November 24, 2019

Christ the King

Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father.

Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’

Matthew 25:34
Report for November 17, 2019
472 donors; 1,403 envelopes mailed (34%)

Financial Stewardship
For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Weekly Offertory ........................................... $ 8,054
Weekly Off. Online (168 donors) .................. $ 2,058
Food Bank.................................................. $ 15
Parish Share 2019................................. $ 1,097
Total Collection.............................................. $ 11,224
Over / Under Weekly Off. Budget..$ (1,696)
Over / Under Annual Off. Budget to Date...$ (32,095)
Third Sunday of November 2018............. $ 11,281
Parish Share 2019 Year-to-date.............. $ 80,338

Weekly Offertory
$         8,054
Weekly Off. Online
(168 donors)$         2,058
Food Bank$         15
Parish Share 2019$         1,097
Total Collection$         11,224
Over / Under Weekly Off. Budget$ (1,696)
Over / Under Annual Off. Budget to Date$ (32,095)
Third Sunday of November 2018$         11,281
Parish Share 2019 Year-to-date$         80,338

Pray for our infirmed and homebound

Pete Ayoob  Eddie Jozsa  Jeldo Montini
Louis B. (infant)  Roberta Jozsa  Angela Ross
Rochelle Barnes  E.K.  Sean S.
Steven Cercone  Pat Kayla  Mia Scalamogna
Filomena DeChellis  Elias Kazis (child)  Helen Schreiber
Ida DiNardo  Hannah K. (toddler)  Marjorie Sewasky
Linda Ermi  Robert Konarski  Jean Shingleton
Stephanie F.  Pauline Leo  Sue Sokol
Mike Fordyce  Shirley Lapata  Jean Vickodil
Larry Garuccio  Santa Lucci  C.W.
James George  Vivian McGinnis  Peter Weisenmiller
Hallie H. (toddler)  Edward Mineard  Alan Zanker

Please Note: To be added to this list, a family member is asked to please contact the Parish Office at 724-775-6363 or email info@sfcabrini.us. First Friday Communicants will remain on the list indefinitely; all others will remain for one month unless renewed by a family member.
**Religious Education**
Contact: Deanna Stacho 724-774-4888, stfrancesch@comcast.net

**Sunday School**

Attention All Families -- Please contact the office if your email address has been revised since September.

Reminder -- Class will not be in session next weekend for families to celebrate during the Thanksgiving weekend.

Office Hours -- Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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**Parish News**
Contact: Parish Office 724-775-6363, info@sfcabrini.us

**Adoration for the Solemnity of Christ the King** on Sunday, November 24, after the 11:30 a.m. Mass until 5 p.m. concluding with Vespers and Benediction. Please make some time for quiet prayer before the Blessed Sacrament honoring Christ as Sovereign and Lord of all.

**Thanksgiving Meal** -- The St. Frances Cabrini Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society would like to ensure that all in our area have a festive meal to celebrate Thanksgiving. They will provide a turkey and all the trimmings and deliver if necessary. Call 724-312-3533 and leave message if you know of anyone that could use this assistance. All requests will be treated confidentially.

**50+ Group’s 28th Annual Christmas Luncheon** -- Thursday, December 12, in O’Connell Hall. Catered buffet served at 1 p.m. Door prizes, Silent auction, and excellent food! Reservations are necessary. Please call Martha at 724-375-7216.

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**Saint Frances Cabrini Parish Food Bank Update** -- As a reminder, our Parish continues to maintain our food bank through its association with the food bank operated by Faith Restoration Inc. (FR), located at 186 Wagner Rd., Center Twp. The Faith Restoration Food Bank Program is currently providing help to 250-300 families weekly. Thank you for your monetary donations and non-perishable food donations (which can be dropped off in the container located at our Preschool entrance). They are used by our parish to assist FR’s efforts to provide help to people in the local area who are in need of food assistance. In addition, there are a number of parishioners who are volunteering several hours of their time each week to support FR’s Food Bank Program.

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**Around our Grouping**

Our grouping is being asked again this year to send Christmas cards to our soldiers who will not be home to celebrate the Christmas season with family and friends. Operation Christmas Cards 4 Troops Overseas. Our effort last year was a tremendous success, and we seek your support again this year! Please feel free to sign as many Christmas cards as you like along with an optional special message to the soldier. Please keep your words simple. Hand-made cards do not need an envelope. Individual cards should be addressed to “any Service Member” and signed by sender. Please seal the envelope and drop your card(s) into the mailbox at the church entrances until November 24.

**Coffee Shop** after the 9 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Masses. Bring your entire family and enjoy!

Consultation and blood pressure readings available by our Faith Community Nurse, Joyce Ott.

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**MACH1 Youth Group Meeting** -- The Youth Group will meet this Sunday, November 24, at 6 p.m. at Fatima House for fellowship and discussion. All 9th-12th graders are invited to join us. Note new location for November, December and January.

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Around our Grouping continued

Baptism

Baptismal Preparation Class will be held at St. John the Baptist on Monday, November 25, at 6:30 p.m. in the Pastoral Center.

This class is a one-time requirement for parents wishing to have their child baptized. Topics to be covered include the Sacrament of Baptism, the Rite of Baptism, & the need for suitable godparents who regularly practice the faith to serve as worthy role models and mentors for the child in the ways of faith. Please do not choose godparents until you have familiarized yourself with the necessary qualifications. To register, call the Parish Office at 724-775-3940.

