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Christ the King - 26 November 2023

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26 November 2023

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

Reflection by Anthony Doran

Introduction

We have come to our last Sunday of the liturgical year and our solemn feast of Christ the King of the Universe. Rather than in the wealthy and powerful, our King resides in the least and little ones of this world. His throne, the cross of crucifixion. Is this the King we are prepared to follow; in whose glory we wish to share?

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you are the Good Shepherd. Lord have mercy.

You seek the lost. Christ have mercy.

You are King of all. Lord have mercy.

First Reading

Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17

For the Old Testament, the qualities of a good king are also the qualities of a good shepherd. Unlike the evil shepherds who fail in their care of the people, in Ezekiel's prophecy, God is the best and truest of shepherds.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 22:1-3, 5-6, R. v. 1

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

This well-known psalm expresses the hope we have in God who tends us as a shepherd tends the flock. Peace, security and plenty are ours in such good and tender care.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28

The kingship of Christ finds its source in the Resurrection: Christ is the first-fruit of all who have fallen asleep, destroying death in the process. So now, all is subject to his reign.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 25: 31:46

A final, eschatological parable telling of the coming of the Son of Man and the judgement he brings. We are judged not on our wealth or prestige, but on how we have treated the least of the Lord's sisters and brothers: 'as often as you did this to one of the least of my brothers and sisters, you did it to me.'

Reflection

A few months ago in May, many of us were captivated by the coronation of His Majesty, King Charles III. You might have been intrigued by the pomp and pageantry; you might have been awed by the variety of colourful robes and jewels. You might have been non-plussed by the whole event.

But this Sunday, we acknowledge Christ as our King.

The kingship of Christ is radically different from anything which we might see in this world. Our first reading from the Prophet Ezekiel tells us something of this. For our king cares for us as a shepherd cares for his sheep. In cultures and civilizations where the people have experience in farming and agriculture – as it was for the people of Israel – the metaphor of the shepherd is a rich one. While shepherds exercise ultimate authority over their flock, they are intimately close to their sheep, surrounding them with care and thoughtfulness. Knowing each of the sheep by name, knowing whether they are doing well or not, leading them forwards with much prudence. This is why Sacred Scripture often compares leaders of the people, kings, and even God to shepherds. The image is a rich one: the image is a true one.

The Son of God, who we acclaim today as Christ our King, has certainly taught us that his kingdom is different from all that we might see in this world. Our long reading of Matthew's Gospel has come to its conclusion. The scene set before us today has Christ our King seated in glory at the end of all time. And our King judges us on how well or not we have proclaimed his kingdom. And we proclaim his kingdom when we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, when we welcome the stranger, when we clothe the naked, when we visit the sick and the imprisoned. To do all these things goes against everything of the so-called wisdom of this world. It is to proclaim that the smallest and the weakest have the best seats in the kingdom. It is to proclaim that power and wealth and being first are not the values on which this kingdom relies. It is to proclaim that ultimate strength lies in vulnerability. It is to proclaim our faith that the Wood of the Cross is, in fact, our Tree of Life.

And this is how we are judged.

Not by how many rosaries or novenas or chaplets we have said. But on how well we have become more like Christ, our Shepherd King, caring for the smallest and weakest in the Kingdom. And when we have done our best to do all this, when we have exhausted our efforts in proclaiming this kingdom in word and deed, then will we hear the words: 'Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world.'

Coming as it does on this final Sunday of the Church's liturgical year, this solemnity proclaims the fact that Christ presides over the whole of history.

Christ, our King, who is...

Yesterday and today.

The beginning and the end.

Alpha and Omega.

All time belongs to him and all the ages.

To him be glory and power through every age forever and ever.

Amen.



*I am the Alpha
and the Omega.*

Rev 1:8

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

Let us pray together for the least in the kingdom and for our needs and the needs of our world.

Petitions

We pray for Pope Francis and the leaders of our Church. May they be true shepherds of their people and lead them with gentleness and compassion.

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

We pray for the leaders of our world that they may be aware that all power comes from God and that they have a great responsibility to care for the least of those in their care.

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

We pray for all monarchs that they understand their role whether it be ceremonial or in governance. This role comes from God and may they therefore direct all their works towards good.

