

Sunday Readings

26th November 2023

Collect

Almighty ever-living God,
whose will is to restore all things
in your beloved Son, the King of the universe,
grant, we pray, that the whole creation, set free
from slavery, may render your majesty service
and ceaselessly proclaim your praise.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel 34:11-12,15-17

The Lord says this: I am going to look after my flock myself and keep all of it in view. As a shepherd keeps all his flock in view when he stands up in the middle of his scattered sheep, so shall I keep my sheep in view. I shall rescue them from wherever they have been scattered during the mist and darkness. I myself will pasture my sheep, I myself will show them where to rest—it is the Lord who speaks. I shall look for the lost one, bring back the stray, bandage the wounded and make the weak strong. I shall watch over the fat and healthy. I shall be a true shepherd to them.

As for you, my sheep, the Lord says this: I will judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and he-goats.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 22:1-3,5-6. R/. v.1

R/. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want

The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.

Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose. **R/.**

Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit.
He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name. **R/.**

You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing. **R/.**

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever. **R/.**

SECOND READING

A reading from the first letter of St Paul
to the Corinthians

15:20-26,28

Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep. Death came through one man and in the same way the resurrection of the dead has come through one man. Just as all men die in Adam, so all men will be brought to life in Christ; but all of them in their proper order: Christ as the first-fruits and then, after the coming of Christ, those who belong to him. After that will come the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, having done away with every sovereignty, authority and power. For he must be king *until he has put all his enemies under his feet* and the last of the enemies to be destroyed is death, for everything is to be *put under his feet*. And when everything is subjected to him, then the Son himself will be subject in his turn to the One who subjected all things to him, so that God may be all in all.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL

Matthew 25:31-46

The Lord be with you. *And with your Spirit.*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate men one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left.

'Then the King will say to those on his right hand, "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me." Then the virtuous will say to him in reply, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; sick or in prison and go to see you?" And the King will answer, "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me."

'Next he will say to those on his left hand, "Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you never gave me food; I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink; I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, naked and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me." Then it will be their turn to ask, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty, a stranger or naked, sick or in prison, and did not come to your help?" Then he will answer, "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me."

'And they will go away to eternal punishment, and the virtuous to eternal life.'

Christ the King (Last Sunday in Ordinary Time)

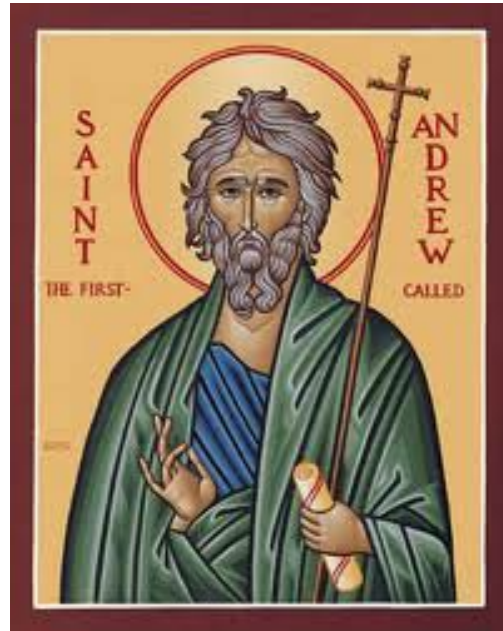
Lectionary Year A

The Word of God

Saint of the Week

Thursday 30 November 2023

St Andrew



Saint Andrew is the patron saint of Scotland, Greece and Russia and was Christ's first disciple.

There are around 600 pre-Reformation churches in England named after Saint Andrew, in contrast to Scotland's handful of churches of all

denominations named after the saint. Nevertheless, it was Scotland that adopted Andrew as its patron - probably because, Saint Andrew being the brother of Saint Peter, it gave the Scots considerable political leverage with the Pope in pleading for help against the belligerent English!

St. Andrew's biographical details are simple. He was born in Bethsaida, in Galilee, and worked as a fisherman. He may have been a disciple of St John the Baptist and he became one of the first to follow Jesus and introduced his brother, Simon Peter, to him. It was Andrew who brought the boy with the loaves and fishes to Jesus before the feeding of the five thousand.

According to the apocryphal 'Acts of Andrew' he is said to have travelled to Asia Minor and the Black Sea. In the city of Synope he is believed to have suffered great hardships and the house he was in was nearly burnt down. He returned twice more to Asia Minor and Greece, even travelling as far as Hungary, Russia and to the banks of the Oder in Poland.

Finally, in Patras, he was given the choice of being offered as a sacrifice to the gods or being scourged and crucified. By his own request the cross was diagonal. He, like his brother Peter, felt himself unworthy to be crucified on the upright cross of Christ.

As one of the twelve Apostles he was widely venerated in ancient times, and became patron saint of Scotland because, according to legend, some of his bones were brought there and buried at the place where the town of St Andrew's now stands.

The usual image of royalty does little to promote the wonderful nature of this feast of Christ the Universal King. The image we have is the bound and wounded, beaten Jesus, standing before Pilate. Jesus is asked about his kingship and his answer confuses and disconcerts Pilate. He is a king but his kingdom is not of this world. His is a kingdom that has the Servant King as its model. Going to the Cross Jesus reveals the nature of his kingship; he is a king who gives his life for his people. The cross is the throne upon which this King is crowned. His kingdom is one that has service at the very heart of it. The care and concern for humanity is paramount in the kingdom he has allowed us to glimpse. We are to be motivated by love, by surrender to God's holy will, so that we strive to establish a community on earth that anticipates heaven.

The church will move into a new year next week, as we begin the season of Advent. It is a time to look forward to celebrating Christmas. There are four weeks of preparation. Advent is an urgent time, a time to make sure we are ready in a spiritual way to realise the full significance of what we are truly celebrating at Christmas. But for this week, the last of the year, we look backwards for a moment. The past is not ours to change any more there is only the present and the future. We dust ourselves down, casting regret to the dustbin of time and move forward. We resolve today as we worship Christ the King to be guided by his example and led by his abiding presence in the Church, through the Eucharist and in the sacraments which, after all, are encounters with Christ. We promise to walk more closely the footsteps of Christ and trace his life in our lives. May we go into the new church year with fresh vigour and zeal for the task of being servants of Christ, our Universal King!

Prayer of the Week

A Prayer to Christ the King

Christ Jesus, I acknowledge You King of the universe. All that has been created has been made for You. Make full use of Your rights over me. I renew the promises I made in Baptism, when I renounced Satan and all his pomps and works, and I promise to live a good Christian life and to do all in my power to procure the triumph of the rights of God and Your Church.

Divine Heart of Jesus, I offer you my efforts in order to obtain that all hearts may acknowledge your Sacred Royalty, and that thus the Kingdom of Your peace may be established throughout the universe. Amen.