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Christ the King - 20 November 2022

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20 November 2022

Our Lord Jesus Christ King of the Universe

Reflection by Mary Coloe

Introduction

While the world seeks power through pomp and display, Jesus displays the power of God's reign on a Cross. Peace begins where there is generosity, forgiveness and concern about others. This is what Jesus came to offer and the power that we celebrate in today's feast.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you lifted us out of the power of darkness.
Lord, have mercy.

You give us forgiveness for our sins.
Christ, have mercy.

You came in the name of the Father.
Lord, have mercy.

First Reading

2 Samuel 5:1-3

The reading takes us back 3000 years when Israel was a group of twelve tribes facing opposition from the Philistines. Saul had been their leader, but now a new leader is needed. Listen to what they want, and to what God wants.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 121:1-5. R. cf. v. 2

Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

When David was made King, he wanted to build a house of God in Jerusalem. This was to unify the tribes into one nation with one house of worship. Walking towards the presence of God is cause for great joy.

Second Reading

Colossians 1:12-20

In this reading we shift across to modern day Turkey to a place called Colossae. Imagine the many Greek and Roman temples in this city asserting the power of the Roman gods. This is what Paul is up against.

Gospel Reading

Luke 23:35-43

We see the crucified Jesus mocked and ridiculed by various figures. Contrasting them, a criminal crucified with Jesus recognises our Lord's kingship even as Jesus lies broken on the cross. In return, Christ assures him of his salvation.

Reflection

Today's liturgy brings to an end the yearly liturgical cycle and concludes with the great festival honouring Christ as King. This is quite a recent feast day, inaugurated in 1925 by Pope Pius XI. This was a time in our world's history when the first Great War was over, but there were signs in Europe that peace was illusory. The feast was to be a reminder that though world powers may fail, there is a power for peace within the world that will not fail. The reign of Christ has been established, and the values of peace and justice are possible for those who seek this reign of God.

As an image, the 'kingdom' of God is archaic, and if taken literally, is wrong. Because the English term 'kingdom' has come to be equated with male military and political power, the expression 'kingdom of God' no longer conveys the prophetic and compassionate model of leadership as expressed in Ezekiel 34. 'I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice' (Ezekiel 34:15-16). While some today use 'the reign of God' as an alternative, I prefer the expression 'kindom' of God, for its evocation of kinship, intimacy and being in relationship. Kindom better reflects a theology of being 'children of God'.

The readings begin with the choice of David, to be the leader of all the twelve tribes of Israel, and not just leader of the southern tribes. While the people speak of kingship, the words of God speak of 'shepherd'. 'You are the man who shall be shepherd of my people.' David, as the youngest in his family had been a shepherd in Bethlehem, his home village. He knows the duties expected of shepherding the people – guiding, nurturing the frail, leading them to nourishment, guarding them from harm and predators. The shepherd is attuned to the needs of the flock, and not to his own comfort, safety, power or status. Shepherd leadership is the model God sees in David and is the model expected of leaders of God's people. Later, the prophet Ezekiel will describe a time when Israel's leaders fail, and then God has to act to be the Shepherd of the people (Ezekiel 34).

Paul's letter is a hymn of praise to Jesus, possibly existing within the community liturgies prior to Paul using it here in this letter. Colossae was a city and its remains

in modern day Turkey are close to Ephesus. The community probably included both Jews and Gentiles with both groups influenced by the Hellenistic culture of Ancient Greece. The hymn expresses a way of thinking that this world was governed by a power of Evil, a power of darkness, but, through Jesus, believers have been liberated from this power to live with the life of God. In speaking of Jesus as the image of God, and as the first-born of all creation, the hymn draws upon the Wisdom poems of ancient Israel, which Paul's audience would recognise. In God's act of creation and then redemption, Christ is the Wisdom of God and thus all things and all powers are subservient to Christ.

Living in Colossae, the Jesus followers were surrounded by obvious signs of the might and power of Empires – firstly the Greeks, and in their time, the Romans. Christians could not ignore the Temples built in the name of these powers, and the civic processions to honour them. In the face of such Imperial power, Paul asserts that real authority lies with Jesus, the son loved by God and now operative in their community. These two readings present the paradox of Jesus as the shepherd, and yet the one given power from God.

While the world seeks power through pomp and display, Jesus displays the power of God's reign on a Cross. The values of this world, which lead to the horrors of Gallipoli, Hiroshima, Cambodia, Ukraine, need to be turned upside down for true peace to break out. Wars begin with greed and selfishness, whether on a world scale or the wars within the family home, and ruthless competition in the marketplace. Peace begins where there is generosity, forgiveness and concern about others. This is the 'kingdom' that Jesus came to offer and the power that we celebrate in today's feast.

The cycle of Luke's Gospel comes to a fitting end with the image of the crucified Saviour offering life in God's gracious love to a dying criminal. The heavens are opened for those who desire to live in God.

May the Good News of Luke touch our hearts bringing life, joy and peace.



Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

As we rejoice in God's house, we have sure knowledge that God will care for us and listen to our needs.

Petitions

We pray for the leaders of our Church that they will show the world through their lives and leadership that Jesus is truly the King and Lord of the Universe.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all the leaders of our world that instead of finding disappointment in the things of this world that they will be inspired to look to the joys of the next world.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all the sick who have not yet known Jesus as their Lord. Bring them to faith and peace in that knowledge.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all of us gathered here at the end of the liturgical year. May the coming year bring us greater faith and knowledge of the depth of the love of God as we move to the conclusion of our Plenary Council and the work of the 2023 Synod on Synodality.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all those who are suffering in our community. May they find solace and comfort in the love shown to them by their carers and family.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all those that grieve for family and friends who have died in our community. May they understand in the depths of their hearts that all of us have been offered a place in the next life.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

As our liturgical year draws to a close we look back on all the good things that we have been gifted us with and know in faith that you will answer our prayers. We pray through the power of the Spirit and in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Title	AOV1	AOV2	GA	CWB	CWBII	S&S1	S&S2
All creatures of our God and king			395	618	446		
Alleluia! Sing to Jesus!	191		371	619	449		
By your kingly power, O risen Lord			352	633	352		
Christ is the king! O friends rejoice				641	398		
Christ is the world's light				643	467		
Christ our Lord, the prince of ages				644	399		
Come, our almighty king				659			
Festival canticle: Worthy is Christ					371		
Forth in the peace of Christ we go			495	681	489		
Hail Redeemer, king divine!			390	703	400		
Holy God, we praise your name		129	411	710	504		
Holy Father, God of might			424	705	503		
I rejoiced						84	
Jesus, remember me	152		308		526		
Let us go rejoicing (Halligan)							278
Let us go rejoicing (Angrisano)							279
Lift high the cross					537		
Praise, my soul, the king of heaven	78			789	588		
Qué alegría/I rejoiced						85	
Rejoice! The Lord is king				799	377		
To Christ, the prince of peace				846			
To Jesus Christ, our sovereign king				847	401		

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 121: *Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.*

	CWB	GA	JOBC	JOBF	LPC	PM
Psalm 121	338	72	pg. 108		pg. 177	pg. 96

Music selections by Michael Mangan

We rejoice (SYJ) *Based on Ps 121/122* [Gathering]

Look at the cross (TT. SYJ) [Gifts, Communion]

Hearts on fire (SHOF) [Recessional Vs 2 & 3]