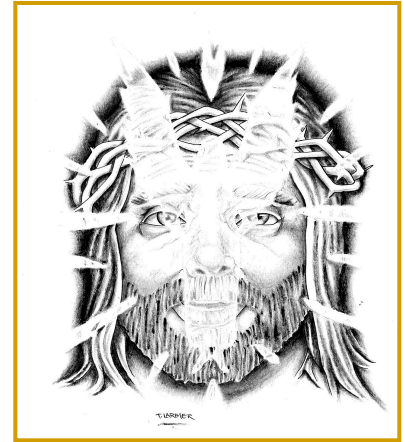


REFLECTION: Lord, I remember a time when I felt excluded from my friends, my neighborhood, and my family... I remember.... I remember....

What is Truth?

The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe
Cycle B | November 24, 2024



Drawing by T. Larimer

WISDOM FROM THE CELLS

I used to be out on the streets with a gun, drugs, and no remorse, distributing bullets and drugs as if it were the end of the world. Who would ever imagine me with a GED and 35 credits short of getting a high school diploma? Not me, not my homies or even my family.

I would live as the days allowed me. I never attended school because I wasn't getting paid. Posted in the hood, selling drugs and having girls and money seemed more essential. What more do I want?

In the eyes of my homies, I was another soldier, shooting to kill with no future. They showed me respect; or was it fear? They only knew that I had no remorse. They couldn't see me as a human being; only as a crazy "G" with a gun in hand ready to kill before being killed. They don't know that I now have a GED, and moreover, that I have goals in my life and skills to survive. In fact, I don't think they know me at all.

In the eyes of my family, I was another trouble maker, another failure in life. They looked at me as a pothead who was up to no good, running with a gang, and with no life ahead of me. But I've been trying to make amends and show them that I am capable of something in life. I want to get out and show them how I've changed. I want to show the homies, my family, and myself that I am not a failure, but rather a creative person full of remorse and a good heart.

Can twelve people who are going to decide my fate look at me as I am now or will they see me as a ruthless gangster with no heart? I pray to God to allow them to see me as the real me.

-Ezequiel, who is now in a California State Prison.

PENITENTIAL RITE

**Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.**
May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.
R. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray:
Lord,
You invite all of us to be with you in your kingdom. Help us to understand that your kingdom begins here on earth in the many ways we relate to the people around us.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord.
R. Amen.

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
grant us peace.

This is Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are we who are called to his supper.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

COMMUNION

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray:
Lord,
You were seen in the eyes of society as a "nobody." You put your body not in a place of luxury, but rather in a place with other "nobodies." Help us to stand with you before Pilate and know that our love for you is reflected in the way we love one another.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **R. Amen.**



OUR FATHER

Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us:
**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

R. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

SIGN OF PEACE

Jesus, you said to your apostles: "I leave you peace, my peace I give you. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom where you live forever and ever. **Amen.**"

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
R. And with your spirit.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: Daniel 7:13-14

As the visions during the night continued, I saw one like a Son of man coming, on the clouds of heaven; when he reached the Ancient One and was presented before him, the one like a Son of man received dominion, glory, and kingship; all peoples, nations, and languages serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not be taken away, his kingship shall not be destroyed.

The Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Second Reading: Revelation 1:5-8

Jesus Christ is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead and ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, who has made us into a kingdom, priests for his God and Father, to him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen. Behold, he is coming amid the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him. All the peoples of the earth will lament him. Yes. Amen. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, " says the Lord God, "the one who is and who was and who is to come, the almighty."

The Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 93:1, 1-2, 5

R. The Lord is king; he is robed in majesty.

The LORD is king, in splendor robed;
robed is the LORD and girt about with strength.

R. The Lord is king; he is robed in majesty.

And he has made the world firm,
not to be moved.

Your throne stands firm from of old;
from everlasting you are, O LORD.

R. The Lord is king; he is robed in majesty.

Your decrees are worthy of trust indeed;
holiness befits your house,
O LORD, for length of days.

R. The Lord is king; he is robed in majesty.

Gospel: John 18:33b-37

Pilate said to Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you say this on your own or have others told you about me?" Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world, my attendants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not here." So Pilate said to him, "Then you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

MEDITATION: TRUE POWER

(through the eyes of peter)

pilate's residence
was palatial
the huge pillars
the fine art were
expressing the power
of the empire

now watching jesus
climb the steps
to pilate's chamber
soldiers were everywhere
showing the strength
of their military equipment
jesus was unarmed
with no army
seemingly no power
in comparison to
this military arrogance

pilate stood up
his whole being
spoke of privilege
clearly he had
been advised
about this meeting
jesus was only
a distraction in
the life of pilate

pilate now standing
before the council:
why have you brought
this one before me?

the eldest began
by saying:
honorable pilate
we would not
bother you
if we did not think
there was
a serious crime
during this past year
this one jesus
has been causing
problems in
the country
the people
are organizing
a rebellion against

our heavy taxation

pilate went over
to where jesus
was standing alone
unprotected and
powerless and said:
so these wise leaders
say that you claim
to be their king
what do you have
to say for yourself?
are you their king?

silence settled
over the room

jesus looked at pilate
and said:
what you say is true

the condemning
cries of the council
were intense
and ugly

all speaking together:
this one will never
be our king!
he is misleading
the people

he is no one
he has no power
no resources

i watched this
mockery of justice
of so many like jesus
in the hands of
the powerful who
are also considered
worthless
seeing two different
kinds of power
our god was redefining
the truly powerful
in his eyes

this opulent society
was dismissing jesus
as a common criminal

but something else
was taking place
as if another veil
was draped
over this scene
an inversion
just like what happened
when we turned over
the tables in the temple
a total reversal
of systems

so this early morning
as all the attention
was being paid
to this roman leader
to these elite
religious leaders
jesus was being
viewed as worthless
without any kind
of power
reflecting on
so many others
that society has
considered
as worthless
as of no value
but with great wealth
within

how many times
during these years
had we visited
so many outcasts?
seen as a waste of time
by many in society
to put effort into
those at the bottom
those excluded
from the temple?

now seeing
the well-prepared
delicacies
surrounding pilate

i noticed the fine
linen of pilate
the golden hem
of his robe
he was a person

of influence
a person of value
a person of importance

in contrast seeing
in the bloody face
of jesus
so many poor whose
clothes spoke
of their apparent
worthlessness

worth less than
the most valuable
animals of the powerful
seeing in the eyes
of jesus
the faces of those
who refused to
believe in this lie
of who is important
and who is not important

jesus was reversing
this forever
by his presence
an unimportant person
standing there
with the supposedly
important people

looking at this scene
watching the faces
of these powerful figures
reflecting on
how jesus himself
could have chosen
this lifestyle but
how he always walked
with those who were
considered worthless

seeing jesus
standing there
it was clear
that he had made
his choice

