

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Nov 20th 2016

Sun Nov 20th - Lk 23:35-43

Who does recognise Jesus as King? Not the leaders (“He saved others...”), not the soldiers (“save yourself!”). Just the thief on his side, who is able to confess his fault (“we are paying for what we did... Jesus, remember me when you enter your Kingdom”).

The leaders are those who sought his death. Since the beginning they managed to charge Jesus with Sabbath violation, blasphemy against the Temple, sorcery (acting “through the prince of the devils”). They brought people to ask “democratically” for the death sentence for Jesus.

The soldiers are those who executed the death sentence. They obeyed orders. They were at the service of the imperial power, the one which could dictate death sentences. But at the end they use their limited power to join in the lynching of Jesus.

The first thief boldly questions the saving power of Jesus (“Aren’t you the Christ?”) For him the only possible salvation is to get down from the cross and escape his own disgrace at the moment.

The one who acknowledges Jesus’ true power is the second thief. He knows Jesus is innocent and His suffering puts him above any other people: He can save others. Salvation for this thief is to be remembered by Him and enter with Him into the eternal Kingdom beyond human death.

And how is it with us? Accepting our own cross, confessing our faults, this allows us to experience the saving power of Jesus. He overcomes our limits and inconsistencies. He doesn’t bring us down from our cross, He takes us high into his eternal Kingdom.

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