



parish

newsletter

20 November 2022 | Christ the King (C)

Today you will be with me in Paradise

It's not unreasonable to think that if God wanted to make a statement he could do so in a very dramatic way. After all, he spoke through a burning bush that didn't actually burn, parted the Red Sea, sent manna to the Israelites from the sky, cured lepers, healed the sick and cast out demons. All of that is pretty dramatic stuff, and they made statements! Now, Jesus hangs dying on a cross. He has been referred to as a king. Considering all of the miracles Jesus did in his short time on earth, isn't one more in order? If Jesus came down off the cross, defied death, and parted the waters of suffering and death, onlookers, believers and unbelievers alike, would take notice. It would prove who God is and show us what God wants us to do. Or would it?

Great spiritual masters remind us not to focus on miracles or consolations received from God. They can distract us. Doing anything other than what Jesus did would distract humanity as well, misplacing our focus. It's not about a miracle, at least not the dramatic kind people are eager to see. It's about something more profound. It all

goes back to where it began for the earthly Jesus. God becomes one with humanity in Jesus Christ. All that goes into being human is holy and blessed, and that becomes a place where God is born, again and again. God, through Jesus, tells us to hold firm to all of the experiences of being human, the joys and the wonders, the disappointments and the failures.

God's lesson is found in Jesus' vulnerability. It is only when we are vulnerable that we learn how to love. When Jesus breathed his last, God's unconditional and tender love was realised. Jesus always had a soft spot for the weak, lost, vulnerable, and broken. God wants us to come to Him freely, not because we have witnessed some fantastic display of prowess. God desires that we find Him through who we are, as our hearts and souls direct. This will mean that our love is authentic as it will be born of the heartache, pain, and turmoil that are a part of life. The fragments of our lives need to be made whole. Our fragmented king, Jesus Christ, is the only one who can help put the pieces together.



OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,
KING OF THE UNIVERSE

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." - Lk 23:42-43

Illustration from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CEB

CEB

Three hang on crosses, suffering and dying. One reviles, one begs for salvation, One promises Paradise. Indeed, only One can promise Paradise. Who but "the Christ of God" could make such a promise? Who but a divine King could reach beyond his own suffering and dying to bestow Life on another? Who but One totally innocent of evil could draw goodness out of one who is "condemned justly"? Three hang on crosses. One remains condemned. One is redeemed.

One will rise from the dead, King of the universe.

Although Jesus' kingdom is established from the very beginning of creation (see second reading) and through the Davidic kingship (see the first reading), his reign is not one of power but of mercy, not one of self-service but of self-giving, not one of material wealth but of eternal salvation. His throne is a cross. Such a King the world has never seen. Through his suffering and death this King brings Life to all who are open to receive it. This King offers Paradise to all those who come to him, accept his reign, and remain faithful to the will of his Father. This King remembers each of us and bids us to come into his kingdom, into the eternal Life he won for us.

The cross is where we least expect a king to be. Yet this is where we find Jesus. The cross is where we ourselves least want to be. Yet this is how God's kingdom is established and where our discipleship begins: allowing

ourselves to be crucified on the cross of self-giving. Jesus demonstrates his kingship not by saving himself but by saving others. Not by turning in on himself but by turning out toward others. Jesus demonstrates his kingship not by power but by loving reassurance that Paradise awaits faithful disciples. Only by beginning here, on the cross, can our discipleship be like the Good Thief's, hearing Jesus say to us, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

The Good Thief said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." This solemnity celebrates Christ as King. His kingdom has come. We are living in God's kingdom now. We are called, however, not to simply pay homage to our exalted King, but to do as he did. This means that each day we must live in a self-giving way because only through goodness expressed in reaching out to others is God's reign at hand. Living the paschal mystery means living the daily dying the cross demands. Just as the cross was the means to Jesus' exaltation, so is the cross our only way into Paradise. When self-giving seems to swallow us up and we are tempted to choose a self-serving attitude, all we need to do is remember that the cross is the door to Paradise. The only way—the cross—is the way out of this life, crossing into eternal Life.

