

Friday (Oscar Romero)

The human race has climbed to moon, has uncovered the secret of the atom. The Lord's commandment is fulfilled: Subdue the earth! But the absolute human dominion over the earth will be what is proclaimed today: bringing all things of heaven and earth together in Christ. Then humanity hallowed will put under God's reign this world, which is now the slave of sin, and set it at the feet of Christ, and Christ at the feet of God. This is the bringing together that was God's design before the world existed. And when history comes to its end, this will be God's fulfilment: Christ, the sum of all things. All that history has been, all that we do ourselves, good or bad, will be measured by God's design. All that has tried to rebel against God's plan in Christ is false, it will not last; it will be for history's waste heap.

Scripture (Psalm 96:4-8,10)

Great is Yahweh, worthy of all praise, more awesome than any of the gods. It was Yahweh who made the heavens; in his presence are splendour and majesty, in his sanctuary, power and beauty. Give to Yahweh, families of nations, give to Yahweh the glory due to his name! Say among the nations, 'Yahweh is king.' The world is set firm, it cannot be moved. He will judge the nations with justice.

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Christ the King

Thy Kingdom has Come

It seems important for us to ask the same question as Pilate when Jesus appeared before him as a prisoner, bound and bedraggled after being 'roughed up' and spat at by the Sanhedrin the night before and with his own people baying for his blood, (John 18:33-37). Pilate's question might have been more 'You surely can't be a king.'

Jesus admits to being a king only after talking about his kingdom, which is 'not of this world,' explaining that his is a kingdom unlike anything Pilate had known: he had no army to fight for him (and so he was not one seeking power, territory, etc like all other human rulers). Clearly though, Jesus is not talking about ruling in another world, (heaven) when he says 'I am a king. I was born for this.'

It wouldn't make any sense to Pilate for a king to be born for 'this trial', or the death which he knows will follow. He wouldn't know about the resurrection – neither would the Jewish authorities who were, in their mind, on the verge of ridding the world of this troublesome Galilean rabble rouser; neither would Jesus' followers who scattered in fear and dismay when he was arrested, and now were watching his defeat from afar. The explanation Jesus gives for 'this' is 'to bear witness to the Truth', to the plan God has for his people. Pilate's 'What is truth?' shows he doesn't understand. Nor do the leaders and people outside, who can't see Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah.

At his trial in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus admits to being the Messiah and quotes the Prophet Daniel 7 in saying 'You will see the Son of Man coming in power.' To be fair to the Jewish leaders, they would be familiar with this promise of the Messiah from Daniel 7:13-14. Daniel's vision was of increasingly powerful kingdoms rising to power, culminating with the supremely powerful Antiochus Epiphanes. The 'Son of Man' would come with God's power and authority to depose this reign and establish the reign of God. It is hard to see how Jesus at his trial or on the cross could fit the bill of this powerful and victorious person. However, when the Book of Revelation talks of Jesus being 'first born from the dead, the ruler, the Ruler of the kings of earth', (1:5-8) it is looking back on the events and saying that the resurrection marked a breakthrough, a turning point in human history: God's reign was established, on earth.

We too are able to look back to the cross and resurrection and see it as the moment of triumph. So when we pray the 'Our Father', 'Thy Kingdom come' is not a hopeful request that somehow God will make everything better at some future date; it is praying for the Kingdom to come to fulfilment. The prayer describes what it means to live as a subject in God's Kingdom: to live by his will, not mine; to rely on him for life, not on my own powers; to forgive as he does. In living as a subject, I am delivered from evil, and delivered into the life that is truly free, open to God's power, not based on human power. Revelations tells how we have been 'washed from our sins', meaning freed from all the limits we settle for in building worldly kingdoms (in the home, work or on a wider scale). Through Baptism, we become subjects in Christ's Kingdom and not only live by greater visions and different standards that are 'not of this world', we are also charged with building his Kingdom in the world. Our Baptism tells us what Revelations taught: we are kings (and queens), i.e. we have the authority to bring his rule, acting in his name; we are priests, meaning we act as intermediaries between God and all people; and we are prophets, called to speak his word in the world.

Martin Bennett

Monday (Bede Griffiths)

We are passing out of one world, the world of western domination, and entering a new age in which the logical, rational mind of Greek philosophy and Roman law, the economic and political order, the science and technology of the West, will pass away. Our patriarchal culture is passing away at this present moment.

Scripture (Daniel 7:13-14)

I gazed into the visions of the night. And I saw, coming on the clouds of heaven, one like a son of man. He came to the one of great age and was led into his presence. On him was conferred sovereignty, glory and kingship, and men of all peoples, nations and languages became his servants. His sovereignty is an eternal sovereignty which shall never pass away, nor will his empire ever be destroyed.

Tuesday (Evelyn Underhill)

Though we achieve social justice, liberty, peace itself, though we give our bodies to be burned for these admirable causes, if we lack this—the transformation of the natural order by the Eternal Charity—we are nothing. For the kingdom is the Holy, not the moral; the Beautiful, not the correct; the perfect, not the adequate; Charity not law.

Scripture (John 17:14-20,24)

I passed your word on to them, and the world hated them, because they belong to the world no more than I belong to the world. Consecrate them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world, and for their sake I consecrate myself so that they too may be consecrated in the truth. Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, so that they may always see my glory which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

Wednesday (Fr. Michael Ivens, SJ)

The risen Christ, Lord of the world, is at work throughout history bringing to completion the project inaugurated in his lifetime, the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the world and the conquest of every power that opposes it. If God is to effectively reign in his world, there is a 'world' that must be overcome, the world that is incompatible with Christ. With this world and its powers Christ must always be in conflict.

Scripture (Psalm 111:1-6,9)

I give thanks to Yahweh with all my heart, in the meeting place of honest people, in the assembly. Great are the deeds of Yahweh, to be pondered by all who delight in them. Full of splendour and majesty his work, his saving justice stands firm for ever. He gives us a memorial of his great deeds; Yahweh is mercy and tenderness. His works show his people his power in giving them the birthright of the nations. Deliverance he sends his people, his covenant he imposes for ever.

Thursday (Cardinal Newman)

We often heard it said, that the true way of serving God is to serve man, as if religion consisted merely in acting well our part in life, not in direct faith, obedience, and worship: how different is the spirit of the *Our Father* with its three petitions to Almighty God and four referring to the petitioner. Evil round about him, enemies and persecutors in his path, temptation in prospect, help for the day, sin to be expiated, God's will in his heart, God's name on his lips, God's kingdom in his hopes: this is the view it gives us of the Christian. What simplicity! What grandeur!

Scripture (Revelation 1:5-8)

Grace and peace to you from him who is, who was, and who is to come, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the highest of earthly kings. He loves us and has washed away our sins with his blood, and has made us a Kingdom of Priests to serve his God and Father; to him, then, be glory and power for ever and ever, Amen. 'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.