



Christ in Our Neighborhood

Prayer

Father, may Your will be done. Help us to remember that we have a place in Your Kingdom, where You live and reign, together with Your Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Commentary

1st Reading: Isaiah 53:10-11

These next 6 weeks bring to a close our Liturgical Year. Ending with the Feast of Christ the King, these last weeks will address the theme: Our Holy Kingdom.

As we consider our theme, we should recall that Christ the King is first and foremost a suffering King for us. Choosing to step from His throne above and embrace the cross (His new throne) we see that Jesus is truly a Suffering Servant for us.

This is the message that our First Reading intends to convey. As Christians, we read into this Old Testament passage and see that God sent His Son to take away our sins. Indeed, our Lord would “bear our guilt.”

It is hard for us to understand that God would choose to do such a thing. But, as Isaiah says, “The Lord was pleased to crush him in infirmity,” so that our Suffering Servant would “justify many.”

The point is, alone we cannot stand justified before our God. Therefore, God became one with us and took all of our sins – and the punishments that go with them – upon Himself.

Question

How do you thank God for receiving the punishments for your sins?

Commentary

2nd Reading: Hebrews 4:14-16

As members of the Body of Christ and sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father, we are co-heirs to the “throne of grace.”

As we consider this throne of grace, we must understand that approaching it means to suffer in the manner of Christ. He did not approach his throne — His cross — lightly.

To approach the throne of grace is to approach the cross. In no way can we assume that the royal carpet to the throne will be easy. Jesus says, “Take up your cross and follow me.” (Mt 16:24)

However, as we read in Hebrews, our Lord sympathizes “with our weakness” when we find our cross hard to bear. We are constantly tested by things of this passing world to let go of the cross. Thankfully, the Lord has already gone before us and “has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin.” So, we can “confidently approach the throne of grace,” knowing that what lies beyond the cross is our home with God.

Question

Do you see the cross as a throne of grace?

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Commentary

Gospel: Mark 10:35-45

To sit on the throne of grace in our Holy Kingdom requires humble submission to Christ our Head. As members of the Body of Christ, we must live a life of humility.

As Christ “did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many,” we are called to do the same. This means that we cannot seek places of honor or strive to reach certain levels of status in this world or – as in the case of James and John – even in the world to come.

As Christians, our Holy Kingdom does not include places of honor. A true Christian is one who approaches the throne of grace as a humble servant. We are not worthy to enter the Kingdom of God. It is Christ who justifies us by His death and resurrection. To claim that we deserve heaven or a certain place of status is to make a mockery of Christ and His cross.

Over these next 6 weeks, make an attempt to approach the throne of grace and the Kingdom of God in the manner of Christ – the humble, suffering servant of God.

Question

Are you a person who likes to be noticed or receive accolades?

This Week's Task

Pay particular attention to the Eucharistic Prayer at Mass this Sunday.

Discover how the words express the Love God has for us by granting us His Son who suffered and died for us.

Make an added attempt to truly give thanks for Christ in your life.

Prayer

The group offers this prayer of hope:

O my God,
relying on Your almighty power and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of Your grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer.
Amen.

The prayer continues with Psalm 33

Psalm

Response: Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Upright is the word of the LORD,
and all his works are trustworthy.
He loves justice and right;
of the kindness of the LORD the earth is full.

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

See, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him,
upon those who hope for his kindness,
To deliver them from death
and preserve them in spite of famine.

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Our soul waits for the LORD,
who is our help and our shield.
May your kindness, O LORD, be upon us
who have put our hope in you.

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Conclude with an Our Father