

ENGLISH

Christ the King C

34th and Last Sunday of the Year C

Today you will be with me in paradise.. (Lk 23:43)

First Reading

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 at Hebron, and King David made a pact with them at Hebron in the presence of the Lord, and they anointed David King of Israel.

Second Reading

Colossians 1:11-20

You will have in you the strength, based on his own glorious power, never to give in, but to bear anything joyfully, thanking 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.

Gospel

Luke 23:35-43

The people stayed there 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."

Meditation

"This is the King of the Jews". In Luke this is a simple inscription, in Mark and Matthew a cause for condemnation, in John an affirmation disputed by the chief priests. What a contrast there is between the inscription and the spectacle of the helpless crucified, between the salvation which some expected from him and the reality of the condemned man incapable of saving himself!

For Luke, Jesus on the cross, enduring mockeries and insults, is the type of the persecuted just one, martyred by the impious who hurl their defiance at him: "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself." Highlighting the reactions of the two criminals who surround Jesus, Luke shows two possible attitudes toward the Messiah. One man condemns himself by blaspheming this laughable king, the other turns to him through whom "we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins" (Col 1:14). Jesus who, since his temptation in the desert, has refused any demonstration of power for his own advantage, claims that he can save the one who trusts in him, "this day you will be with me in paradise." "This day" is the time of the kingdom already present in the person of Jesus. Here, at the foot of the cross, the lordship of Christ takes root.