

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

November 21, 2021

What a fabulous pericope, i.e., section of the Gospel. I'm sure we all recognize this reading from the Gospel of John as from the Passion reading on the Good Friday ritual. Read this Gospel again, more than once. We begin to dig deeper into the political danger that Pilate is in. His opening question sets the scene: "Are you the king of the Jews?" Expecting Jesus to give a simple answer of 'yes or no' his patience runs thin. As the crowd gets louder, Pilate becomes aware that he is the one on trial here. The crowd wants Jesus dead. Yet Pilate's inner soul raises suspicions: Who is this man? Surely, he has heard about the preacher from Nazareth. He has many followers and has performed many healings and other miracles. Though Pilate recognizes the scheme of the Jewish authorities, he is afraid to challenge them. While at the same time he is very aware of the Roman law to determine the kings of the territory. Finally, Jesus reveals his mission: "for this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth". And in the Passion narrative, Pilate declares with exasperation: "Truth, what is that?"

And that is our challenge: "Truth, what is that?"