

The Solemnity the Christ the King – 11-23-2025

For those who have attended funerals since I have been here, today's homily will be very familiar to them. It comes from the Rescue Project and it is something we need to do as a parish.

Today we are celebrating the Solemnity Christ the King, so it's a perfect day to introduce the Rescue Project to the wider parish and the gospel fits perfectly.

You know if one of us were to commit an injustice against a fellow human being we have this sense in our minds and consequently even in our laws that we can put the scales of justice back in balance.

It might be a simple apology or it might be more serious and include a financial penalty, the loss of personal freedom or even, in the most extreme cases, the loss of life.

In other words, we sacrifice something that belongs to us in order to make up for the injustice committed and when it is complete we have this notion that the scales are back in balance. Maybe that's why those two thieves were hanging on the cross in the gospel today – to put human scales of justice back in balance.

However, if we commit an injustice against God, that which we call sin, how could we ever hope to put that scale back in balance?

What can we give to God to repair the injustice toward God that God didn't give us first? The answer is nothing. As sinners, we were stuck between a rock and hard place, to say the least – destined for hell.

So the King came to our rescue. When Jesus was crucified, as we heard in the Gospel, there were those two criminals on either side of him on that first Good Friday who didn't choose to be there but Jesus did. He laid down his life for our salvation! He was crucified so that we could live!

And because of this many people might see Jesus as an easy going pacifist who calmly went to his death – an innocent victim. Some non-believers might even think he was weak.

It is true that Jesus calmly went to his death an innocent victim but this was by no means the act of a pacifist or a weakling.

Jesus chose to suffer and die. Nobody took his life from him. Nobody has the power to kill God. Jesus was an innocent victim but a victim of his own choosing.

So why did Jesus, the second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, God and the Son of God, the King of kings choose to be crucified and die as a mere criminal? Well, let's just say, He was on a mission – A one-man undercover operation to rescue humanity from the grip of Satan.

In other words, Jesus came veiled in our humanity so that Satan wouldn't be able to see his divinity hidden beneath. It was a mission to liberate captive humanity – One that only the God/man was able to accomplish.

Essentially, Jesus conducted a full-scale invasion into occupied territory to destroy the enemy's stronghold from within.

His mission was to seek out and destroy Satan's stranglehold on humanity and annihilate death forever – An all-out war on Satan and his minions.

But it wasn't a generic mission. It was a very personal one only for you, only for me, only for those two criminals that hung beside him and the list is as long as humanity itself.

On the cross Jesus, because he is God, was able to reach back in time to the very beginning and reach forward in time to the very end and draw everyone to himself so that he could suffer in himself everything that

humanity had incurred as a consequence of sin in order to reconcile the world to his Father and finally destroy death forever.

Satan couldn't grasp this. He has no concept of love, let alone sacrificial love. Satan had no idea who he was dealing with so he rallied fallen humanity to crucify this mysterious figure so that death would swallow him up like it had everyone else who had come before him but Satan played right into Jesus' plan.

This mysterious figure was the God/man and death had no power over him. Satan and his fellow demons were ambushed and they never saw it coming.

At Jesus' death Satan suddenly realized that he had been duped all along. His kingdom was ripped from his grasp and death no longer had any power over humanity. But like the good thief, we need to humbly ask for it because apparently only one thief was saved.

Jesus said to the good thief, "Amen I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." The good thief has been referred to as the greatest thief of all time because at the very end of his life, and one probably not very well spent, he stole heaven.

Ironically, though it was really Jesus who stole heaven from Satan so that all of us could potentially escape damnation. Amazing! The King came to rescue his subjects. It's usually the other way around – subjects die for the king. All Hail the warrior/King!

But let's not think for a minute that we can wait until the last hour like the good thief to advantage of the grace that the King of kings is offering us. Only one thief was saved.

So let's say every day, humbly yet with childlike confidence, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."