

**THIS WEEKEND,, THE CHURCH CELEBRATES THE;**

***KINGSHIP OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,, THE KING OF THE UNIVERSE!***

**THIS DAY FALLS ON A UNIQUE PLACE IN OUR LITURGICAL CALENDAR. IT FALLS ON *THE 34<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME* AND IS CELEBRATED *JUST BEFORE THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT.***

**SINCE PENTECOST,, WE’VE TRAVELED THE SEASON OF ORDINARY TIME,, BEING FED THE GOOD NEWS OF CHRIST,, BY FOCUSING ON LUKE’S GOSPEL. WE NOW LOOK TO ADVENT,, AS WE PREPARE OURSELVES,, TO CELEBRATE ***THE BIRTH OF JESUS,, CHRIST THE KING!*****

**IN TODAY’S GOSPEL,, LUKE TELLS US THAT AS JESUS HUNG ON THE CROSS,, THE PEOPLE STOOD WATCHING,, AND THE RULERS SNEERED AT JESUS. AND SAID;**

***“HE SAVED OTHERS,, LET HIM SAVE HIMSELF,, IF HE IS THE CHRIST OF GOD,, THE CHOSEN ONE!”***

**THE SOLDIERS ALSO CAME AND MOCKED HIM. THEY OFFERED HIM WINE VINEGAR AND SAID;**

***“IF YOU ARE THE KING OF THE JEWS,, SAVE YOURSELF.”***

**THERE WAS A WRITTEN NOTICE ABOVE HIM,, WHICH READ: ***THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.*****

**ONE OF THE CRIMINALS WHO HUNG NEXT TO JESUS,, HURLED INSULTS AT HIM,, SAYING;**

***“AREN’T YOU THE CHRIST? SAVE YOURSELF AND US!”***

**BUT THE OTHER CRIMINAL,, WHO HUNG ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF JESUS,, REBUKED HIM,, SAYING;**

***“DON’T YOU FEAR GOD?,, SINCE YOU ARE UNDER THE SAME SENTENCE? WE ARE PUNISHED JUSTLY,, FOR WE ARE GETTING WHAT OUR DEEDS DESERVE. BUT THIS MAN,, HAS DONE NOTHING WRONG.”***

**THEN HE SAID;**

***JESUS,, REMEMBER ME,, WHEN YOU COME INTO YOUR KINGDOM.”***

**JESUS ANSWERED HIM;**

***“I TELL YOU THE TRUTH,, TODAY,, YOU WILL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE.”***

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, IN THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS,, FROM HIS BETRAYAL BY JUDAS,, IN THE GARDEN,, WITH A KISS,, FROM THE KANGAROO COURT,, BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST CAIAPHAS,, TO HIS UNJUST CONDEMNATION,, BY THE ROMAN GOVERNOR PONTIUS PILATE,, TO THE SOLDIERS,, WHO ROLLED DICE FOR JESUS’ CLOTHING,, IT SEEMED THAT NOTHING WENT RIGHT,, IN THE DIVINE TRAGEDY,, PLAYED OUT THAT DAY.**

**BUT FINALLY,, AS THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS,, WHICH ENDED IN JESUS’ DEATH,, CAME TO IT’S CONCLUSION,, THERE WAS ONE THING THAT PILATE DID GET RIGHT!**

**THAT WAS; THE MESSAGE THAT HE CAUSED TO GET POSTED,, ON THE TOP OF THE CROSS. IN THREE LANGUAGES,, IT READ:**

***“THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS”***

**ANOTHER GOSPEL ACCOUNT TELLS US,, THAT WHEN THE JEWISH LEADERS PROTESTED,, REQUESTING THAT PILATE CHANGE THE WORDS TO READ; **THAT JESUS SAID,, THAT HE WAS THE KING OF THE JEWS**,,, FINALLY,, PILATE FOUND A SPINE! HE SAID TO THEM; ***“WHAT I HAVE WRITTEN,, I HAVE WRITTEN!”*****

**PILATE MAY HAVE WRITTEN THIS SIGN,, TO RIDICULE THE JEWISH LEADERS,, BUT,, IN DOING SO,, HE MADE A BOLD STATEMENT. WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING IT,, PILATE TOLD ALL WHO WERE PRESENT AT THE CRUCIFIXION,, THAT; **JESUS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.** HE IS A KING THE WORLD DOES NOT RECOGNIZE AND HE IS A KING,, THAT TAKES US TO PARADISE!**

**THIS WEEKEND,, ***WE CELEBRATE CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY***,,, THE END OF OUR CHURCH CALENDAR.**

