

Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ the King – November 23, 2025 – Good Shepherd Church

Scripture Reading: 2 Samuel 5:1-3

In those days, all the tribes of Israel came to David in Hebron and said: "Here we are, your bone and your flesh. In days past, when Saul was our king, it was you who led the Israelites out and brought them back. And the LORD said to you, 'You shall shepherd my people Israel and shall be commander of Israel.'" When all the elders of Israel came to David in Hebron, King David made an agreement with them there before the LORD, and they anointed him king of Israel.

Psalm: Ps 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5

R. (cf. 1) Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

I rejoiced because they said to me,

"We will go up to the house of the LORD."

And now we have set foot

within your gates, O Jerusalem.

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Jerusalem, built as a city
with compact unity.

To it the tribes go up,
the tribes of the LORD.

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

According to the decree for Israel,

to give thanks to the name of the LORD.

In it are set up judgment seats,
seats for the house of David.

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Scripture Reading: Colossians 1:12-20

Brothers and sisters: Let us give thanks to the Father, who has made you fit to share in the inheritance of the holy ones in light. He delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to 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 were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and for him. He 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, that in all things he himself might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile all things for him, making peace by the blood of his cross through him, whether those on earth or those in heaven.

Gospel: Luke 23:35-43

The rulers sneered at Jesus and said, "He saved others, let him save himself if he is the chosen one, the Christ of God." Even the soldiers jeered at him. As they approached to offer him wine they called out, "If you are King of the Jews, save yourself." Above him there was an inscription that read, "This is the King of the Jews."

Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us." The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, "Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God.

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud.

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

Sunday is the feast of Christ the King. So here is a story. In the western world there was once a king named Arthur. He was the one who invented the famous Round Table and had Lancelot as his knight and Guinevere as his wife. Long before Arthur became a king—in fact when he was just an infant in the cradle—a strange thing happened. The nurse stepped out for a moment and quick as a wink Merlin the magician appeared. Then disappeared and took the little boy with him. This was not really a kidnapping, because Merlin was a kindly old magician. Alright, it was a kidnapping, but it was for a fond purpose. This magician did not want this boy to grow up in a sumptuous court, spoiled, pampered and “royal.” Rulers can be miles above the tiny precious specks of beauty in life. So Merlin whisked young Arthur to a bedraggled castle of a third-rate Lord, Sir Ector. Ector’s castle was coarse and dirty but the people were ordinary and nice, and the nooks and crannies were perfect for a little boy to run around in and to hide in. All the servants and lords and ladies were his friends. Naturally. There was no jealousy about Arthur’s being heir to the throne because, thanks to Merlin, no one knew that he was. Even the boy did not know! He was now the foster-son of Sir Ector, and he was given the unpretentious name Wart (which in those days rhymed with Art, which is short for Arthur). Merlin, funny old character, decided to educate Wart in an odd, special way. Merlin’s idea was to transform him into various and sundry animals so that the Wart would find out first-hand the wonders packed into, say, the life of a hawk. Or of a fish. In fact, especially of a fish, because fishes go around in schools, and Wart the fish could go to class!

Now, Jesus was not called Christ during his whole lifetime any more than Wart was called King. He was called “Jesus,” a name that in Hebrew was Joshua, which probably meant “God is salvation.” He was a normal Jewish boy, playing with toys, helping his dad, getting his hands dirty and watching birds fly. Like the Wart, Jesus identified with the lowliest, most ordinary people in the world. Granted, there was no Merlin to turn Jesus into a fish or a hawk, but there was someone better, the Holy Spirit. At the last, Pilate asked Jesus if he were a king. Jesus was a King, but not in any way a Pilate could understand. Smallness was his power. Christ the King. I almost forgot to tell you: I typed a wrong key when I began writing this reflection and hit a “d” instead of a “g” at the end of the word King. It came out “Christ the Kind”! Why should Christ the Kind, one of the people, have to suffer? Because he was one of us. Why do we have to suffer? Because that is the way of the world. And why didn’t Christ the King change the world and make things perfect? He did, but not in the way we had expected. He did it as Christ the Kind.

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

1. Compare Jesus and David as shepherds, anointed ones, and kings. What is the difference between their kingships?
2. “For him all the fullness was pleased to dwell.” What does *fullness* mean to you in this context? Do you see part of such a fullness in this or that neighbor? What part do you want to dwell in you? Think of all the places you find goodness. Are they sacred? What is the goodness and beauty in your life saying to you about God?
3. The good thief reached out to Jesus. How is he a model for us? Is anyone reaching out to you in any way, at work, at home, in your parish, in the local community, in the world community? How will you heal these wounds and/or warm these hearts?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another’s openness and sensitivity. Conclude with the following:

Almighty ever living God, whose will is to restore all things in your beloved Son, the King of the universe, grant, we pray, that the whole creation, set free from slavery, may render your majesty service and ceaselessly proclaim your praise. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

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Prayer to St. Michael

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen