

Sermon 23.03.2025

Christ the King



Imagine you have just had an invitation to a royal Garden Party or an event to receive an award in the presence of royalty. How would you feel? How would you dress? How would you behave?

I was fortunate to be invited to Buckingham Palace to receive my Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award along with a friend from school and we each were able to take someone with us, and I invited my younger sister Jackie. All the preparation we did to attend that special event. Many years ago Janet and I sang at an international singing event at Addington Palace, what used to be the home of the Royal School of Music. We did not know when we signed up for the course that we were all invited to sing at Westminster Abbey for a special event. We sat in the Choir stalls with the Queen and Prince Philip sat in their special seats at the end of the choir stalls. We did not know at the time but we were then invited to the garden party held at Lambeth Palace.



Imagine how excited and privileged the members of that international choir on the course felt about attending those two events in one day. At those events, the Queen and Prince Philip were doing their duty, supporting the achievement of other people.

Today we are asked to look at Christ the King, to think about the truth that Jesus Christ reigns over all creation, not as a monarch as we see our monarch in King Charles, but as the eternal King whose kingdom is not of this world. Today's feast is celebrated at the end of the liturgical year, before our new Christian year with Advent next week, and it asks us to re-examine what it truly means for Christ to be King in our lives, our communities, and our world.

When we think of kingship, we think of images of crowns, thrones, and regal processions. Yet, the kingship of Christ is different. In our reading from Colossians, it reminds us that "The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation..." "He is the head of the body, the church..." Jesus did not come to dominate us through power or wealth as he grew up in a family just as we did. Jesus was put to death for being a king. Our reading from Luke reminds us of how people mocked him as he was crucified, all but one of the other men on his cross who believed in Him. Jesus wore a crown that was woven from thorns, and his throne was the wooden cross. Here he still reigned over us through serving, loving, and laying down his life for his people.



Saint Paul reminds us that Jesus "humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God exalted him and gave him the name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:8-9). The power of Christ the King is rooted in his self-giving love and his victory over sin and death. Throughout his short ministry Jesus proclaimed that the Kingdom of God was at hand and you may be thinking about what that means to us in today's troubled world that we live in. Jesus's kingdom is not a political world or a realm that is defined by borders that we see erected in today's world; rather, it is a kingdom of justice, peace, and mercy, which is established in the hearts of those who follow him. Christ's rule is one of compassion, forgiveness, and inclusion and His invitation extends to all people, especially the lost, the lonely, and the suffering.

In the Gospel of John, when Pilate asks Jesus if he is a king, Jesus responds: "My kingdom is not of this world... I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice" (John 18:36-37). This gospel asks us to recognise that Christ is King and we will hear him if we listen for his voice

when we work, rest and take time to pray. If we listen for his voice we can seek his truth, and this will allow his teachings to shape our daily lives.



What does it mean for us, today, to proclaim Christ as King? It allows us to follow His example to guide our choices in life, our relationships, and when looking at our priorities. It helps us to think about how we can play a part, including through prayer to strive for justice, peace, and to show mercy in our daily lives in the way we live, work, and pray. For each of us to acknowledge Christ as King we need to have Jesus as the centre of our lives. We need to trust his guidance, even when it challenges us to step beyond our comfort zones and work or live in different way to what we are used to.

Each of us are called to be His special ambassadors in a todays broken world locally and nationally. We can take part in this role when we forgive those who wrong us, serve those in need, and speak out against injustice. This helps us to make visible the reign of Christ the King. His kingdom grows wherever his followers show and share his love and truth.

Our world today is often marked by division, conflict, and uncertainty. Today's feast of Christ the King reminds us of the enduring hope we have in Jesus and the part we have to play in healing the brokenness of the world, even in our small communities. There are no earthly powers or circumstances that can diminish the authority and mercy of our Lord. As we come to the close of the liturgical year, we will again look forward to the fullness of his kingdom, which is a special time when every tear will be wiped away, and peace will reign.



Today let us pray for the grace to welcome Christ the King into our hearts anew. We can pray that we will have the courage to follow him in humility and love, helping to building his kingdom on earth as we await glory in heaven. Jesus calls us to live as people who love one another, who share what they have, who look after those in need, the vulnerable, the poor, those who are alone, the stranger, the orphans. The faith that we have in Jesus as king is about the way we live with one another and care for one another.

Today as we celebrate Christ the King, let us renew our commitment to him, recognising in His humble, loving rule , who takes on our woes of the world we live in. As we end the year looking up at the cross we begin to prepare for next week, when the church begins to whisper that a child is coming, and we know what kind of child he is. He will be a King whose power is through mercy. He will be a King whose glory is compassion. He will be a King whose crown is the crown of thorns and his throne is a cross and whose promise, today, and always, is paradise and the restoration of community. As we prepare to enter the Advent season, let us carry the message of Christ's kingship into the world, proclaiming His love and justice to all. Amen

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