

24. November 2019

“Solemnity of Christ the King”

Lk 23,35-43

The people stayed there watching. As for the leaders, they jeered at him with the words, 'He saved others, let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One.' The soldiers mocked him too, coming up to him, offering him vinegar, and saying, '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? 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. 'Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. 'He answered him, 'In truth I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.'

Before we enter the new church year, the Church celebrates the kingdom of Christ. Jesus kingdom is not of this world, as Jesus testifies before Pilate (*cf. Jn 18,36*). And indeed, the Lord rules His kingdom differently than we usually know from the mighty of this earth. “*The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them*” (*Mt 20,25*) lets us know Jesus and then guides his disciples on how authority is to be exercised in this kingdom. “*whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.*” ” (*Mt 20,26*)

Our king reigns down from the cross.

There God showed us how far His love goes, that he himself is the "greatest of love", who even gives his life for his enemies. In doing so, the Lord breaks all false claims to power, all abuses of power, for he has forever set an example - himself - and shown what true rule means. Whoever is one of the great in this kingdom of the Lord must be like the Lord, in whose life that love must shine up which has enabled the Lord to pray on the cross for his enemies (*cf. Lk 23,34*).

The kingdom of the Lord is therefore a kingdom of love and truth. The leading men of the Jewish people did not understand this. A king who does not show his power by external strength, who does nothing against to deal with him as they please, provokes their ridicule. This is all the more true for them when he claims to

be the Son of God, God's elect. He should prove it and save himself from this hopeless situation!

The soldiers, who are at the service of the external power of a ruler, did the same as they did. Faced with the Lord's external helplessness, they too were tempted to mock him and to humiliate him with it.

Even one of the criminals who was crucified with him felt superior to him and joined the chorus of mockers.

But the Lord was silent!

Only one of these raw men felt something of the mystery of the Lord's love on the cross. Even burdened with guilt, he was a consolation to the Lord, one who defended him, one who recognized that they were crucifying an innocent man, one who opened his heart to the Lord and believed in the Lord: *"Remember me when you come into your kingdom."*

How much we sinners identify ourselves with him, and how much comfort it is to us that the Lord said, *"Today you will be with me in paradise."*

Our Lord is a king who graciously forgives the sinners, who prays for his tormentors, he possesses a kingdom in which all men are invited. You can enter this kingdom through him who is the "greatest of love", God Himself.

The heart of Jesus is wide open! Jesus is the door to this kingdom. We human beings only need to accept His love and follow Him into His kingdom. He offers himself to all peoples. On the cross he paid for all sins, Jesus our true King!

I will now conclude this meditation and hurry to the cross here in Jerusalem, thanking the Lord for not descending from the Cross and for redeeming us human beings. I take with me all those who listen to me in the speeches and bring Him the thanks and adoration of all of us! And I will take with me those who do not know Him, even mock Him!

And we have not to forget: The best is yet to come when we will be with him in his Kingdom for eternity.