



As Year C closes this week, we are invited, once again, to celebrate the reign of Christ. The readings, though, make it impossible to get too triumphalist about it. The message is clear: this King is no power-monger, no tyrant, no self-aggrandising leader. Rather, Christ embodies what the Scriptures call the Good Shepherd to God's people, the servant leader, the self-giving Messiah. This vision of God's reign is both challenging and inspiring in a world where religions try to claim God's kingdom for themselves, while warring on each other, and where power is all too often abused and hoarded.

## INTRODUCTIONS

*For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines*

**May we be challenged to live under the authority of the Servant King as we worship together this week.**

**Jeremiah 23:1-6**: A prophecy of judgement on the unrighteous rulers of God's people, and a promise of a new, righteous leader from David's line.

**Luke 1:68-79**: Zechariah's song proclaiming God's fulfilment of the promise to send a righteous ruler from David's line, and celebrating his son, John, as God's prophet.

OR **Psalms 46**: A celebration of God's protection and shelter, God's presence and awesome works, and a call to silent and humble recognition of who God is.

**Colossians 1:11-20**: In Christ, who is supreme over all, and the visible image of God, we have been transferred from the realm of darkness into the realm of God's reign.

**Luke 23:33-43**: While dying on the cross, Jesus assures the penitent thief that he will be with him in paradise that day.

*For Bible text, click on readings underlined above*

## COLLECTS OF THE DAY

### Collect One

Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord,  
the wills of thy faithful people;  
that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works,  
may of thee be plenteously rewarded;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### Collect Two

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,

## First Sunday before Advent (Kingship of Christ) - November 20, 2016

who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

- P** Jesus, until Your glorious return on the Last Day, bless Your Word wherever it is proclaimed. Make it a word of power and peace to convert those not yet Your own and to confirm those who have come to saving faith. May your Word pass from the ear to the heart, from the heart to the lip, and from the lip to the life, that, as You have promised, Your Word may achieve the purpose for which You sent it; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
- C** **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**
- P** Almighty and most gracious God and Father, we implore You to turn the hearts of all who have forsaken the faith once delivered to Your Church, especially those who have wandered from it or are in doubt through the corruption of Your truth. Mercifully visit them and restore them that in gladness of heart they may take pleasure in Your Word and be made wise to salvation; through faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord.
- C** **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**
- P** Almighty and gracious God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, You have commanded us to pray that You would send forth laborers into Your harvest. Of Your infinite mercy give us true teachers and ministers of Your Word who truly fulfill Your command and preach nothing contrary to Your holy Word. May we, being warned, instructed, nurtured, comforted, and strengthened by Your holy Word, do those things which are well-pleasing to You and profitable for our salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
- C** **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**
- P** Eternal Lord, ruler of all, graciously regard those who have been set in positions of authority among us that, guided by Your Spirit, they may be high in purpose, wise in counsel, firm in good resolution, and unwavering in duty, that under them we may be governed quietly and peaceably; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
- C** **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**
- P** Lord of heaven and earth, as we know both from history and current events, there are and have been wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes, droughts, and famines in various places. Grant us peaceful hearts in the midst of uncertain times knowing that these are but the beginning of birth pangs. Protect us from the teachings of those who would announce a date for the end of all things, comforted by Your Word that assures us that no one knows the day or the hour but only You, the Father; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
- C** **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**
- P** O Lord God, You create and sustain life as a good and precious gift from Your gracious hand. Provide clean water and nourishing food through relief and human care agencies around the world. Enable and embolden us to speak up to defend life from the womb to natural death. By the example of Your blessed Son, grant the sick (*especially* \_\_\_\_\_) grace to accept patiently the sufferings of the present time in full assurance of the glory that shall be revealed to us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
- C** **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

## First Sunday before Advent (Kingship of Christ) - November 20, 2016

**P** Lord Jesus, You invite all who are burdened with sin to come to You for rest. We now come at Your invitation to the heavenly feast which You have provided for Your children on earth. Preserve us from impenitence and unbelief, cleanse us from our unrighteousness, and clothe us with the righteousness purchased with Your blood. Strengthen our faith, increase our love and hope, and assure us a place at Your heavenly table, where we will eat eternal manna and drink of the river of Your pleasure forever and ever; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

**P** All these things and whatever else You know that we need, grant us, Father, for the sake of Him who died and rose again and now lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God forever.

