

Blessed Trinity Catholic Community † Spirit of Christ
Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe ~ 34B, November 24, 2024
Homily ~ Father Ed Hislop



The year of the Lord, 2024, ends with loved ones still surrounding us; memories overwhelming us and hope, though at times fragile, still echoing through the days and darkness of this year.

What we believe as an authentically catholic people, called to embrace a true respect and love of all life, from beginning to end, seems to have been lost in the winds of fearful rhetoric, forgotten values, and the Catholic vision of the “fundamental option for the poor,” and respect for *all* life.

Now we watch as the implications of choices made begin to be revealed. The words Pilate spoke to Jesus seem to echo through the days: *“Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me...”* But Jesus reassures us: *“Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”* Now we must listen!

“As the visions during the night continue,” the light of healing, the hope of caring; the heart of hospitality, and the truth of living for the sake of others, begins to appear again on the horizon. During the darkness of the night, we can still see visions of God’s light; a dwelling place for all, a home that cannot be taken away, even by those who want to be a king. We are still loved and still called to open eyes, ears, and heart—to see, listen,

and feel the struggle, hope, and vision of the many around us.

The Gospel journey of St. Mark this past year was a way toward a new place to live where the welcome and compassion of Christ is felt and seen; a house of faith, as Mark envisioned for us through this past year, where mercy is felt, and judgement is left only to God; a home where the stranger is welcomed and given rest, a place in which the family brings healing, and lives for the sake of others. A “holy communion” sent forth to love and serve the many seeking a home. That is the “truth” to which we belong; that is the life we honor. These days, that may be the cross we are all asked to carry. The cross we help the many bear the “tribulations that are imminent.”

The faith community to whom and of whom Mark wrote this earliest and shortest of the Gospels, needed to be jarred from its sense of complacency, self-satisfaction and seeming conviction that they, and they alone, were the “great” “family of God.” Mark impelled us, and the whole Church, this past year, to change our heart and mind; to hear the cry of the many; to carefully embrace the vision of Jesus, rather than our own, or others, and to search for Christ’s truth in the places we have not yet gone. Remember the prophetic words of the angel in Mark’s Easter Gospel at the empty tomb: *“He is not here; he has gone before you... there you will see him.”*

He is seen, in places we have not yet gone: in the life, spirit, hopes, and struggles of every human person; seen and found, where too many do not believe him to be; heard in joy and laughter around the tables of friends and family, in our schools, and in the twinkling eyes of children whose dreaming imagination knows no limit. Felt in the struggles and fear of peoples and families clamoring for a new home at too many borders and in the unheard cries of children whose lives are haphazardly taken, in places like Gaza, Israel, Ukraine and so many other places we are not told about. He has gone ahead of us, Mark reminds us, to those places, those moments of sadness and

despair, those times of pain and disaster. It is there he is found—and here, in this place, among and with us, around this table, where his word is heard and his story told with the story of all who long for their life to be honored and respected. Here around this altar, with all who have gone before us. We remember and promise to do everything in his memory, to look, see and be merciful and forgiving. From here, he goes ahead of us, beckoning you and me to find him anew in places we have never been.

Today we end this troubling year of Mark with the Gospel of John in which Jesus stands judged by the powers of both world and religion, because of the undesirable places he goes, and the diverse people he embraces.

Even today he stands before the powers that be, whose vision is lost in the dark; who separate persons and set them apart; who judge, exclude, condemn, blame, and lie.

But he stands also before us and many others, who strive to love every neighbor, who live for the sake of others, who care for the stranger, serve the hungry, minister to the sick, welcome the refugee, act justly, walk humbly, and speak truth—truth and only truth. He stands with those who break the bread of life and give it; who share the cup of

mercy, filled with compassion and care for all. His words are strong, loving, and wise: *“Everyone who belongs to the truth—to the truth—listens to my voice.”*

We hear His voice, ever ancient and ever new. A voice inviting us into what is yet to be. Remembering, that he has much more to tell us, beyond what we now can bear. We have much more to discover and much more to learn. He is going ahead of us, not behind us! As we face the unknown, or that never before seen, we are asked to trust in his promise that we will be guided to all truth, truth not yet imagined. John 16:12
That is the House of God; that is how Christ makes a kingdom of truth and light; a dominion of holiness and grace; a dwelling place of justice, love, and peace. Preface, Christ the King

So, the year ends with a plea to belong to the truth, to listen for Christ’s voice among the many. We end by getting ready to hear Jesus speak to us again through Luke, whose Gospel we begin on the First Sunday of Advent, **“Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy... be vigilant at all times, and pray, that you have the strength to escape the tribulations that are imminent...”**