THIS IS THE DAY WE SET ASIDE FOR US TO RENEW AND SUBMIT OUR LIVES TO CHRIST JESUS ,, AS ***KING***. LUKE TELLS US,,, THAT AS JESUS WAS DYING ON THE CROSS,,, PEOPLE STOOD WATCHING AND THE RULERS SNEERING AT HIM,,, SAYING;

***“HE SAVED OTHERS,,, LET HIM SAVE HIMSELF,,, IF HE IS THE CHRIST OF GOD,,, THE CHOSEN ONE!”***

THE PEOPLE FAILED TO RECOGNIZE JESUS AS THEIR KING,,, SENT TO THEM BY GOD. THEY CHALLENGED HIM,,, ***TO COME DOWN FROM THE CROSS,,, IF HE IS THE CHRIST,,, GOD’S CHOSEN ONE!***

IF THERE WAS EVER A KING,,, THAT THE WORLD DIDN’T RECOGNIZE,,, IT WAS JESUS.

HE WAS TREATED AND CONVICTED,,, LIKE THE WORST CRIMINALS,,, AND HE RECEIVED THE MOST EXTREME PUNISHMENT OF THAT DAY. NO TRUE KING,,, WOULD EVER BE TREATED THAT WAY!

***TO THE EYES OF THE UNBELIEVING WORLD,,, THERE WAS NO WAY THAT THIS JESUS,,, COULD BE THE KING THEY WERE WAITING FOR,,, AND BECAUSE OF THEIR STUBBORNNESS,,, THEY COULDN’T SEE THAT THIS WAS,,, THE PROMISED KING,,, SENT BY GOD.***

THEY COULDN’T SEE,,, THAT BY SUFFERING AND DYING ON THE CROSS,,, JESUS WAS DOING WHAT THE CHRIST,,, THE CHOSEN ONE,,, WAS SENT HERE TO DO.

THE PEOPLE WERE LOOKING FOR A KING,,, WITH A CROWN ON HIS HEAD. JESUS DIDN’T HAVE A GOLD CROWN. INSTEAD,,, HE HAD A CROWN OF THORNS.

ST. MATTHEW RECORDED THE EVENTS OF THAT DAY,,, WHEN HE WROTE; THAT ***JESUS HAD A TWISTED CROWN OF THORNS,,, SMASHED DOWN,,, INTO HIS SCALP***,,, WHILE THE CHIEF PRIESTS,,, THE TEACHERS OF THE LAW,,, AND THE ELDERS MOCKED HIM,,, SAYING; ***LET HIM COME DOWN FROM THE CROSS,,, AND WE WILL BELIEVE HIM. HE TRUSTS IN GOD,,, LET GOD RESCUE HIM”.***

**THERE WERE TWO ROBBERS,,, CRUCIFIED WITH JESUS,,, AND THEY THREW INSULTS AT HIM.**

**ONE OF THESE NAMELESS MEN,,, WHO HUNG ON A CROSS NEXT TO JESUS,, WAS A THIEF,, A SERIOUS,,, CONVICTED CRIMINAL ,, JUDGING FROM THE FACT THAT HE WAS BEING CRUCIFIED FOR HIS CRIMES.**

***ALTHOUGH THIS DYING THIEF,, WAS A NOTORIOUS SINNER,,, HE WAS ALSO,,, BY THE GRACE OF GOD,,, A REPENTANT SINNER,, WHICH IS EVIDENT FROM HIS CONFESSION.***

**ALTHOUGH HE TOO,,, AT FIRST,,, JOINED WITH THE OTHER CRIMINAL IN MOCKING JESUS,,, HE HAD A CHANGE OF HEART.**

**WHEN HIS PARTNER IN CRIME,,, ONCE AGAIN STARTED TO MOCK AND BLASPHEME JESUS,,, LUKE TELLS US,,, THAT HE REBUKED HIM SHARPLY,,, *CONFESSED HIS SINS WITHOUT ANY HEDGING OR EXCUSES*,,, AND *TESTIFIED TO THE INNOCENCE OF JESUS.***

**THE MAN SAID;**

***DON'T YOU FEAR GOD,,, SINCE YOU ARE UNDER THE SAME SENTENCE? WE ARE PUNISHED JUSTLY,,, FOR WE ARE GETTING WHAT OUR DEEDS DESERVE. BUT THIS MAN,,, HAS DONE NOTHING WRONG!***

**BY THE GRACE AND MERCY OF GOD,,, THE HOLY SPIRIT BROUGHT HIM TO A TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS SINS AND OF THE JUST PUNISHMENT HE DESERVED.**

***BUT,,, HE HAD NOT ONLY COME TO KNOW HIS SINS,,, BUT ALSO,,, TO KNOW HIS SAVIOR AND KING!***

**HE HAD NOT BEEN WITH JESUS VERY LONG,,, ONLY A FEW HOURS,,, BUT,,, IT WAS LONG ENOUGH.**

**(\* HE WATCHED JESUS SUFFER PATIENTLY,,, AND,,,**

**(\* HE HEARD HIM PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS,,, FOR HIS EXECUTIONERS.**

(\*) HE LISTENED TO THE MOCKING WORDS OF THOSE WHO PASSED BY THE CROSS AND OF THE JEWISH LEADERS,, WHO STOOD UNDER IT,, GLOATING! THE THIEF CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD FROM JESUS' WORDS,, THAT HE WAS NOT SUFFERING FOR ANY CRIME,, HE HAD DONE.

