

CHRIST THE KING

23rd November 2025



In the name of the + Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Prayer of Preparation

God of glory,
touch our lips with the fire of your Spirit,
that we with all creation
may rejoice to sing your praise;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

HYMN

1 Christ is made the sure foundation,
Christ, our head and cornerstone,
chosen of the Lord and precious,
binding all the Church in one;
holy Zion's help forever
and our confidence alone.

2 To this temple, where we call you,
come, O Lord of hosts, and stay;
come with all your lovingkindness,
hear your people as they pray;
and your fullest benediction
speak within these walls today.

3 Grant, we pray, to all your faithful
all the gifts they ask to gain;
what they gain from you forever
with the blessed to retain;
And hereafter in your glory
evermore with you to reign.

4 Praise and honor to the Father,
praise and honour to the Son,
praise and honour to the Spirit,
ever three and ever one:
one in might and one in glory
while unending ages run!

Invitation to Confession

We have come together in the name of Christ
to offer our praise and thanksgiving,
to hear and receive God's holy word,
to pray for the needs of the world,
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins,
that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

Jesus says, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' So let us turn away from sin and turn to Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith. cf Matthew 4.17

The kingdom is yours,
but we turn away from your just rule:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

The power is yours,
but we trust in our own power and strength:
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

The glory is yours,
but we fall short of the glory of God:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Absolution

May the Father of all mercies
Cleanse us from our sins, +
and restore us in his image
to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Collect for the Christ the King

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.
Amen.

Reading from The Old Testament
Jeremiah 23 1-6

The Righteous Branch

23 "Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!" declares the Lord. 2 Therefore this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend my people: "Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done," declares the Lord. 3 "I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number. 4 I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the Lord.

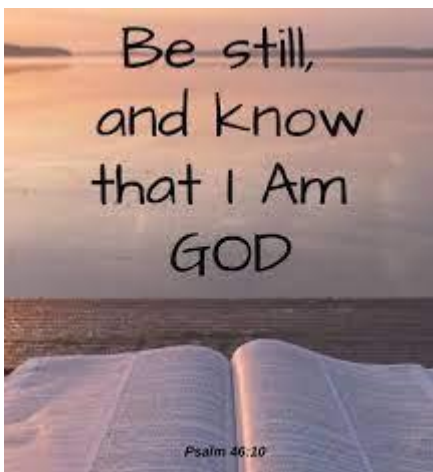
5 "The days are coming," declares the Lord,
"when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch,
a King who will reign wisely
and do what is just and right in the land.

6 In his days Judah will be saved
and Israel will live in safety.

This is the name by which he will be called:
The Lord Our Righteous Saviour.

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

- 1 God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
- 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
- 3 though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.
- 4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.
- 5 God is within her, she will not fall;



- God will help her at break of day.
- 6 Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.
- 7 The Lord Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.
- 8 Come and see what the Lord has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.
- 9 He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.

- 10 He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."
- 11 The Lord Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

A Reading from the New Testament
Colossians 1 9-20

9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, 10 so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, 11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, 12 and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. 13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was

pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

HYMN

1 The Church of God a kingdom is,
where Christ in power doth reign;
where spirits yearn till, seen in bliss,
their Lord shall come again.

2 Glad companies of saints possess
this Church below, above;
and God's perpetual calm doth bless
their paradise of love.

3 An altar stands within the shrine
whereon, once sacrificed,
is set, immaculate, divine,
the Lamb of God, the Christ.

4 There rich and poor, from countless lands,
praise God on mystic rood;
there nations reach forth holy hands
to take God's holy food.

5 There pure life-giving streams o'erflow
the sower's garden-ground;
and faith and hope fair blossoms show,
and fruits of love abound.

6 O King, O Christ, this endless grace
to all your people bring,
to see the vision of your face
in joy, O Christ, our King.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

You, Christ, are the king of glory,

The eternal Son of the Father.

Alleluia.

The Gospel

The Holy Gospel is written in the 23rd Chapter of the Gospel according to Luke beginning at the 33rd verse.

Glory be to thee, O Lord

3 When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. 34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

35 The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is God's Messiah, the Chosen One." 36 The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar 37 and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself." 38 There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the king of the Jews. 39 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!"

40 But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? 41 We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." 42 Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." 43 Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise be to thee, O Christ

Reflection

Today is the Feast of Christ the King which marks the culmination of the liturgical year. It is a feast instigated by Pope Pius XI in 1925 in the face of growing secularism. The word 'king' can sound antiquated or oppressive, even alienating to modern ears for various reasons. But we are trying to speak of the rule or reign of God. Language use changes over time but here the term 'King' is significant.

We need to find an understanding which works with modern thinking and allows the concept, for it is foundational in our Christian faith and still has to be used.

The Kingdom of God came in the person of Jesus in the sense that he is the only person ever to live who completely fulfilled the will of God. It was within him and expressed through him in what he said and did. John calls the miracles of Jesus 'signs' and that is helpful; they were signs of what this Kingdom of God is like. Jesus Christ healed sickness, raised the dead, restored people. "This is the Kingdom of God" he said.

When God raised Jesus from death, God confirmed his message; death is overcome in this Kingdom. Read the end of the Bible and it describes this Kingdom; 'And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. Revelation 21.4

Jesus taught us to pray, 'Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done.' But what is this Kingdom like? Here are two of the descriptions that we find in scripture.

