



Bringing Home the Word

Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, November 20, 2016

Last Words

By Janel Esker

The following retelling of the crucifixion from the viewpoint of a criminal crucified with Jesus is based on Luke 23.

Someone once said we should say things like “I’m sorry” and “thank you” and “I love you” before we die—things that will ensure all is well. I’m not sure which category my words to Jesus fell into; heck, I’m not sure why I spoke up at all. I guess the criminal who was mocking Jesus irritated me. How could he challenge an innocent man? I’d overheard Jesus’ trial—he’d done nothing wrong. But Jesus didn’t get

angry; he merely looked sad. I didn’t know much about Jesus. I’d heard about his healing, his miracles, his life-changing words. If I’d known him before the cross, maybe my life would have turned out differently.

There was so much noise—so much jeering and mocking. I don’t know where I got the courage to speak, and I wasn’t sure what to say. I just wanted one quiet moment with this holy man. Was he the Son of God? Was he a king? I didn’t know for sure, but I wanted to believe—so I whispered quietly, “Remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

His response blew me away—“Today you will be with me in Paradise.” Paradise? Me? Lowly, evil, crucified me? Then I caught his eye—and I saw love. And peace like I’d never known before. Yes, he was a king—a crucified king. Yes, I would be with him in paradise. And yes, as I took my last breaths, all was indeed well. †

“Paradise?”

Me?

Lowly me?

Evil me?”

A Word From Pope Francis

Hear Jesus’ words as though they were addressed to you....Be ever more docile to the Lord’s word; it is he, it is his word, it is following him that brings to fruition your commitment to witnessing. When your efforts to reawaken faith in your friends seem to be in vain...remember that with Jesus everything changes. The word of the Lord...makes the missionary work of his disciples effective. Following Jesus is demanding, it means not being satisfied with small goals of little account but aiming on high with courage!

—Meeting with young people at Largo Carlo Felice, Cagliari, Italy, September 22, 2013



Sunday Readings

2 Samuel 5:1–3

“And the LORD said to you: ‘You shall shepherd my people Israel.’”

Colossians 1:12–20

“In [his beloved Son] we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

Luke 23:35–43

“‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS REFLECTION

- If you were on the cross next to Jesus, what would your last words to him be?
- This week, think about the last words you’ve said to friends, coworkers, or family members. If they were truly your last, would all be well?

Understanding Sin Today

By Richard M. Gula, SS

There was a time when Catholics thought that living morally was mostly a matter of obeying the law. Sin was like a crime, a transgression of the law. The law was what made an action sinful. Where there was no clear-cut law, there was no questions of sin.

Catholic theology has since come to realize that the legal model for

understanding the moral life and sin is deficient. Laws cannot possibly cover all the decisions that we have to make. The legal model of the moral life too easily makes moral living a matter of repeating the same old behaviors even though we have changed.

The root sense of sin means to be disconnected from God through the failure to love. In sin, we simply don't bother about anyone outside ourselves. Because loving God and loving our neighbor are all tied together, sin will always be expressed in and through our relationships.

In order to rise above the power of evil, we need to open ourselves to the presence

of redeeming love. This love comes to us through others witnessing to justice, truth, and peace. While the presence of original sin may make responsible moral living a demanding task, the presence of redeeming love makes it possible.

One thing that hasn't changed in how we talk about sin is our concept of God's love and mercy. We do not believe that God wants us to be weighed down with a distorted sense of guilt and responsibility. Rather, we believe that we are called to participate more fully in the creative power of God calling us to reconciliation, to reconnect with our best selves, with others, with the world, and with God. †

Source: *Catholic Update*, January 1997

Admonishing Sinners

By Andrew L. Minto, PhD

The parking lot was void of lines to delineate parking spaces, and my car was the only one in the lot. Yet under the wiper blade on the driver's side was a note. Inelegant curses informed me that my parking skills were inferior and that future infractions would not be tolerated. If only admonishing the sinners that all of us are could be addressed so simply...so anonymously. But of course, in reality, this spiritual work of mercy appeals to none of these characteristics. Rather it is the flip side of the obligation to forgive all offenses. While the concept seems easy enough to grasp, the logistics and conditions that come into play require

discernment and mature virtues.

This work of mercy is an expression of divine justice. In the case of any resolution of conflict, the clear promulgation of the law or expectation placed upon the parties involved must be forthcoming. Moreover, the communal context that binds both offender and admonisher in a well-defined relationship also must be spelled out.

The admonishment must contain a clear declaration of what the offense is and why it is wrong. Finally, the correction must be unencumbered by self-righteous indignation. The messenger and message should not get in the way of the penitent's response to the divine call.

As with any human activity, there are bound to be differences of opinion, offenses against charity, and violations of moral law. If the inevitable strains on human relationships are treated with charity, justice, and prudence, then the

unity of the community is ensured.

Admonishing the sinner often has less to do with the people involved than it does the divine presence that unites and works through them. It is not so much about our satisfaction and demand for justice as it is about what God demands and what satisfies his rights that bind us all. †

Source: *Liguorian*, December 2015



Lord, I am grateful for your gentle presence. Remember me even when I forget you.

—From *Grateful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*,
Rev. Warren J. Savage, Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

November 21–26

- Mon. Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Revelation 14:1–3, 4b–5 / Luke 21:1–4
- Tue. St. Cecilia: Revelation 14:14–19 / Luke 21:5–11
- Wed. Weekday: Revelation 15:1–4 / Luke 21:12–19

- Thu. Thanksgiving: Sirach 50:22–24 / 1 Corinthians 1:3–9 / Luke 17:11–19
- Fri. Weekday: Revelation 20:1–4, 11–21:2 / Luke 21:29–33
- Sat. Weekday: Revelation 22:1–7 / Luke 21:34–36

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