

## THE SON OF MAN COMES IN HIS GLORY

understanding of what is really going on. *Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?*' Pilate's answer (perhaps unconsciously) tells Jesus that Pilate has been prompted by the Priestly establishment. *'I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?'* The Lord answers the question that he perhaps sees in Pilate's heart: *'My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.'* Pilate, who was later removed from office for malfeasance, perhaps senses that he is in danger of being overthrown by a Rabbi. He grabs onto what we now call a "got-cha" moment Pilate asks him, *'So you are a king?'* Jesus answered, *'You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.'* Then Pilate shows the real difference between the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdoms of Earth: Pilate asked him, *'What is truth?'*

Today we celebrate our King, Jesus, who earlier in John, Chapter 14, told Thomas *I am the Way and the Truth and the Life, No one comes to the Father except through me.* His kingdom is not of this world, but we became citizens of that kingdom at the moment of our Baptism. We are fed the banquet of that kingdom at every Eucharist. We participate in that kingdom when we pray, or give of ourselves to others or when support that kingdom with our time, talent and treasure. We are "family" of the Heavenly Kingdom and our King is Jesus.

**Scripture note:** Today is the end of *Year B* when most of our Sunday Gospels lessons were taken from St. Mark. Next Sunday we begin *Year C* when most of the selected Gospels are taken from Saint Luke.

**Please prepare Luke 21:25-36 for next Sunday.**

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**Christ in Glory Adored by Angels**  
Museo Dell'Opera, Duomo (Cathedral). Siena, Italy  
The figures are Life size

The *museo* (museum) lies next to the cathedral. It is the repository of countless statues, paintings and liturgical objects that in the past graced the cathedral. Old limestone statues seem to predominate. At one time they were on the many pinnacles that decorate the huge building. Centuries of stone-dissolving weather has reduced much of the statuary to dust. Those pictured above were replaced with newly carved replicas. Note the missing hands are half dissolved wings.

### Today's Gospel **Saint John 18:33-37**

✘ THEN PILATE ENTERED THE HEADQUARTERS AGAIN, SUMMONED Jesus, and asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered, 'Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?' Pilate replied, 'I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.' Pilate asked

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him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.' [© NRSV]

### Theological Feasts

Christ the King is a one of a dwindling number of "Theological" Feasts, that is, feasts that celebrate theological concepts rather than Christ's life, the Seasons of the Church year or the deeds of the saints. Christ the King was ordered by Pope Pius XI in 1925. Originally the feast was scheduled on the last Sunday of October, perhaps placed there to counter the annual celebration of Luther's posting of his 95 Theses on the Wittenburg Chapel door on October 31, 1517. Those theses decried the practices, customs and corruption Luther found in the Renaissance Roman Catholic Church and lit the spark of the Reformation. Fortunately, the inter-church rivalries of earlier years have give way to greater fellowship. The Roman Catholic observance of the feast was recently moved to the Sunday before Advent. It is now kept on this Sunday by many Christian groups.

Theological Feasts at one time crowded the calendar of western Christianity. In the Roman Church there were (and are) the Feasts of the Seven Sorrows (of the B.V.M.)<sup>1</sup>, Precious Blood, Sacred Heart, Immaculate Conception (of the B.V.M.), Assumption (of the B.V.M.), Corpus Christi, plus several more, and, of course, the most familiar Theological Feast to be celebrated in both the Roman Catholic and the Episcopal Church (and many others), Trinity Sunday.

Each of these Theological Feasts commemorates a non-Biblical opinion or a belief or legend, sometimes backed by a foggy use of Scripture, (# 1 & #2 below), or a Theological concept clearly found in Scripture (# 3 below),

For Example: 1) The Feast of the Assumption, August 15 celebrates the believed bodily ascension into Heaven of

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<sup>1</sup> The Blessed Virgin Mary.

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Mary, Jesus' mother. The matter is not dealt with in the Bible; rather there are some spurious writings that support it, Further, there is the novel argument from silence that it *must* be so since there are no *bodily* relics of Mary.<sup>2</sup> In 1950 Pope Pius XII decreed that the Assumption was an infallibly defined article of faith.

The Episcopal Church commemorates the *death* of the Virgin on August 15, but makes no statement about the *disposition of her body*.

2) The Immaculate Conception is a Roman Catholic feast celebrated on December 8. It was established as a universal feast in 1476 by Pope Sixtus I but was not then declared as a required belief. Pius IX proclaimed it an infallible dogma and required its belief in 1854. Popularly, it is among the most misunderstood of religious concepts. It does not have anything to do with *Jesus' birth* (as many think), but rather with the birth of his *mother*. The idea is that Mary, at *her* conception was relieved of Original Sin **without Baptism** so that her body would be a fit temple for Jesus. Biblical material supporting the proclamation of this dogma is cited out of context.<sup>3</sup>

3) The Feast of Christ the King The rich precedent for today's feast is fully illustrated in many Bible passages. In today's Gospel (Saint John 18:<sup>33-37</sup>) Jesus has been arrested. He replies to a question from Pontius Pilate, who asks him: '*Are you the King of the Jews?*' Jesus' answer reflects his deep

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<sup>2</sup> Although the Assumption was only relatively recently defined as dogma, and in spite of a statement by Epiphanius of Salamis in AD 377 that no one knew of the eventual fate of Mary, accounts of the assumption of Mary into heaven have circulated since the 5th century. The Roman Catholic Church itself interprets chapter 12 of the Book of Revelation as referring to it. The earliest known narrative is the so-called Liber Requei Mariae (The Book of Mary's Repose), a narrative which survives intact only in an Ethiopic translation. Probably composed by the 4th century, this early Christian apocryphal narrative may be as early as the 3rd century. Also quite early are the very different traditions of the "Six Books" Dormition narratives. The earliest versions of this *apocryphon* are preserved by several Syriac manuscripts of the 5th and 6th centuries, although the text itself probably belongs to the 4th century. (From the Internet)

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Job 14:4 *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No one can.*