



The Holy Scriptures  
are our letters  
from home

# 34<sup>th</sup> Sunday Ord. Time, Yr C

## Feast of Christ the King

### Lectio Divina

**Lectio:** Jesus is about to complete his journey with his disciples. He has been taken out of the walls of the city of Jerusalem to Golgotha to die on the Cross. Though he has clearly taught the Good News that salvation is a free and total gift of God's love for everyone without exception. This gift that must be humbly accepted; and it is a gift too good to be missed. The religious authorities out of jealousy have duped the people into calling for Jesus' crucifixion. As he was nailed to the cross he prayed: 'Father forgive them, they do not know what they are doing.' (Lk 23:34a). So few people had come to accept his transformative Good News?!<sup>1</sup>

► So, in our text, Jesus is in the agony of crucifixion on the Cross. The people watched on probably confused at what they had let the religious authorities do to this good and inspiring man, Jesus. They were acquiescent and complicit in the tragedy happening before them! Could Jesus turn this evil to good?

The authorities, both religious and military, were making fun of Jesus to try to justify what they were doing. They were blinded by jealousy or by blind application of the law. But their jeers and mocking betray their complete ignorance of Jesus' Good News. Jesus can't shortcut the Cross; love is freely given and total. Jesus is not a magician; he must humbly accept his Cross, he can't miss this opportunity to show the transforming power of love.

One of the criminals, crucified beside Jesus, also abused Jesus. He too was just thinking of himself; he wasn't trusting in God's love that alone could save him.<sup>2</sup> The other criminal stood up for Jesus; he accepted his just punishment but knew God would act through Jesus. And Jesus promises to act on his behalf, promising paradise.

Jesus is victor over evil and king of the universe by his death on the Cross which is the expression, in its fullness, of the Good News. The moment before Jesus dies on the Cross, he commits himself into God his father's hands, Lk 23:46; this is his humble acceptance of the Cross that opens the way to salvation for every person. Jesus' love, that unites him to the Father and the Holy Spirit, turns an evil tragedy into the gifting of Salvation.

**Read: Luke 23: 35 – 43**

**Meditatio:** Has my journey with Jesus, in Luke's Gospel through the last twelve months, renewed my appreciation of the Good News and the gift of Salvation? Do I realize that my sinning adds to Jesus' sufferings on the Cross? How can I be so blind to hurting the one I love? Have I ever let others mislead me to be complicit in wrongdoing? For me is Jesus' tragic death on the Cross a victory or a failure? Am I ready to face the crosses of my life? Can I see that love wins through in suffering? Do I avoid suffering and/or self-giving? Is Jesus, the Suffering Servant, my King and my Lord? How do I react to ridicule or mockery? Am I sorry for what I have done wrong, or, do I want to find a way to 'get away with it'? Am I open to forgive those who have sinned against me? Do I look to Jesus as the only person that can save me; that I can't save myself? In the midst of my times of pain and suffering, do I still trust in God's love and care for me? How strong is my hope for paradise and eternal life? Do I long to be in the presence and glory of the King of the Universe?

**Oratio:** Pray for those who mock or jeer at Jesus or his Church in these days. Pray for those who suffer for their belief in Jesus. Pray that the Lord may be our King. Pray in thanks for God's love so evident in the Lord's Passion. Pray for criminals who have no 'fear of God'. Pray that the Lord's kingdom, of peace and love, may come in all its fullness. Pray that our lives may reflect God's love as we live the Good News. Pray that all may one day be with the Lord our King in Paradise.

**Contemplatio** – Dwell in stillness, simply aware of the boundless expanse of mercy that surrounds you.

**After your prayer** – Live by the Good News.<sup>3</sup>

✍ Fr Joe

## Luke 23: 35 – 43

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.'

### Notes:

**1** The first person to publically accept that God was working through Jesus was the centurion overseeing Jesus' crucifixion, Lk 23:47.

**2** Also, he couldn't understand that Jesus came, sent as the personalization (i.e. incarnation) of God's love, precisely to save sinners; he was one of the worst of sinners. The religious authorities were convincing the people of the misconception that God does not associate with sinners but with people who do lots of good deeds. Also the misconception that you had to pay your way into eternal life through a preponderance of good deeds; his good deeds were overwhelmed by his criminal, bad deeds. Yet the reality of the Good News is that God seeks out sinners to reconcile them to himself through the forgiveness Jesus would win for all on the Cross

**3** You might also: pray and repeat the prayer of the criminal crucified with Jesus: "*Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.*"