

CHRIST THE KING, Cycle C

Let us pray:

O Lord, amazing God, we rejoice that you are the King of our lives.

In You may we find true freedom and life.

Fill us with Your Holy Spirit.

Open our minds and hearts to Your powerful, creative Word.

A Reading from the second Book of Samuel (5: 1-3)

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Responsorial Psalm

Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

I rejoiced because they said to me we will go up to the house of the Lord.

Jerusalem, built as a city with compact unity.

To it the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord.

We give thanks to the name of the Lord.

Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord. (Psalm 122)

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Colossians (1:12-20).

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Lord be with you,

And also with you.

A Reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke (23: 35-43).

Glory to You, O Lord.

(May Christ's word be in my mind+ on my lips+ and in my heart+.)

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

1st Reading – 2 Samuel 5: 1-3

David was always regarded as the ideal king. When the hopes for a messiah began to grow in the Jewish people, it was natural for the messiah to be thought about as a son of David. Kingship was thought about in two ways: the first was to see a king as *the sacramental expression of Yahweh*. This passage stresses this side of the picture. With this ideal, the king was to be a shepherd caring for his people. He represented the divine Shepherd that we find in Psalm 23. But another attitude about kingship – a much more realistic one -- was that it could easily degenerate into tyranny. Chapter 8 of 1 Samuel warns about this type of king. Jesus, of course, comes to us as the first type of king to help us endure the tyranny of the second type – too often the actual experience of Jews and Gentiles alike. (Reginald Fuller, http://liturgy.slu.edu/Christ KingC112110/the word_indepth.html)

What do you think about this reading?

We are your “bone and flesh” – what is meant here?

What does this have to do with us who are Christians?

2ND READING -- COLOSSIANS 1: 12-20

This is from a Christian hymn probably used at baptisms.

What do some of these phrases mean to you . . .

What images of Jesus particularly speak to you ?

Scholars suggest that this letter was written most likely in the 80's A.D. in reaction to false teachers among the Christian groups. Influenced by the Greek culture of their day, there were beliefs that regarded angels and other ‘spirits’ as rulers of the universe. They were associated with stars and new moons and pagan rituals. These people wanted Jesus to be seen as subordinate to these ‘deities,’ since by his incarnation they viewed him as being contaminated by human ‘flesh.’ This writer firmly tries to correct this view with imagery that is profound and beautiful. (Celebration, Nov. 2001)

Jesus personifies (incarnates) the wisdom and goodness of God who was and is forever present in creation and redemption. It is one and same God who creates and redeems (frees).

THE GOSPEL -- LUKE 23: 35-45

What two reactions to Jesus are seen here?

Who is the only one to call Jesus by name?

What does this mean to you? How is this a story of conversion?

What kind of Kingship do we see here?

Why does the Church give us this picture of Christ, the King?

Jesus chose to exercise his authority as service and forgiveness. He reigns not from a throne, but from the cross. The Jesus who is worshipped today as Lord of lords and King of kings does not Lord it over others, but, rather, he loves and leads all who will follow him to the kingdom of eternal life, peace, and glory.

(Celebration, Nov. 2001)

Bishop Fulton J. Sheen said once in his TV show of 50 years ago:

“We have a God who stumbled to His throne!”

Indeed we might say that the God we find in Jesus flunked Logic 101 – unless, of course, the system of logic allows for the factor of overwhelming, redeeming love: God’s amazing love!

Jesus -- by his life, death and resurrection – assures us that with God’s power in our lives there is strength in weakness, there is hope in disgrace, there is the seed of new life in the stench of death. Amen!

(“Bringing Home the Word,” St. Anthony Mess. 11/21/04)

*If you stopped believing in Jesus today,
how would it matter to you?*

REFLECTION:

In Jesus Christ – especially on the cross – we see who God is.

**Jesus died, separated from all that others would call holy – outside Jerusalem, the Holy City, on cursed ground, a scandal to all –
rejected by those with power and prestige.**

**When we look to Jesus, call Him by name, and accept His assurance
that God is with us even in suffering and death –
then we know the power of the Crucified One: Christ the King.**

**We are freed from illusions about false wisdom, false power, false struggles
for security and prestige.**

We are creatures; we are weak.

But when the ‘foundations shake,’ Jesus assures us that God is there.

**To hear and accept Jesus’ Word of the Cross is to be free to live with joy
and purpose and service – and to someday to die in peace – shalom!**

Jesus our King – free us and open us to Your Kingdom of life!

(John Dwyer and Paul Tillich)

The Mass is a remembering and reliving of all of this.

**THE LITURGICAL YEAR begins again with the 1st Sunday of /Advent:
A YEARLY CYCLE THAT BRINGS US AN EVER-DEEPENING
EXPERIENCE OF JESUS' LIFE, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION.**

Another reflection on Christ as King by John Kavanaugh, S.J.:

Jesus is the king who serves the other. He is the king who dies for the other. He is the king who is ridiculed, scorned, and mocked. He is also powerless – or so it seems. Dying on his cross-throne, he is taunted for not saving himself. He is unguarded. This is a king who is a scandal, a stumbling block – an earth-shaking revolution. *This crucified king is also the secret key to Christ's uniqueness. There is none other like him in the fables or history of the human consciousness. No cult or culture could dream him , , , God has spoken, become enfleshed, in a way that defies human cleverness.* Our hunger for pre-eminence, for dominance, for power and self-importance –is spurned. Christ dismantles the triangle of desire, violence and retribution. In Christ there is no envy, greed or lust for power. In fact, such things are revealed as what they are: evil and destructive. Jesus, the innocent king who executes no one, is executed. Christ the king is the only king to embody such principle. *Jesus is the sole king who saves fallen humanity from its twisted ways.* In this respect he is truly original – exceptional –the divine challenge to a world of tyranny and injustice. And it is precisely *here* that he is “*the image of the invisible God, the first-born – in him everything in heaven and on earth was created*” . . . it is here that he makes “peace through the blood of his cross.”

(http://liturgy.slu.edu/ChristKingC112110/the_word_engaged.html)

Let us pray:

May we see Christ's glory in the faces of those in need, in those who suffer.

Christ, our King, be with us!

Petitions . . .

May our love for Jesus and his kingdom continue to rescue us from the power of darkness and death. Christ, our King, be our light!

We pray for all world leaders . . .

O Lord of justice and compassion, open us to Your Spirit of truth, courage, and peace. Christ, our King, be in us!

We pray also for ourselves that we may learn more and more how to bring the presence of Christ into our everyday world. Amen.

SONG: “We Remember” by Marty Haugen