Bible Study

Wednesday Bible Study -- There is no bible study class on Wednesday, November 27 at St. John the Baptist in Monaca. Happy Thanksgiving!

Request For Help -- Our grouping St. Vincent de Paul Societies along with Deacon Bob and the Knights of Columbus of Our Lady of Fatima will be collecting coats, blankets, socks and deodorant. Some of these items will be delivered to the St. Vincent de Paul St. Francis of Assisi Conference at Duquesne University where the students feed and clothe the homeless population in downtown Pittsburgh every Sunday evening during the academic year. The rest of the items will be used to help the needy in our local area. Please drop your donations in the boxes at the front church entrances of our grouping before December 15. Thank you for helping us help others.

Join Us For

Thanksgiving Day Mass

9:00 a.m.

Saint Frances Cabrini, Center Twp.

“Help us to bring Christ to all those in the world who are so in need of Him!”

— Saint Catherine of Alexandria
Patron Saint of philosophers and scholars
Feast Day, November 25

Christmas Discernment Retreat -- Are you striving to do something great for your life? Though the world offers you mediocrity, do you thirst for heroism and sainthood? College and post-college men, come to Made for Greatness: A Christmas Discernment Retreat, to discern your vocation and learn more about the priesthood. Retreat master Deacon Jim Keating will lead the retreat. Deacon Keating, director of theological formation at the Institute for Priestly Formation, will offer life-changing insights and reflections to aid you in discerning what God is calling you to do with your life. The retreat takes place December 13-15 at St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center. The weekend will include Mass, adoration, conferences, opportunity for confession, and solid brotherhood. No cost. Men must be 18 or older. Visit PGHPriest.com by December 8 to register.

Beaver Valley Choral Society

Christmas Concert Schedule

In Heaven the Bells are Ringing!

December 7, 2:00 p.m. SAINT BLAISE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH 772 OHIO AVENUE, MIDLAND
December 14, 7:00 p.m. HOLY FAMILY ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH 521 7TH AVENUE, NEW BRIGHTON
December 15, 4:00 p.m. SAINT CECILIA ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH 532 VIRGINIA AVENUE, ROCHESTER
December 21, 4:00 p.m. NEW BRIGHTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 1033 8TH AVENUE

Please join us for a free concert of sacred choral music celebrating the birth of our Savior.
**Sanctuary & Holy Family Candles**

Contact: Parish Office 724-775-6363, info@sfcabrini.us

**Mass Intentions**

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**Today’s Readings**

*First Reading* -- The Lord said to David, You shall shepherd my people Israel (2 Samuel 5:1-3).

*Psalm* -- Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord (Psalm 122).

*Second Reading* -- Thanks to the Father who has made you fit to share in the inheritance of the holy ones in light (Colossians 1:12-20).

*Gospel* -- Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom (Luke 23:35-43).

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**Saints & Special Observances**

*Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe*

**Monday:** Thirty-fourth or Last Week in Ordinary Time; St. Catherine of Alexandria  
**Thursday:** Thanksgiving Day  
**Saturday:** St. Andrew

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**Mass Intentions** (MB: Fr. Martin; TS: Fr. Thomas; JM: Fr. Joachim; RA: Fr. Regis; BB:Dcn Bob Bittner; Deacon Joe Basko)

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**Readings for the Week**

**November 24, 2019**

*Monday:* Dn 1:1-6, 8-20; Dn 3:52-56; Lk 21:1-4

*Tuesday:* Dn 2:31-45; Dn 3:57-61; Lk 21:5-11

*Wednesday:* Dn 5:1-6, 13-14, 16-17, 23-28; Dn 3:62-67; Lk 21:12-19

*Thursday:* Dn 6:12-28; Dn 3:68-74; Lk 21:20-28

Thanksgiving Day, Suggested: Sir 50:22-24; Ps 145:2-11; 1 Cor 1:3-9; Lk 17:11-19

*Friday:* Dn 7:2-14; Dn 3:75-81; Lk 21:29-33

*Saturday:* Rom 10:9-18; Ps 19:8-11; Mt 4:18-22

*Sunday:* Is 2:1-5; Ps 122:1-9; Rom 13:11-14; Mt 24:37-44

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Christ the King Sunday, the last Sunday of the liturgical year, is a feast that focuses on the authority of Christ. While the problems our world faces today differ from the particular events that inspired Pope Pius XI to establish this feast in 1925, his message to honor Christ the King in a society that denies the authority of Our Lord is no less pertinent now than it was then.

The pontiff was witness to a turbulent time in the world's history. Secularism was on the rise and dangerous dictatorships were emerging in Europe and beyond. Christ had long been referred to as King, but Pope Pius and the Christian faithful saw the respect and reverence for Christ's authority waning in the midst of the unrest during the first part of the 20th century. In response, the feast was set with the intent to reaffirm and re-focus faith and respect in the kingship of Jesus.

Pope Pius XI was hoping for these effects to occur:
1) That nations would see that the Church has the right to freedom, and immunity from the state.
2) That leaders and nations would see that they are bound to give respect to Christ. That the faithful would gain strength and courage from the celebration of the feast, as we are reminded that Christ must reign in our hearts, minds, wills, and bodies.