It is a Kingdom where God's spirit is in control where justice, peace, and joy are experienced completely and permanently by all equally

It is a Kingdom understood as life free from the forces which enslave humanity. The final enemy, death, comes into focus on a rubbish tip, a place of execution outside a city held in the iron grip of a ruthless oppressive regime.

Jesus has been crucified. He is among the dregs of humanity; now one of them himself. He is dying under successive volleys of abuse, jeered at by the Jewish authorities, mocked by the Governor's soldiers, taunted by one of the criminals.

And then quite unexpectedly, in the midst of all this, one of the criminals speaks and quite astonishingly, acknowledges the Kingship of Jesus: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom." And, more astonishingly still, Jesus replies, "Indeed, I promise you, today you will be with me in paradise." In some icons you see the image of this man running into paradise. The first person into this Kingdom was a thief.

In these words, is caught and symbolized the whole meaning of what was really happening: the forgiving, acquitting, life-giving meaning of the death and resurrection of Christ, and its ability to take any of us, however down among the dregs we are, somewhere else, somewhere better.

Human power has no ability to create, to redeem or to sanctify, it will always fail. In these few words the reality of the Kingdom is whispered. This is a deeper reality shaped by a different Kingship. Jesus speaks with an authority different from, and greater than, the system that is implementing his death.

These concepts of the Kingdom are overwhelming, and we struggle to comprehend. Not least because we do not see it and have never experienced it. Indeed, in the whole of human history, such a Kingdom has never been on this earth. So, what can it mean to speak of Jesus as King of what appears to be an invisible Kingdom?

Here we must live on the brink of knowing and yet not knowing; the now and not yet. And we have to have the courage to keep moving towards that and not back off because we feel it will threaten our faith or lead us to despair.

This is a Kingdom that will challenge – it is an irritant, a voice that will not be silenced, it will speak out for the poor and weak, it will challenge earthly power. It is visible in all who speak for the poor whether from a faith or none; it is the stimulus of a God who cares for creation and for the powerless.

Canon Henry Scott Holland who died in 1918 knew the poverty of London slums, said that the more you believed in the incarnation and the Kingship of Jesus, the more you cared about drains.

Whenever people do well, they stand in defiance of despair and know that each action for what is right and good is a visible expression of the Kingdom of God in our lives – this Kingdom is not invisible.

It has profound and permanent implications for the way we live, how we spend our money, our time, our career choices, our voluntary work, the way we relate to people and the way we worship.

Such an encounter with Jesus is a living present, movement - there is no mistaking it. Millions of people know this. This is not an invisible Kingdom. The reality of Christ as King is neither antiquated nor oppressive, but timeless and liberating.

The Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

Let us with confidence present our prayers and supplications to the throne of grace.

We pray for all those in positions of power,
that they may govern with wisdom and integrity,
serving the needs of their people.

May your reign come;

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for the Church, the sign of your reign,
that it may extend your welcome to people of every
race and background.

May your kingdom come;

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for Christians of every denomination,
that together we may come to understand
the royal priesthood you bestowed on us in baptism.

May your dominion come;

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for those whose commitment to truth
brings them into conflict with earthly powers,
that they may have the courage to endure.

May your rule come;

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for this community of faith,
that attentive to your word
we may always worship in spirit and in truth.

May your reign come;

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for those who are in trouble and are burdened with worry.
In your mercy bring light into their darkness,
by your grace lift their despair and bring assurance of your care and love.

We pray for any in our thoughts today.....

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for those who have recently died.
In mercy, bring comfort and bring us into peace.

We remember in gratitude the lives of those we have loved.....

Lord, hear our prayer.

Loving God,
you have taught us that the power of the heart
is greater than the power of wealth and might.
Hear us as we pray for the fulfilment of your reign.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our King;
to him be glory and power for ever. Amen

HYMN

1 Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
does its successive journeys run,
his kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
till moons shall wax and wane no more

2 To him shall endless prayer be made,
and praises throng to crown his head.
His name like sweet perfume shall rise
with every morning sacrifice.

3 People and realms of every tongue
dwell on his love with sweetest song,
and infant voices shall proclaim
their early blessings on his name.

4 Blessings abound where'er he reigns:
the prisoners leap to lose their chains,
the weary find eternal rest,
and all who suffer want are blest.

5 Let every creature rise and bring
the peculiar honours to our King,
angels descend with songs again,
and earth repeat the loud amen.

We pray for God's blessing

Christ our King make you faithful and strong to do his will,
that you may reign with him in glory;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
Amen

HYMN

1 Your hand, O God, has guided
your flock from age to age;
your faithfulness is written
on history's open page.
Our fathers owned your
goodness,
and we their deeds record;
and both to this bear witness:
one church, one faith, one Lord!

2 Your heralds brought the
gospel
to greatest and the least;
they summoned men and
women
to share the great King's feast.
And this was all their teaching
in every deed and word,
to all alike proclaiming:
one church, one faith, one Lord!

3 Your mercy will not fail us
nor leave your work undone;
with your right hand to help us
the victory shall be won.
And then by earth and heaven
your name shall be adored;
and this shall be our anthem:
one church, one faith, one Lord!