

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, November 23, 2025

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

This email, entitled Looking to Sunday®, focuses on one or more of the scripture readings for the coming Sunday. It prepares readers to hear God's Word at Mass and it offers a point of reflection to consider in the days leading to Sunday. Looking to Sunday is written by Father Tom Iwanowski.

Looking to Sunday has been published for more than sixteen years.

REMEMBER ME

"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom" are the words spoken by one of the criminals crucified alongside of Jesus. They are found in this Sunday's Gospel for The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe (Luke 23:35-43).

The words of that condemned man are among the most recognized words found in the scriptures that are not spoken by Jesus himself. They are particularly remembered on Passion Sunday and Good Friday. These words have even been set to music and become a well-known Taizé chant heard in church.

The plea of the criminal, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom," is also part of many penitential services and often used by individuals during their personal prayer.

Each time we pray those words, we acknowledge our sinfulness and our need for the Lord's mercy. We also place the name of Jesus on our lips, and we bring to mind the kingdom where he reigns as king and where he has called us to join him. As Jesus told us, "In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?" (John 14:2)

We give most of our attention to the criminal who asked to be remembered and was told by Jesus, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

But we cannot forget the other criminal dying in agony next to Jesus that Good Friday afternoon. Rather than calling upon the mercy of Jesus, he joined the soldiers and leaders in reviling Jesus. "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us."

That criminal failed to recognize who Jesus was. He did not see him as the source of mercy and forgiveness, as the one who was "the way, the truth, and the life." Because of his unbelief and rejection of Jesus, that criminal did not hear the words, "Today you will be with me in Paradise." We might conclude that he ended up in a far different place.

This Sunday as the liturgical year comes to an end, we honor Christ the King, a king not of power and might but a king of love and mercy who humbled himself so that all people might be saved and have an everlasting place in the kingdom of heaven.

Today's Gospel shows us that all who wish to have a place in that kingdom need to be like the so-called "good thief." They need to reach out to the Lord and put their faith in him. If they fail to do so, they will never hear the words, "Today, you will be with me in paradise."

May the well-known words uttered that first Good Friday afternoon be ones that we often address to the Lord; "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

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