

## **The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John 18:33-37**

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 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.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

## SERMON

Last week, I visited a parishioner from St. Andrew's Cathedral who was recuperating in Kuakini Hospital. I was dressed in my black shirt and collar, carrying my little communion box, wandering and circling through the hallways, trying to find the correct room, and getting more and more lost. I finally stopped to ask someone for help. She looked me up and down and said, "Who are you? Are you a priest?"

Sometimes the obvious is not so obvious.

Sometimes we don't believe what we hear from others.

Sometimes we know the answer, but we pretend we don't know it so we can catch the other person in a lie.

Pilate knew who Jesus was. Pilate knew why Jesus was being brought to trial, but he was trying to find a politically correct way to simultaneously release Jesus and also appease the crowds who were calling for his death.

Pilate asks, “Are you the King of the Jews?” It’s hard to say if this is an honest question or an obnoxious one. Maybe Jesus can’t tell either. “Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?” Jesus responds. Pilate asks more questions and when Jesus says his kingdom is not from this world, Pilate thinks he’s got him and exclaims, “So you are a king?”

Today we celebrate Christ the King Sunday, a fairly new celebration for the church.

The Feast of Christ the King affirms for us, once and for all, that Jesus is the king in our lives.

How many of you remember the movie “The Lion King?” Simba, the lion cub, wanted to be king because he didn’t want anybody to tell him what to do. He was looking forward to telling everyone else what to do. He said “I’m going to be a mighty king so enemies beware!” “I’m working on my ROAR! Oh, I just can’t wait to be king!”

I think Simba had a very poor idea of what it meant to be a king.

Jesus came into this world to show us what a king should be.

He rode on a donkey, and he washed people's feet. He came not catering to the powerful, but to the poor and less fortunate. He calls us to be just like him. He calls us to give instead of take. He calls us to love, not only the people we like, but also the people we don't like.

Have you ever dreamed of being king for a day?

Would you be fair and honest? Would you want to collect a lot of taxes so you could live in a big house?

Or would you give everything away?

What would your kingdom look like? Would your people love you? Or would they talk about you behind your back?

Faye and I recently went to Hawi on the Big Island and saw the original statue of King Kamehameha. The one we have on Oahu is actually a copy because when the original one was being shipped here from Florence, Italy, it fell overboard near the Falkland Islands. A replacement was made and now stands in front of the Hawaii Supreme Court. The original one was miraculously found and retrieved from the sea in 1912 and now stands in Hawi, on the island where King Kamehameha was born. This must've been meant to be. God truly works in mysterious ways.

I am always humbled by the fact that we live on sacred land where kings and queens were born, ruled, lived and died.

We are reminded of them every single day, from seeing the King Kamehameha statue, or passing by Iolani Palace, or by simply remembering their names as we walk or drive on Kalakaua Avenue, Bishop Street, or Kalanianaʻole Highway.

The story of our Diocese and all of our Episcopal churches in Hawaii begins with King Kamehameha the Fourth and Queen Emma. They invited the Church of England to come and share God's love with the people of Hawaii.

Queen Lilioukalani was Hawaii's last queen. Her reign was cut short by the overthrow of the Hawaiian government.

Although she was imprisoned in her own palace, she was always grateful to the Episcopal church as she wrote in her memoir:

*That first night of my imprisonment was the longest night I have ever passed in my life; it seemed as though the dawn of day would never come. I found in my bag a small Book of Common Prayer according to the ritual of the Episcopal Church. It was a great comfort to me, and before retiring to rest Mrs. Clark and I spent a few minutes in the devotions appropriate to the evening.*

As we sing the Queen's Prayer later in today's service, picture the Queen locked in her palace, having faith that Jesus is her king, and writing these words to God:

*Your love is in heaven and your truth so perfect.*

*I live in sorrow imprisoned*

*You are my light. Your glory my support.*

Queen Liliuokalani knew that Christ was King of all.

So today, we give thanks for our blessed King and

Queens in our Hawaiian history and most of all for

Jesus Christ our King.

Amen.