

READINGS AND REFLECTIONS – CHRIST THE KING --- A

First Reading

Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel

The Lord says this: I am going to look after my flock myself and keep all of it in view. As a shepherd keeps all his flock in view when he stands up in the middle of his scattered sheep, so shall I keep my sheep in view. I shall rescue them from wherever they have been scattered during the mist and darkness. I myself will pasture my sheep, I myself will show them where to rest - it is the Lord who speaks. I shall look for the lost one, bring back the stray, bandage the wounded and make the weak strong. I shall watch over the fat and healthy. I shall be a true shepherd to them.

As for you, my sheep, the Lord says this: I will judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and he-goats.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 22:1-3, 5-6

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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

Second Reading 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep. Death came through one man and in the same way the resurrection of the dead has come through one man. Just as all men die in Adam, so all men will be brought to life in Christ; but all of them in the proper order: Christ as the first-fruits and then, after the coming of Christ, those who belong to him. After that will come the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, having done away with every sovereignty, authority, and power. For he must be king until he has put all his enemies under his feet and the last of the enemies to be destroyed is death. And when everything is subjected to him, then the Son himself will be subject in his turn to the One who subjected all things to him, so that God may be all in all.

Gospel

Matthew 25:31-46 (JB)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus said to his disciples: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate men one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right hand, "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me." Then the virtuous will say to him in reply, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; sick or in prison and go to see you?" And the King will answer, "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of

mine, you did it to me." Next, he will say to those on his left hand, "Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you never gave me food; I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink; I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, naked and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me." Then it will be their turn to ask, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty, a stranger or naked, sick or in prison, and did not come to your help?" Then he will answer, "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me." And they will go away to eternal punishment, and the virtuous to eternal life.'

REFLECTIONS

Kings these days are largely figureheads, without any significant political power.

It was not always the case. Kings wielded absolute power.

People's lives were largely controlled by the whim of the King – if he changed his mind on some religious matter, or changed political orientation, the people had to follow suit.

They showed their allegiances and declared their loyalty by siding with the King, repeating what he said, and imitating what he did, whether it was right or wrong.

The shape of society, with its good and bad points, with its inequalities and injustices, was determined by the King. People prospered under a good King and suffered under a bad one.

A good king has the qualities of a caring shepherd

- he keeps all his people in view and ensured that their needs were met;
- he searches out the lost and rescues those who have strayed;
- he heals the wounded and makes the weak strong;

The Kingdom of God, begun by Christ, is such a Kingdom. Its basic shape can be seen in the way in which Jesus related to the people of his time: he worked for justice by seeking out the marginalised, befriending the outcast and bringing them back into the community

His is a Kingdom which is inclusive of all: a kingdom in which forgiveness and healing are paramount, a kingdom whose citizens

- trust not in possessions and wealth, but in the goodness of God and the goodness of others;
- are gentle with others and with God's good creation;
- forgive without counting the cost;
- strive for peace and harmony between themselves;

- are single-minded and constant in their service of others;
- reach out in mercy to the afflicted and stand in solidarity with them.

This Kingdom is being built, day by day, we are its builders.

Almighty God,
you have conferred upon Christ Jesus
sovereignty over every age and nation,
and a kingship that shall not pass away.

Remove from us every desire for privilege and power,
that we may imitate the sacrificial love of Christ our King
and, as a royal and priestly people,
serve you humbly in our brothers and sisters,
and receive the inheritance of your kingdom.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.
