

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

34th Week of Ordinary Time- November 20, 2016 – Luke 23: 35-43

Another year has come to an end. I'm not referring to the calendar year or the fiscal year but the liturgical year. It ends this week with the celebration of Christ the King. The purpose of this day of celebration, on this 34th week of Ordinary time, is to proclaim and celebrate Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.

This year we have been hearing from the evangelist Luke who sees Jesus as the suffering servant who has come to redeem the world through his dying on the cross and his inclusive embrace of the most marginalized members of society. The gospel text for this week sounds more like a reading from Holy Week than something appropriate on the Sunday just four days prior to Thanksgiving.

“The rulers sneered at Jesus and said “He saved others, let him save himself if he is the chosen one, the Christ of God.” Even the soldiers jeered at him. As they approached to offer him wine they called out. “If you are King of the Jews, save yourself.” This reading is a specific reminder, to us, as we end this liturgical year, that Jesus is God. God has come to proclaim the Kingdom of Eternal Salvation. Jesus, the embodiment of Divine Love, now hangs on the cross, the ultimate instrument of death. The difference in this story is that death does not get the final say. Death is not the end.

As this story progresses, one of those crucified next to Jesus take up the same jeering as the rulers and the soldiers. **“Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us.”** The second one crucified with Jesus, takes a completely different approach. He recognizes who Jesus really is and proclaims to his comrade in crime, **“Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal. Then he said ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’ He replied to him, ‘Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.’”**

The truth revealed is that God has come to earth. God has taken on a human life and a human death, and yet, in spite of our sinfulness, forgives us. St. Luke wants us to recognize this ultimate truth. The Church calls us to celebrate this in a profound way today. Let us rejoice in this truth that our Lord Jesus Christ is the King of the Universe!! We get to do this all over again beginning next week.

Blessings!



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