

HOMILY FOR THE SOLEMNITY OF
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE

Sunday, 20 November 2022

- Fr. Jim Fredericks

Part One: the readings for the day

Part Two: reflection on the readings

Part Three: guidelines for *lectio divina*

PART ONE: READINGS FOR THE DAY

Lectionary: 162

Reading 1 2 Sm 5:1-3

In those days, all the tribes of Israel came to David in Hebron and said:

"Here we are, your bone and your flesh.

In days past, when Saul was our king,

it was you who led the Israelites out and brought them back.

And the LORD said to you,

'You shall shepherd my people Israel

and shall be commander of Israel.'"

When all the elders of Israel came to David in Hebron,

King David made an agreement with them there before the LORD,

and they anointed him king of Israel.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5

R. (cf. 1) Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

I rejoiced because they said to me,

"We will go up to the house of the LORD."

And now we have set foot

within your gates, O Jerusalem.

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Jerusalem, built as a city

with compact unity.

To it the tribes go up,

the tribes of the LORD.

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

According to the decree for Israel,

to give thanks to the name of the LORD.

In it are set up judgment seats,

seats for the house of David.

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Reading 2 Col 1:12-20

Brothers and sisters:

Let us give thanks to the Father,
who has made you fit to share
in the inheritance of the holy ones in light.
He delivered us from the power of darkness
and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,
in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

He is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn of all creation.
For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth,
the visible and the invisible,
whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers;
all things were created through him and for him.
He is before all things,
and in him all things hold together.
He is the head of the body, the church.
He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,
that in all things he himself might be preeminent.
For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell,
and through him to reconcile all things for him,
making peace by the blood of his cross
through him, whether those on earth or those in heaven.

Alleluia Mk 11:9, 10

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!
Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is to come!

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel Lk 23:35-43

The rulers sneered at Jesus and said,
"He saved others, let him save himself
if he is the chosen one, the Christ of God."
Even the soldiers jeered at him.
As they approached to offer him wine they called out,
"If you are King of the Jews, save yourself."
Above him there was an inscription that read,
"This is the King of the Jews."

Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying,
"Are you not the Christ?"

Save yourself and us."
The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply,
"Have you no fear of God,
for you are subject to the same condemnation?
And indeed, we have been condemned justly,
for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes,
but this man has done nothing criminal."
Then he said,
"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."
He replied to him,
"Amen, I say to you,
today you will be with me in Paradise."

PART TWO: HOMILY ON THE READINGS

[Preacher's note: this homily is a translation into English from Spanish. The homily is intended for people that have come to us at Saint Leo's from Mexico. If you have not come to us from Mexico, please read on. I hope the homily will be of some benefit to you.]

¡Que Viva Christo Rey!

This is our *grito*. This is what we shout on the Solemnity of Christ the King. This is what we shout when we remember the blood shed by the *Cristeros* in defense of the faith during the persecution of the Church in the time of President Porfirio Elias Calles in Mexico.

Today, let our voices be united with the *grito* of the *Cristeros*.

But before we shout out the *grito*, we must stop and reflect on our faith. We must ask ourselves about our commitments as Catholics living in a world that is blinded by greed and obsessed with violence.

We must not shout the *grito* until first we are standing with Christ the King.

So, I must ask you,
Where is Christ the King enthroned?

Where is the palace of our King?
Where is his throne to be found in this world?

To answer this question, look at Luke's account of Christ's crucifixion. It begins with those who have power and high standing in this world.

The rulers sneered at Jesus and said,
"He saved others, let him save himself
if he is the chosen one, the Christ of God."

This, of course, is irony. And Luke continues his story with irony. The soldiers who do the work of Rome's Empire humiliate Jesus as the "king of the Jews."

Even the soldiers jeered at him.
As they approached to offer him wine,
they called out,
"If you are King of the Jews, save yourself."

Above the head of our Lord, was an inscription that read in Latin,

Jesus Nazari, Rex Iudeorum
Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews

But the Good Thief overcomes the irony with faith and, in doing so, draws near to the throne of Christ the King.

"Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom."

The Good Thief looks on Christ hanging from the cross and recognizes what is a great truth of our faith: only on the cross do we see the King on his throne.

Not the rulers.
Not the soldiers.
Only the Good Thief can rightfully shout out the *grito*,

¡Que Viva Christo Rey!