**C** **Amen.**

### POST COMMUNION

Stir up, O Lord,  
the wills of your faithful people;  
that plenteously bearing the fruit of good works  
they may by you be plenteously rewarded;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### PRAYERS

Shepherd of Israel, hear our prayer  
as your Son heard the plea  
of the criminal crucified with him.  
Gather into Christ's holy reign  
the broken, the sorrowing, and the sinner,  
that all may know  
wholeness, joy, and forgiveness. Amen.

As the shepherd who cares for the flock, O God,  
you guide all things through Jesus  
whom you have exalted over all creation as king.  
Hear the prayers we offer in his name  
for the creation he cherished  
and that you entrust to us.  
Look upon your people who rejoice in your justice and mercy,  
and grant that the prayers we make  
may reveal Christ's reign in our time. Amen.

Almighty God,  
You rescue us from our enemies,  
that we may serve you without fear.  
Strengthen us,  
that we may share in the inheritance of the saints  
in your kingdom of light. Amen.

## First Sunday before Advent (Kingship of Christ) - November 20, 2016

Holy God, our refuge and strength,  
you have redeemed your scattered children,  
gathering them from all the corners of the earth  
through your firstborn, the Christ,  
in whom all things are held together.  
Make of us a just and righteous people,  
worthy by grace to inherit with him  
the kingdom of light and peace  
where he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Gracious God,  
look upon a sinner  
who is yet created in your image.  
Look upon a disciple  
into whose heart you gaze.  
Look upon a child  
who longs to love you with a heart  
yet more perfect,  
and looking, forgive,  
and gazing, pardon and bless;  
for your truth and your mercy's sake.

Amen

*Francois Fenelon, 1651-1715*

Loving Heavenly Father I thank you for this new day, for its promise, its challenge and its opportunity. I have little to give you this day, but within my trembling hand I give you this will of mine and things that seem small, for you alone, O Lord, understand that when I yield Thee this I yield Thee all. So may my life this day, in all I think, speak or do, shew forth the mind of Christ. Amen.

God our Friend and protector, as we go through life help us to offer a hand of love and friendship to all in need. As our lives develop, like the seasons , spring when we blossom in our own ways, summer when we are full of the joys of young life, autumn when we hope to pass on the wisdom we have learnt, winter when we need the comfort of your presence at the closing of our days. Mmay we remember to thank you in our prayers for all your many blessings and help throughout our lives.

Heavenly Father we thank you for the gift of life and for loving each one of us, just as we are.

Now that we are elderly and less mobile, we have more time to sit and think. We give thanks for the gift of memory, whether of happy or sad occasions, memories precious to us all. And, even if we cannot remember what happened yesterday, we can ponder over our youthful days and be thankful. Amen.

Creator God, we thank you that through the centuries you have given to men and women the gift of creativity. We think of all musicians and the music that inspires and brings us close to you. We thank you for artists, as we gaze on their work we marvel at the details and the beauty of the colours. We think of the poet and his words, which can help and heal, and of the craftsmen, who have given such beautiful carving and buildings. Thank you too for those who use their creative gifts in leadership, creating order out of chaos and in building up broken relationships. O God you are the master craftsman and we would

## First Sunday before Advent (Kingship of Christ) - November 20, 2016

pray that we may use our own creative gifts for your honour and glory. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Draw near to your flock, O Shepherd of Israel, that we may rejoice at the sound of your voice; walk through the darkest shadows at your bidding and climb the rugged steeps under your protection. May we come at the last to the sight of your unclouded beauty where, in the glory of eternal light, you are worshipped for evermore.

