

Catholic Church of the Beatitudes
Santa Barbara, CA

Feast of the Cosmic Christ, Nov. 20, 2016, Year C

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Reflections on **2 Sm 5:1-3, Col 1:12-20, Lk 23:35-43** (2016-1120)

It's been a wild couple of weeks. How appropriate that we should be celebrating this evening our exemption from the craziness of it all. For those of us struggling to be disciples of Jesus, nothing has changed, and although we are *in* this world, and affected by this world, we declare in faith that we are not *of* this world.

It is times like these that make us more grateful than ever that we are not disciples of Donald, not disciples of Hillary, not disciples of Bernie, not disciples of anyone other than our precious Jesus. We have been following him alone, we continue to follow him alone and we will always follow him alone. In that regard, nothing has changed.

Paul's letter to the Colossians, from which we just read, is so hopeful. It encourages us to give thanks to God who has delivered us from the powers of darkness and spiritually transferred us from this country, in which we live, to the *Kindom* of Jesus, who has redeemed us and forgiven our sins, including the grave sin of complicity in the culture of materialism and militarism of the most opulent and dominant nation in history. We were all born into and immersed in this culture, and although we try hard to insulate ourselves from the aspects of this culture that are not in line with the values of the gospel we

hear proclaimed week after week in our church, we will, but for God's grace, always fall short of where we would like to be. We are through Jesus forgiven for our shortcomings and redeemed from our own humanity. May God help us to remember to put the credit for that where it deserves to be, solely in the love of God through Jesus.

Paul's letter suggests that everything that has ever come into being in all of creation, including the powers and principalities which seek to hold us and control us, came into being through Jesus and everything is, in fact, under his dominion. When we follow Jesus, we follow the One, and every other leader, or president, or general, or bishop, or magistrate judge, or boss are all second to the One, and under the One, and loved by the One, and invited by the One, and joined to us by the One.

We are already in eternity, from infinity before we were born to infinity after this earthly life, and Jesus has been, is now, and forever shall be with us throughout that eternity. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. If we choose, we can live in that love no matter what changes around us.

In Luke's gospel it seems that everyone is taunting Jesus: the rulers, the soldiers, the convicted criminal hanging beside him.

Nearly everyone is calling him a failure because the powers and principalities seem to have had their way with him, they seem to have won and proved him and his gospel of love just so much folly. The only one in this scene who dares to believe in something beyond the apparent reality is the other convicted criminal to whom Jesus proclaims, while he is still hanging on a cross, "Today you are with me in Paradise."

We need to have the faith that our gospel is true, that love will prevail in spite of the apparent reality, and we need to hold fast to that belief even when taunted by the realists and the pragmatists and the fear mongers and those who would tell us that might and personal gain and being on top are more important than love.

Tonight we celebrate the Feast of the Cosmic Christ, the ruler of everything in the universe, the eternal unchanging One. Noth-

ing that matters most has changed, even though it looks like we have our work cut out for us if we are to be instruments of God's love in the world. So... if we have loved God with all of our hearts and with all of our strength and with all of our wills, and if we have loved our neighbors as ourselves, nothing changes. We just continue as we always have and we pray that those who come to earthly power will see by our example that to live in the love of God is why we are here and is the only path to deep peace and joy.

Above all we continue in gratitude for God and for each other. We are (with all of our humanity and shortcomings), along with Jesus and the criminal on his right and the sick and the poor and the cast-outs and the peacemakers and all other people of faith, we are all already in Paradise. Tonight we proclaim that "Love is Lord of heaven and earth." How can we keep from singing?