Today, let us pray in solidarity with the people of the little pueblo of Cerocauí, in the State of Chihuahua. Cerocauí's parish is made up, mostly, of indigenous people who are very poor.

Last June, the people buried two of their priests along with two laymen of the parish.

On 20 June, a man ran into the parish church begging the priests and a lay worker to hide him. The man was the owner of a small business and was being pursued by *narcotraficantes* (drug gang members). I suppose that the gang members were looking for protection-money. This man hoped that he would find sanctuary in his parish church.

He was terribly mistaken.

The *narcotraficantes* entered the church and killed them all: the two priests, the lay worker and the poor soul begging for sanctuary.

At the funeral, the bishop of the diocese and the Jesuit superior of the two murdered priests assured the people of the parish that more priests would be sent to continue the work of the priests who had been slain.

Like the Good Thief at Golgotha, in Cerocauí, the Church is drawing near to the throne of Christ the King.

For Christ is being crucified there.

Here in Sonoma, most of us have come from Jalisco and Michoacán. Now, people are arriving from Chiapas and Guatemala.

You already know the story of these new members of our community. The *Tratado de Libre Comercio de America del Norte*, what we call "NAFTA" here in the United States, has made it almost impossible for a man to feed his family by growing corn. The great

corporations in places like Kansas and Nebraska, with subsidies from the United States government, have made the old life of the *ranchos* impossible for many.

Now thousands of young people are faced with a terrifying choice: the drug gangs or emigration.

The teaching of the Church is clear: capitalism is not king. The economic system is a human creation, a reflection of our sinfulness. It is under God's judgment and in need of Christ's redemption.

Let us draw near the throne of Christ the King.

Like the new priests being sent to Cerocauí and their co-workers in the parish, let us commit ourselves to those who have been marginalized by the powerful and the violent.

Like the Good Thief in Luke's Gospel, let us recognize that our King has been enthroned on a cross.

Let us draw near to the throne of Christ the King, for if we do not, our *grito* will mean nothing.

Hold in your hearts all those who have been displaced by the violence of the *narcotranficantes* and by the violence of global capitalism.

Hold in your hearts all those who seek sanctuary from the insane cruelty of this world, and then, at long last, join me in the *grito* of the *Cristeros*...

¡Que Viva Cristo Rey!
¡Que Viva Cristo Rey!
¡Que Viva Cristo Rey!

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Que Viva Christo Rey...

Este es nuestro grito. Esto es lo que gritamos en la Solemnidad de Cristo Rey. Así gritamos al recordar la sangre derramada por los cristeros en defensa de la fe durante la persecución a la Iglesia en tiempos del presidente Porfirio Elías Calles en México.

Hoy, ojalá que nuestras voces se unan al grito de los cristeros.

Pero antes de gritar, debemos reflexionar sobre nuestra fe. Debemos preguntarnos sobre nuestros compromisos como católicos que viven en un mundo cegado por la codicia y obsesionado por la violencia.

No podemos gritar hasta que primero estemos de pie con Cristo Rey.

Entonces, debo preguntarles,
¿Dónde está entronizado Cristo Rey?
¿Dónde está el palacio de nuestro Rey?
¿Dónde se encuentra su trono en este mundo?

Mire el relato de Lucas sobre la crucifixión de Cristo. Comienza con aquellos que tienen poder y están seguros en este mundo.

Cuando Jesús estaba ya crucificado, las autoridades le hacían muecas, diciendo: "A otros ha salvado; que se salve a sí mismo, si él es el Mesías de Dios, el elegido".

Este es ironía. Y continua la ironía.

Los soldados que hacen el trabajo del Imperio de Roma humillan a Jesús como el "rey de los judíos".

También los soldados se burlaban de Jesús, y acercándose a él, le ofrecían vinagre y le decían: "Si tú eres el rey de los judíos, sálvate a ti mismo".

También, el letrero

Había, en efecto, sobre la cruz, un letrero en griego, latín y hebreo, que decía: "Éste es el rey de los judíos".

Pero sólo el Buen Ladrón se acerca al trono de Cristo Rey.

"Señor, cuando llegues a tu Reino, acuérdate de mí".

El Buen Ladrón mira a Cristo colgado de la cruz y reconoce la gran enseñanza de nuestra fe: en la cruz, el Rey del universo está en su trono.

