

## Christ the King Cycle C

### Reading 1

[2 Sm 5:1-3](#)

In those days, all the tribes of Israel came to David in Hebron and said: "Here we are, your bone and your flesh. In days past, when Saul was our king, it was you who led the Israelites out and brought them back. And the LORD said to you, 'You shall shepherd my people Israel and shall be commander of Israel.'" When all the elders of Israel came to David in Hebron, King David made an agreement with them there before the LORD, and they anointed him king of Israel.

### Reading 2

[Col 1:12-20](#)

Brothers and sisters: Let us give thanks to the Father, who has made you fit to share in the inheritance of the holy ones in light. He delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and for him.

He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he himself might be preeminent.

For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile all things for him, making peace by the blood of his cross through him, whether those on earth or those in heaven.

### Gospel

[Lk 23:35-43](#)

The rulers sneered at Jesus and said, "He saved others, let him save himself if he is the chosen one, the Christ of God." Even the soldiers jeered at him. As they approached to offer him wine they called out, "If you are King of the Jews, save yourself." Above him there was an inscription that read, "This is the King of the Jews."

Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us."

The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, "Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

### Reflection:

When you think of a King what image comes to mind?

Perhaps you see a figure like one of the old medieval kings; fat, wearing a velvet cloak, gold crown, sitting at table with a leg of mutton in one hand a mug of mead in the other presiding over his court. Or maybe you see someone more like the King of Siam from the old movie "The King and I"; a king who is arrogant and stern on the outside, but whose heart is kind and gentle on the inside.

Perhaps you think of King Arthur of Camelot and the Round Table; a king of chivalry and justice; a King who fights for integrity and honor. If you're a Tolkien fan, perhaps your king is handsome with a beard and long black hair; a king of wisdom and valor who knows elvish ways, who fights evil and brings about an age of peace and hope to the world.

All of these images of what a King is come to us through literature and fairy tale. As a people, we have no first hand experience of what a king is. So we have these images, these ideas that we've developed over the years from various sources.

Today we celebrate the Feast of Christ the King. This marks the last Sunday of the Liturgical Year of the Church. Next Sunday begins a new year as we enter Advent, a time when we prepare for the coming of our King both in the manger in Bethlehem and at the end of time in the glory of his return.

Deacon Bill Austin  
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But as we celebrate the kingship of Jesus today, what image does that evoke in us? When we think of Christ as a King what do we imagine? Do we see Jesus as a medieval king? Or as Yule Brenner in “The King and I”? Or do we see Jesus as King Arthur or Aragorn in the Lord of the Rings? While some of the attributes of these kings I’ve mentioned are admirable and some of them may seem to fit with who Jesus is, none of them are adequate. None of them capture the true kingship of Jesus Christ.

Perhaps if we looked to Scripture for ideas of what a King is, we would come closer to the type of King we proclaim Jesus to be. In ancient times there were many kings, good and bad. One of the most well known is David, who we heard about in the first reading. He is the King of Israel selected by God who led his people through difficult times. His story reveals that he is a powerful king but he also makes mistakes. Because of his leadership and his faithfulness to God he becomes an icon of Judaism and is an ancestor to Jesus. This may make him a good image of the kind of King Jesus is but even David doesn’t capture the true picture of the kingship of Jesus.

Other kings from the Bible reveal different traits. There’s King Herod, who we see as a corrupt king who has John beheaded and is instrumental in the execution of Jesus. There are the three Kings, the Magi, the wise astrologers from the East, men of wealth who come to pay homage to the infant Jesus. Yet again none of these completely capture the proper image of the kingship of Jesus.

As a king, Jesus fits none of the usual images. He is born into humility. His mission is to serve not to be served. He doesn’t seek out royalty to spend his time with, but rather he seeks out the lowly, the needy, the sinners. His cloak is simple, his crown is of thorns not gold, his throne is a cross of wood. When we proclaim Jesus as King, we need to reform our image of what a King is.

In today’s gospel we hear the story of three men together on a hill top sharing the most profound moment of their lives; the moment of their death. We’re told that two of the men are thieves and the third has been condemned for the vague crime of being King of the Jews. How appropriate that Jesus, the humble King, is crucified in the midst of two sinners.

One of the thieves joins with the crowd in jeering Jesus. In his arrogance he challenges Jesus, “If you are the Christ, why don’t you save yourself, and us?”

The other thief realizes the truth. He understands the situation. He knows who Jesus is, and in a moment of repentance rebukes the other thief and prays to Jesus, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.” An acknowledgement of the kingship of Jesus.

In keeping with his life-long mission and living the message he preached to the world, Jesus remains committed to seeking out the marginalized, even at the moment of his death. From his throne on the cross, wearing his crown of thorns, as an expression of his compassion for the repentant thief Jesus tells him, “Today you will be with me in Paradise.”

The kind of King that Jesus is not the kind of King we see in history or in literature or in fairy tales. He’s unlike any other King we find in scripture. Instead of seeking to be served by his people Jesus is a king who serves. Instead of leading his people with military might and ruthlessness, Jesus is a king who leads his people with love and compassion. Instead of exacting revenge and doling out punishments, Jesus is a king who redeems those who come to him.

What is our response to our King, to Jesus?

Recently we were asked once again to think about how we practice our Stewardship. Jesus has offered us a model. His kingship is one of charity and compassion. His life-long message has always been centered on those most in need. Today and over the coming weeks we have an opportunity to follow this example by taking a step to help build up Jesus’ kingdom by helping those in need in our parish.

Jesus is our King. His is a reign of charity and compassion. He invites us to be part of his Kingdom and promises to be with us always. As we continue our prayer today, let us remember our need for forgiveness and ask our King, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.”