

THE REIGN OF GOD & A VISION OF WORKING TOGETHER
SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE, 24th November 2019

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE

As Christians, we pray regularly in the *"Our Father"* the petition, *"Your kingdom come"* or *"Thy kingdom come"*
We pray for the reign of Jesus to come.

From the Bible we learn about the reign or kingdom of Jesus.
We learn about our mission in life and why God has called us.
We learn why it is Good News.

Today is the last Sunday of the Church Year.
Next Saturday evening we begin the *Season of Advent*,
preparing over four weeks for Christmas.

This Sunday is named the Solemnity of *"Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe"*.
Some will remember it as *"Christ the King"*.

Pope Pius XI instituted this celebration in 1925, in a world still recovering
from so many deaths and massive destruction in the First World War of 1914-18,
from the deaths caused by the Spanish Influenza, and concerns about developing trends.

With that background of pain and suffering and concerns,
we can understand why today's gospel reading is appropriate.
We do not see Jesus as the type of monarch or ruler wearing the most expensive clothes,
riding a gold and silver chariot or living lavishly with several castles or mansions.

Today we read from Luke's account of Jesus on the cross, to help us understand the mission of
Jesus to a broken world, a world in need of healing and salvation.

WOUNDER HEALER

When Jesus was crucified to the cross, Luke's Gospel tells
us that there were two other people on crosses near
him. One was unrepentant for his crime.
The other was repentant and proclaimed the innocence
of Jesus.

Jesus welcomed the repentant criminal to journey with
him into Paradise, the same day.
He would be with Jesus eternally.

Even though in great suffering himself, Jesus ministered
to the repentant criminal.

Though wounded himself, Jesus healed the repentant
criminal of his inner torments.



Jesus (centre) brings Dismas (left) into Paradise – Russian icon

We have already seen earlier in Luke's Gospel that healing accompanies the proclaiming of God's Kingdom.

The mission of Jesus continues on the cross, accompanying the repentant thief, on the journey to Paradise.

Our world is wounded and in need of healing.

We are called to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God by being witnesses to the love and grace of God in our own lives and through the Holy Spirit, to make a difference.



Jesus Unrolls the Book in the Synagogue - Tissot

We have already heard this year from Luke's Gospel about the mission of Jesus in Chapter 4, as Jesus read from the scroll –

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring the good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.”

Proclaiming the Kingdom of God is hands on.
Making a difference now.

How is the holy spirit upon us?

LOVE

To inherit eternal life, Jesus in Luke 10:27-28 affirmed the response of the person who stated,

***“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
and with all your soul, and with all your strength,
and with all your mind,
and your neighbour as yourself.”***

How does our vision and our mission, open our hearts, souls, strength and minds to love god so fully?

Jesus gave depth to these two commands by highlighting the meaning of love of neighbour, in the *parable of the Good Samaritan*.

It is a love that affirms the dignity of people,
a love that breaks down the barriers of discrimination,
a love that heals and comforts, and a love that is practical and hands on.

Even on the cross, Jesus responds lovingly to the repentant thief.

St Paul in his Letter to the Romans 14:17 said,

*“For the kingdom of God is not food or drink
but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”.*

In the Holy Spirit we can reach out to others and work together with integrity,
for a more just, peaceful and joyful world.

For example, inspired by the Holy Spirit, we can reach out to our sisters and brothers in other
religions, and work together for a more just, peaceful and joyful world.

A BROAD VISION WITH RELIGIONS WORKING TOGETHER

Last Friday while visiting Thailand, Pope Francis invited the Religious Leaders of Asia **into a broad vision.**

[Pope Francis address to the Leaders of Christian Denomination & other Religions](#)

Some of the insights that spoke to me about his vision are included below as a patchwork of quotes.

- *‘mutual respect, esteem and cooperation between religions’*
- a boldness *‘in devising new ways of shaping the history of our time without denigrating or insulting anyone’*,
- facing *‘the complex challenges such as economic and financial globalization and its grave consequences’, ‘rapid advances in technology’, ‘the tragic persistence of civil conflicts’, ‘movements of migration, refugees, famine or outright war’, and ‘the degradation and destruction of our common home’.*
- *‘envision the logic of encounter and mutual dialogue as the path’, ‘common cooperation as the code of conduct’, ‘and reciprocal knowledge as a method and standard’.*
- *‘provide a new paradigm for resolving conflicts and help foster greater understanding and the protection of creation’.*
- *‘religions, like universities’ would work together, ‘each with their own specific character and special gifts’, to move towards ‘guaranteeing younger generations their right to the future’, ‘while serving the cause of justice and peace’ so as to ‘provide the young with the tools they need to be in the forefront of efforts to create sustainable and inclusive lifestyles’.*
- *‘build solid foundations, anchored on respect for, and recognition of, the dignity of persons, the promotion of an integral humanism alert to and concerned for the protection of our common home, and a responsible stewardship that preserves the beauty and richness of nature as a right fundamental for existence’.*
- *‘heed the voice of the poor in our midst: the disenfranchised, the downtrodden, the indigenous peoples and religious minorities’,*
- *‘be unafraid to create opportunities, as is already quietly occurring, to work hand in hand’.*

- *'upholding human dignity and respecting the rights of conscience and religious freedom'.*
- *'create spaces where we can let in a breath of fresh air, in the certainty that all is not lost'.*
- *'where research and knowledge can help to open new paths for reducing human inequality, strengthening social justice, upholding human dignity, seeking means for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and preserving the life-giving resources of our earth'.*

Pope Francis envisions that,

'the great religious traditions of our world bear witness to a transcendent and widely shared spiritual patrimony that can make a solid contribution in this area, if only we are able to encounter one another without fear'.

WE WELCOME THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Like the Twelve Apostles, we come back regularly to God in prayer for debriefing and discernment. During this week, we spend some time in prayer, exploring what is our vision.

How can the words of Pope Francis broaden our vision?

We pray that the Holy Spirit will show us how to welcome the Kingdom of God more and more into our lives.

We pray that we live the Good News of the Reign of God.

Let us now pray for our special intentions, including

- For the three families preparing for funeral services this coming week;
- For the national prayer campaign for rain;
- For the people affected by recent bushfires; and fire-fighters and emergency crews.
- For Pope Francis and his visit to Japan;
- For the Australian Bishops who gather this week to discuss Church and Societal issues;
- For the expected Senate debate on the mental health rights and other health issues of refugee and asylum seeker detainees now in Port Moresby and Nauru;
- For the right to live;
- For a vision where we can work together;
- And for our individual and communal intentions.

Amen.

Fr Gerry

[Readings: <https://universalis.com/20191124/mass.htm>]