The feast was initially fixed to the final day of October, the day before All Saints Day. Later, in 1969, Pope Paul VI moved the feast to the last Sunday before Advent, to emphasize the importance of the feast. This is fitting within the Church year. The liturgical year begins with Advent, the season of awaiting the coming of Christ, and now the year ends with celebrating the Kingship of Christ.

While the feast is new, the tradition of calling Christ “King” is not:
To the King of ages, . . .be honor and glory forever – 1 Tim 1:17
Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” – John 1:49
Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You say so.” – Mt. 27:11
The blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords – 1 Tim 6:15
Just and true are thy ways, O King of the ages!” – Rev. 15:3
And from Jesus Christ . . . the ruler of kings on earth. Rev. 1:5

He has a name . . . King of kings and Lord of lords. – Rev. 19:16

Clearly “King” was one of the earliest titles given to the Son of God. The title does not refer to a status of an earthly king, which many of the Jews had been expecting – someone to overthrow the Roman rule and be earthly king of the Israel. Rather He came to be the spiritual king; His kingdom is in heaven, not confined to the earth alone. In respecting the name of Christ the King, and in celebrating the yearly feast, both citizens and leaders are to remain reverent and devoted to the higher authority of Christ.
A customer walks into a dress shop and ask, "May I try on that dress in the window?"

The salesperson replies, "We prefer you use the dressing rooms."

Cop: You know how fast you were going?
Guy: Sorry officer, I was just trying to catch up with traffic.
Cop: What traffic? The road is empty.
Guy: Yea, that's how far behind I am.

A lawyer phoned the governor's mansion shortly after midnight. "I need to talk to the governor -- it's an emergency!" exclaimed the lawyer.

After some cajoling, the governor's assistant agreed to wake him up.

"So, what is it that's so important that it can't wait until morning?" grumbled the governor.

"Judge Pierson just died, and I want to take his place," begged the attorney.

“Well, it’s okay with me if it's okay with the funeral home.”
**Sunday, Nov 24, 2019**

**SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE**

**Real power doesn't grab or push**

The bluster of schoolyard bullies isn’t much different from the threatening words of the world’s tyrants. Only the reach of their destruction sets the tyrants apart. Among the revelatory transfigurations of Jesus is how he deftly transforms divine authority into the surrendering action of a servant. While worldly powers seize and hold, Jesus shares, teaches, and heals. As bullies lash out, Jesus lays down his life and forgives his enemies. The King of the Universe makes no claim on territory or seats of grandeur. His throne is truth, and his realm, justice. Take time to honor him.

**TODAY'S READINGS:** 2 Samuel 5:1-3; Colossians 1:12-20; Luke 23:35-43 (162). “Are you not the Christ? Save yourselves and us.”

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**Monday, Nov 25, 2019**

**MEMORIAL OF CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGIN, MARTYR**

**A saint for the ages**

Just as November begins with the feast of All Saints, it ends with examples of how the church remembers saints such as Catherine of Alexandria (c. 287-305). Iconography reminds us that she was of Egyptian royalty (often shown with a crown), and she could have used her privilege to do almost anything. She chose to immerse herself in the study of philosophy—she’s often shown with books. Other symbols remind us of her fate once she was baptized at 14 and rebuked the Roman emperor for persecuting Christians. Catherine is typically depicted with a spiked wheel—a torture device said to have miraculously broken apart as the emperor first tried to execute her—along with the “palm of martyrdom” and the sword that finally beheaded her. We’re all called to be saints. What symbols would adorn your holy card?

**TODAY'S READINGS:** Daniel 1:1-6, 8-20; Luke 21:1-4 (503). “She, from her poverty, has offered her whole livelihood.”

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**Tuesday, Nov 26, 2019**

**Test the message**

Jesus warned against false prophets promising salvation to those who heed their call, yet each age seems to produce its own crop of misguided messiahs. In our own time, many will remember the tragedies associated with delusional figures such as Charles Manson, David Koresh, Yahweh ben Yahweh, and Jim Jones. Be cautious with those who promise much but demand unquestioning loyalty in return. If the fruits of humility, compassion, respect, and integrity are not visible in the message, don’t trust the messenger.

**TODAY'S READINGS:** Daniel 2:31-45; Luke 21:5-11 (504). “See that you not be deceived, for many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he,’ and ‘The time has come.’ Do not follow them!”

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**Wednesday, Nov 27, 2019**

**I had a dream**

You might wonder if God still speaks to us, as in biblical times, through our dreams. The church teaches that while we already have received the fullness of “public revelation,” God can still offer us “private revelation”—guidance on our life journey or major decisions—through our dreams. But such revelations are not common—most dreams are randomly generated as part of sleep—and dreams with a message require skillful interpretation by way of prayer and reflection, and ideally with the assistance of a spiritual advisor. Pay attention to your dreams, but also test them.

**TODAY'S READINGS:** Daniel 5:1-6, 13-14, 16-17, 23-28; Luke 21:12-19 (505). “I have heard that you can interpret dreams and solve difficulties.”