*Bede Jarrett, 1881-1934*

God of new beginnings, your love to us knows neither measure nor end. Reveal yourself to us in the ordinary things of life, so that each day's tasks may be done for love of you and each day's living may bring us nearer you; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Saviour. Michael Townsend, Chair, Leeds District

Eternal God, in whose perfect realm no sword is drawn but the sword of justice, and no strength known but the strength of love: guide and inspire all who seek your kingdom, that peoples and nations may find their security in the love which casts out fear; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

Gracious God we pray for ourselves, that we might remember who is in control in creation, who it is who holds together all things. So may we give complete control to you of our lives. Help us to entrust to you our fears and worries and to rest ourselves in Christ Jesus. Help us to grow in faith, to rejoice always in what you have done, to submit our will and our plans to your will and your plan for our lives. **Amen**

## LECTIONARY NOTES

### **REFLECTIONS ON THEME:**

This final week in Year C brings together two central aspects of Christ's life and activity. On the one side there is the proclamation of Christ as the incarnation of God, the supreme ruler over, and creator of, all things. This transcendent vision of Christ (primarily from the Colossians reading) is reflected in the praise of Psalm 46 which proclaims God's awesome works and concludes with the exhortation to "be still and know that I am God". In a similar vein, Both Jeremiah and Zechariah proclaim the Christ as God's righteous ruler, in the line of David, who will judge the unrighteous leaders of Israel and replace them with a just reign. The cross narrative from Luke 23, offers the other side of this reigning Christ. God's reign – God's kingdom – is most profoundly expressed and revealed through the cross. It is in the self-giving, gracious, life-bringing act of dying that Jesus wins the nations and establishes God's reign in the world. This is not radically different Kingship – and it is one that the world desperately longs for.

### **CONNECTING WITH LIFE:**

**GLOBAL APPLICATION:** The celebration of the rulership of Christ is a significant one for our interaction with the world and its power systems. On the one hand it reminds us that no human power, however it may pride itself on military might, wealth or global influence, is truly in control of the world. All human empires ultimately fall. On the other hand, it reminds us that we are called to work within – and also in opposition to – the systems of this world to bring the values and justice of God's reign into being in our human reality. This is complex and difficult task, although an inspiring and rewarding one. It engages our best energies on all levels of our participation in society. In so far as we are involved on a

## First Sunday before Advent (Kingship of Christ) - November 20, 2016

national level – be it in some form of leadership, or simply through participating in processes like voting, petitioning and lobbying – we are called to be accountable to Christ’s standard of sacrificial, servant leadership, rejecting the corrupt leadership against which the prophets spoke. On a community level, our leadership in Church, in our neighbourhoods and cities, in our schools and organisations, must similarly reflect the leadership values of Christ. And on a personal level – in our conversations, in our families and homes and in the ethical and moral decisions we face, we are called to act as leaders – reflecting Christ’s reign in the way we live under Christ’s authority. In these ways, God’s reign begins to influence the affairs of the world through small, significant groups of people who are committed to living differently, and to reflecting Christ in every situation. Make no mistake, when God’s reign is revealed like this, it has a massive impact on power dynamics and justice issues on a global scale.

**LOCAL APPLICATION:** At its most basic, the reign of God is manifest when those who, like the thief on the cross, recognise their brokenness and need to change, open themselves to the influence of Christ, and invite God to be the frame of reference for their lives. This does not just apply to those without faith, or those who have not made a conscious decision to follow Christ. It is a daily choice that must be made by all – especially those who are committed to the way of Christ. God’s reign will only be seen – Jesus will only be recognised as King – when we who are called by Christ’s name begin to live as true disciples, true followers of the sacrificial, life-giving Gospel. This requires two simple, but difficult, tasks to be undertaken. The first is to examine ourselves and our lives in the light of Christ’s teaching and example, allowing God’s Spirit to reveal where we still need to come under the rulership – the Lordship – of Christ. This must then lead us into a life of repentance and change which allows Christ’s character to be revealed in us a little more each day. If our faith doesn’t change us, then we’re wasting our – and God’s – time. The second task is to allow the change which God’s reign brings to us to filter through everything we think and say and do. Every interaction, every decision, every moment and every place we find ourselves in must be submitted to the influence of Christ, and must be received as an opportunity to experience God’s reign in our lives, and to share the blessing of God’s reign with others. This is not about evangelism in the “tell them about Jesus” sense. It’s about turning our faith into a life-transforming practice, rather than just an intellectual assent to some ideas about God. Ultimately, for Christ to truly be King in our world, Christ must be King in individual lives in such a way that God’s peace and justice, God’s love and grace, constantly flow through God’s people into the world – one moment, one interaction and one step at a time.

