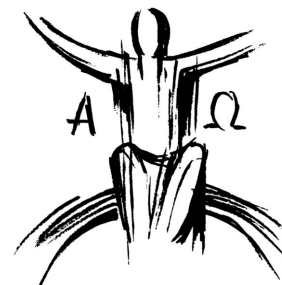


Christ the King B 34th and Last Sunday of the Year B

*"I am the Alpha and the Omega"
says the Lord God,
who is, who was, and who is to come,
the Almighty. (Ap 1:8)*



First Reading

Daniel 7:13-14

I gazed into the visions of the night. And I saw, coming on the clouds of heaven, one like a son of man. He came to the one of great age and was led into his presence. On him was conferred sovereignty, glory and kingship, and men of all peoples, nations and languages became his servants. His sovereignty is an eternal sovereignty which shall never pass away, nor will his empire ever be destroyed.

Second Reading

Apocalypse 1:5-8

Jesus Christ is the faithful witness, the First-born from the dead, the Ruler of the kings of the earth. He loves us and has washed away our sins with his blood, and made us a line of kings, priests to serve his God and Father; to him, then, be glory and power for ever and ever. Amen. It is he who is coming on the clouds; everyone will see him, even those who pierced him, and all the races of the earth will mourn over him. This is the truth. Amen. "I am the Alpha and the Omega" says the Lord God, who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.

"Are you the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked. Jesus replied, "Do you ask this of your own accord, or have others spoken to you about me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? It is your own people and the chief priests who have handed you over to me: what have you done?" Jesus replied, "Mine is not a kingdom of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my men would have fought to prevent my being surrendered to the Jews. But my kingdom is not of this kind." "So you are a king then?" said Pilate. "It is you who say it" answered Jesus. "Yes, I am a king. I was born for this, I came into the world for this: to bear witness to the truth; and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice."

Meditation

Pilate orders an inscription to be placed on the cross: "Jesus the Nazorean, the King of the Jews" (John 19:19). Thus he announces the conclusion to which he has come about the man sent to him for interrogation and sentencing. The essential content of that interrogation appears in today's gospel. It is a strange interchange, where the accused acts as judge. It is he, not Pilate, who dominates the proceedings.

Does Pilate want to make Jesus admit his claim to royalty? Jesus does not deny the claim, but before answering the Roman procurator, he raises a preliminary question, as if he wanted this official to commit himself personally: "Are you saying this on your own?" Jesus continues, if you are speaking of the royal title in the political sense in which my accusers take it, "My kingdom does not belong to this world." He has come into the world "to testify to the truth". It is as witness to the truth that he is king. It is for this he was born and for this he will die. Jesus died to exorcise forever the temptation to reduce his gospel to one or another of the political forces of society. Yet it remains a temptation for us to make the Church one of the kingdoms of this world. We must instead hope for a kingdom where the Church will cease to be because God will be all in all.