

Homily for the Reign of Christ Sunday (Year B 2018)
November 25, 2018
Donald Walls

2 Samuel 23: 1-7
Psalm 132: 1-18,
Revelation 1: 4b-8; 3411
John 18: 33-37

Jesus says to Pilate, "For this I was born, to come into the world, to testify to the truth." The focus of my sermon is the question, "What is truth?" Jesus has come into the world as a sign of God's love, as a sign of God's faithfulness, a sign of God's abiding care for us. He tells us that the here-and-now is not all that there is. The truth encompasses the past, the present and the future, and in this is our Christian hope, that, whatever we find ourselves mired and muddled in at different times, the big picture encompasses so much more. The truth is so much greater than you and me and our immediate concerns.

So if the truth is God's love and the hope of life to come, how do we find the truth? Jesus offers us a model of how to live our lives, to show love to God and to neighbor, to grow to our greatest potential, to be wholly the person God created each of us to be. So each of us is called to live out our own gifts. This is how we share the truth and show the truth, and this is how we find the truth in others.

Where is the truth? It is in the organist who offers her special gift of musicianship, to draw out, encourage and coax a choir to be the best that they can be in offering their gifts of singing. It is in the elderly woman who has lived a life of hard work and activity, who now finds some of the limitations of age and yet goes on busily sewing, knitting, making handicrafts to sell at the church bazaar. The truth is demonstrated in the professional man who takes time to read splendidly to enhance others' worship and spiritual experience. The truth is found in the busy persons who take time to help others, to be present at church events. Now I'm talking about things within the church but of course, in the wider world we can find many examples of the truth lived out, people of faith who live lovingly. Think of doctors, nurses, care aides, all who give care to those who are limited by age, pain or illness. Think of a bus driver who has a regular routine, who takes time to speak to passengers as they board the bus, who takes time to smile, to help. The truth can be found in so many ways.

The reign of Christ calls each of us to be conscious always of living in the kingdom. Think of those who have inspired you. Who are the persons who have taught you or have modelled by their way of living how you want to live and the person you want to be? Is there someone you can think of who has given you the love and the freedom to explore, to set forth tentatively on new paths and to find ways to fulfil your own special gifts? Each of us does have special gifts. We are all individuals. Not everyone is enabled to live out their gifts and in a sense, they are hampered from living fully into the truth. There are others who by their self-will, their

selfishness, their arrogance, who do not live out the truth. Think of the bossy woman who orders people around, who always has her own agenda, the man who dismisses women as unimportant, the persons who bully and scold children instead of offering caring love. The truth is found in many and diverse ways, but one truth I hold up to you and that is that each of us has special gifts. What are the gifts with which God has endowed you? Where are your special passions? There are activities in life, which do not feed us, which in a sense deaden us. That's not where our gifts and passions are.

We know our own gifts and passions by the energy that feeds into us from them. Jesus' truth, the reign of Christ, offers the hope and encouragement to all, of course about eternal life, about resurrection from the dead and what is to come, which will surely be glorious. But the reign of Christ is also about the here-and-now, about how each of us lives our life. In this, I find great hope and encouragement. In a sense, it's a series of doors that keep opening. What will your next door be? What will the truth be into which you live? My hope for each of you is that you will keep opening doors, finding ways to live more fully into the person you have been specially created by God to be. Thanks be to God for this complete and wonderful encouragement.