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**Thursday, Nov 28, 2019**

**THANKSGIVING DAY**

**Deepen your gratitude**

Research from the Greater Good Science Center at University of California, Berkeley and A Network for Grateful Living has underscored the importance of gratitude—or “reverence for what is given.” Focusing our mental lens on abundance, not scarcity, can lead to dramatic improvements in health and quality of life. Dr. Robert Emmons and Brother David Steindl-Rast pioneered the field that teaches us to appreciate all experiences, whether we once labeled them “good” or “bad.” Find a gratitude practice for you or your family at gratefulness.org. Try it for a week.

**TODAY'S READINGS:** Daniel 6:12-28; Luke 21:20-28 (506). “Stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

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**Friday, Nov 29, 2019**

**God’s persistent presence**

Both of today’s readings point toward the notion that God’s kingdom persists, no matter what. Daniel presents fantastical, destructive beasts with teeth and horns and thrones of flames. But vanquishing them all is “one like a son of man” with an enduring kingship. In the gospel, Jesus reinforces the idea: the kingdom is near; his words will endure. There is comfort here for the faithful: While the world around us may be in upheaval, God’s presence never fails. Allow yourself today to rest in the certainty that God’s kingdom is always at hand.

**TODAY'S READINGS:** Daniel 7:2-14; Luke 21:29-33 (507). “Know that the kingdom of God is near.”

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**Saturday, Nov 30, 2019**

**FEAST OF ANDREW, APOSTLE**

**Introducing Jesus**

If ever there were a patron saint of introductions—fortuitous, life-changing introductions—it would have to be Andrew. At the beginning of John’s gospel, Andrew tells his brother Simon Peter, “We have found the Messiah,” before introducing him to Jesus. And we all know how that turned out for Peter! Later, before Jesus performs the miracle that fed 5,000 people, it was Andrew who introduced him to the boy with two fish and five loaves. Later still, it was Andrew who was approached—on the eve of Jesus’ death—when a few curious Gentiles wanted to meet Jesus. As Advent begins, consider ways that you, too, could introduce others to Christ. Like the boy with the loaves and fishes, it could be as simple as bringing food to a gathering.

**TODAY'S READINGS:** Romans 10:9-18; Matthew 4:18-22 (684). "They left their nets and followed him.”

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**Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time**
Honoring Our Anointing

Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

2 Samuel 5:1-3
Colossians 1:12-20

There is a scene in the first season of the award-winning Netflix series, “The Crown”, when a young Elizabeth is role-playing a coronation ceremony with her father, the soon-to-be King George VI. The girl destined to be queen is reading the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury while her father responds and reflects on the circumstances of his life. The words speak of the sacredness of the ceremony and of the unbreakable promise that he will make to God. At one point he says to her, “You have to anoint me or I can't be king.” He explains to her that the anointing is essential, for when the holy oil touches him, he comes into direct contact with the Divine and is transformed forever. He becomes an anointed king who is now bound to the Anointed One. Elizabeth continues with the mock ceremony and anoints his head with the words: “as kings, priests, and prophets were anointed.” It is a very powerful scene that can give the viewer chills, especially if they have a Christian reference point from which to draw.

In the scene, you catch a glimpse of the importance of the monarchy to the people of England. The throne, whether it be sat on by a king or queen, is nothing like the seat of a president or prime minister. This seat of power is about divine calling and purpose. It is not so much about serving the people, but instead being a servant of the people because the true service is to God.

Of course, for most Christians who are active in their faith, watching this scene calls to mind the sacrament of Baptism. In Baptism, we are washed clean of our sin with water and anointed with oil. We die to our very self and are born again in Christ. We are new creations in the risen Lord. As King George
Real power doesn’t grab or push
The bluster of schoolyard bullies isn’t much different from the threatening words of the world’s tyrants. Only the reach of their destruction sets the tyrants apart. Among the revelatory transfigurations of Jesus is how he deftly transforms divine authority into the surrendering action of a servant. While worldly powers seize and hold, Jesus shares, teaches, and heals. As bullies lash out, Jesus lays down his life and forgives his enemies. The King of the Universe makes no claim on territory or seats of grandeur. His throne is truth, and his realm, justice. Take time to honor him.


A saint for the ages
Just as November begins with the feast of All Saints, it ends with examples of how the church remembers saints such as Catherine of Alexandria (c. 287-305). Iconography reminds us that she was of Egyptian royalty (often shown with a crown), and she could have used her privilege to do almost anything. She chose to immerse herself in the study of philosophy—she’s often shown with books. Other symbols remind us of her fate once she was baptized at 14 and rebuked the Roman emperor for persecuting Christians. Catherine is typically depicted with a spiked wheel—a torture device said to have miraculously broken apart as the emperor first tried to execute her—along with the “palm of martyrdom” and the sword that finally beheaded her. We’re all called to be saints. What symbols would adorn your holy card?

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Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time
VI explains to his daughter about his coronation, we are forever transformed in Baptism. We also are anointed into a royal priesthood. We become priest, prophet, and king like all those who have gone before us marked in the Faith.

Each year on the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, we speak about how Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. No earthly king surpasses him in glory and majesty. Jesus was the Anointed One, and we are blessed to be his earthly subjects in a kingdom that cannot be destroyed. However, if we are to be about the business of our king in this world, we need to take this occasion to reflect on our own anointing. In fact, since we bear the name Christian, we truly are called to be Christ to a world that needs to know him. All have been saved by the death and resurrection of the Anointed One, but now he is calling us and counting on us to honor our anointing through our discipleship and stewardship in this world.

