

## **Christ the king 2006**

Look up in the sky, it's a bird, it's a plane, it's.....superman! or more appropriately for today's scripture: Look up in the clouds! It's a bird, it's a plane, it's SON OF MAN!

I mean no disrespect to our scriptures but the reality is that the imagery we have is pretty antiquated. Our image of the universe is not what it was 2000 or more years ago when you could imagine literally, one "coming on the clouds of heaven". And the image of the king which is at the heart of today's liturgy is one that does not function well in our contemporary society. Living in a world where kings are either tyrants or figure heads, the image of Christ as King does not have much resonance. As every one knows, Royalty is the stuff of "Fairytale" and not reality.

But there is something here that demands attention. There is some core of "truth" about Jesus Christ and about us that demands attention. "the reason I came into the world is to testify to the truth. Anyone committed to the truth hears my voice." And like Pilate, we might say, Truth? What is truth?

I found something of the truth in one word that we hear this morning and in fact, a word that we hear with some frequency throughout the liturgical year. It is a word that may be as antiquated in English as the images throughout the liturgy. It is a word that we don't really use anymore. The word is

Behold! How many times in the story of Jesus do we hear the word "behold", Ecce in Latin, Ide in Greek. Behold! Stop and really look. Retain this in your memory. It's worth holding on to.

On this feast of Christ the King, the last Sunday in the liturgical year, I thought it would be a good thing to reflect on the times throughout the year we have been told to behold and ask ourselves, what it is about this Jesus the Christ that holds us here.

In the Christmas season: Behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, for all people: to you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior who is the Messiah, the Lord. (the Angels words to the Shepherds)

Behold, this child is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed (Simeon in the temple to Mary and Joseph)

In the beginning of Ordinary Time, Behold, the lamb of God, the one who takes away the sins of the world (John the Baptist)

On Good Friday, Ecce Homo! Behold the human! (Pilate to the crowds)

On Easter: Behold the place where they laid him. (The angels to the women at the tomb)

Behold my hands and my feet. See that it is I myself. (Jesus to his disciples)

And today: Behold he comes amid the clouds.

Today we are asked to look again, to behold the one who is God's anointed. What we have seen and heard throughout the liturgical year is that Jesus Christ is so much more than we ever imagined. Jesus Christ is not 'superman' but rather one who shares our common humanity: He is the one born of Mary, fulfillment of the promise of a savior. His life is not one of power and glory. He is not to be a Priest or a King in this world. No he is the innocent lamb, whose life is given as sacrifice. He is the one who suffers a violent death, reserved for a criminal. But He is the one whom God will hold fast to, even in death on a Cross. He is the one to whom God will give victory over sin and death in the Resurrection. And he is the one who bears the wounds of the crucifixion in his Risen body.

What we behold today on the feast of Christ the King is not one "up in the sky" but rather one who is very down to earth, one with us: Emmanuel. We may very well prefer a "Superman", one who comes from the sky to rescue us, fight against the power of evil and put the world in order till its next crisis. But In Jesus Christ that's not what we get. Ecce Homo! Behold the human! Look and hold on to the image of the one who is powerless, the servant of all, the one who knows our struggles and pain but much more. Jesus the Christ, the anointed one.

Look up in the sky! No look up in the choirloft and behold the image of Christ the king and notice his hands and his feet. They are bare so that we can behold his wounds, his scars, his humanity. Behold!

ADD TO ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Please take home a bulletin with you to plan for the many special opportunities for spiritual growth in the Advent season: i.e. Taize prayer on Monday nights and the Parish night at A Dancer's Christmas.

As is our custom on World Aids Day, this Friday, our parish will have a liturgy at 12 noon at the Cyclorama on Tremont St. We invite anyone who is able to join us for this special time of prayer and healing.