

Let us give thanks to God our Father for all his gifts so freely bestowed upon us.

For the beauty and wonder of your creation, in earth and sky and sea,

We thank you, Lord.

For all that is gracious in the lives of men and women, revealing the image of Christ,

We thank you, Lord.

For our daily food and drink, our homes and families, and our friends,

We thank you, Lord.

For minds to think, and hearts to love, and hands to serve,

We thank you, Lord.

For health and strength to work, and leisure to rest and play,

We thank you, Lord.

For the brave and courageous, who are patient in suffering and faithful in adversity,

We thank you, Lord.

For all valiant seekers after truth, liberty, and justice,

We thank you, Lord.

For the communion of saints, in all times and places,

We thank you, Lord.

Above all, we give you thanks for the great mercies and promises given to us in Christ Jesus our Lord;

To him be praise and glory, with you, O Father, and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

See also The General Thanksgiving on pages 58 and 101.

Last Sunday after Pentecost *or*
Trinity Church *Christ the King*
Nov. 26, 2006
John 18:33-37

YEAR B

This is November 26, 2006. We have just celebrated Thanksgiving. Then, why in the world is our gospel for today the story of Jesus standing before Pilate just before his crucifixion? We usually hear this story during Holy Week. So, why do we have this gospel selection at this time of the year?

There is really a simple answer. How many of you know that today is the Last Sunday after Pentecost? Who knows the other name we give to this day in our church calendar? I won't embarrass you by asking you to tell me, but this Sunday's other name is celebrated as "Christ the King".

Why?

In our liturgical church we strive to present the entire life of Jesus, starting with our next series of Advent which means we are awaiting the birth of Christ. Our church year proceeds to take his life from birth to death and all that goes in between.

During pentecost we have learned what Jesus DID. What he tried to convey to us about his life so that we could follow his example. All summer we have tried to show what we, as his disciples, are supposed to live and do.

Since next Sunday we start to prepare ourselves for his birth, it is also fitting that we conclude his earthly life by some proclamation worthy of our King.

Today we have Jesus standing before Pilate just before he was crucified. Can't you just imagine him, in all his majesty, standing there humbly, calmly, regally, heroically -before a man who had the power to kill him. It is a terrible picture. The hatred of the Jews turned the people into a maddened mob of shrieking, frenzied, fanatics in their hatred. They forgot all mercy, all justice. all their principles---even God. Never in all history was the insanity of hatred so vividly shown.

Pilates' history of dealing with the Jews was not too good. His reign as governor was a failure because of his many mistakes in judgement as he tried to rule the Jews. Pilate was really caught between "the devil and the deep blue sea." One could almost feel sorry for Pilate for he had made the Jewish people so mad that he dared not defy thsm. Yet he really wanted to do the right thing with Jesus, but he did not have the courage to defy the people. So, he allowed the curcifixion in order to keep his job. Pilate was also a little superstitious. He had heard that this Jew, this Jesus Christ had been proclaimed as the Son of God. Maybe, just maybe, it was all true and he did not know what would happen if he let Jesus die. Somewhere, in the back of his mind he was somewhat fearful the the outcome if this Jesus was

really the Son of God.

Pilate tried to give the decision of what to do with Jesus to others. He said "I'm not a Jew. I don't know your laws. You all decide what to do with him". He tried to get the mob to choose another criminal so that Jesus could be released. Not so. "Crucify him!!! Crucify him!!!" was loudly proclaimed by the angry mob.

Can't you just see Jesus--standing before Pilate--after being beaten and scourged? Standing there--calmly--silently--royally. Pilate asked "Are you the king of the Jews?" He was half afraid to ask--because he really didn't know, there just might be a grain of truth in the public outcry;

Jesus answerer "Are you asking because you really want to know for yourself--or are you asking because someone told you to ask?"

In response, Jesus confused Pilate even more when he calmly replied--"My kingdom is not of this world. My kingdom is not from here!"

Then, "So you are a King?" Jesus replied, "It is you who says that I am."