At the very least, one can reflect on the fact that if we are sons and daughters of God, then we are royalty in a sense. That means we should act like it. Our Church suffers from so many ills in these modern times. Many of those defects have come about from members of the Body of Christ acting like anything but anointed royalty. With our Baptism comes responsibility. With the name Christian comes accountability. We are called and we are chosen.

What will the next liturgical year have in store for the Church? Only God truly knows. However, the future will be brighter if the kingdom of God manifests itself more clearly in our cities and towns. Things will improve if all those anointed by God step forward boldly with the Good News of the King of Kings.

Pope Pius XI instituted this very feast of the Kingship of Christ in 1925 to combat the increasing secularism, atheism, and apathy found throughout the globe. Many continue to believe that the universe would be just fine without Jesus Christ. A day on a liturgical calendar will not convince them. It will take all of us together — anointed and on fire for our King — to make a difference. This is the day and this is the moment.

— Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

Prayer
I have traveled many miles.
I have seen many things.
But nothing can compare to
the Beauty of the King.
When He stands there before me
with His arms open to receive,
I wonder how people see Him
and choose not to believe.

I have traveled many miles.
I have seen many things.
But nothing can compare to
the Beauty of the King.
When He stands there before me
with the angels I start to sing
of the power & the glory,
and the Beauty of the King.
— from the song “Beauty of the King” by Tracy Earl Welliver
SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,  
KING OF THE UNIVERSE, CYCLE C  

24 Nov 2019  

SUNDAY SUMMARY  

2 Samuel 5:1-3  David is anointed king in Hebron by popular demand.  
Psalm 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5  Jerusalem is the center of tribal identity and religious unity.  
Colossians 1:12-20  Christ is the beginning, the center, the head, and the peacemaker.  
Luke 23:35-43  To be remembered by Jesus is to enjoy Paradise today.  

The inner word  

What's in your heart?  

Christ may be king, but there seem to be an awful lot of princes and extra royalty standing around in our lives to which we bow and curtesy.  

- Which aspects of the past in general, or your past in particular, are you nostalgic for? What parts of the past are you grateful to leave behind?  
- Is there something in the future to which you direct your longing or attention? How does this motivate you, or perhaps interfere with your commitment to the present?  
- List the sources of authority in your life and the order in which you serve them. What do you do when they are in conflict?  
- "King," "Lord," and "Master" are antique-sounding terms to many people. Finish this sentence with the most honest word you can think of to describe the truth of your relationship: "Jesus is my ________"  

Exploring the word  

The imperative of the present  

Many of us, admittedly, live in the past or the future a good bit of the time. Past-dwellers can be divided into groups: the nostalgists who think the past is much too good to leave behind and those who rubberneck their personal histories with all the gruesome fascination of a car wreck. In the same way, future-dwellers come in two kinds: those who eagerly await the future as the ultimate antidote to all that ails us and those who agonize about what's ahead to the point of requiring ulcer medicine. In the twin obsessions with long ago and later, the members of all four clubs stand to lose the pearl of great price. The only moment that counts—that is, the hour of purpose and possibility—is the present.  

Our addiction to the past is certainly understandable. So far we've lived a great deal of our lives there, and some of it was pretty good. Certainly the songs were memorable, and nobody makes movies like that anymore. Try buying tomatoes like the ones we used to get, or buying anything near the quality of what used to be. Liturgy was grander, the streets were cleaner, the environment was healthier, and eating meat wasn't going to drive you crazy.  

For better or for worse  

But then there was the bad stuff. Let us count the ways just in the relatively recent past: the Holocaust, wars galore, assassinations, and terror attacks, for starters. More personally, every one of us has known
dark hours that took years to move beyond, and some of us are still trying to salvage ourselves from the wreckage of our own histories. For many people, the past is a shrine composed of glory days and nightmares, both of which keep us in thrall to what was and cannot be again.

Future junkies go the other way. The enthusiasts are often young people and all too soon they'll get over it. Technology will prove to be, not the god it pretends to be, but only the Golden Calf, a false savior of health, time, and labor. Harmony and understanding won't rush in with the dawn of Aquarius or the next government. When we finally meet E.T., he won't be any more together than we are. Future worriers, of course, will discover some of their fears realized, and others merely phantoms. Either way it won't matter, because addictive worriers will already be embarked on the next great season of fretting.

How can we escape our obsessive orbit of past or future? By embracing the present and refusing to live anywhere else. This is not the path of least resistance by any means: The present has all kinds of grisly elements that might send the faint of heart screaming into the time tunnel and frantically pushing all available buttons. But a brave new world cannot be had by those who seek to escape the here and now. Those fueled by bitterness, disappointment, or nostalgia idolize the past and will feed the present and future to it as a sacrificial offering. Those motivated by fear, anxiety, or misplaced hopes allow tomorrow to rule over today like a ruthless dictator. The only way to overthrow these powers and principalities is to surrender totally to divine grace, which operates in the "holy now" of God's everlasting presence. Now is the hour when Christ is King. The Kingdom we await is always "at hand."

Kingdom now

How do we know this? Luke is the evangelist of the holy now. Mary announces the imperative of the present hour in her canticle: "Behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed." Simeon echoes it in his: "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace." The angels in Bethlehem take up the refrain: "For today in the city of David, a savior has been born for you." And Jesus preaches the same in the synagogue at Nazareth, "Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."

