

Thursday of Third Week of Great Lent

“The Kingdom Within” (Regnum Christi Meditation for Thursday * of the Thirty-Second Week in Ordinary Time by Father Edward Hopkins, LC – [Audio version](#) * Luke 17:20-25)

Luke 17:20-37 - Asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus said in reply, “The coming of the kingdom of God cannot be observed, and no one will announce, ‘Look, here it is,’ or, ‘There it is.’ For behold, the kingdom of God is among you.” Then he said to his disciples, “The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. There will be those who will say to you, ‘Look, there he is,’ or ‘Look, here he is.’ Do not go off, do not run in pursuit. For just as lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. But first he must suffer greatly and be rejected by this generation. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man; they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage up to the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Similarly, as it was in the days of Lot: they were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building; on the day when Lot left Sodom, fire and brimstone rained from the sky to destroy them all. So, it will be on the day the Son of Man is revealed. On that day, a person who is on the housetop and whose belongings are in the house must not go down to get them, and likewise a person in the field must not return to what was left behind. Remember the wife of Lot. Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses it will save it. I tell you, on that night there will be two people in one bed; one will be taken, the other left. And there will be two women grinding meal together; one will be taken, the other left.” They said to him in reply, “Where, Lord?” He said to them, “Where the body is, there also the vultures will gather.”

Introductory Prayer: Lord, I believe in your presence in my life. You have called me to share in your faith and love. I trust that you will help me grow closer to you. I love you, Lord, here and now. I will live this day in prayer.

Petition: Lord, help me to understand your Kingdom better.

1. **When?** Since the Pharisees had the wrong notion of the Kingdom of God, they could hardly ask the proper questions concerning it. Their expected kingdom was a worldly kingdom that would cast off foreign domination and restore sovereignty to Israel. But Christ's kingdom is concerned more about the state of the soul and the struggle between good and evil than external nations. The Pharisees' misperception kept them from recognizing Christ and his kingdom. Thousands of years later we, too, can be susceptible to the errors of the Pharisees. For us, a lack of faith can keep us from seeing that the Kingdom of God comes only when we accept Jesus as king of our souls. Only when we allow him to rule and order our lives does his kingdom come. The "when" is now. Now is the moment for me to encounter Christ and make him my king.
2. **Where?** Christ's disciples also struggled to understand the nature of the kingdom. They sought to see "the days of the Son of Man," a powerful reign where Christ was supreme with the entire world subject to him. Yet, Christ comes first to reign in the heart of each person. In my own heart, do I believe in Christ and accept his will? Do I love him and sacrifice myself in order to respond to his will? Am I building the kingdom from my prayer and life of grace?
3. **How?** If the kingdom is here and now, then how do we enter? We enter the same way our King enters – through the door of suffering and perseverance. "First he must suffer greatly and be rejected." Belief is not just a one-time acceptance. Faith must be lived throughout the great and little trials we encounter in life. In this way we make faith and the kingdom more our own. We need to remember that in the end, it is the kingdom — and the King himself — who comes to us, like lighting across the sky.

Conversation with Christ: Dear Jesus, help me to understand your kingdom. Build your kingdom within me, in my thoughts and desires. Become my life and my love. Cut away any distance between us. Make my life the light and salt to spread your kingdom effectively to those with whom I cross paths.

Resolution:

Tonight, I will dedicate a longer and calmer time to examine my conscience. I will look for progress as well as the struggles of the kingdom within me.

**The Gospel of Luke 17:20-37 is read over two days in the Roman Catholic Church. The above meditation is based on Luke 17:20-25, the one below is based on Luke 17:26-37.*

“Living My Encounter with Christ” (based on Friday of the Thirty-Second Week in Ordinary Time by Father Edward Hopkins, LC – [Audio version](#) Luke 17:26-37)

Jesus said to his disciples: “As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man; they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage up to the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Similarly, as it was in the days of Lot: they were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building; on the day when Lot left Sodom, fire and brimstone rained from the sky to destroy them all. So, it will be on the day the Son of Man is revealed. On that day, a person who is on the housetop and whose belongings are in the house must not go down to get them, and likewise a person in the field must not return to what was left behind. Remember the wife of Lot. Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses it will save it. I tell you, on that night there will be two people in one bed; one will be taken, the other left. And there will be two women grinding meal together; one will be taken, the other left.” They said to him in reply, “Where, Lord?” He said to them, “Where the body is, there also the vultures will gather.”

Introductory Prayer: I believe in you, Lord, my companion and strength. I believe that you come out to meet me each day, asking me to depend more on you and less on creatures. I hope in you, Lord, as the one who fills my longing to love and be loved. I love you here and now with my prayer and with my desire to be faithful and generous in the little things you ask of me.

Petition: Lord, help me to put you first in my life

1. **They Were Eating and Drinking:** In the time of Noah and of Lot, God’s judgment was said to come down upon man. Yet the real moment of judgment for each one of us comes immediately upon our own death. It is then that the kingdom will be fully revealed to us, and it will be decided whether we will be part of it or not. But it is in the course of my own life that my option for being received into the kingdom is decided. God comes to me today. How will I respond? My response now and each day determines my eternal place in the kingdom.
2. **Do Not Return to What Was Left Behind:** In most disasters people have little chance to collect belongings; those who try are often lost as a result. The same will be true of the Final Judgment – or at our own death; when Jesus comes, will I be ready? What do I most cherish? What I must hold on to is my relationship with Christ. And this implies in so many ways losing “my life” here. Do I live with the

attitude of losing my life a little more each day, detaching myself from things, activities and people, so as to be freer to love, serve and be with Christ?

3. **Where the Body Is?** “Where Lord?” the disciples ask; where will the day of the Son of man take place? It will take place, says Jesus, wherever you are. Whether we die and encounter Christ in a personal judgment or are alive to encounter the Lord at his Second Coming and the Final Judgment, the reality is the same. Standing next to a saint or a sinner will not alter our fate. Who we know or what contacts we have will do little. Where we are in our relationship with Christ will be the only real determining factor. Where am I, Lord, today, in relationship with you? May this be my only concern!

Conversation with Christ: Dear Jesus, help me to understand your kingdom. Increase my desire to live my life in close relation with you. Order all my activities according to your will, and my relationships according to your heart. “I want whatever you want, because you want it, the way you want it, as long as you want it” (Prayer of Pope Clement XI). Build your kingdom within me, in my thoughts and desires. Become my life and my love. Cut away any distance between us. Make my life the light and salt to spread your kingdom effectively to those with whom I cross paths.

Resolution:

I will give priority to my relationship with Christ. I will make prayer my first act today before every meal.