



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2025 – 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.

Psalm 46

1 God is our refuge and strength, ♦
a very present help in trouble;
2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved, ♦
and though the mountains tremble in the heart of the sea;
3 Though the waters rage and swell, ♦
and though the mountains quake at the towering seas.
4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, ♦
the holy place of the dwelling of the Most High.
5 God is in the midst of her;
therefore shall she not be removed; ♦
God shall help her at the break of day.
6 The nations are in uproar and the kingdoms are shaken, ♦
but God utters his voice and the earth shall melt away.
7 *The Lord of hosts is with us; ♦
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.*
8 Come and behold the works of the Lord, ♦
what destruction he has wrought upon the earth.
9 He makes wars to cease in all the world; ♦
he shatters the bow and snaps the spear
and burns the chariots in the fire.
10 '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 of hosts is with us; ♦
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.*
*God of Jacob,
when the earth shakes
and the nations are in uproar,
speak, and let the storm be still;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

A reading from the letter to the Colossians, chapter 1, verses 11-20.

May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

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 Luke, chapter 23, verses 33-43.

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.**

Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heaven.

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke, chapter 23, verses 33-43.

Glory to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!' The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!' There was also an inscription over him, 'This is the King of the Jews.'

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, 'Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!' But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' He replied, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.'

A Reflection from Hannah

On this, Christ the King Sunday, we've come full circle- it's the end of the liturgical year, which we began in Advent with the hope of the coming Messiah and which we end with the proclamation of his universal sovereignty.

Those words from Paul's letter to the Colossians also invite us to loop right round to the beginning of all things in scripture and to recognise the eternal kingship of Jesus. 'The son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.' What weighty words, what royal words. We cast our minds back to Genesis, where God spoke in the plural- 'let us make humanity in our image.' Jesus was there. And as that link is forged, we realise the dynamism and the magnitude of what Paul is saying. Jesus is king and Jesus creates- that creative process is continuing every day, and we are invited to step into our true humanity and join in.

So when Paul heralds the divinity and sovereignty of Jesus, he is showing us who Jesus is, and, in light of that, who we are too. As Paul says elsewhere, we share in that royal inheritance- we are brothers and sisters in Christ. This is our true vocation. It was there at the beginning- when God said, 'let us make humanity in our own image', God meant that the image we bear is one of vocation- a purpose- the purpose to be agents of God's kingdom, God's kingship and reign. We are stewards of creation- deeply connected to it, breathed into being by the Trinitarian God, made from the earth and part of an ongoing, unfolding act of loving, creative action. We are stewards of the new creation too- of heavenly ways- proclaiming the redeeming work of Christ, through cross and resurrection, and whose implications span the cosmos.

Perhaps, this Christ the King Sunday, we might pay special attention to the reach of Jesus' kingship. Especially in light of the tipping points the world is reaching, and the threats those bring. Jesus is for all that is, not just the human part- humanity has a particular role, but the Christian account of our world is Christological, not Anthropological- that is, Jesus is at the centre, not us. It's a lesson we're still learning in this age of selfish consumption. When we hear about our 'standard of living' – perhaps we can think about what 'good living' means in God's economy, and how that does or doesn't map on to the society's definition. We are not, and should not, be at the middle of it all, and yet there are so many ways in which we behave as though we are- that the world is just here for our needs, for us to rule over.

In contrast, it is humility that makes us truly human and truly carriers of the divine image. We have a crucified God, as the passage from Luke's gospel reminds us. God who hung on a cross with the sardonically meant, but wholly true words above his head- 'this is the king of the Jews.' Jesus' kingship is not how the world thinks of royalty. Jesus' kingship didn't make sense to the powers that were around in first century Palestine, and, more often than not, it doesn't make sense to the powers that are around today. A God who will die a shameful death. A God who serves, makes space, decentres, who keeps company with us, who knows everything we ever did and yet still loves. That God is a hard one for our cynical times to digest, but it's the God we worship today- on this Feast of Christ the King.