



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 23rd November 2025

Christ the King – Luke 23:35-43

Relax

Make the Sign of the Cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. Then read the Gospel — preferably aloud and slowly — paying attention to any words that stand out to you.



Read

This Sunday's Gospel : THE KING OF FORGIVENESS



The people stayed there before the cross watching Jesus. As for the leaders, they jeered at him. 'He saved others,' they said, 'let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One.' The soldiers mocked him too, and when they approached to offer him vinegar they said, 'If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.' Above him there was an inscription: 'This is the King of the Jews.' One of the criminals hanging there abused him. 'Are you not the Christ?' he said. 'Save yourself and us as well.' But the other spoke up and rebuked him. 'Have you no fear of God at all?' he said. 'You got the same sentence as he did, but in our case we deserved it: we are paying for what we did. But this man has done nothing wrong. Jesus,' he said, 'remember me when you come into your kingdom.' 'Indeed, I promise you,' he replied, 'today you will be with me in paradise.'

Did any words or phrases stand out to you in the Gospel? If so, take a few moments to meditate on them.

Reflect

Now read the Gospel again and consider what the Lord might be saying to you, or asking of you, through it. Then continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection...



The crucifixion scene in Luke, as in all the gospels, is the climax of the story of Jesus. Emphasis is placed on the role of Jesus as King. The soldiers mock him as such, but the Gospel's use of irony ensures that we understand that they are saying more than they realise. Jesus is also ridiculed as Saviour ('Save yourself and us as well!'): especially in Luke (from the Infancy Stories onwards) Jesus is presented as the true Saviour – who is God. In Luke the crucifixion scene is primarily a scene of forgiveness, where Jesus carries on to the very end his work of forgiveness, which Luke has underlined throughout his Gospel. The scene begins with the women of Jerusalem mourning for Jesus, and ends with all the spectators departing, beating their breasts, recognizing their universal guilt. Jesus spontaneously forgives his executioners, asking God's forgiveness for them before they even ask it for themselves. He welcomes into his kingdom of Paradise the bandit who spontaneously acknowledges his wrongdoing. Here we see the culmination of all those scenes throughout Luke's Gospel where values are reversed: the King presented as a wretched figure dying on the Cross, to whom homage is paid not by dignified courtiers, but by another wretched figure dying by his side.

What sort of person should a citizen of the kingdom of forgiveness be?

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

Rest

Now call to mind the Lord's love for you, remembering that through this scripture the Lord is truly present. Then silently and prayerfully listen for God's voice and rest in God's love.



Respond & Request

Thank God for any insight you may have received, and respond by asking the Holy Spirit to bless you with a spiritual gift or help you to grow in a particular fruit of the Spirit. You might pray for wisdom, courage, faithfulness, self-control, patience, generosity, joy, kindness, love, peace, faith, chastity - or another grace - to help you live out your faith this week.



Remember

This Wednesday's word for our families is **MERCY!**
(To see the Family Version, please visit: wednesdayword.org)



As you pray for your loved ones, please remember to pray for the Church and for the families connected to our schools.

St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church, pray for us. Mary, Star of Evangelisation, pray for us. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.



First Reading: *David Anointed King*



2 Samuel 5:1-3

All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron. 'Look', they said, 'we are your own flesh and blood. In days past when Saul was our king, it was you who led Israel in all their exploits; and the Lord said to you, "You are the man who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you shall be the leader of Israel."' So all the elders of Israel came to the king of Hebron, and King David made a pact with them at Hebron in the presence of the Lord, and they anointed David king of Israel.

David is a fascinating character. As a leader he had a charm and charisma which were irresistible. There is no doubt that he was ambitious. When the women sang, 'Saul has killed his thousands and David his tens of thousands,' it was music to his ears. The king's son fell in love with him and gave him his own prince's gear.

The king's daughter fell in love with him, and he accepted her as a good dynastic marriage; but he never had children by her, though he was not lacking in sexual drive (Bathsheba was to come later). He set up a protection racket in Judah and so, having won the loyalty of the tribal leaders there, they first anointed him king of Judah at Hebron, the southern tribal capital. Finally, after Saul's death, the elders of the northern tribes (known collectively as Israel) came to anoint him king as well, to reign over the whole country. Nevertheless, David also took the first steps to setting up the Temple cult, and was ever after remembered for that. It was to David that the promises of God's eternal monarchy were given which were to be fulfilled in Jesus. These promises echo down and down the scriptures; they were the basis of all Israel's hope.

What do you consider leadership-qualities before God?



Second Reading: *The Kingdom of Forgiveness*



Colossians 1:12-20

We give thanks to the Father who has made it possible for you to join the saints and with them to inherit the light. Because that is what he has done: he has taken us out of the power of darkness and created a place for us in the kingdom of the Son that he loves, and in him, we gain our freedom, the forgiveness of our sins. He is the image of the unseen God and the first-born of all creation, for in him were created all things in heaven and on earth: everything visible and everything invisible, Thrones, Dominations, Sovereignities, Powers - all things were created through him and for him. Before anything was created, he existed, and he holds all things in unity. Now the Church is his body, he is its head. As he is the Beginning, he was first to be born from the dead, so that he should be first in every way; because God wanted all perfection to be found in him and all things to be reconciled through him and for him, everything in heaven and everything on earth, when he made peace by his death on the cross.

Way back in July, on the fourteenth Ordinary Sunday of the Year, we heard all but the first part of this reading which celebrates the unrivalled position of Jesus as first-born not only in the order of creation, but also in the resurrection. In the order of creation, Christ is the image of the unseen God, the model or template on which God created the world, the Wisdom of God, so he is the first-born and yet himself uncreated. In the order of the resurrection also he is the first-born, bringing all things to perfection, and so he is the crown of creation. In today's reading, before we hear about Jesus as the first-born, we have a significant preface. Paul is writing, with a slight air of surprise, to the gentiles: the gentiles too are enabled to enter into the inheritance, to join Christ in the kingdom promised to David and fulfilled in Jesus. As this year's gospel readings have taught us again and again, it is not a kingdom that we can earn. What we need to do is to submit ourselves for forgiveness. Not all that easy, perhaps! Put it the other way round: what we need to do is stop pretending to others and ourselves that we are perfect.

What attitude in myself is the most frequent cause of my falling?

“Jesus is the Crown of Creation.”