

## The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe



As we conclude the liturgical year with the Solemnity of Christ the King, we proclaim that Jesus reigns not through force or domination, but through mercy and love. For those of us who grew up in dysfunctional homes, this feast reminds us that true leadership—the kind that brings healing—looks nothing like control. It looks like compassion, humility, and service.

We have spent much of our lives reacting to fear, chaos, and unpredictability. But under the gentle rule of Christ the King, we learn a new way of living—one grounded in faith and trust rather than self-protection. He teaches us that authority rooted in love restores what power rooted in fear once destroyed.

Recovery literature reminds us of the same spiritual truth:

“Particularly was it imperative to work with others as he had worked with me. Faith without works was dead, he said. And how appallingly true for the alcoholic! For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead. If he did not work, he would surely drink again, and if he drank, he would surely die. Then faith would be dead indeed” (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 14-15).

This is the essence of healthy leadership and loving service. In recovery, we grow by helping others. We step out of isolation and fear, offering understanding and encouragement. As we serve, we discover that Christ leads us gently toward freedom and belonging.

In this Sunday’s Gospel (Luke 23:39-43), Jesus reigns from the cross:

*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.”*

In this moment of surrender, the repentant thief becomes the first to proclaim Christ as King. He accepts his reality, confesses his wrongs, and asks simply to be remembered. That small act of humility opens the door to paradise.

In recovery, we practice the same surrender. We admit our powerlessness, name our wounds, and trust God to bring healing. As we do, we are lifted into a new kind of kingdom—one defined not by fear or shame but by grace and truth.

Christ the King invites us to follow Him not as subjects of fear, but as beloved sons and daughters of the Father. He rules not by domination, but by love that liberates. When we live in that truth, we become part of His restoration work—healing what was broken in us and sharing that hope with others.

## Reflection Questions

- How has Christ's example of humble leadership changed your understanding of authority, service, or love?
- In what ways are you learning to let go of fear and trust God's care in your recovery journey?
- How can you share the mercy and hope of Christ the King with others still suffering?

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### **Sunday Mass Readings this Week**

**First Reading:** 2 Samuel 5:1-3

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

**Second Reading:** Colossians 1:12-20

**Gospel:** Luke 23:35-43