

Dear Padre,

Can all good people go to heaven after they die, even if they haven't been a Christian? My dad is from India and grew up with another religion. The rest of my family is Catholic. I am afraid that we won't see each other again after we die.

Put your mind at ease. A person who is not a Christian can go to heaven. Heaven is not just for Christians, but for everyone who loves God and responds to God's will in his or her life.

We know that God wants all people to be saved, not just Christians. Jesus began a Church to help people achieve salvation. The Church teaches that those who seek "the truth and [do] the will of God in accordance with their understanding of it can be saved" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1260). What we know as Catholics is that God called us into the Church. It is there that we will work out our salvation. "Since Christ died for all, and since all are called to one and the same destiny, which is divine," we must believe that the Holy Spirit makes a way for everyone, a way that only God knows (*CCC* 1260).

You should pray for your dad and be a faithful Catholic. Perhaps your good example will help him become a Christian. Even if he never becomes a Christian, your prayers will help him work out his salvation without the benefit of the sacraments and a believing community. If he does what is right, God will reward him.

The Redemptorists
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A WORD FROM Pope Francis

The face of God revealed by Jesus is that of a Father concerned for and close to the poor....We do not find him when and where we want, but see him in the lives of the poor, in their sufferings and needs, in the often inhuman conditions in which they are forced to live.

MESSAGE, WORLD DAY OF THE POOR, NOVEMBER 14, 2021



Our Parish Community

November 20, 2022
*Our Lord Jesus Christ,
King of the Universe (C)*
2 Sm 5:1-3
Col 1:12-20
Lk 23:35-43

Hail, Christ Our King

The readings for today's feast create a collage of images that capture different characteristics of Christ's kingship. "Shepherd" assures us his kingly rule is characterized by tenderness. "King of Israel" locates him squarely within human time and space. "Image of the Invisible God" acclaims his divine origin. "Firstborn of all Creation" places him over the entire created world. "Source of all Created Things" acknowledges him as the model after which all things were fashioned. "Head of the Body, the Church" underscores the intimacy and interrelationship between him and all those joined to him through faith and baptism. "Firstborn of the Dead" acclaims his resurrection and guarantees the resurrection of those who will follow him into death.

The Gospel's image of Christ as the crucified king clearly interprets all the other images. He is a shepherd who protects his flock with his life, a king who rules with dedication despite shame and defeat, divine yet accepted death on a cross. He was God who became a

vulnerable child of earth, a simple man who offered himself as sacrifice, the one through whom we will all enjoy resurrection from the dead.

In the last words of the Gospel, Jesus opens the gates of his kingdom to a repentant sinner: "Today you will be with me in Paradise." This is what all of us long to hear, words that are empty when coming from one who has no authority, but charged with power when spoken by the one who is king over us all.

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

Editor's note: This is Sr. Dianne Bergant's final reflection for *Our Parish Community*. She will continue to serve as professor of biblical studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. When a new liturgical cycle begins on November 27, 2022, we will welcome a new reflections writer, Fr. Joseph Jukialis. The people of Liguori Publications thank Sr. Dianne for her three years of insightful reflections. We wish her well.

FOR Reflection

- Which image of Christ inspires you? Why?
- What must you do to allow Christ to have sway in your life?