The imperative to commit to today is spelled out in the conditions for discipleship: If anyone wishes to follow Jesus, he or she must take up the cross daily. Zacchaeus is told that salvation arrives at his house today. Likewise the repentant thief on the cross is assured that he will attain Paradise today. No one is asked to take a number, to come back tomorrow, or to bide his or her time. The moment of action is always now. The eternal God doesn't use a date planner. If something is worth doing, we might say, it's worth doing at once.

When asked by the Pharisees when the promised Kingdom would arrive, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God cannot be observed, and no one will announce, 'Look, here it is,' or 'There it is.' For behold, the kingdom of God is among you." In plain speech, Jesus introduced the reign of God breaking into time and taking a chair in our midst. Maybe heaven can wait, but the Kingdom is in the room.

Applying the word

Christ our King

The folks at Hebron knew just what to do when David arrived. They claimed him as their king. But many Christians seem uncertain that Christ is King, or that citizenship in his Kingdom is our primary allegiance. It could be a matter of terminology: Kingship is off-putting in a democratic age. Paul preferred the phrase: Jesus is Lord. Authority has become such a soiled garment in our times that the idea of ultimate authority seems to have no positive corollary. But sovereignty is the message: the power without peer. For Christians, Jesus is sovereign, and the reign of God trumps every other reality.

Essayist Charles Lamb once wrote, "If Shakespeare should come into this room, we would all rise; but if Jesus Christ should come in, we would all kneel." The sentiment is right, but the use of the conditional, at least with reference to Jesus, is misleading. Jesus Christ is among us and his Kingdom is within us. If Jesus is our King, the time to make our allegiance is now. If we believe the reign of God is among us, it's time to live according to its values.

Related scripture links

In other words

The Sunday gospel in everyday English

The people stood there staring at Jesus, and the ringleaders made faces, taunting, “He saved others. Let’s see him save himself! The Messiah of God—ha! The Chosen—ha!”

The soldiers also came up and poked fun at him, making a game of it. They toasted him with sour wine: “So you’re King of the Jews! Save yourself!”

Printed over him was a sign: this is the king of the jews.

One of the criminals hanging alongside cursed him: “Some Messiah you are! Save yourself! Save us!”

But the other one made him shut up: “Have you no fear of God? You’re getting the same as him. We deserve this, but not him—he did nothing to deserve this.”

Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you enter your Kingdom.”

He said, “Don’t worry, I will. Today you will join me in paradise” (from Luke 23).


Homily stories

Wherever you go, there God is

The Runaway Bunny by Margaret Wise Brown is a children’s story that I often read to our daughters in their early years. The story begins with these words: “Once there was a little bunny who wanted to run away. So he said to his mother, "I am running away." "If you run away," said his mother, "I will run after you. For you are my little bunny." No matter where the bunny goes, the mother follows: He becomes a fish in a stream and she fishes for him; he becomes a crocus in a garden and she becomes a gardener; he becomes a trapeze artist and she becomes a tightrope walker who walks across the air to him. You get the idea: The bunny cannot run away from his mother’s love. “Shucks,” he says at story's end, “I might as well stay where I am and be your little bunny.”

In pastoral ministry, I often gave this book to new parents. And in pastoral education, I used the book to teach about forgiveness and unconditional love, a love like God's very own. It is a story that reminds us that nothing can separate us from God’s love. God looks for us, never gives up on us, loves us in every moment of every day and waits for us to come home even when we have gone astray.

Peggy Ekerdt

Peg Ekerdt is a writer, spiritual director, and retreat facilitator. She has served as a parish pastoral associate for more than 30 years, working in the areas of pastoral care, bereavement, marriage preparation, liturgy, adult formation, and religious education. She has written for Celebration, National Catholic Reporter, Abbey Press CareNotes, Liturgy Training Publications, and as a scripture columnist for the diocesan paper. She continues to write for Take Five and Prepare the Word.
Homily stories

Bad king, good king

When my daughters were little and I would read them fairy tales we’d often come across lands where the king was either bad or missing in action. And because the one who should have sat on the throne ruling justly was either not on the throne, or ruling unjustly, the storybook land had inevitably turned bleak and gloomy and the people were sad. Anyone who pays attention knows that fairy tales aren’t just stories to amuse children and coax them into slumber. The best of them describe a world that mirrors the human psyche. They often have lessons for all of society, and for the home.

One point that applies is that if there is no benign sovereign in the home, the residents will be lost, confused, and sad. Every family needs a person or persons at the family’s core who act as a center to hold everything together. That’s how Saint Paul describes the kingship of the risen Christ—“in him all things hold together.” Families know this need. When a parent is ill or suddenly missing, things at home don’t hold together as easily. It’s clear not any kind of “king” will do. Parents and guardians and grandparents can emulate Jesus, the servant leader, the king who was filled with compassion and whose trust in God kept his power intact, even when he seemed most powerless.

Tom McGrath

Tom McGrath is the vice president for product development at Loyola Press. He was a co-founder of TrueQuest Communications and, prior to that, director of publishing at Claretian Publications. He is author of Raising Faith-Filled Kids <http://www.lyoapress.com/raising-faith-filled-kids.html> and The Meal Box <http://www.lyoapress.com/the-meal-box.html>.

