

Christ the King of the Universe: "King of Hearts"

Jesus is the King of the universe, but today's Gospel emphasizes that his Kingdom is not of this world. While he was on the cross all laughed at him: Ironically, leaders were demanding proof of his being truly the Christ of God; the Roman soldiers required that he saves himself from the cross as proof that *he was truly the King of the Jews*; even one of the criminals, crucified with him, insulted him. Only one voice was raised differently: the second thief, (aware of his many sins, turns with trust to Jesus King), "Lord, remember me when you are in your kingdom".

Yes, Jesus is King and his Kingdom is realized on the cross. What for men seems like a total failure, becomes the decisive victory: Jesus dying on the cross, conquers death forever, the greatest enemy of life, and win over Satan with all his deception, and opens the way to resurrection, to eternal life for all of us. The second criminal has the joy of hearing from the lips of Jesus the personal promise: "*today you will be with me in Paradise*" (*in my Kingdom*).

Jesus makes this promise to us in our today¹; just that we recognize that we are sinners in need of salvation and we turn to him, our King, with confidence.

A master of the spiritual life today: the Christian repentance cannot be compared with any other natural religious experience ... Repentance is a fruit of the Holy Spirit and the safest of its action in a soul. Nobody knows their sins without simultaneously knowing God: not before or after, but at the same time, in one and the same intuition of grace.

There can be no room for compromise or concession with God. We either give our lives over to him entirely or we keep them for ourselves. Paul the Apostle says, "*We are not our own. We were bought with a price*" (1Cor. 6.19) That price is the precious blood of Jesus Christ shed for us upon the cross to redeem us from slavery to sin and death.

The love of God compels us to choose who or what will be first in our lives.

To place any relationship or any possession above God is a form of idolatry. Jesus, the king challenges us his disciples to examine who we love first and foremost. Jesus' way to glory and power is opposite to the world's way of glory, power, and success. The choice is ours, but the Lord does not leave us alone, if we choose to follow him. Does the love of Christ compel you to put God first in all you are and all you do?