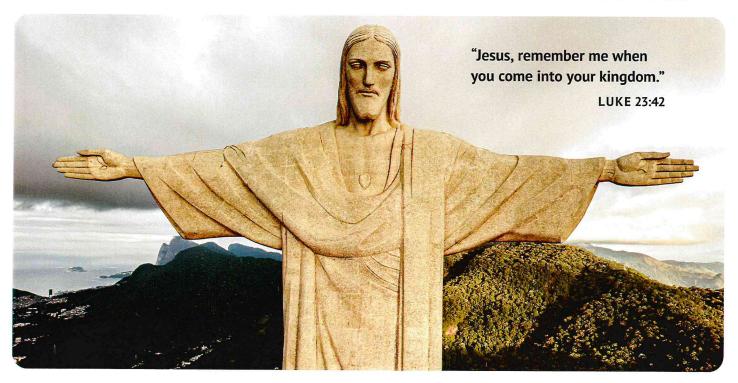
## Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe (C)



2 Samuel 5:1-3 / Colossians 1:12-20 / Luke 23:35-43



# The Hero King

FR. JOSEPH JUKNIALIS

ome think of a myth as something once presumed to be true but discovered to be false. For example, we say it's a myth that Christopher Columbus discovered America. There is, however, another quite different meaning to "myth," as in a story that helps us understand life and how to negotiate it. Such myths are often centered around heroes who overcome great odds for the sake of the greater good. Star Wars and Luke Skywalker is one such myth. The Lord of the Rings trilogy and Frodo Baggins is another. These are myths capturing the need for courage and commitment to the good at the hero's own expense. We often find ourselves wishing we could be like these heroes.

The biblical story of the Hebrew people can be thought of as such a myth, culminating in the story of Jesus. It differs from those other myths in that this story is not fiction. It is a saga that helps us understand and negotiate life as we live it. It culminates with the sacrificial death of the one we call King of the Universe. This King is a servant-king, one who gives his life for us so that we might live. Despite being urged by religious leaders and soldiers and the thief on the cross to save himself, he resists. Saving himself is not what he is about. Jesus is the King whose true myth we tell whenever we come together.

**Editor's note:** This is Fr. Jospeh Juknialis' final reflection for *Our Parish Community* bulletins. The new liturgical cycle begins next Sunday, November 30, 2025, and we will welcome three new reflection authors: Miguel Dulick, Ann M. Garrido, and Fr. Thomas M. Santa, CSsR, the president and publisher of Liguori Publications. We thank Fr. Joe for his three years of insightful reflections and wish him well.

Reflect

What does servant-leadership mean to me in my job, my community, my home?

# Dear Padre,

# Why is a US secular holiday like Thanksgiving on the Church's liturgical calendar?

Since November 1969, the Proper Calendar offers a Thanksgiving Day Mass for US dioceses. While it also includes Independence Day, no suggestion is made for other civic holidays (Memorial Day, Labor Day, etc.). Instead, the Roman Missal provides "Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions" that are suited to these observances (Ordo #5, GIRM 368-378).



In the United States, November is associated with giving thanks to God. In 1623-three years after the Pilgrims sailed to this land on the Mayflower—a severe drought threatened their crops. Consequently, a day of prayer was observed, an abundant rain saved the harvest, and a Day of Thanksgiving was established. In 1863, President Lincoln issued a proclamation for "Thanksgiving and Praise to Our Beneficent Father" on the last Thursday of November (later moved to the fourth Thursday).

However, thanking God isn't just a one-day event; it's meant to be a perennial practice. Recall the lesson of the ten lepers healed by Jesus, only one of whom returned to thank him. (See Luke 17:11–19.) People who don't take their blessings for granted return thanks to God in prayer. Therefore, offer brief prayers of gratitude to God throughout the day, every day, for such gifts as your health and faith, the freedoms allowed in this country, "thy daily bread," and the Eucharist—a word that means "thanksgiving."

"Become what you pray"—a grateful disciple of our Lord! •

Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR / DearPadre.org

## Monday November 24 St. Andrew Düng-Lac,

Priest, and Companions. Martyrs Dn 1:1-6, 8-20

Lk 21:1-4

#### Tuesday November 25

Weekday Dn 2:31-45 Lk 21:5-11

#### Wednesday November 26

Weekday Dn 5:1-6. 13-14, 16-17,

23 - 28

Lk 21:12-19

## Thursday

November 27 Thanksgiving Day (US)

Sir 50:22-24 1 Cor 1:3-9

Lk 17:11-19

## Friday

November 28 Weekday Dn 7:2-14

Lk 21:29-33

### Saturday

November 29 Weekday Dn 7:15-27

Lk 21:34-36

## Sunday

November 30 First Sunday of Advent Is 2:1-5

Rom 13:11-14 Mt 24:37-44



#### A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV

Listen to [Christ's] offer of love and become his one family: in the One Christ, we are one. This is the path to follow together, among ourselves but also with our sister Christian churches, with those who follow other religious paths, with those who are searching for God, with all women and men of good will, in order to build a new world where peace reigns! **HOMILY, MAY 18, 2025** 

