

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe



Christ the King: The New Testament is in no doubt about the ultimate kingship of Jesus Christ, but John's Gospel reminds us that his kind of sovereignty is a kingship "not of this world". Not for the first time, God incarnate turns the world upside down.

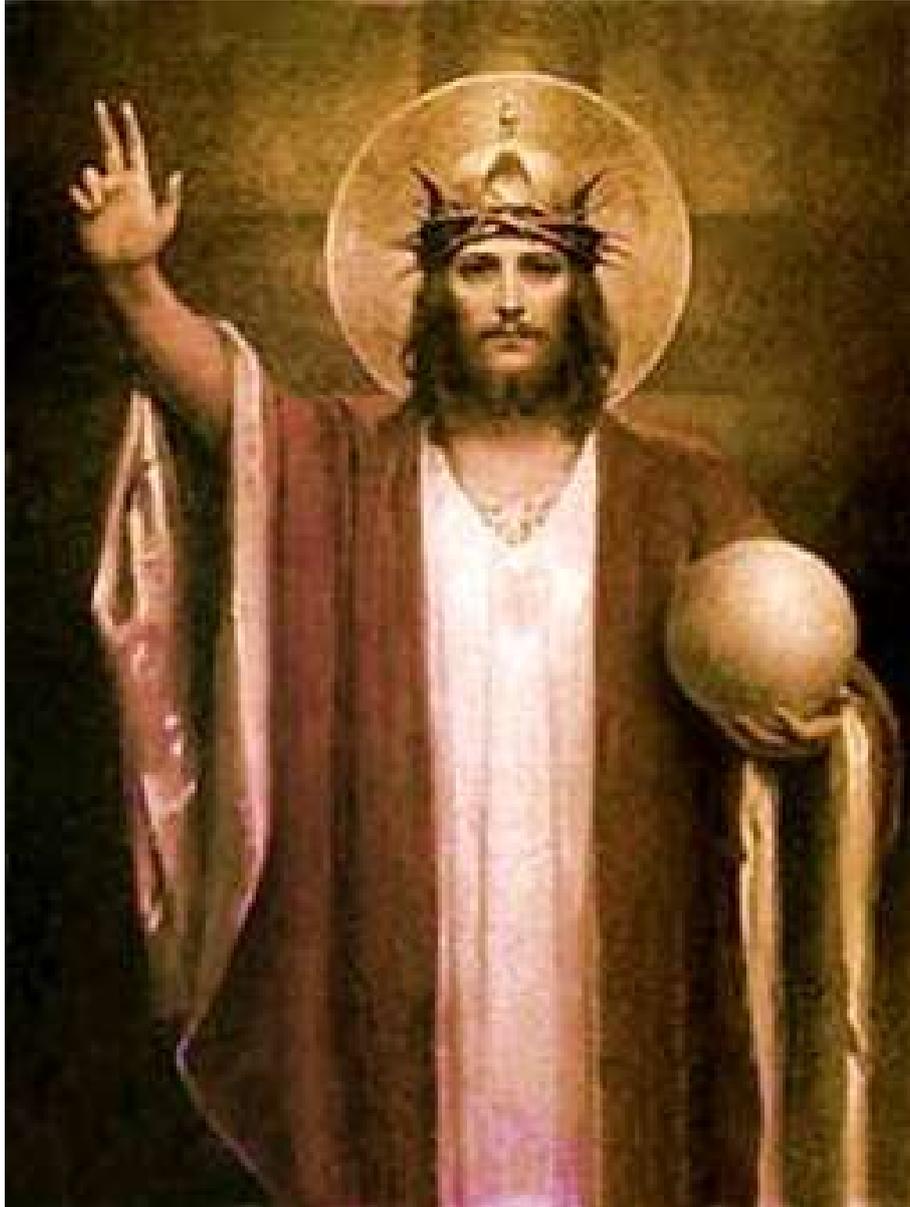
On this feast of Christ the King we celebrate the triumph of Jesus who emptied himself of power in order to give us an example of service.

Daniel 7:13-14 Daniel's vision is one in which God conquers over all that is evil, cruel and abusive, and restores the triumph of goodness.

Apocalypse 1:5-8 The word "apocalypse" may suggest drama, horror, vengeance and violent upheaval. But John's vision is one in which the enemies of God's purposes will be confounded, not by being overthrown but by realising the immensity of God's love.

John 18:33-37 Jesus comes face to face with the greatest power in the world, with nothing but the weapon of truth as his protection. Salvation is accomplished

by one who looks like a failure, but even the great empire of Rome cannot overcome the love and mercy of God.



Peanuts: Charlie Brown leaning against tree, talking to Lucy. She asks,

“What do you think security is, Charlie Brown?”

Charlie answers,

“Security is sleeping in the back seat of a car when you’re a little kid, and you’ve been somewhere with your mum and dad, and its night. You don’t have to worry about anything. Your

mum and dad are in the front seat and they're doing all the worrying. They take care of everything.”

Lucy smiles and says,

“That’s real neat, Charlie Brown.”

Charlie Brown, who never seems to know when to stop, gets a serious look on his face and says,

“But it doesn’t last.

Suddenly you’re grown up and it can never be like that again. Suddenly, it’s all over, and you’ll never be able to sleep on the back seat again. “Never!”

Lucy gets frightened look on her face and asks,

‘Never?’

And Charlie Brown replies,

“Never!”

They stand there, sensing a terrible loneliness. and Lucy reaches over and says,

“Hold my hand, Charlie Brown.”

