

LECTIO DIVINA OF CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY 2020

OPENING PRAYER: Lord our Heavenly Father, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We give you thanks and praise you for your blessings in our life. Thank you for a roof over our head, clothes on our back and food to eat and the means to pay our bills. Thank you for your holy presence in our life, filling us with your grace and wisdom through bible study and Lectio Divina day by day. Continue to guide us in this trying time so that we stay closer to you and each other by being faithful, prayerful, purposeful and grateful in our thoughts, words and gestures. Let us be joyful in worshipping you and honoring you by praying the Psalm 47, a royal psalm, recognizing your kingship.

All you peoples, clap your hands; shout to God with joyful cries. For the Lord, the Most High, is to be feared, the great king over all the earth, Who made people subject to us, nations under our feet, Who chose our heritage for us, the glory of Jacob, whom he loves. God has gone up with a shout; the Lord, amid trumpet blasts. Sing praise to God, sing praise; sing praise to our king, sing praise. For God is king over all the earth; sing hymns of praise. God rules over the nations; God sits upon his holy throne. The princes of the peoples assemble with the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God, highly exalted.

First reading: A Reading from the book of Prophet Ezekiel Isaiah 34:11-12, 15-17

Thus says the Lord God: I myself will look after and tend my sheep. As a shepherd tends his flock when he finds himself among his scattered sheep, so will I tend my sheep. I will rescue them from every place where they were scattered when it was cloudy and dark. I myself will pasture my sheep; I myself will give them rest, says the Lord GOD. The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy, shepherding them rightly. As for you, my sheep, says the Lord GOD, I will judge between one sheep and another, between rams and goats. **(The word of the Lord/ Thanks be to God).**

Explanation: God promises to take over as shepherd of his scattered flock. He takes care of us as his flock. He strengthens the weak and sick, searches the lost. He rules lovingly and gently. He gathers and protects the sheep, giving the best to the sheep. When leaders fail us, we must not despair but remember that God is in control and that he promises to return and care for his flock. Thus we know that we can turn to God for help. He is still in control and can transform any situation to produce good for his kingdom.

Responsorial Psalm 23 *The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.*

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. In verdant pastures he gives me repose.

R. *The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.*

Beside restful waters he leads me; he refreshes my soul. He guides me in right paths for his name's sake. **R. *The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.***

You spread the table before me in the sight of my foes; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. **R. *The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.***

Only goodness and kindness follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for years to come. **R. *The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want***

Explanation: Psalm 23 has been called the “Pearl of the Psalms”. It probably is one of the most quoted Scripture in the Bible, written by David who describes the Lord as a Shepherd because he had spent his early years caring for sheep (1 Sam 16:10-11). Sheep are completely dependent upon the shepherd for provision, guidance and protection. As sheep, we are invited to depend upon our shepherd in order to dwell in his house for ever.

Second Reading: A Reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to Corinthians 15:20-26,28

Brothers and sisters: Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through man, the resurrection of the dead came also through man. For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life, but each one in proper order: Christ the firstfruits; then, at his coming, those who belong to Christ; then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to his God and Father, when he has destroyed every sovereignty and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. When everything is subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all. **(The Word of the Lord/ Thanks be to God).**

Explanation: Firstfruits were the first part of the harvest that faithful Jews brought to the temple as an offering (Leviticus 23:10). Jesus is the first fruit who rose from the dead, defeating sin and death on the cross and in the final days, he will defeat Satan and all evil. World events may seem out of control and justice may seem scarce. But God is in control, defeating evil by sending Jesus to earth again. He is the forerunner for us, the proof of our eventual resurrection to eternal life.

Gospel Reading : A Reading from the Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus said to his disciples: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least brothers of mine, you did for me.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.' Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?' He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.' And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." **(The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ/ Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ)**

MEDITATION The feast of Christ the King was instituted by **Pope Pius XI in 1925** with the proclamation: "***Pax Christi in regno Christi***". It means "**the Peace of Christ in the Reign of Christ**". It was established to reassert the 'sovereignty of Christ and the Church' over all forms of government and to remind us of our fidelity and loyalty to Christ as our king.

What is the Biblical basis of the feast? The title "**Christ the King**" has its roots both in Scripture and in the whole theology of the Kingdom of God. The various messianic prophecies in the books of Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel point out the kingship of Christ. We read in Is 9:6-7 "***A child has been born for us, a son given to us. Authority rests upon his shoulders and he is named wonderful counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. He will rule with justice and righteousness***".

In the New Testament we have very clear proofs for his kingship. 1) In the Annunciation (Lk 13:2-33), we read: "**The Lord God will make him a King like David and He will be the King of the descendants of Jacob forever and His Kingdom will never end.**" In fact, the Kingdom of God is the center of Jesus' teaching and the phrase "the kingdom of God" occurs 122 times in the Gospels and of which 90 instances are used by Jesus.