Everyday Stewardship

Discipleship and victory:

For months now we have been traveling with Jesus through the proclamation of Luke's gospel. This festival of Christ the King is the last Sunday and culmination of the whole liturgical year. Next Sunday we begin Advent and thus begin again yet another paschal mystery journey through a liturgical year. This annual celebration reminds us that the difficulties of discipleship are always rewar-

ded by the joy of victory. The cross leads to risen life. As we embrace the cross in our own journey of discipleship each day, we are spurred on to faithfulness by remembering that it all culminates in this victory.

Each year we begin and end the same journey. What keeps this cyclic pattern of our liturgical celebrations from becoming tedious? The answer lies in our taking the time to recognise our own growth in discipleship and

our personal relationship with Jesus our King during this past year. Since judgment is one of the themes of the end times, it might be good to take some time this week to judge our own growth and preparedness to enter Paradise with Jesus. Without such self-reflection we run the risk of every liturgical year simply being like all others for us. Endings and beginnings always give us an opportunity to assess growth and recommit ourselves to faithful discipleship. True, the cross is not something we would naturally choose for ourselves. But the end of this liturgical year and the beginning of the new one when we encounter our victorious Christ is exactly what we need in order to be faithful to the disciple's life of self-giving for the good of others.

Living the Paschal Mystery

Illness tends to make people grumpy. When we don't feel good, we naturally turn inward upon ourselves. We want this to be over. We want to feel good again and get on with the tasks and challenges at hand. Prolonged illness keeps some people grumpy all the time, while a surprising number of other people seem

to be able to rise above their pain and distress and, sometimes even because of it, reach out to others. Jesus, in this Sunday's gospel, is hanging on a cross. He is in much pain and distress. He's being "sneered at." He's being "jeered." He's being "reviled." Was Jesus grumpy and turned inward upon himself? No!

Live the Liturgy

Our king hangs on a cross. Onlookers saw this as the final defeat of a fool who many saw as an insurrectionist. They laughed at him and challenged his kingship by looking for proof: Save yourself! Historically, earthly kings are influential figures wielding significant power over the quality of their subjects' lives. Where is Jesus' power? Slowly fading away, he's a failure in many eyes. Brokenness and vulnerability are often seen as failures. Something went wrong and exposed us, revealing our fragile and some-

times incorrect selves to others. Yet, what appears at first to be shameful is really a golden key to life. It is only when vulnerable that we learn how to love genuinely. Marking what seems the end of a failed mission, Jesus Christ our King hangs before us as the vulnerable, wounded key to God's infinite love and life. The kingdoms of this world pass away. Jesus hangs as our king of a world that never ends. When we are vulnerable and broken in death, we fall into the fullness of Christ and are made one



with him. This is more than any earthly king can promise

and is the salvation we seek.





