

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON How worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and divinity, and wisdom and strength and honour. To him belong glory and power for ever and ever.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 22)

ANTIPHON: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

RESPONSE: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

LECTOR: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose. **R.**

LECTOR: Near restful waters he leads me, to revive my drooping spirit. He guides me along the right path; he is true to his name. **R.**

LECTOR: You have prepared a banquet for me in the sight of my foes. My head you have anointed with oil; my cup is overflowing. **R.**

LECTOR: Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life. In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for ever and ever. **R.**

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

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn)) The Lord sits as King for ever. The Lord will bless his people with peace.

TODAY'S READINGS Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17; 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28; Matthew 25:31-46

NEXT WEEK (1st Sunday Advent, Year B) Is 63:16-17, 64:1, 3-8; Ps 79; 1 Cor 1:3-9; Mk 13:33-37

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We all belong to one another



26 November 2023 Christ the King Year A

What sort of king is revealed to us in today's readings? It seems he's not like other kings. In the first reading God is spoken of as 'a true shepherd', one who doesn't abandon his flock, but cares for them.

Kings, who had once been thought of as shepherds, had long abandoned their people. Consequently, the reading focuses on the ways of this 'true shepherd', this true king. In the gospel there is awe and majesty and judgement and, if we wonder where this king is to be found, we hear he's to be found among the 'nobodies' and outcasts.

To which we might say, come again? We're surprised by this, as are the righteous and unrighteous in the gospel, because it's not quite what we expected. Of course, we might contribute to a couple of charities, or volunteer with St Vinnies; we might even say hello to the person sitting outside Coles, though as for her being Jesus, or bumping into Jesus on a visit, that might seem a bit of a stretch.

Still, almost unawares, we may have begun to make room in our lives for others, and in doing so, at moments, begin to see this king and recognise the ways in which he doesn't seem to resemble the popular images of Christ the King. He's more like the well-known sculpture of the Homeless Jesus lying on a bench, his body covered over, with only his wounded feet showing. What this image suggests is that his life and death have been all about God's kingdom

and Jesus is there, waiting for us in the 'nobodies' and outcasts, and we can enter this kingdom whenever we find ourselves able to be with them. Then we may realise, 'there's no more them and us, just us.'

It's a kingdom characterised by mercy and justice and this king dispenses justice mercifully, as he will at the last judgement when we're all to be judged. We shouldn't worry unnecessarily about it, however awesome and decisive it might seem, because it will come, and our lives will speak for us: they will be the answer we give to Christ. This judgment isn't meant to fill us with fear, rather, it's a cause for hope when all will be revealed to us; and this future is to be lived now, because his judgement is a call to be present to the person before me, who is my future.

Take to heart then what Mother Teresa once said about the world's problems: 'We've forgotten that we belong to one another.' Belonging to one another is the hope Christ offers us, as the second reading says, a life he wants to share with us all.

Who doesn't belong in our local churches and in our lives? Where is Jesus to be found? On our streets, in prisons, in boarding houses, wherever, still waiting to be seen, to be welcomed. Whenever this happens, God's kingdom is made real on earth, as in heaven.

Damian Coleridge

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