2) The Magi from the Far East came to Jerusalem and asked the question: (Mt. 2:2) "**Where is the baby born to be the king of the Jews?**" And they offered **Gold**, Frankincense and Myrrh. There is a symbolic meaning behind presenting Gold. In the ancient world, Gold was a gift for the kings. So they saw baby Jesus as their king.

3) During the royal reception given to Jesus in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the Jews shouted: (Lk.19:38) "**Blessed is the king, who comes in the name of the Lord.**" He went to Jerusalem to be enthroned as their king. He was riding on the donkey. The kings in the biblical times used horse when they went for war while Jesus used Donkey. There is a symbolic meaning behind donkey. Donkey is the symbol of peace. So Jesus came as **the king of peace**.

4) During the trial of Jesus, Pilate asked the question: (Jn.18: 33): "**Are you the king of the Jews?**". When Pilate scourged Jesus and brought him with a crown of thorns on his head, the crowds said to him, "**Hail, the king of Jesus**". During the time of interrogation, Pilate made Jesus *sit on the Judge's bench* in the place called stone pavement. This is a symbolic presentation of Jesus as the king to judge the people who came to judge him. Further Pilate said to the crowds, "**Behold, your king**" (Jn 19:14), **Shall I crucify your king?** (Jn 19:15). He placed the signboard hanging over Jesus' head on the cross: INRI Latin: "**Iēsus Nazarēnus, Rēx Iūdaeōrum**" Which means "**Jesus the Nazarene, king of the Jews.**"

5) In today's gospel, we read that **Christ the King will come in glory** to judge us on the day of the Last Judgment and that is what we profess in the creed "**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end**". All these Biblical verses are a very clear proof of Jesus' kingship in the NT.

WHAT IS OUR LORD'S MESSAGE FOR US THIS WEEK AS WE CONCLUDE THE LITURGICAL YEAR 2020 THIS SUNDAY?

Was Jesus truly a king? Yes. What type of king he was? What was his kingdom like? He was not a king of the world because the kings of this world possess power, wealth, force and border as their properties. Jesus had nothing of this sort. Life for everyone, Love for the enemies, Preferential

option for the Poor, downtrodden and marginalized, Actions based on Truth, Righteousness, Justice and above all Peace were his Kingdom principles. Hence when we pray in Lord's prayer, "Thy kingdom come and thy will be done", it is a daily reminder that our Lord's ways become our ways and his thoughts become our thoughts and his demands become our demands in our daily life and this is how his Kingdom will blossom and his Will will be one

Why Jesus is called the Lord of lords and King of kings? Different Kings in different times and places appear now and then and they are forgotten once their life is over whereas Jesus is ruling in thousands of human hearts all over the world for more than 2000 years and that is the reason he is called the Lord of the lords and the king of the kings. He is all in all. In the end, all the rulers will be conquered and he alone will reign supreme as king of kings and Lord of Lords. There is no higher authority than him and that is why the book of Revelation in 19:16 calls him "*King of kings and Lord of lords*"

Prayer for peace and prayer for local and global leadership is the need of our times. Jesus was a prince of Peace. We need peace more than ever before. We are living in very difficult times. Religious fundamentalism, extremism, terrorism, violence, communalism, moral relativism, the rise of individualism, breaking down of families, individual and institutionalized crimes, poverty, inequality, immigration issues, racial discriminations are becoming the norms of the day irrespective of any society and as a result we become a peaceless people and society. Although all of us share a bit of this mess, we cannot easily rule out the key role of governments and leaders because they are the law makers. St. Paul invites us to make supplications, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings for our kings and rulers so that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all devotion and dignity. (1 Tim 2:2). This week specially let us make a very special prayer for our leaders that they exercise their responsibilities like Jesus with service mindedness, humility, selflessness and sacrifice in order to create a peaceful society. May Christ, the king of the universe, rule us, our families, our society, our religious and civil authorities that we all work for His kingdom on earth by bearing witness to Christ and his Gospel Values: Love and Peace.

CONCLUDING PRAYER: Lord Jesus, You are the King of Glory, You are the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings. We pray for your Kingdom of justice, peace, mercy, love and righteousness to reign forever in our hearts and in our world. Honestly, We often have our own plans and agendas and we want to be rulers of our world. Forgive us for those times. Help us to know how to live as your Kingdom People in these times. There are a lot of Kings in this world who terrorize, over tax, humiliate, over exploit, and abuse those they are to lead. Help us to spread the good news of the different kind of King you are. Lord, we thank you for being a different kind of King. Thank you for your goodness and kindness in our lives. Thank you for your generosity. Thank you for loving us. Thank you for including us in your Kingdom.