### SERMON OUTLINE

#### Lk 23:33-43 Christ the King Proper 29C

Today we honour Christ the King - on the cross...

#### 1. The Place of the Skull: *Calvaria* – so called because

- a) looked like a skull – Gordon’s Calvary - 1867
- b) many skulls left lying around the place of execution.. There *they crucified Jesus* – in simple words but describing the most agonising of deaths..

**Cicero:** *the most cruel & frightful of punishments...*

## First Sunday before Advent (Kingship of Christ) - November 20, 2016

**2. The Pardon for Sin:** Hanging there in pain & agony Jesus found it in his heart to forgive the perpetrators *Father, forgive them..* Cf Stephen the 1<sup>st</sup> Xian martyr; Gordon Wilson 1987 (Enniskillen bomb); behind the altar of the bombed-out [Coventry Cathedral](#), destroyed on 14 Nov 1940 is the simple but sincere inscription "Father Forgive"..

**3. The Promise of Salvation:** to the Penitent Thief...

**a) The Plea of the Criminal:** *'Remember me when you come into your kingdom'* – cry of every penitent heart! ct the taunts of the other criminal...

**b) The Promise of the Christ:** *Truly I tell - you, today you will be with me in Paradise* - Persian word = walled garden - security/rest/peace. A Persian king would honour a subject by making him a Companion of the Garden – so he would share fellowship with the king in his paradise – the highest honour granted to a subject of the king...

May we all come to share that fellowship in heaven with Christ the King when our life here comes to an end- that we *will be with Jesus in Paradise*

*By Norman Porteous*

### ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

"What does 'king' mean to you?" the Rev. Machrina L. Blasdell, Sermons that Work, Episcopal Digital Network  
<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2013/11/06/christ-the-king-c-2013/>

["Image of the Invisible,"](#) the Rev. Dr. Fred R. Anderson, *Day 1*  
[http://day1.org/1074-image\\_of\\_the\\_invisible](http://day1.org/1074-image_of_the_invisible)

[Christ the King Sermons](#), Pastor Edward F. Markquart, Grace Lutheran Church, Seattle, Washington.  
[http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/christ\\_the\\_king.htm](http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/christ_the_king.htm)

[Father Andrew M. Greeley](#), Commentary and Homily  
<http://www.agreeley.com/hom01/nov25.htm>

### CHILDREN

[Worshiping with Children](#), Proper 26, Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary, Carolyn C. Brown  
[http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2013/10/year-c-christ-king-reign-of-christ\\_23.html](http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2013/10/year-c-christ-king-reign-of-christ_23.html)

"The End Is the Beginning (Without End)," Fran Woodruff, On The Chancel Steps  
<https://onthechancelsteps.wordpress.com/2013/11/10/end/>

["Light to Those Who Sit in Darkness,"](#) Proper 29C, Lesson Plans that Work, Episcopal Digital Network

## First Sunday before Advent (Kingship of Christ) - November 20, 2016

<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/lessons/2013/07/08/light-to-those-who-sit-in-darkness/>

[Story for Children's Worship and Family Activity](#), Ordinary 33, at *word-sunday.com: A Catholic Resource for the Lectionary* by Larry Broding.

<http://www.word-sunday.com/Files/c/King-c/A-King-c.html>

["Sermon of the Week,"](#) / ["Mensajes para ninos,"](#) Sermons 4 Kids, Charles Kirkpatrick, Object Lessons & Children's Sermons, Coloring Pages, Puzzles. Sermons4Kids.com.

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/>