

Scripture Study

The Solemnity of Christ the King – Cycle C



Opening prayer

2 Samuel 5:1-3

(Ps 122:1-5)

Colossians 1:12-20

Luke 23:35-43

Overview of the Gospel:

- This Sunday is the Solemnity of Christ the King, a feast originally established by Pope Pius XI in 1926 to foster the awareness of Christ's dominion over all people and to establish peace among nations. It is also the final Sunday of the liturgical year, next Sunday marking the beginning of the penitential season of Advent.
- In this Sunday's Gospel, we have now come to the conclusion of Christ's journey to Jerusalem and his Passion. Jesus is crucified between two criminals. He is mocked by all, in fulfillment of Scripture (Psalm 22:1-19; Wisdom 2:12—3:10).
- The leaders of the Jews and the Gentile soldiers both have contributed to Jesus' Passion. All share responsibility—including us by our sins (Hebrews 6:6).
- As Jesus is being reviled by one of the criminals, the other comes to his defense (v 40-41). This same criminal had earlier taunted Jesus (Mark 15:32), but has had a conversion. As a result of his conversion, he recognizes Jesus as King, and asks to be remembered in his coming Kingdom. In response, Jesus promises him more than he asks for. He will do the same for us.

Questions:

- In the First Reading, the people remind King David of the promises that God made to him, "You shall shepherd my people, Israel and shall become commander of Israel" (verse 2). How has Jesus fulfilled that in the Church? In your life? How is Christ your king?
- In the Second Reading, what does it mean to you that God the Father has delivered you "from the power of darkness" and transferred you "to the kingdom of his beloved Son" (verse 13)?
- In the Gospel Reading, what attitudes and motives do you see in the crowd following Jesus' way of the cross? In the rulers? The criminals? The soldiers? The sign maker (verse 38; John 19:19-22)? In Jesus?
- How do you view Jesus' death on the cross? Necessary evil? Cruel and unusual punishment? Sacrifice for sin? Triumph over injustice? Why?
- When did the meaning of the death of Christ on the cross begin to make sense to you? How would you explain it to a non-Christian friend?
- Who in this reading do you identify with most? With least? Why?
- How do people today similarly reflect the profound misunderstanding expressed in verse 35?
- How do you acknowledge in your life that Christ is King?

Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 440, 541, 783, 786, 908, 1021

Closing Prayer

Remember to read and meditate on the daily Mass readings found in the bulletin!

On this earth everyone has his cross. But we must act in such away that we be not the bad, but the good thief. –St. Padre Pio

"This is the King of the Jews"

Scripture: Luke 23:35-43

And the people stood by, watching; but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him vinegar, and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews." One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Meditation: Do you recognize that the Lord Jesus has been given full authority and power to rule over the earth as well as heaven? Jesus was crucified for his claim to be the Messianic King who would rule not only over his people Israel but ultimately over all the nations as well. What is the significance or meaning of Jesus' kingship for us? Kingship today seems antiquated, especially in democratic societies where everyone is treated equal and free. God at first did not want to give his people Israel a king.



Why? Because God alone was their King and they needed no other. Nonetheless, God relented and promised his people that through David's line he would establish a kingship that would last for eternity (Psalm 89:29). The Jews understood that the Messiah would come as king to establish God's reign for them. They wanted a king who would free them from tyranny and from foreign domination. Many had high hopes that Jesus would be the Messianic king. Little did they understand what kind of kingship Jesus claimed to have. Jesus came to conquer hearts and souls for an imperishable kingdom, rather than to conquer perishable lands and entitlements.

When Satan tempted Jesus during his forty day fast in the wilderness, he offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world (Matthew 4:8-9). Jesus knew that the world was in Satan's power. And this was precisely why Jesus came – to overthrow Satan's power and ruler-ship over the earth. Jesus knew that the way to victory was through submission

to his Father's will and through the sacrificial offering of his life upon the cross for the sins of the world. As Jesus was dying on the cross, he was mocked for his claim to kingship. Nonetheless, he died not only as King of the Jews, but as King of the nations as well. His victory over the power of sin, Satan, and the world, was accomplished through his death on the cross and his resurrection. Jesus exchanged a throne of glory for a cross of shame to restore us from slavery to sin to glory with God as his adopted sons and daughters. In the Book of Revelations Jesus is called *King of kings and Lord and lords* (Rev. 19:16). Do you recognize Jesus Christ as your King and Lord?

The scriptures present us with the choice between two kingdoms – the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. The choice is ours. Which kingdom do you serve? God's kingdom remains forever because it is built on the foundation of God's eternal love and justice. To accept Jesus as Lord and King is to enter a kingdom that will last forever where righteousness, peace, truth, and love dwell. Is your life submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ?

"Lord Jesus Christ, you are my King and there is no other. Be the Lord and Master of my heart. May all that I do be pleasing to you and serve the best interests of my neighbor as well."

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