

Sunday Readings

24th November 2024

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 Daniel 7:13-14

I gazed into the visions of the night.
And I saw, coming on the clouds of heaven,
one like a son of man.
He came to the one of great age
and was led into his presence.
On him was conferred sovereignty,
glory and kingship,
and men of all peoples, nations and languages
became his servants.
His sovereignty is an eternal sovereignty
which shall never pass away,
nor will his empire ever be destroyed.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 92:1-2.5. R/v.1

R/. The Lord is king, with majesty enrobed.

The Lord is king, with majesty enrobed;
the Lord has robed himself with might,
he has girded himself with power. **R/.**

The world you made firm, not to be moved;
your throne has stood firm from of old.
From all eternity, O Lord, you are. **R/.**

Truly your decrees are to be trusted.
Holiness is fitting to your house,
O Lord, until the end of time. **R/.**



SECOND READING

A reading from the Apocalypse

1:5-8

Grace and peace to you from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the First-born from the dead, the Ruler of the kings of the earth. He loves us and has washed away our sins with his blood, and made us a line of kings, priests to serve his God and Father; to him, then, be glory and power for ever and ever. Amen. It is he who is coming on the clouds; everyone will see him, even those who pierced him, and all the races of the earth will mourn over him. This is the truth. Amen. 'I am the Alpha and the Omega' says the Lord God, who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.

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

Gospel Acclamation

Mk 11:10

Alleluia, alleluia!
Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord!
Blessings on the coming kingdom of our father David!
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

John 18:33-37

The Lord be with you. *And with your Spirit.*
A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.
Glory to you, O Lord.

'Are you the king of the Jews?' Pilate asked. Jesus replied, 'Do you ask this of your own accord, or have others spoken to you about me?' Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? It is your own people and the chief priests who have handed you over to me: what have you done?' Jesus replied, 'Mine is not a kingdom of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my men would have fought to prevent my being surrendered to the Jews. But my kingdom is not of this kind.' 'So you are a king then?' said Pilate. 'It is you who say it' answered Jesus. 'Yes, I am a king. I was born for this, I came into the world for this: to bear witness to the truth; and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice.'

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

Communion Antiphon

The Lord sits as king for ever.
The Lord will bless his people with peace.

Prayer after Communion

Having received the food of immortality,
we ask, O Lord,
that, glorying in obedience to the commands of
Christ, the King of the universe,
we may live with him eternally
in his heavenly Kingdom.
Who lives and reigns
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Christ the King (Last Sunday in Ordinary Time)

Lectionary Year B

The Word of God

Saint of the Week

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.

Monday 25 November 2024

St Catherine of Alexandria (d. 305)



According to the traditional narrative, Catherine was the beautiful daughter of the pagan King Costus and Queen Sabinella, who governed Alexandria. Her superior intelligence combined with diligent study left her exceedingly well-versed in all the arts and sciences, and in philosophy. Having decided to remain a virgin all her life, she announced that she would only marry someone who surpassed her in beauty, intelligence,

wealth, and dignity. Though raised a pagan, she became an ardent Christian in her teenage years, having received a vision in which the Blessed Virgin Mary gave her to Christ in mystical marriage.

As a young adult, she visited her contemporary, the Roman Emperor Maxentius, and attempted to convince him of the moral error in persecuting Christians for not worshipping idols. The emperor arranged for a plethora of the best pagan philosophers and orators to dispute with her, hoping that they would refute her pro-Christian arguments, but Catherine won the debate. Several of her adversaries, conquered by her eloquence, declared themselves Christians and were at once put to death.

Catherine was then scourged and imprisoned, during which time over 200 people came to see her, including Maxentius' wife, the Empress; all converted to Christianity and were subsequently martyred. Upon the failure of Maxentius to make Catherine yield by way of torture, he tried to win the beautiful and wise princess over by proposing marriage. The saint refused, declaring that her spouse was Jesus Christ, to whom she had consecrated her virginity. The furious emperor condemned Catherine to death on the spiked breaking wheel, but, at her touch, this instrument of torture was miraculously destroyed. Maxentius finally had her beheaded.

She is the patroness of philosophers and preachers. Catherine is very frequently depicted in art, especially in the late Middle Ages. She can usually be easily recognised as she is richly dressed and crowned, as befits her rank as a princess, and often holds or stands next to a segment of her wheel as an attribute. She also often carries either a martyr's palm or the sword with which she was actually executed.