

Read

2 Samuel 5:1-3

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

Colossians 1:12-20

Luke 23:35-43

LIVING THE WORD

Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

November 24, 2019



REFLECTION

Jesus has the ultimate superhero title in today's solemnity: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe." All the superheroes—Batman, Spiderman, and so on—kept their true identities hidden except when someone needed their help. They were strong enough not to show off their powers for attention. When Jesus' kingship was mocked by the criminal as he was unjustly dying for us, we can see his quiet strength. If Jesus appeared before you, would you recognize him? He's not where you would expect to find him. We can find him in the poor, the frail, little children, the elderly, or the refugee. In 2 Corinthians 12:9, when speaking of Jesus, St. Paul said: "power [that is, Christ's power] is made perfect in weakness." Think about what real power is, and how real superheroes use their power. If you see them showing off for attention or using their strength for evil, they are not truly powerful.



ACTION

In today's reflection, you are encouraged to think about what real power is. Using Jesus' example, design a superhero identity for yourself. Who are you going to help? What is your superhero outfit? What are your special powers? Why do you want to help these particular people? The great thing is, we can actually *be* those superheroes in life without a costume (or with one, if that's how you roll). After you've designed your Superhero identity, brainstorm ways in which you can bring that Identity into real life (careful not to show off!).



Watch the movie,

The Avengers,

where superheroes
come together
to save the planet.



? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ If you could imitate one of Jesus' superhero virtues, what would it be and why?
- ❖ How is Jesus different from the superheroes in movies, comics, and books?
- ❖ Do you think you have power to help change the world? Why or why not?



November 24, 2019

SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE

LECTIONARY #162C

2 Samuel 5:1-3

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

Colossians 1:12-20

Luke 23:35-43

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

Today, we recognize Christ as King of the Universe by recalling his passion and death on the Cross. As has often been the case in our reading of the Gospel according to Luke, today we hear the story of two people, one who even on a cross mocks Jesus, and the other who humbly asks that Jesus remember him at the coming of his kingdom.

Q FOCUS: Christ, is our King of the Universe.

Liturgical Calendar Connection

Today's solemnity marks a pivot between the culmination of the liturgical year that is ending, and the start of the new one with Advent. The new liturgical year begins next Sunday by recalling Christ's victory through death on the cross.

Church Teaching Connection

In Baptism, we are joined to Christ's offices of priest, prophet, and king. We are called to sacrifice our lives and resources in Christ's name; to proclaim the Good News of Christ in word and deed; and to serve, especially the poor and vulnerable as Christ himself who draws all to himself through his death and resurrection (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 786).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Luke 23:35-43

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

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."

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

Today, we mark the end of the liturgical year. Each of the seasons, solemnities, feasts, and memorials of the year draw us into particular aspects of the Paschal Mystery, the ministry, passion, death, Resurrection, and ascension of our Lord.

At first, it might seem odd to celebrate Christ as king by hearing the Gospel account of Jesus' crucifixion. Yet, it is in this moment that we see the depths of God's love, which is most profoundly shown and experienced in Jesus Christ.

In today's passage, the rulers of the world sneer at Jesus; soldiers jeer at him; even a criminal who is being crucified with him mocks him. Yet, we know the truth, that this man was innocent, and that he will rise on the third day.

► **Have you endured sneers or mocking because of your commitment to Christ?**

► **If you have not, is this a result of being fortunate, or because your life is not marked by living faith sufficiently enough to draw attention?**

Jesus' encounter with the other criminal stands out. Not only does he not mock Jesus as the others have done, he addresses Jesus with compassion and understanding. We see in his remarks a statement

of faith: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom" (Luke 23:42). While the others refuse to see Jesus as he is, this criminal acknowledges that Jesus is king.

Jesus says to the repentant criminal, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).

► **What strikes you about his response from the Cross?**

Jesus is like no other king, however. He came to seek and save those who are lost. He came to serve, and to teach us to do so as well. Jesus is the embodiment of God's love—he brings forgiveness, healing, compassion, and love to all he meets, and goes out of the way to do so.

► **How does Jesus' kingship differ from the ways in which people govern and lead today?**

In Baptism, we have been drawn into Christ's way of life, as priest, prophet, and king. We pray this prayer during the Rite of Baptism for Children (RBC), as the person is anointed with sacred Chrism: "God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and welcomed you into his holy people. He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation. As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as members of his body, sharing everlasting life" (RBC, 62).

As priest, we are called to be holy, to sacrifice, to offer our lives and all that we do to God. As prophets, we announce God's love through our words and actions. Just as Christ announced the reign of God by offering forgiveness, compassion, and mercy, we are called to do likewise. As king, we are to serve as Jesus served, to wash the feet of others, to reach out to the poor, vulnerable, and all who need to know God's love through us.

Jesus Christ is priest, prophet, and king. Baptism calls us to live as Christ's Body in the world. We will do so by making Christ the Lord and king of our lives.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 74.

In what ways is Jesus the Lord of your life?

In what ways are you consoled by Jesus' response to the repentant criminal?

How is the repentant criminal's declaration a challenge to live faith more deeply?

Act on the Word

Priest, Prophet, and King

Prepare ahead by having three activity center leaders on hand who will facilitate discussion on one of Christ's offices: priest, prophet, and king. If the facilitator wishes, she or he might prepare a handout or bookmark with their talking points or a passage of Sacred Scripture that captures the essence of the office they have been assigned.

Have three activity centers set up for this activity. Invite three leaders to be on hand to facilitate the discussion at one of the activity centers. These might be young adults, catechists, or members of your RCIA team. In your preparation with the facilitators, ask them to reflect on how we live the three offices of Christ, who is priest, prophet, and king. Assign one office to each facilitator and ask her or him to focus especially on that office.

Divide your group into three smaller groups, so that they may rotate through the three activity centers. At each center, ask the facilitator to lead a discussion about how we may live the office of Christ assigned to him or her. What does this "look like" in real life? What are the challenges? How is this a fulfilling and purposeful way of life?

Christ Is King

Ask the teens to form pairs or small groups of three to four. This is a reflective conversation that will require the teens to focus and stay on topic. Ask them to talk with each other about what it means for Christ to be the king or Lord of their lives. How does this influence their daily lives? Are there times in which they must renounce something, walk away from temptation, or embrace service as a result of their relationship with Christ? How are decisions such as these a way of living as a Christian disciple?

Closing Prayer

*God of all,
your Son reigns as King of heaven and earth,
now and for ever.
May we open our hearts to Christ the King
and help usher in the fullness of his kingdom
in the world,
where he lives and reigns with you in the unity
of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.*

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.