

**The Rectorial Benefice of the East Vale
Morning Prayer
Sunday 22ndth November, 2020 | Christ the King**

Hymn (requested by Marian Quick)

**I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Come unto me and rest;
lay down, thou weary one, lay down
thy head upon my breast."
I came to Jesus as I was,
weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in him a resting place,
and he has made me glad.**

**I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Behold, I freely give
the living water; thirsty one,
stoop down and drink, and live."
I came to Jesus, and I drank
of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
and now I live in him.**

**I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"I am this dark world's light;
look unto me, thy morn shall rise,
and all thy day be bright."
I looked to Jesus, and I found
in him my star, my sun;
and in that light of life I'll walk
till traveling days are done.**

The Gloria

Glory to God, glory in the highest,
peace to his people, peace on earth.
**Glory to God, glory in the highest,
peace to his people, peace on earth.**

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father.
**Glory to God, glory in the highest,
peace to his people, peace on earth.**

We worship you,
glory in the highest,
give you thanks,
glory in the highest,
praise you for your glory.
**Glory to God, glory in the highest,
peace to his people, peace on earth.**

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us,
have mercy on us;

you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer,
receive our prayer.

Glory to God, glory in the highest,
peace to his people, peace on earth.
**Glory to God, glory in the highest,
peace to his people, peace on earth.**

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God, the glory of God the Father.

**Glory to God, glory in the highest,
peace to his people, peace on earth.**

Amen. **Amen.**

The Collect

Eternal Father, whose Son Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of heaven that he might rule over all things as Lord and King: keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace, and bring the whole created order to worship at his feet; grant this for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit, be the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever.
Amen.

First Reading

(Ezekiel 34: 11-16, 20-24)

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel

Thus, says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 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. Therefore, thus says the Lord God to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because

you pushed with flank and shoulder and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm

(Psalm 95.1-7)

R/ Hear the word of the Lord!

O come let us sing unto the Lord, let us heartily rejoice in the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving and sing loudly unto him with psalms. **R/**

For the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods. In his hand are all the deep places of the earth and the heights of the mountains are his also. **R/**

The sea is his and he made it and his hands prepared the dry land. O come let us worship and bow down and kneel before the Lord our maker. **R/**

For he is our God, and we are his people and the sheep of his pasture today, if ye will hear his voice, ye shall know his power. **R/**

Second Reading

(Ephesians 1: 15-23)

A reading from Paul's first letter to the Ephesians

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

This is the word of the Lord **Thanks be to God**

The Gospel

(Matthew 25: 31-46)

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Give thanks to the risen Lord.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Give praise to his name.

**Jesus is Lord of all the earth,
he is the king of creation.**

Alleluia! Alleluia!...

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Listen to the gospel of Christ

according to Saint Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus said to his disciples, 'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." Then he will say to those at his left hand, "You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me. Then they also will answer, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?" Then he will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me." And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Spread the good news o'er all the earth,
Jesus has died and risen.**

Alleluia! Alleluia!...

The Homily

Fr David

I got very excited last week when the government announced initial plans for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, which will be marked in 2022 with an extra bank holiday to create a four-day celebration at the beginning of June. It certainly gives us something to look forward to, especially a shameless royalist, like me!

It's remarkable that the Queen will be celebrating 70 years on the throne, but there has been some speculation recently that the Queen would step down at 95 to allow Prince Charles to become Prince Regent. However, in response to the speculation a 'reliable' source is recorded as saying, "*The Queen would never abdicate, it is simply not in her DNA to abandon her people or her duty... ...As a young woman she vowed to serve until her death and that is what she plans to do.*"

The longevity of the Queen's reign may be historic and remarkable, but there is one other monarch who has reigned longer and 70 years is a drop in the ocean of his reign! We often note how many Prime Ministers, US Presidents or Popes even, the Queen has seen come and go, but this ruler has seen no end of monarchs and leaders rise and fall for millennia! Of course, I'm talking about Christ our King, whose kingship and reign over all creation we celebrate today!

The Queen makes no apologies for the fact that she is a Christian and she has patterned her leadership on that of Jesus, and his servant kingship. As a Christian monarch, she very much sees her sovereignty as a vocation, something that has been gifted to her by God, in the same way that God anointed and blessed monarchs we find in the scriptures to rule over his people, and do so with justly, with mercy and humility.

On this last Sunday of the Church year, before the Church enters into Advent and reflects upon the birth of Christ the King and the impending return of Christ the King, we are invited to think about what defines Christ's kingship and his kingdom and to reaffirm the supremacy of his kingship and rule over all things.

Interestingly the feast of Christ the King was instituted by Pope Pius XI in 1925 and other Christian denominations adopted it into their own calendars of holy days, including Anglicans. The Feast was instituted in the middle of what was a very difficult time of human history between the first and second world wars. In Italy, Benito Mussolini was prime minister and in 1925 he started using the title 'Il Duce' – 'The Leader' as the leader of the Fascist Party. Pope Pius XI instituted the Feast of Christ the King with a very pointed letter to the whole Church called 'Quas Primas', which simply means 'In the first', reminding the faithful that their primary allegiance should be to the King of Heaven and Earth and not to earthly rulers.