Homily stories

The final say

Following a devastating world war and nearly a century of vicious conflicts among nation states trying to establish their identity and independence, Pope Pius XI decided it would be a good idea to remind Christians that when all is said and done Christ is the King, the ruler, the head of state. If we kept that in mind, he wrote in 1925, our conflicts might not be so frequent or severe.

Nearly a century later, we still haven’t gotten the message. Perhaps it would help to say Christ is the CEO, the president, the commander-in-chief. Whatever human term we use, the idea is not so we can imagine what Jesus would do in our modern situations; it is to understand the depth of Christ’s authority. When Jesus tells us to love one another, he is speaking as one who has the right to direct our actions. He has the final say. There are no other powers greater than he—no director, no board, no prince, no general, no pope trumps Jesus.

When a boss speaks, it is in one’s best interest to listen for the sake of one’s job. When Jesus speaks, it is in our best interest to listen for the sake of our lives.

Patrice J. Tuohy

Patrice Tuohy, co-founder of TrueQuest Communications and publisher of PREPARE THE WORD, is an award-winning writer, editor, designer, and author of a number of articles on Catholic life.

Prayers

Penitential Act & Prayer of the Faithful

Penitential Act
Invitation

Encouraged by God’s promise of salvation, let us pray for reconciliation with God and one another.

Invocations

- Lord Jesus, you welcome us into your Kingdom. Lord, have mercy.
- Lord Jesus, you are the firstborn of all creation and the firstborn of the dead. Christ, have mercy.
- Lord Jesus, you shepherd your people. Lord, have mercy.

Prayer of the Faithful

The universal prayer

We come rejoicing to the house of the Lord. With Christ enthroned in our hearts and minds, we offer these our prayers.

- We believe everything has been created in and through Christ. That we may be good stewards of creation and citizens of the kingdom of God, we pray to the Lord.
- Christ is the image of the invisible God, in whose image we are made. That all people may recognize the value and dignity of every person, we pray to the Lord.
- Christ is the head of the body, the church. That the members of Christ’s church may find redemption, forgiveness, reconciliation, and peace, we pray to the Lord.

Sovereign God, all fullness dwells in your Son. Hear our prayers, and lead us and all the world to the fulfilment of your kingdom. We ask this through Christ our Lord and King, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.

Quotes

God pardons like a mother, who kisses the offense into everlasting forgiveness.
— Henry Ward Beecher

Christ has dominion over all creatures, a dominion not seized by violence nor usurped, but his by essence and by nature.
— Cyril of Alexandria

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Christ the King

Celebrated on the last Sunday of the liturgical year, the Solemnity of Christ the King was instituted by Pope Pius XI in 1925 with his encyclical Quas primas to respond to growing secularism. The Holy Father saw that attempting to “thrust Jesus Christ and his holy law” out of public life would result in continuing discord among people and nations. The Solemnity reminds the faithful that Christ reigns as king of the entire world forever, and it encourages Catholics to respond to this reality.

Thanksgiving Prayer

Lord, we thank you for the goodness of our people and for the spirit of justice that fills this nation. We thank you for the beauty and fullness of the land and the challenge of the cities. We thank you for our work and our rest, for one another, and for our homes. We thank you, Lord: accept our thanksgiving on this day. We pray and give thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer taken from the Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers, Revised Edition, copyright © 2007, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC. All rights reserved.
Catherine is thought to have been born to a noble family in Alexandria, Egypt. Through a vision, this scholarly young woman converted to Christianity and began evangelizing others, including the wife of the pagan emperor who was persecuting Christians. According to legend, after she defied the emperor and refuted philosophers brought in to test her faith, she was imprisoned and tortured. She was put on a rotating spiked wheel; when it broke, she was beheaded. She is venerated as the Great Martyr St. Catherine in the Orthodox tradition and her voice was among those heard by St. Joan of Arc. She is the patron saint of wheelwrights, and also a patron of jurists, philosophers, unmarried girls, students and teachers.
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The Solemnity reminds the faithful that Christ reigns as king of the entire world forever, and it encourages Catholics to respond to this reality. Pope Pius XI notes: “The kingship and empire of Christ have been recognized in the pious custom, practiced by many families, of dedicating themselves to the Sacred Heart of Jesus; not only families have performed this act of dedication, but nations, too, and kingdoms” (Quas primas, 26). Let us rededicate ourselves this year to bearing witness to the reign of Jesus Christ and his Sacred Heart.

We recognize the reign of Christ the King with our whole lives.

“If to Christ our Lord is given all power in heaven and on earth; if all men, purchased by his precious blood, are by a new right subjected to his dominion; if this power embraces all men, it must be clear that not one of our faculties is exempt from his empire. He must reign in our minds, which should assent with perfect submission and firm belief to revealed truths and to the doctrines of Christ. He must reign in our wills, which should obey the laws and precepts of God. He must reign in our hearts, which should spurn natural desires and love God above all things, and cleave to him alone. He must reign in our bodies and in our members, which should serve as instruments for the interior sanctification of our souls, or to use the words of the Apostle Paul, ‘as instruments of justice unto God.’”

– Quas primas, 33

We love Christ the King with all our hearts.

