

God will be put on one side - heaven, and those who have rejected the belief in God, sinned in their lives and not repented, will be placed on the other side - hell. This festival day of Christ the King shows Jesus to be the supreme being, the one who is unique in standing and power. The king who is a judge but who has a deep care for each of his subjects - whoever they are. In this second time of lockdown let us try to use this time to see where we are with God, and at the day of judgement rejoice that we will be able to experience an even deeper love than the one Christ the King can bring to us now.

Prayers

These can be formal or improvised and end with:

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.

Amen.

Hymn

This hymn can be sung or said as a poem

1. Christ, whose glory fills the skies,

Christ, the true, the only Light,
Sun of Righteousness, arise,
triumph o'er the shades of night;
Dayspring from on high, be near;
Daystar, in my heart appear.

2. Dark and cheerless is the morn
unaccompanied by thee;
joyless is the day's return
'til thy mercy's beams I see;
'til they inward light impart,
glad my eyes, and warm my heart.

3. Visit, then, this soul of mine;
pierce the gloom of sin and grief;
fill me, Radiance divine;
scatter all my unbelief;
more and more thyself display,
shining to the perfect day.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
we share together the blessing of your presence.
Give us in this life knowledge of your truth,
and in the world to come life everlasting;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Just a thought:

Be faithful in small things because it is in them
that your strength lies.
Mother Teresa

22nd November 2020

Email Sunday Service
A warm welcome to all who worship with us

Introduction

Worthy is the Lamb to receive power and wealth and wisdom
and might and honour and glory and blessing. *Revelation 5.11*

Hymn

This hymn can be sung or said as a poem

1. Rejoice, the Lord is King! Your Lord and King adore;

Mortals give thanks and sing, and triumph evermore;
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

2. Jesus, the Savior, reigns, the God of truth and love;

When He had purged our stains He took His seat above;
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

His kingdom cannot fail, He rules o'er earth and Heav'n,
The keys of death and hell are to our Jesus giv'n;
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

He sits at God's right hand till all His foes submit,
And bow to His command, and fall beneath His feet:
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Prayers of Penitence

When the Lord comes,
he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness,
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.
Therefore in the light of Christ let us confess our sins.

Amen.

Collect

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.

The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading: Ezekiel 34.11-16, 20-24

For thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall



lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice. Therefore, thus says the Lord God to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken.

Second Reading: Ephesians 1.15-23

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 25.31-46

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

A short time of Silence may be taken

Homily



Well, here we are again at the end of yet another church and liturgical year. And just like our secular year it has been incredibly testing for us. There can only be a relatively small amount of people who have experienced similar testing times during this past year. Those who have lived through a world war or the Falkland war or other military conflicts will know of the raw fear and the extreme pressure that those times hold. We have all had testing times in some way or another, some with much more pressure than others. Perhaps being interviewed for a new job, or moving house, or even getting married, to name just a few. But this past year, with Covid-19, is something that only a very, very small percentage of people could have seen coming, and the stress and pressure and not forgetting grief that it has caused is immeasurable.

Most of our testing time this year was because most of us were in our homes doing what the government told us to do to keep safe. And as we were (nearly) all in our homes, they took on a new description of what they were. Suddenly they became our office or our place of work, our Church, our schoolroom, our gym, our bank or financial centre and of course, as usual, the place where we gathered at the days end to rest. In short, we had to diversify with our dwellings to help us through the crisis.

But another thing that we found out about ourselves was that we had a great deal more time to sit and think. At times like this we often take stock of who and what we are. We try to work out what it is that shapes our lives. What have we done with our lives and what else can we do?

That may be our everyday, secular lives, but what about our Christian lives? Are we happy with where we are in our relationship with God? What sort of relationship with God do we have? Where and how do we use prayer? When do we just sit before God and listen? These questions can be just that - questions. But they can also be seen as a test.

There is something of a test in the words of Jesus in our Gospel reading this week concerning the sheep and the goats, only this time the test concerns something very different - how faithfully have we responded to Christ? What are the distinguishing features that we should look for? Faith that can move mountains? Being a regular attender of church services? Is this enough? Well according to this parable, they're not. It questions whether we have responded to people in need. Whether we have shown our faith in action, through care and compassion. For those who remember their chemistry lessons from their schooldays and how the test of litmus paper dipped into a test tube of liquid and then turns red or blue, indicating a result - these questions are the litmus tests of Christian discipleship and true faith.



Faith, though, may not just depend on good works alone, but it goes a long way to show God how we, as a true believer, are trying to understand what he wants from us. But there is a pointer - you could even say that it is a warning - in this parable, that it is not so much that Jesus will reject us for not doing his works, but by turning our backs, or just not being alive to the concerns of others, we may find that it is us who has rejected him. Just as the words of the Gospel point out:

"Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me."

In this parable, Jesus uses the example of a shepherd who separates his sheep from his goats in order to help his followers understand what judgement will be like.

Jesus explains that people will be separated into two groups: those who have lived good lives and believed in