First Reading: The elders of Israel came to David in Hebron, King David made an agreement with them there before the LORD, and they anointed him king of Israel. (2 Sm 5:3)	Psalm: I rejoiced when I heard them say: 'Let us go to God's house.' (Ps 121)	Second Reading: He delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have the forgiveness of sins. (Col 1:13-14)	Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessings on the coming kingdom of our father David! Alleluia!	Gospel: "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Lk 23:42-43)
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20	CHRIST THE KING (C)	8.00 Morning Prayer Mercy Chapel 9.00 MASS Convent Deceased members of the Crawley Family 10.30 MASS St Mary's Caroline & Bernard Purdy (RIP) 5.00 MASS St Mary's Fred Gardiner (RIP)
21	Monday The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary	8.00 Morning Prayer Mercy Chapel 9.00 Arise Mercy Chapel 12.05 MASS St Mary's Billy Close (RIP) 12.45 Chaplet of Divine Mercy St Mary's 17.15 Evening Prayer Mercy Chapel 6.30 Catholicism St Mary's Catholic Centre
22	Tuesday Saint Cecilia, Virgin, Martyr	8.00 Morning Prayer Mercy Chapel 12.05 MASS St Mary's Dec'd of Gibson & Middleton Families 1.00 Over 60s St Mary's Catholic Centre 4.30 Chaplaincy Tuesdays Upper Room
23	Wednesday Saint Clement I, Pope, Martyr or Saint Columbanus, Abbot and Missionary	8.00 Morning Prayer Mercy Chapel 12.05 MASS St Mary's Gilbert & Dinah Burns (RIP) 5.15 Evening Prayer Mercy Chapel 6.30 RCIA Upper Room
24	Thursday Saints Andrew Dũng-Lạc and his Companions, Martyrs	8.00 Morning Prayer Mercy Chapel 10.00 Open House St Mary's Catholic Centre 10.15 Confessions St Cecilia's 10.30 MASS St Cecilia's Holy Souls 12.05 MASS St Mary's Stella Chaytor (RIP) 5.00 Restore Mercy Chapel 6.30 REQUIEM MASS St Cecilia's For deceased parishioners
25	Friday Saint Catherine of Alexandria, Virgin, Martyr	8.00 Morning Prayer Mercy Chapel 12.05 MASS St Mary's In Thanksgiving (St Jude) 12.45 Holy Rosary St Mary's 5.15 Evening Prayer Mercy Chapel
26	Saturday Saint Leonard of Porto Maurizio, Religious	8.00 Morning Prayer Mercy Chapel 10.30 Confessions St Mary's 11.00 MASS St Mary's Constantino & Filomena Balnig (RIP) 11.45 Confessions St Mary's 6.00 VIGIL MASS St Cecilia's Colin Stones (RIP)
27	FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A)	8.00 Morning Prayer Mercy Chapel 9.00 MASS Convent Ints of Sr Mary Assumpta 10.30 MASS St Mary's Charlie & Jimmy Dickinson (RIP) 5.00 MASS St Mary's People of the Parish 6.30 Parish Pastoral Council Upper Room



Bernadette, Jean Maureen, Christopher, Paula, Peter, Emilia, Jean, Teresa, Cath, the sick sisters at Oaklea, David, Marion, Dave, Neil, Paul, Andrew, Jacob, Stella, David, Alisa, Susan, Mary, Jack, Richard, Margaret, Moira, Gerry, Nick, Maureen, Stella, Rose, Keith, Kelly and Tracy
Let us know if you would like a name added to the list.



Dominic English, Miriam Rogers, Florence Isabella Davis, Alan & Maureen

Announcements

Bank Details & Offerings
Our bank details are:
Name: DHN Sunderland Our Lady of Mercy
Sort Code: 40-34-18
Acc No: 84456955

November Lists for the Dead
Envelopes are available at for offerings and lists for the dead. Please put them in the basket in front of the altar.

Christmas Stars
In addition to the usual lists for the dead, please pick up a star from the back of the church and write the names of your deceased loved ones on it. Put them in the basket in front of the altar and we'll

Catholicism
Bishop Robert Barron's acclaimed series on the Catholic faith is on Monday at 6.30pm in St Mary's Hall. Filmed all over the world, the series looks at beauty of our faith.

Mass for the Deceased of the Parish
This year's Mass for the deceased of the parish where we pray for those who have died this past year will be at 6.30pm on Thursday, 24 November at St Cecilia's Church.

Identity Fraud
It seems as though someone is pretending to be Fr Christopher! Please don't accept any invitations to befriend me on Facebook—it isn't me and I haven't used Facebook for years!
It also seems someone is sending emails pretending to be from me as well. If an email looks suspicious it probably is, please delete it. If you have any doubt, please call the parish office and verify it.
It doesn't look like I've hacked and the person is just spoofing my identity. This is a good reminder nonetheless for all of us to check our security settings! The children of this world are canny indeed!

Questions for the Week

First Reading: The Israelites recognised that David was anointed by the Lord to shepherd and rule over them as their King. What do you think it takes to be a really good leader?