In his letter the Pope quoted St Cyril of Alexandria to support his message, he writes, '*The foundation of this power and dignity of Our Lord is rightly indicated by Cyril of Alexandria. "Christ," he says, "has dominion over all creatures, a dominion not seized by violence nor usurped, but his by essence and by nature.*'" Essentially, St Cyril asserts that Jesus' kingship over creation is not something that he needs to claim by violence or take for himself, it is quite simple his. Everything begins and ends with Christ – the Alpha and the Omega. Which is why this feast is so well placed, it marks the end of one Church year and the beginning of another. Everything begins and ends with Christ.

Our readings today highlight Christ's supreme rule over all creation but also challenge us to emulate those things that characterise his kingship. In his letter to the Church at Ephesus, Paul reminds the Ephesian Christians that God has exalted Christ to a throne of glory at his right hand and that all things are subject to him.

Today is the last we will hear from Matthew's gospel on a Sunday for a while because we have come to the end of Year A. Next Sunday will be the first of Year B, the year when we venture through Mark's gospel. However, we are reminded by Matthew today that Jesus' fundamental concern was for the lost and the least, the most vulnerable and the weak, and so should ours.

In his earthly life Jesus embodied the values of humility, service, love, respect, justice and obedience to the will of the Father. When Christ was enthroned in glory, so too were all these things. We see in Christ, humility, service, love, respect, justice and obedience enthroned. Therefore, we must enthrone these things in our lives, treasure them, value them and uphold them. Emulating Jesus enables us to grow in holiness and in his likeness. As the gospel reading reminds us, when we feed the hungry, give the thirsty something to drink, when we welcome the stranger and clothe the naked, when we visit the sick and those in prison, we honour Christ our King who can be found in them.

One of the many things that I find endearing about our Christian faith is that we have a king who was willing to do, be and experience everything that we ought to do, be and are likely to experience. He has given us an example to follow, clear teaching on the sort of people we should be, and he has experienced much of what we experience in our daily lives - especially the difficulties. We have a king who was born in undesirable circumstances, who was rejected from the word go, tried unjustly, tortured and put to death.

Christ our king has trod the path he expects us to follow, it is a narrow path, but it is the path of integrity, it is the path which leads to life in all its fullness.

**The King Love by the
"The Single Singers" Male Voice Quartet**

Hymn

**Christ triumphant, ever reigning,
Saviour, Master, King!
Lord of heaven, our lives sustaining,
hear us as we sing:**

***Yours the glory and the crown,
the high renown, the eternal name.***

**Word incarnate, truth revealing,
Son of Man on earth!
power and majesty concealing
by your humble birth:**

Yours the glory...

**Suffering servant, scorned, ill - treated,
victim crucified!
death is through the cross defeated,
sinners justified:**

Yours the glory...

**Priestly king, enthroned for ever
high in heaven above!
sin and death and hell shall never
stifle hymns of love:**

Yours the glory...

**So, our hearts and voices raising
through the ages long,
ceaselessly upon you gazing,
this shall be our song:**

Yours the glory...

The Intercessions

For the spirit of love and service, let us pray to the Lord

Christ as we confess you as King of kings and Lord of Lords; come to rule our hearts and claim us as part of your Kingdom. Grant you church light to know your will and grace to perform it. We pray for June our Bishop and all who minister in the Diocese. In our cycle of prayer with the parish of Lagunda, we pray for the mission group and for a just, peaceful and sustainable world and for all who to keep our churches clean and tidy in our parishes.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Fill the world with the spirit of compassion, that the powerful may use their power to help the poor and outcast in our societies. We pray for leaders of nations,

in this global pandemic, that they may govern with wisdom, gentleness and integrity. Break down the barriers that divide people and nations and draw all together for the common good.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Christ our King, in you the thirsty find refreshment, the hungry are fed, the naked clothed and prisoners are visited. Give us deeper compassion and open our eyes to the presence of Christ in all people. Allow your light to shine on those places in our communities where you wish us to be and your love is needed.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Christ our King, the sick, the lame and the infirmed hold a special place in your concern. Give us the grace to ensure that the care that is needed is provided and today we pray for those known to us who need our prayers..... we ask your loving and healing touch may be with them in their time of need and all who care for them.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Have mercy on those who have passed from this world, thinking particularly of the recently departed....., our loved ones departed and all whose anniversary of death occurs at this time. May they rest in the peace promised to his faithful servants.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

In a moment of silence, let us offer our personal prayers trusting in Christ from whom all good things come...

**Merciful Father
accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

Hymn

**Majesty, worship his majesty
unto Jesus be all glory, honour and praise.
Majesty, kingdom authority
flow from his throne unto his own:
his anthem raise
So exalt, lift up on high the name of Jesus
magnify, come glorify Christ Jesus the King.
Majesty, worship his majesty,
Jesus who died now glorified,
King of all kings.**

Repeat