No los poderosos del mundo. Ni los soldados.
Sólo el Buen Ladrón puede gritar el grito,

Hoy que oremos en solidaridad con el pueblo de Cerocai, en el Estado de Chihuahua. Allí hay una parroquia compuesta, en su mayoría, por indígenas que son muy pobres.

El mes de junio, el pueblo enterró a dos de sus sacerdotes junto a dos laicos de la parroquia.

El 20 de junio, un hombre entró corriendo a la iglesia parroquial rogando a los sacerdotes ya un trabajador laico que lo escondieran. El hombre era dueño de un pequeño negocio y estaba siendo perseguido por narcotraficantes. Supongo que los pandilleros buscaban protección-dinero. Este hombre esperaba encontrar refugio en su iglesia parroquial.

¡Que lastima! El estaba equivocado.

Los narcotraficantes entraron a la iglesia y los mataron a todos: los dos sacerdotes, el trabajador laico y el pobre humilde hombre que suplicaba asilo.

En el funeral, el obispo de la diócesis y el superior jesuita de los dos sacerdotes asesinados aseguraron a la gente de

la parroquia que vendrían más sacerdotes para continuar el trabajo de los sacerdotes asesinados con la gente.

Como el Buen Ladrón en el Gólgota, en Cerocaui, la Iglesia se acerca al trono de Cristo Rey.

Porque Cristo está siendo crucificado allí.

En nuestra solidaridad con los indígenas de la parroquia de Cerocaui, Chihuahua, nos acercamos al trono de Cristo Rey.

Aquí en Sonoma, la mayoría de nosotros venimos de Jalisco y Michoacán. Ahora está llegando gente de Chiapas y Guatemala.

Ya Uds conocen la historia de estos nuevos miembros de nuestra comunidad. El Tratado de Libre Comercio de América del Norte, lo que llamamos "NAFTA" aquí en los Estados Unidos, ha hecho casi imposible que un hombre pueda alimentar a su familia cultivando maíz. Las grandes corporaciones en lugares como Kansas y Nebraska, con subsidios del gobierno de los Estados Unidos, han hecho imposible para muchos la antigua vida de los ranchos.

Ahora miles de nuestros jóvenes se enfrentan a una elección aterradora: las bandas de narcotraficantes o la emigración.

La enseñanza de la Iglesia es clara: el capitalismo no es el rey. El sistema económico es una creación humana, un reflejo de nuestra pecaminosidad. Está bajo el juicio de Dios y necesita la redención de Cristo.

Que acerquémonos al trono de Cristo Rey.

Como los sacerdotes y sus colaboradores en Cerocaui, comprometámonos con aquellos que han sido marginados por los poderosos y los violentos.

Como el Buen Ladrón del Evangelio de Lucas, reconozcamos que nuestro Rey ha sido entronizado en una cruz.

Que acerquémonos al trono de Cristo Rey, porque si no lo hacemos, nuestro grito no significará nada.

Guarden en sus corazones a todos aquellos que han sido desplazados por la violencia de los narcotraficantes y por la violencia del capitalismo global.

Mantengan en sus corazones a todos aquellos que buscan refugio de la insana crueldad de este mundo, y luego, por fin, únanse a mí en el grito de los cristeros...

¡Que Viva Cristo Rey!
¡Que Viva Cristo Rey!
¡Que Viva Cristo Rey!

PART THREE: INSTRUCTIONS FOR *LECTIO DIVINA*

I suggest that you use the readings and my reflections as an opportunity for practicing *lectio divina* ("divine reading"). This is an ancient spiritual practice that started with the great monks in the Syrian and Egyptian desert back in the early days of the Church. It is really quite simple.

Step one: calm your mind (my Buddhist friends describe the mind as "a mango-tree full of chattering monkeys"). I find that paying attention to your breath for a few minutes is a practical and effective way to do this.

Step two: read the readings slowly and attentively. Savor the words as if you were tasting a great Pinot Noir. Don't rush. You are not looking for information or instructions. You are making friends with a sacred text which will bless you abundantly if you will only open your heart to it and let it speak to you. In *lectio divina*, we are not actually "reading" the Bible. Rather, we are "listening" to the Bible as the sacred words speak to us.

Step three: repeat step two.

Step four: read the reflection on the readings.

Step five: Ask yourself a few questions:

- What particular words in the readings call out to me most forcefully?
- What is going on in my life such that these words call to me so forthrightly?
- How am I being asked to change, both interiorly and exteriorly?
- In light of this *lectio divina*, how am I being invited to be of service to the world today?