

Homily for  
Sunday, November 24, 2018  
33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Christ the King Sunday  
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Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor (procurator) of Palestine, stands face-to-face with the Lord of the universe. Pilate is agitated by the circumstances but thinking clearly because it's still early. Jesus is exhausted from the first twelve hours of his passion, but his eyes glow with the love and determination that had led him to this hour. He came to earth in order to save Pilate's soul; Providence has finally brought them together. Jesus is eager to draw this Roman patrician close to his heart. All the conditions are right for Pilate to detect in Jesus the God for whom his heart longs. Yet, he doesn't: he is in the same room with Jesus, speaking with him, but he remains unmoved. Why? Jesus himself gives us the explanation when he tells Pilate, "Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

With that sentence, Jesus teaches us all the secret to intimacy with God. Whoever lets himself be led by what is true will be drawn into communion with Christ, will hear and heed God's ceaseless invitations to follow him more closely. But being led by truth requires humility. It requires recognizing a higher authority than oneself: if I am obliged to discover, accept, and conform to what is objectively true (morally,

physically, historically), then I am not autonomous, I am not the master of my universe, I am not God. Making that act of humility, which frees us from the enervating bonds of selfishness, is hard. Our human nature tends towards pride, towards self-sufficiency, control, and dominance. To resist that tendency, obey the truth, and expose oneself to the burning love of God takes courage. Courageous, humble acceptance of God's truth, of the truth that God is love – that's the only way to follow our eternal King, and to experience the fulfillment that comes from being a faithful citizen of his everlasting Kingdom.

As I was writing this, sharing it with Camille, she tells me that we have a great example of that courage right here in our own parish!... She told me the story of a couple who couldn't have children, who tried every catholic way possible but just couldn't conceive. The couple both worked and had promising careers so conceiving a child would also bring other challenges, like who would stay home and raise the child, Could we make it on one salary ect.. The man is an engineer and as their hopes of having children were dwindling, his company appointed him the engineer on a new project they just took on. He later discovered that the project was somehow connected to Planned Parenthood and so he advised the company that he couldn't work on the project. They essentially told him that if he didn't work on it, that he wouldn't have a job. The couple prayed about it together and decided that he would leave the company. Jesus taught us "Whoever lets himself be led by

what is true will be drawn into communion with Christ and as a result, will hear and heed God's ceaseless invitations to follow him more closely. Shortly after the man left his company, the couple conceived a child. The man now stays at home to care, not only for that first child, but for all 4 of their children. That's humble, quiet, Catholic courage.

Rewarded with the abundant blessing that God provides when you turn your life over to him! You see the freedom of Christ's Kingdom is an interior freedom, a peace and strength of soul that only his grace can give us. If up to now we haven't experienced it as deeply as we would like, there could be a variety of reasons. One simple one could be that we just don't know his teaching well enough to understand and follow it. In past generations, the values of popular culture were for the most part inspired by a Christian worldview. Entertainment, schools, and the general patterns of behavior encouraged by society were more or less in harmony with the moral and spiritual messages that people would hear at Sunday Mass. As a result, the Sunday homily was supported and reinforced by many other sources of input. But now that has changed. The world around us has been secularized, and normal behavior is, often, profoundly anti-Christian. As a result, CCD and the Sunday homily are not enough anymore. If we want to truly understand ourselves and the world in the light of Christ's saving truth, we have to take a more active role. If all week long we fill our hearts and minds with secular images and information, we will begin to think like secularists, even if we still

come to Sunday Mass. And then it will be no surprise that we aren't experiencing the interior freedom that Christ promises us. Following him faithfully requires seeking him out, spending time each day in personal prayer, and spending quality time each week studying our faith.

There are a lot of programs we have here at St Edward to help do that. We have a fun event coming up on December 14th called Lessons and Carols where the Frassati High School choir will mix scripture with caroling to reflect more deeply on the lesson each scripture provides. In a world that is rebelling against our King, our call is to awaken our own souls, to sing of the matchless king of all eternity! Unless we embrace that Catholic Courage to actively follow Christ, we will slowly slide into rebellion ourselves. Today is the feast of Christ the King – and we are about to be face-to-face with the living God in the eucharist. Knowing that everyone who belongs to the truth listens to the voice of Jesus – will you be the procurator who remains unmoved today or will you be the faithful couple who lets themselves be led by what is true.