



Sunday Worship at Home Christ the King 26th November 2023

Opening Prayers:

Lord Jesus you are King and ruler of all!

Help us to acclaim you are our King today

Lord, direct our thoughts and prayers to worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Invitation to confession:

We remember that even though he was a King, Jesus died on a cross to take away our sins.

King Jesus, you died because you loved us,

Lord have mercy

King Jesus, you died to save us

Christ have mercy.

King Jesus, you died so that we might be forgiven.

Lord have mercy

May almighty God have mercy upon us,
forgive us our sins and bring us to eternal life. **Amen**

The Collect (Special Prayer for the day)

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.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 25. 31-end

‘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 you 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.’

Reflection for Christ the King:

Today is the final Sunday of the liturgical year, traditionally the day when we celebrate the feast of Christ the King. Next Sunday we begin a new church year with the onset of Advent, the time of preparation, not just for the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day, but also for the second coming of God when we will all be judged; we do not know when that will be or in what form God will return. Our gospel reading describes those to be judged as sheep and goats – or the good guys and the bad guys. The sheep are surprised by God’s claim that they cared for him in many and varied ways, when they do not remember doing any such thing. That is until they are told that whatever good they did for others throughout their lives, they did for God, who then turns to the goats. The accusation is straightforward; God simply says that they did not recognise him in the poor and needy and did none of the good things the sheep did. Notice Jesus does not condemn the goats on religious or moral grounds, he condemns them for their apathy in not noticing that they needed to do good at all. Christians are all called by Christ the King to be caring of those in need simply because they ARE in need, and it is they who require help to have their lives turned around. The picture painted of judgement in the Gospel is not there to fill us with fear, rather it is a challenge to live our lives in a loving, caring, tolerant and accepting way while we can, so that when the time comes, we will find ourselves counted among the sheep of God’s pasture and not the goats of regret. This parable can be summed up as “Love is the answer”! The sheep, because of their unselfishness and “giving” behaviour, inherit God’s Kingdom, whereas those who reject God and show no compassion to those in need, will receive none of the joys of knowing and loving Christ the King.

The Creed

We believe in God the Father,

from whom every family in heaven and earth is named.

We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.

We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Be still and Pray: For our families and those we love and those we find it hard to love. For the Church throughout the world, giving thanks for our Benefice. For all nations’ leaders to govern with care and not self-interest. For His Majesty the King that may he may become a beacon of light and hope to his people as his mother was. Pray for comfort for those in sickness or need and keep in your hearts the memory of those who have died recently. May they rest in peace and rise in glory Amen

Blessing: It is not enough to claim Jesus Christ as our Lord and King. Our mission is to make God’s kingdom a reality to those around us by our words and deeds.

May God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, bless you for this task. Amen

Reverend Irene