**JESUS WAS ON A CROSS,, SIMPLY BECAUSE HE CLAIMED TO BE THE PROMISED MESSIAH AND THE SON OF GOD!**

THE THIEF SAW THE SIGN OVER THE CROSS,, WHICH WAS A SERMON IN ITSELF; “**JESUS OF NAZARETH,, THE KING OF THE JEWS**”. AND THROUGH IT ALL,, **THE HOLY SPIRIT,, LED HIM TO RECOGNIZE AND TO BELIEVE IN,, JESUS OF NAZARETH,, THE KING OF THE JEWS,, THE PROMISED MESSIAH,, THE SON OF GOD,, AND THE LONG-AWAITED SAVIOR,, WHO HAD COME,, IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME,, TO DIE,, FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF THE SINS,, FOR THOSE WHO REPENT AND BELIEVE.**

IN FAITH,, THE THIEF ASKED JESUS;  
**TO REMEMBER HIM,, WHEN HE WAS IN HIS KINGDOM.**

SO,, HOW DID THE SAVIOR RESPOND TO THIS CRIMINALS PLEA? JESUS ASSURED HIM,, SAYING;  
**TODAY,, YOU WILL BE WITH ME,, IN PARADISE!**

WHAT A PRECIOUS PROMISE JESUS GAVE TO THIS DYING THIEF. **IT ASSURED HIM,, OF FORGIVENESS,, FOR ALL HIS SINS,, AS UGLY AS THEY WERE!**  
**IT ASSURED HIM,, OF ETERNAL LIFE,, IN HEAVEN,, WITHOUT ANY MERITS,, OR WORKS,, OR DOING ON HIS PART,, OF ANY KIND,, IN HIS LAST HOURS OF LIFE AND SURE HOPE IN THE FACE OF DEATH.**

**WE ALSO HAVE THE SAME HOPE,, AND COMFORT BROTHERS AND SISTERS! GOD TELLS US THAT ALL WHO BELIEVE IN SON,, WILL HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE,, IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN,, WITH OUR KING.**

- (\*) HE WAS WOUNDED AND BRUISED FOR US,,,
- (\*) HE TOOK OUR PLACE AND HE BORE THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD.
- (\*) HE SUFFERED OUR PUNISHMENT,, SO THAT WE WOULDN'T HAVE TO,, AND,,
- (\*) HE PAID OUR DEBT TO GOD,, IN FULL!
- (\*) JESUS' BLOOD ATONED FOR THE SINS OF THE WORLD AND THAT INCLUDES ALL OF YOUR SINS AND MINE TOO.
- (\*) HE OPENED UP THE GATES OF PARADISE,, NOT ONLY FOR THAT DYING THIEF,, BUT ALSO FOR YOU AND ME!

AS I SAID,, IN THE BEGINNING OF TODAY'S HOMILY,, PONTIUS PILATE GOT ONE THING RIGHT,, WHEN HE POSTED,, ABOVE THE CROSS,, THE MESSAGE;

**"THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS"**

BUT I NEED TO QUALIFY THAT SOMEWHAT,, BECAUSE,, THE SIMPLE TRUTH IS,, THAT PILATE DIDN'T HAVE IT TOTALLY RIGHT!

YOU KNOW THAT JESUS ISN'T ONLY THE KING OF THE JEWS! JESUS IS THE KING OF EVERYTHING THAT EXISTS IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH AND UNDER THE EARTH,, AND HE WILL RULE FOR EVER AND FOREVER! **SO,, TAKE COMFORT IN THIS.**

- (\*) OUR KING HAS PROMISED TO NEVER LEAVE US,, OR FORSAKE US.
- (\*) SCRIPTURE SAYS,, HE IS IN CONTROL OF ALL THINGS,, AND AS KING,, IS SOVEREIGN OVER ALL THINGS.
- (\*) HE GIVES US THE SAME PROMISE,, THAT HE GAVE TO THE THIEF,, HANGING NEXT TO HIM.

JESUS,, OUR KING,, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, PROMISES AND TELLS US,,

**"YOU WILL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE!"**

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER,, AND OF THE SON,, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.