

CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

Welcome Us into Your Kingdom

Written by Allison Gingras

2 Samuel 5:1-3

Colossians 1:12-20

Luke 23:35-43



Above him, there was an inscription that read, “This is the King of the Jews” (Luke 23:38). These words would spark the poignant exchange between Jesus and the two thieves. One is unwilling to consider a need for saving, mocking this innocent man suffering beside him. In contrast, the other receives the promise of paradise through a humble, contrite acknowledgment of his sins and the recognition and proclamation of Jesus as Messiah. “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom” (Luke 23:42). And Jesus demonstrates God’s great mercy as He promises the good thief, on that very day, entrance into the kingdom.

What is the kingdom Jesus will come into? The [Catechism of the Catholic Church \(2816\)](#) describes it this way,

*“In the New Testament, the word *basileia* can be translated by “kingship” (abstract noun), “kingdom” (concrete noun) or “reign” (action noun). The Kingdom of God lies ahead of us. It is brought near in the Word incarnate, it is proclaimed throughout the whole Gospel, and it has come in Christ’s death and Resurrection. The Kingdom of God has been coming since the Last Supper and, in the Eucharist, it is in our midst.”*

While we understand the kingdom of God to be heaven, this quote reminds us — in God’s mysterious ways, it also dwells among us — present in every Tabernacle of the world in the Eucharist. The totality of Jesus remains fully present among us in the guise of a little white host, having come into his kingdom through the salvific work upon the Cross.

While everyone's idea of heaven on earth is very different, none of us can begin to imagine the heaven that awaits us.

*"What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard,
and what has not entered the human heart,
what God has prepared for those who love him," (1 Corinthians 2:9).*

In my typical tendency to limit the majesty of Jesus, I've only hoped for a tiara and an all-you-can-eat buffet filled with gluten and dairy that I will finally be able to eat! My anxious mind cannot begin to comprehend the peace experienced in heaven. "This perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity — this communion of life and love with the Trinity, with the Virgin Mary, the angels and all the blessed — is called "heaven." Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness" ([CCC 1024](#)).

The Catechism teaches for whom the kingdom has been prepared, "Everyone is called to enter the kingdom. First announced to the children of Israel, this messianic kingdom is intended to accept men of all nations" ([CCC 543a](#)). Then instructs, "To enter it, one must first accept Jesus' word: The word of the Lord is compared to a seed which is sown in a field; those who hear it with faith and are numbered among the little flock of Christ have truly received the kingdom. Then, by its own power, the seed sprouts and grows until the harvest" (543b). My Lord, my God, and my King — forgive me my trespasses, and remember me as you reign in your Kingdom.

In a recent homily, my pastor shared the subtle evidence that Christ's nobility was revealed in how his body was prepared for burial after removal from the Cross.

"Nicodemus, the one who had first come to him at night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about one hundred pounds. 40 They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom." (John 19:39-40).

For a frame of reference, Father Matthew explained a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloe would be equivalent to twelve gallons of milk. Only a noble burial, he concluded, would warrant this quantity of anointing materials.

Prayer

Our Lord Jesus Christ,
King of the Universe,
we anoint you with our worship and praise;
come reign in our hearts.
Remember us,
show your mercy upon us,
and welcome us into your kingdom.

The Good Thief needed nothing more but a stirring of the heart to acknowledge Christ as King and receive the promise. Today, may we allow the Truth to penetrate our hardened hearts to make room for the kingdom here and the world to come.

— Allison Gingras