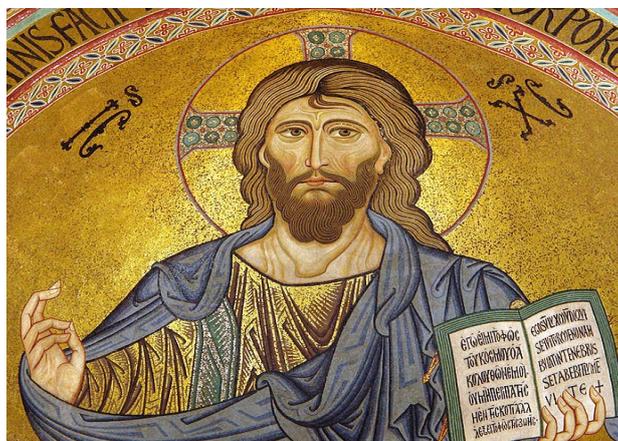


Worship Material for Sunday 22nd November

The Last Sunday after Trinity – Year A

THE FEAST DAY OF CHRIST THE KING



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; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

First Reading - Ezekiel 34.11-16,20-24

A reading from the prophecy of Ezekiel

¹¹Thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. ¹²As 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. ¹³I 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. ¹⁴I 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. ¹⁵I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. ¹⁶I 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.

²⁰Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. ²¹Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, ²²I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep.

²³I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. ²⁴And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

Second Reading - Ephesians 1.15-23

A reading from the letter to the Ephesians

¹⁵I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. ¹⁷I 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, ¹⁸so 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, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. ²⁰God 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, ²¹far 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. ²²And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

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



Gospel Reading - Matthew 25: 31 - 46

***Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to MATTHEW
Glory to you, O Lord.***

Jesus said to his disciples: ³¹“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. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴Then 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; ³⁵for 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, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” ³⁷Then 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? ³⁸And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” ⁴⁰And 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.”

⁴¹Then 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; ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I 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.” ⁴⁴Then 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?” ⁴⁵Then 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.” ⁴⁶And 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.***

Post-Communion Prayer:

Stir up, O Lord, the wills of your faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may by you be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Additional Collect (for private use):

God the Father, help us to hear the call of Christ the King and to follow in his service, whose kingdom has no end; for he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, one glory.

Parish Prayer

Lord, we need your eyes, give us a living faith. Lord, we need your heart, a love to withstand any test. Lord, we need the breath of God, give us your hope, that we may bear witness to the world, and to those among whom we live.

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Reflection:

This is a powerful poem entitled "Listen, Christians" cited in James Cone's "The Servant Church," a chapter in *The Pastor as Servant*.

I was hungry
and you formed a humanities club
and you discussed my hunger.
Thank you.

I was imprisoned
and you crept off quietly to your basement chapel and
prayed for my release.

I was naked
and in your mind you debated the morality of my appearance.

I was sick
and you knelt and thanked God for your health.

I was homeless
and you preached to me of the spiritual shelter of the love of God.

I was lonely
and you left me alone to pray for me.

You seem so holy
so close to God.

But I'm still hungry
and lonely
and cold.

So where have the prayers gone?

What have they done?

What does it profit a man to page through his book of prayers
when the rest of the world
is crying for his help?

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LECTIO DIVINA – BIBLE STUDY

LECTIO (Reading):

This liturgical year draws to a close with the final part of Jesus' fifth discourse in Matthew's gospel. It is not a parable in the strict sense but paints a vivid scene of judgement. It is a complex passage so we will only be able to draw out a few points.

In most of the earlier parables the King represents God the Father. Here Jesus himself is identified as the King who will come to judge all people. Jesus knows that he will be rejected by the religious leaders and crucified. When he returns his true identity will be beyond dispute.

The image of a shepherd separating the sheep from the goats would have been a very familiar one to people in Israel at the time. Sheep and goats grazed together during the day but at night the goats, being less hardy, were separated so they could be kept warm.



The division of the righteous and unrighteous reinforces much of Jesus' earlier teaching. Reaching out in compassion to people around is a natural expression of faith in Jesus. Walking in obedience to Jesus and loving our neighbour leaves no place for being indifferent to the needs of others.

MEDITATIO (Meditation):

- Meditate on Ezekiel 34:11-17. Consider all the different ways the shepherd cares for his sheep. What does this say to you about how God cares for you?
- How does James 2:14-26 help our understanding of this passage?
- How do you respond to the fact that Jesus will come to judge us all?
- What does this passage have to say to us about our attitudes to other people?

ORATIO (Prayer):

Worship Jesus as the King seated on his throne and surrounded by the angels.

Ask God to make you responsive to the needs of others. God might speak to you about people who are spiritually, as well as physically, hungry or thirsty.

CONTEMPLATIO (Contemplation):

Give thanks that we are reconciled to God because Jesus paid the price for our sin on the cross.

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