“And since there is in the Sacred Heart a symbol and a sensible image of the infinite love of Jesus Christ which moves us to love one another, therefore is it fit and proper that we should consecrate ourselves to His most Sacred Heart—an act which is nothing else than an offering and a binding of oneself to Jesus Christ, seeing that whatever honor, veneration and love is given to this divine Heart is really and truly given to Christ Himself.” – Annum sacrum, 8

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By Fr. Larry Rice, CSP

In most Catholic households, one important family tradition is a prayer of thanksgiving before meals. The practice of praying before eating is an ancient one, and certainly predates Christianity. Still, for us Catholics, to pray in thanksgiving before meals recalls Jesus himself giving thanks to the Father before miraculous feeding of crowds. It also reminds us of the prayers of thanksgiving that are such an important part of our celebration of the Eucharist.

Although different families have different customs and prayers for this “grace” before meals, the most common example goes something like this: “Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive, through Christ our Lord. Amen.” Most of us can perceive the antiquity of this prayer through its archaic use of the word “thy” for “your.” But the original prayer pre-dates that Elizabethan English by several centuries.

According to the 1911 edition of the Catholic Encyclopedia, the text of the traditional Catholic grace before meals can be found in the Gelasian Sacramentary, a Catholic liturgical book believed by scholars to have been compiled around the year 750. It echoes phrases from, and may actually be derived from Didache, a liturgical text from the late first century.

So, when we give thanks to God before we eat, we are praying a prayer that is probably as old as Christianity itself. This prayer recognizes God’s goodness and our dependence of God’s providence. Parents have taught their children this simple prayer for centuries, and when we give thanks in this way, we are connected with nearly 2000 years of Christian tradition.
By Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy

Every November, as we celebrate Thanksgiving, we are grateful for food, the ability to feed our own families, and the need to ensure our entire human family has enough to eat.

Our holiday table reminds us of many other important tables: tables where families come together to share a special meal; tables where our nation’s decision makers negotiate trade, aid, and public policies that affect us all; and, the most sacred of tables—the altar where the church gathers to be nourished by communion. Let us enter this month remembering that each table calls us to act with faith and hope.

November is the anniversary month of the pastoral letter “For I Was Hungry & You Gave Me Food: Catholic Reflections on Food, Farmers and Farmworkers,” first issued in 2003. The letter seeks to highlight the issues of food and agriculture and their connection to our faith. The letter states, “We focus on how food and fiber are produced, how land is protected and how agriculture is structured, compensated, and regulated to serve the ‘common good.'”

The purpose of the bishop’s letter was to address the concern that food and agriculture are “little seen and less understood” by a post-industrial society living increasingly technological lives. It is true we are further removed from food and agriculture than ever before. Yet what we eat, who grows and harvests that food, and the state of the earth that produces these goods are the very things we need to consider as Christian disciples. It’s a valuable consideration this harvest month, and every month. More than a decade since it was first published, the bishop’s pastoral letter still serves as a poignant reminder that food and agriculture must be viewed from a deeply faith perspective.

November is also Native America Heritage month. Native Americans were once the most agriculturally prosperous group of people in the United States. Yet a snapshot of hunger and poverty today on reservations is nothing short of a banquet of scarcity. Sixty percent of the counties with majority Native Americans face dangerously high food insecurity rates, according to Feeding America. These statistics are a sobering reminder that many marginalized brothers and sisters are missing from our tables of plenty.

A broader overview of the state of hunger in our country reveals that 48 million Americans live in households that struggle to put food on the table, and that 1 in 5 kids live at risk of hunger.

Unfortunately, Thanksgiving won’t be a feast for everyone.
The bishop’s pastoral letter addresses the complexities of our food system but it is also a profoundly hopeful document. “We know these are not easy times, but as believers we have hope for the days ahead: We have the capacity to overcome hunger in our nation and around the world,” the letter said.

Through Bread for the World’s Offering of Letters campaigns, churches across the country advocate to end hunger by putting food and agriculture into focus. These annual policy advocacy campaigns remind us that God intended for all to be fed.

This Thanksgiving, let us remember that ending hunger in our lifetime will only be a reality if we act with faith and hope at all the sacred tables in our lives.
We begin our prayer:  
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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.

(Collect, Christ the King)

Reading (Lectio)  
Read the following Scripture two or three 
times. 

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."

Meditation (Meditatio)  
After the reading, take some time to reflect 
in silence on one or more of the following 
questions:

- What word or words in this passage caught your attention?
- What in this passage comforted you?
- What in this passage challenged you?

If practicing lectio divina as a family or in a 
group, after the reflection time, invite the 
participants to share their responses.
Prayer (Oratio)
Read the Scripture passage one more time. Bring to the Lord the praise, petition, or thanksgiving that the Word inspires in you.

Contemplation (Contemplatio)
Read the Scripture again, followed by this reflection:

What conversion of mind, heart, and life is the Lord asking of me?

Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us. When have I questioned Christ? How can I best address those times when my faith feels weakest?

Have you no fear of God? When do I feel awe for God and his works? How can I become more aware of God’s majesty and power working in my life?

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. When have I felt forgotten? What reminds me of God’s presence and love for me?

After a period of silent reflection and/or discussion, all recite the Lord’s Prayer and the following:

Closing Prayer:
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.

Jerusalem, built as a city with compact unity. To it the tribes go up, the tribes 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.

(From Psalm 122)

Living the Word This Week

How can I make my life a gift for others in charity?

Remember those who have asked for your prayers.


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