



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2024 – Christ the King

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.

Psalm 93

- 1 The Lord is king and has put on glorious apparel; ♦
the Lord has put on his glory
and girded himself with strength.
- 2 He has made the whole world so sure ♦
that it cannot be moved.
- 3 Your throne has been established from of old; ♦
you are from everlasting.
- 4 The floods have lifted up, O Lord,
the floods have lifted up their voice; ♦
the floods lift up their pounding waves.
- 5 Mightier than the thunder of many waters,
mightier than the breakers of the sea, ♦
the Lord on high is mightier.
- 6 Your testimonies are very sure; ♦
holiness adorns your house, O Lord, for ever.

A reading from the book of Daniel, chapter 7, verses 9-10 and 13-14.

Judgement before the Ancient One

As I watched,
thrones were set in place,
and an Ancient One took his throne;
his clothing was white as snow,
and the hair of his head like pure wool;
his throne was fiery flames,
and its wheels were burning fire.
A stream of fire issued
and flowed out from his presence.
A thousand thousand served him,
and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him.
The court sat in judgement,
and the books were opened. As I watched in the night visions,
I saw one like a human being
coming with the clouds of heaven.
And he came to the Ancient One
and was presented before him.
To him was given dominion
and glory and kingship,
that all peoples, nations, and languages
should serve him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
that shall not pass away,
and his kingship is one
that shall never be destroyed.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

At Morning Prayer, the Gospel is simply the second reading, people sit to hear it and is introduced in the same way as the first:

The second reading is from John, chapter 18, verses 33-37.

and then at the end:

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

For Eucharists/ Communion people stand to hear the Gospel. Everywhere except Fitz introduces it with an Acclamation (the blue bit), and then we all use the introduction and ending (the green bit):

Alleluia. **Alleluia.**

You, Christ are the King of glory, the eternal Son of the Father.

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John, Chapter 18, verses 33-37.

Glorify to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

John 18.33-37

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered, 'Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?' Pilate replied, 'I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.' Pilate asked him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.'

A reflection from Hannah...

Many of us have been watching the latest *Wolf Hall* series- *The Mirror and the Light*. In it, we see the danger of getting close to a king, and the capricious nature of kingship itself, as Henry VIII exercises his authority through his flawed humanity... as we all would, whether we'd like to admit it or not! We see how power is a thing of peril for those in its orbit, and how the public face and the hidden reality can be so incongruous with each other. And this latest TV series isn't the only example- there is many a cautionary tale with the same punchline throughout history, and in the pages of scripture. Indeed, there is a heart-wrenching passage in the first book of Samuel in which God laments the very human request for a king, saying that all who seek one will come to bitterly regret it.

This Christ the King Sunday we are invited to gaze upon Jesus as one who shows us what kingship really looks like, and how far it is from the glitter, pomp and palace intrigue that is associated with human power. As the song goes (to the tune of 'What shall we do with the drunken sailor'):

We have a king who rides a donkey,

And his name is Jesus!

As our Gospel reading attests, we have a king who is humble and full of love- love that will die for us. Love that lives in solidarity with us. Love that knows suffering. Love that is full of truth. Pontius Pilate accuses Jesus of being a king, but his accusation is laden with the same assumptions we have about what the word means. Jesus transforms the question- he points out that they are talking about different kingdoms, different ways, different values. Thank goodness that Christ's kingdom is not of this world, with all of its horrors and agonies. Jesus is enthroned in heaven- where there is only goodness, justice and truth.

And it is truth that gets the final word- 'Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice'. It's such a shame that the reading stops here, before we hear Pilate's infamous response, which is perfect for our postmodern, post-truth, relativist times- 'What is truth?'

What indeed. When we are tempted to collude with that prevailing sense that truth is something we own and define ('my truth'), we are reminded by Christ the King that in him is *the* truth- and it is pure love.