A bittersweet moment. We can all identify with it. Since terrorist attacks on the twin towers in New York, since the underground bombings in London and the present terrorist threats and the pandemic we’ll never go to sleep on the back seat of car anymore. Never. Our old securities have been shattered. War abroad with difficult enemies, war at home with terror stalking our streets, always at back of our minds the fear of nuclear war, checkpoints, baggage searches, masks, latex gloves, gun patrols, long queues at airports. We’re learning the uncomfortable position of always looking over our shoulders. We’ve suddenly **all** become Lucys:

“Hold my hand, Charlie Brown.”

The good thief on cross must have felt a bit like that. The clouds were darkening. There'd already been blood shed. The crowd was ugly. There was nowhere to turn. Old securities were gone. There was, however, someone beside him who seemed, in his terrible suffering, to have a dignity, a grace, a majesty. The thief might have wanted, in his despair, his fright and his loneliness, to reach out to Jesus; perhaps to ask like a frightened Lucy,

“Jesus, hold my hand,”

Might have wanted to, but, of course, fixed to cross, he couldn't. So he did the next best thing. He turned to his fellow prisoner and pleaded from the depths of his sinful heart,

“Jesus, remember me”.

And we know reply of Jesus.

The Feast of Christ the King is based on those words. Take away all the elegant metaphors, all the medieval trappings, all the golden crowns and, beneath it all, behind this royal feast, is a man reigning from a cross who said he would “**remember us**”.

But, like the Good Thief, we've got to **ask** to be remembered. Like the Good Thief we've to realize that the game's up, that our old certainties of mortgages, insurance and pension plans, big cars and big spending, and competitive buying and conspicuous consumption no longer hold—if they ever did. Our salvation is found elsewhere. That admission, that moment of truth perhaps dawned on us all on 9/11 in New York and with the world-wide pandemic; suddenly we recognize what really counts, *who* really counts, and we cry out,

“Jesus, remember me.”

That cry is recognition of the kingship of Jesus; that he is Lord; that his amazing love can overcome **everything**, even death: “Today you will be with me in paradise.” That cry, ‘Remember me,’ which we should, in a sense, all make, with the repentant thief on this feast, is a

cry grounded in hope. That's why, I think, especially these days, we're drawn back, again and again, to the throne of Calvary, to this despised king of ours, because, repentant and chastened, we need to hold his hand or he to hold ours or at least whisper, "Remember me."

The Feast of Christ the King is a way of reminding us we ought to be paying homage to one whose mercy is wide, whose forgiveness legendary, whose love transcends time and terror. Today's Feast takes us back to Calvary, to three men on crosses. On one side, a man who creeps away into despair, in middle a man who talks to God, and on the other side a man who, on his cross, turns in hope to that man in the middle and wants to hold his hand.

That's a paradigm of today. In frightening times some people drift into fear and despair. But all of us who follow Jesus should speak to God in hope: being sorry for our sins, promising to live better lives, and finding the humility to ask Jesus to hold our hands — or at least to remember us.

The whole idea of this feast, on the last Sunday of the Church's year, is to reassure us that Jesus is in charge, Christ is king, Christ will remember us; that Christ, among the terror and the tears, will have the last word and make good the final promise. and that final promise is - paradise.

Christ is King: we can go to sleep on the back seat of a car.

The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe is a relatively recent addition to the Western liturgical calendar, having been instituted in 1925 by Pope Pius XI as an antidote to secularism, a way of life which leaves God out. The feast is intended to proclaim Christ's royalty over individuals, families, society, governments, and nations.

In 1970 this Catholic observance was moved to the final Sunday of Ordinary Time, the Sunday before Advent, which awaits the "coming King." On Christmas the Church greets, not the Child of Bethlehem, but the 'Rex Pacificus', "the King of peace gloriously reigning."



Every time we complete the cycle of the liturgical year, there is a seamless blending into the new liturgical year: so, just as this week we hear about the King who is to come, next week, we begin a New Year and the Season of Advent by more meditation on the end of time, and the One who is to come again, as he once came among us. This feast affirms that Christ is King, that he is Judge, that he is Ruler of the kings of the earth. By his own words we know that this is true, as he stands before Pilate and says, “Yes, I am a king.” But his kingship is different: it is not of the same kind as earthly kings, whose empires fade and pass away. His kingship is eternal, and holy until the end of time. Through his love for us, we share in this sovereignty - this holiness - as priests and kings who ‘serve his God and Father’.

We end our year in simple, awe-filled praise of the One who is, who was, and who is to come - the Almighty.

Alleluia! Amen!

GOSPEL WORDSEARCH

D	R	E	G	N	A	R	T	S	S	GLORY	ANGELS	THRONE
R	S	L	E	G	N	A	N	T	E	SHEPHERD	HERITAGE	HUNGRY
E	F	E	T	E	R	N	A	L	S	FOOD	STRANGER	CURSE
H	I	O	O	D	F	O	E	G	H	FIRE	DEVIL	VIRTUOUS
P	R	T	O	E	G	A	L	U	G			
E	E	H	S	D	S	E	N	S	L			
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S	U	O	U	T	R	I	V	C	R			
C	E	N	I	Y	V	E	D	K	Y			
A	L	E	V	E	D	L	R	O	W			

SIR DAVID AMESS MP RIP



The Requiem Mass and Funeral for Sir David is on Tuesday this week (23rd) at Westminster Cathedral. Please continue to pray for the repose of his soul and for his sorrowing family.

Sir David was very much a local boy. Born and brought up in Plaistow and an old St Bon's boy, he was very much formed by his Catholic Faith and by Catholic Social teaching.

St Anthony Novena



**EVERY TUESDAY AT 12.15pm –
Holy Mass followed by St Anthony Novena**