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

We pray for all those who work in the caring industries. May they be encouraged by the Holy Spirit to always work towards the best level of care that they can provide and may they be rewarded for their good work.

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

We pray for all those who have died in our community. May they be brought to life in Christ and may those who mourn understand this in hope.

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

We pray for ourselves as a community of faith. May we always care for those who need to be fed, clothed, visited or cared for in any way. Let us not neglect any of the little ones of the kingdom.

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

Conclusion

Father, as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of the kingdom, we place all these needs before you in the sure hope of compassion and mercy. We make our prayer in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Title	AOV1	AOV2	AOVK	CWB	CWBII	GA
All creatures of our God and king				618	446	395
All the ends of the earth	76					420
Alleluia! Sing to Jesus!	191			619	449	371
Because the Lord is my shepherd	66					
By your kingly power, O risen Lord				633	352	352
Christ is the king! O friends rejoice				641	398	389
Christ is the world's light				643	467	
Christ our Lord, the prince of ages				644	399	
Closing prayer			72			
Come, our Almighty King				659		
Festival Canticle: Worthy is Christ					371	
Forth in the peace of Christ we go				681	489	495
Glory be to God the Father				686		422
Hail Redeemer, king divine!				703	400	390
Holy God we praise your name		129		710	504	411
Holy Father, God of might				705	503	424
Lift high the cross					537	
Like a shepherd	160				538	467
Love divine, all loves excelling				740	552	463
Praise my soul, the King of Heaven	78			789	588	
Rejoice! The Lord is King				799	377	
Shepherd me, O God	33				597	24
The living God, my shepherd is				827		
The Lord is my shepherd (Boniwell)	26			830	619	506
The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want	144			833	620	473
To Jesus Christ, our sovereign king				847	401	
Wake, awake! for night is flying				853		

Title	AOVNG	S&S1	S&S2
Alleluia! Sing to Jesus		97	
In the day of the Lord		121	
Jesus Christ is Lord			327
Mighty king			328
Shepherd me, O God		59	
The Lord is my shepherd (Blakesley)	127		250

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 22: *The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.*

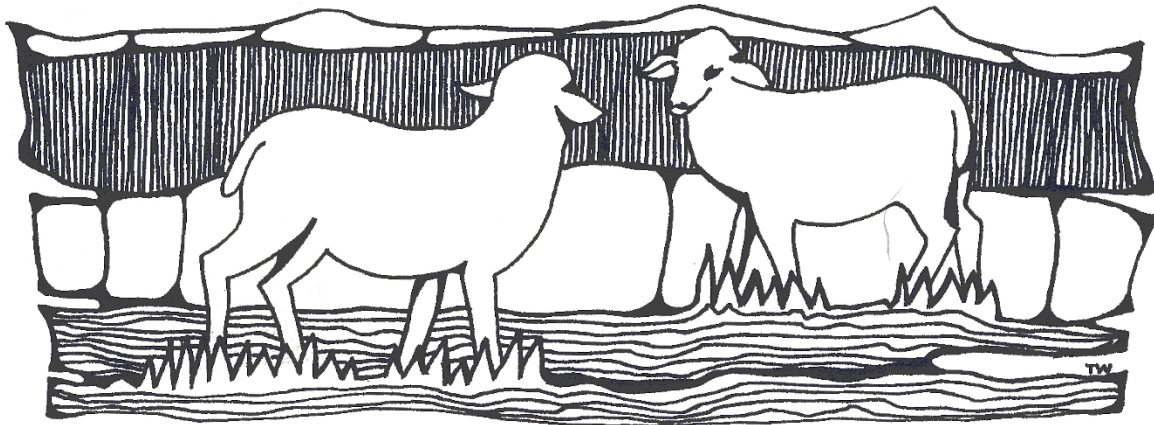
	CWB	GA	JOBA	LPA	PM
Psalm 22	34a/51/589/590	23/25	p. 34	p. 172	p. 18

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Hearts on fire (SHOF) [Gathering, Recessional]

You are my shepherd (FWS) *Based on Ps 22/23* [Gifts, Communion]

Whatever we do (DOM) *Based on Mt 25:34-45* [Gathering, Gifts, Recessional]



I shall be a true shepherd. Ezek 34:15