

Making the Reign of Christ a Reality
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Christ the King Sunday

The Reign of Christ is how this Sunday is marked in one commentary that is organized by Sunday readings. To be honest I like that title better than Christ the King especially for our current times. Christ the King is a title and creates in my mind a more static image. Like the image on domes all over Eastern Christianity of Christ seated on the throne. A powerful image, but the reign of Christ, now that is powerful and dynamic. This is about the one who was and is and is to come. This is the one who is referenced in the prologue of John

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4 in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

For me the great hope in this passage for us today comes in the last line. “The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.” This is about trusting that Christ/God/Holy Spirit is in charge even when we cannot see it. For me this is a message of hope in a challenging time for many people.

Br. David Vryhof from the Society of St. John the Evangelist posted this on Friday and it seems a good place to start:

Trust

Learning to let go of our notions of how things should be and finding freedom to work with things as they are will bring us peace and freedom. Believe that (Christ) is at work in every person, in every situation, and trust (Christ's) promise to bring new life out of that which we had assumed was dead.

I am just starting Richard Rohr's book *The Divine Dance*, which is about the Trinity of which Christ and the reign of Christ is an integral part. The challenge with a day like this and the Trinity is this is something we end up dancing and circling around because we really can never totally understand it. It is a mystery. *“Remember, mystery isn't something that you cannot understand—it is something that you can endlessly understand. There is no point at which you can say, “I've got it.” Always and forever, mystery gets you.”* Hence the title of the book, *The Divine Dance*.

Please remember to begin with that on a day like this we are talking about more than Jesus. I often remind people that Christ is not Jesus' last name but the essence of who he was. Jesus is the incarnation that came into our world at a

given time in a given place to reveal God to us. When we are speaking of Christ we are speaking of the member of the Trinity who is referenced in the prologue of John and is eternal just as is God and the Holy Spirit.

While we can never completely understand the Trinity or the kingdom as the earth people that we are, we can begin to glimpse what the kingdom, what a reign of Christ might look like. This is why Jesus became incarnate, became human. All this is to show us what the kingdom will be like, what the reign of Christ will mean.

This is a tall order and since Jesus was one to challenge the status quo that provides a challenge to us as well.

So how do we live into the reign of Christ? First I would like to share something that the Rt. Rev. Neil Alexander said to the clergy this past week as we gathered at Chanco. He said, "The problem is that we need to walk towards each other even as we disagree. The reality at the moment is most of us are walking away from each other instead." I thought as I sat there, Bishop you nailed it. That in a nutshell is exactly what many of us, myself included have started to do and it only makes things worse. So first we must turn around and begin to walk back towards each other even when we disagree.

Our Presiding Bishop provides a good start and is along the same lines as my post election homily.

Message from the Presiding Bishop this past week:

Last week I shared what I pray was a reconciling post-election message to our church, reminding us that 'we will all live together as fellow Americans, as citizens.' Today I want to remind us that during moments of transition, during moments of tension, it is important to affirm our core identity and values as followers of Jesus in the Episcopal Anglican way.

Jesus once declared, in the language of the Hebrew prophets, that God's "house shall be a house of prayer for all nations" (Mk 11:17). He invited and welcomed all who would follow saying, "come to me all who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens" (Mt. 11:28).

We therefore assert and we believe that "the Episcopal Church welcomes you" – all of you, not as merely a church slogan, but as a reflection of what we believe Jesus teaches us and at the core of the movement he began in the first century. The Episcopal Church welcomes all. All of us!

As the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement today, we Episcopalians are committed, as our Prayer Book teaches to honor the covenant and promises we made in Holy Baptism: *To proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ; To seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as*

ourselves; to strive for justice and peace among all people, and to respect the dignity of every human being.

As Christians, we believe that all humans are created in God's image and equal before God – those who may be rejoicing as well as those who may be in sorrow. As a Church, seeking to follow the way of Jesus, who taught us, "you shall love your neighbor as yourself," (Mt. 22:39) and to "do to others as you would have them do to you" (Mt. 7:12), we maintain our longstanding commitment to support and welcome refugees and immigrants, and to stand with those who live in our midst without documentation. We reaffirm that like all people LGBT persons are entitled to full civil rights and protection under the law. We reaffirm and renew the principles of inclusion and the protection of the civil rights of all persons with disabilities. We commit to the honor and dignity of women and speak out against sexual or gender-based violence. We express solidarity with and honor the Indigenous Peoples of the world. We affirm the right to freedom of religious expression and vibrant presence of different religious communities, especially our Muslim sisters and brothers. We acknowledge our responsibility in stewardship of creation and all that God has given into our hands. We do so because God is the Creator. We are all God's children, created equally in God's image. And if we are God's children we are all brothers and sisters.

"The Episcopal Church Welcomes You," is not just a slogan, it's who we seek to be and the witness we seek to make, following the way of Jesus.¹

This is certainly a challenging message from Bishop Michael, but it gets to the core of what it means to be an Episcopalian. It also gets to the heart of what it means for us as member of St. Aidan's to be Christ's beacon for all seeking God. This is the light that shines on those who sit in darkness as Zechariah proclaimed at the birth of John the Baptist. This is how we bring the kingdom to our broken world. This is our call as members of the Jesus movement. I making my commitment this morning to all of you to be that light, I hope you will all join me in making the reign of Christ a reality.

¹ <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/posts/publicaffairs/statement-presiding-bishop-michael-curry>