Pilate could have treated Jesus with contempt, --but he didn't. It seemed to be more like Jesus was in control and Pilate was bewildered and floundering in a situation he couldn't understand.

The majesty of Jesus never shown more radiantly than in this hour when he was on trial before men! Jesus made it perfectly clear that

his kingdom was not based on force , but was a kingdom based in hearts of man.

In this dramatic trial scene we see the majesty--the undaunted courage and the serene acceptance of the cross displayed by the Jews. Never was he so regal as when men did their worst to humiliate him.

There was glory in his death when he threw back his head on the cross and said triumphly "It is finished!!!" It was as tho he shouted with great glee. It is almost as tho he said "I WON"! With his resurection he further demonstrated to the world that he was KING OF KINGS!

After his noble death, on his cross was inscribed "Jesus of Nazareth--The king of the Jews". Even tho there was an argument Pilate stood firm for once and it was written in the three most commonly used languages of the day, Latin, Hebrew, and Greek.

And so we end his life on a note of glory. He died for you and for me. He died for the sin of the world. He was,,,,,indeed, the King of Kings.

During this past year we have tried to protray Jesus's glory from birth to death and so today we celebrate his greatest triumph--his death on the crosss and the resurrection that followd.

However, don't let us forget that Jesus went willingly to the cross. He went willingly for us and since his resurrection we no longer have to suffer through nights of guilt and regret for our sins for we can REPENT.

We who wear our crosses on our chests, put them over our altars, and over our church spires ---We who had the sign of the cross made on our foreheads with baptismal water have complete forgiveness when we ask, and that is why this day is so significant.

Jesus Christ is Lord because he saves and redeems us. He is not a mythical legend. He is a present fact. Because of these facts known to you and to me and all the world, we can say Jesus is Lord. When Pilate had those words inscribed on the cross he was being sarcastic, cynical, and vengeful.

But do you want to know something?

Pilate was right.

We will see our King this morning in our great feast when we welcome him with the words "This is the body of Christ--the bread of heaven. and this is the blood of Christ--the cup of salvation". At that moment we will join those of every time and every place who know what to look for in a king and where we certainly can find hope for all eternity!

Pontious Pilate had to face great decisions. And during this coming

week we, too, will be faced with some very important decisions in the life of Trinity Church. We will have to make personal decisions as we hear that terrible S word--stewardship. Among other things we will have to ask ourselves just how much we are willing to sacrifice for him who sacrificed everything for us.

While we will all be making serious decisions, I'd like to put a little lightness to the process and give you something to think about.

A pig and a cow lived on the same farm. The pig was puzzled because he was unpopular while the cow was loved by everyone. The pig said to the cow: "people always speak kindly of your gentle nature and your generosity. They say every day you give them milk and cream. But I give them everything I have! I give ham and bacon. I provide bristles for brushes. They even pickle my feet! Yet no one likes me, but they love you. WHY?"

The cow replied: "Maybe it's because I give while I am still living!"

While this is my attempt at humor, There is a great deal of truth for one to consider.

And last, but not least, this week is also a very special time for me. Many of you here today witnessed a momentous day in my life

for on this Tuesday, November 28 I will have been ordained for 25 years.

What a day!!! You were all so loving, supportive and kind. You still are.

One of the things Bishop Gaskell said was " Father, through Jesus Christ your son ,give your holy spirit to her , fill her with grace and power and make her a deacon in your church.!" Over the years many things have happened to us all. I have tried my best to keep my ordination vows all this time. While there have been many times as my body slowly has been falling apart that I have been very discouraged, I have never questioned my calling to the diaconate.

My spirit remains even more true to him than it was 25 years ago.

My biggest problem at this point in my life, is to gracefully accept it when someone wants to help me. My natural instinct is to help others. I have tried to console myself and try to think that God is trying to teach me to be more compassionate and patient.

Sometimes I think I must have more compassion than the law allows, and then I remember that with his holy spirit, and your love, support , and care I am , hopefully , still learning to become a deacon.

Amen

*I can^{still} confidently say - Crown him with many thrones
as thrones before him fall. Crown him, ye kings,
for he is King & Lord of all!"*