Second Reading: Paul teaches that through the death and resurrection of Christ, God has redeemed and reconciled

Why do we do that?



Question: The Assumption isn't in the Bible. What proof do we have that it really happened?

Answer: Since the beginning of the Church, Christians have venerated the relics of the saints. We can see this in the catacombs of Rome, in the crypts of churches, and in the reliquaries that contain tiny fragments of bone. Throughout Church history, there have been no relics of Mary nor any legitimate claims to her bones. Even the tomb of Mary, visited as a site of pilgrimage, stood empty. At the

all of us and creation, and "transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son." How should we celebrate this incredible gift from God?

Gospel: While the rulers and soldiers mocked Jesus as

"King of the Jews", Jesus offered words of comfort to the repentant criminal crucified beside him. What words of comfort do you need to hear today from our Lord Jesus Christ?

Council of Chalcedon in 451, the Roman emperor asked the bishop of Jerusalem to bring Mary's relics to the council. The bishop reported that there were no relics of Mary. Upon finding her empty tomb, the Apostles had concluded that her body was taken up into heaven. Soon afterward, the Church began celebrating this miraculous event.
The Assumption is an art-

Saint of the Week

Saint Cecilia's story, like many of the earliest saints, is largely apocryphal and legendary in nature. According to tradition, Cecilia was born to a wealthy and prominent Roman family. Though she had consecrated her virginity to the Lord, she was married to a man named Valerian. It is said that she was "singing in her heart to the Lord" at her wedding. She confessed her promise of virginity to her new husband revealing that an angel protected her. Valerian would honour her vow only if he too could see the angel. Cecilia told him he would see the angel if he was baptised, which he went to do immediately. When he returned to her, he saw the angel beside her. Cecilia also converted Valerian's brother, Tiburtius.

Unfortunately, it was a turbulent time in Rome for Christians. Valerian and Tiburtius were martyred for burying the bodies of Christians, which was illegal. Cecilia was also targeted for her faith. First authorities attempted to suffocate by locking her in the bath in her home and overheating the room. Some

accounts say that she didn't break a sweat and even began to sing. They then sent in an executioner to behead her, but he faltered and was unable to complete his task, only succeeding in mortally wounding her. She remained alive for three days before she died.

The saint's body was exhumed twice, first by Pope Paschal I in 821, then by Cardinal Sfondrato in 1599. Both times her body was found incorrupt, the first saint to exhibit this extremity. St. Cecilia is the patron saint of music and musicians.



Stewardship

Income	October 22	September 22
Collections	6,371.48	7,264.95
Rent of Premises	380.00	680.00
Candles	778.52	887.85
Piety/CTS	348.18	214.30
Fundraising/Donations	92.80	473.27
Total	7,970.98	9,520.37
Expenditure		
Heating & Lighting	741.69	572.98
Repairs & Renewals	365.87	499.99
Wages	3246.30	0.00
Water rates	647.76	0.00
Council Tax	256.00	256.00
General Admin*	10,035.69	1,760.88
Total	15,293.31	3,089.76

* October's General Admin includes property insurance: St. M = £5,512.70 & St. C = £2,976.31

Thank-you so much for your generosity.

Flock Notes

Considering he's Christ the King, today's gospel doesn't seem to show Jesus at his most majestic. Bleeding, dying, nailed to a cross: these aren't the sorts of things we normally associate with kingship and majesty. Perhaps that's why most of the people who witnessed the crucifixion didn't realise either.

They probably thought that the notice Pilate had put on the cross—The King of the Jews—was meant as a mockery, whereas it was completely accurate. As in so many other aspects of his life, Jesus refuses to adapt himself to our notion of kingship.

Kings normally sit on thrones, he is nailed to a cross. Kings normally have servants doing everything for them, he gets on his hands and knees to wash his disciples' feet. Kings normally receive tax and tribute from their people, he gives his very body and blood for our food and our salvation.

Christ wants to be our King and he wants to rule in our lives, not with force and coercion, but with peace and love. Therefore, it is up to us to decide if we want to accept him.



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