May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

“*Are you the King of the Jews?*” (Jn 18: 33). It’s a simple question and Pilate wants a simple answer, a simple truth. Yes or no. I’ll bet there have been times in your life when you too wanted a clear answer and a simple truth. I’ll bet there have been times when you tried to categorize your life, relationships, other people, and the world into this or that, yes or no.

I wonder why Jesus does not give Pilate a straight answer. Maybe that’s his way of telling us that truth is never as simple as we want it to be, never as absolute as we often assert it to be, and never as exclusive as we sometimes claim it is. He knows that truth is more than a fact, an answer, or an experience, and that it cannot be possessed. Rather, it is a life to be lived.

The truth to which Jesus testifies is the God who is beyond the circumstances of this world and yet always present in the circumstances of this world. Jesus came into the world to tell us about that truth, to show us what it looks like in a human life, and teach us how to be a part of and belong to that truth.

To seek and claim sole and exclusive possession of the truth is the way of Pilate and the way of the world, but it is not the way of Christ. Jesus never asks us to possess the truth about him or anything else. Instead, he asks us to belong to the truth, to let ourselves be possessed by his truth, and listen to his voice.

So, here’s my question. Do we belong to the truth or do we live and act as if the truth belongs to us? How we answer that question will determine whose voice we listen to, the choices we make, the words we speak, and the actions we take.

“*Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice*,” (John 18: 37b) Jesus said. Okay, then whose voice do we listen to when we act as if the truth belongs to us? When we make ourselves custodians of the truth, when we believe that the truth belongs to us, … we listen to our own voice and the voices of those who think and act like us. We listen to the voice of our political party, our country, our religion. We listen to the voice of our fear and insecurity. We listen to the voice of our prejudice, our individual needs and desires.

I know those voices. I’ve heard and listened to them. I know they are real. And they do speak a truth but it is only a piece of the truth. They remind me that the world is not always safe and life is not always easy. But I also know this. There is another voice, a voice that speaks from a kingdom not of this world.

* In the midst of uncertainty and fear, there is a voice that says, “*Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand*” (Is 41:10).
* In the darkness of death there is a voice that says, “*I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live*” (Jn 11:25).
* People who think, act, and believe differently than us, there is a voice that says, “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*” (Mk 12:31).
* In a world with battle lines drawn and enemies named, there is a voice that says, “*Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you*” (Mt. 5:44).
* When somebody is in need there is a voice that says, “*I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me*” (Mt 25:35).
* In the moments of pain of a broken heart, hurt feelings, and betrayals, there is a voice that says, “*If anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you*” (Col. 3:13).

In every time, in every place, in every situation there is always that other voice. It is always speaking to us. It speaks in today’s world, in your life, and in my life. That’s the voice I want to listen to. That’s the truth to which I want to belong. That’s the life I want to live. What about you?

So, will we belong to the truth or will we live and act as if the truth belongs to us? Amen.