

Sunday Readings

23rd November 2025

Collect

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.

FIRST READING

A reading from the second book of Samuel 5:1-3

In those days: All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, 'Behold, we are your bone and flesh. In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. And the LORD said to you, "You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel." ' So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 121:1-5. R/cf. v.2

***R/. I rejoiced when I heard them say:
'Let us go to God's house.'***

I rejoiced when I heard them say:
'Let us go to God's house.'
And now our feet are standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem. ***R/.***

Jerusalem is built as a city
strongly compact.
It is there that the tribes go up,
the tribes of the Lord. ***R/.***

For Israel's law it is,
there to praise the Lord's name
There were set the thrones of judgement
of the house of David ***R/.***

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul
to the Colossians

1:12-20

Brothers and Sisters: Let us give thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain 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 by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the Church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL

Luke 23:35-43

The Lord be with you. *And with your Spirit.*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.'

At that time: The rulers scoffed at Jesus, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ 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 railed at Jesus, saying, 'Are you not the Christ? 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 justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.' And he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' And he said to him, 'Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



Christ the King (Last Sunday in Ordinary Time)

Lectionary Year C

The Word of God

Saint of the Week

The usual image of royalty does little to promote the wonderful nature of this feast of Christ the Universal King. The image we have is the bound and wounded, beaten Jesus, standing before Pilate. Jesus is asked about his kingship and his answer confuses and disconcerts Pilate. He is a king but his kingdom is not of this world. His is a kingdom that has the Servant King as its model. Going to the Cross Jesus reveals the nature of his kingship; he is a king who gives his life for his people. The cross is the throne upon which this King is crowned. His kingdom is one that has service at the very heart of it. The care and concern for humanity is paramount in the kingdom he has allowed us to glimpse. We are to be motivated by love, by surrender to God's holy will, so that we strive to establish a community on earth that anticipates heaven.

The church will move into a new year next week, as we begin the season of Advent. It is a time to look forward to celebrating Christmas. There are four weeks of preparation. Advent is an urgent time, a time to make sure we are ready in a spiritual way to realise the full significance of what we are truly celebrating at Christmas. But for this week, the last of the year, we look backwards for a moment. The past is not ours to change any more there is only the present and the future. We dust ourselves down, casting regret to the dustbin of time and move forward. We resolve today as we worship Christ the King to be guided by his example and led by his abiding presence in the Church, through the Eucharist and in the sacraments which, after all, are encounters with Christ. We promise to walk more closely the footsteps of Christ and trace his life in our lives. May we go into the new church year with fresh vigour and zeal for the task of being servants of Christ, our Universal King!

Prayer of the Week

A Morning Prayer

Dear Lord, enlighten my mind with truth;
Inflame my heart with love;
Inspire my will with courage;
Enrich my life with service.
Pardon what I have been;
Sanctify what I am;
And order what I shall be.
Amen.

Tuesday 25 November 2025

St Catherine of Alexandria (d. 305)



According to the traditional narrative, Catherine was the beautiful daughter of the pagan King Costus and Queen Sabinella, who governed Alexandria. Her superior intelligence combined with diligent study left her exceedingly well-versed in all the arts and sciences, and in philosophy. Having decided to remain a virgin all her life, she announced that she would only marry

someone who surpassed her in beauty, intelligence, wealth, and dignity. Though raised a pagan, she became an ardent Christian in her teenage years, having received a vision in which the Blessed Virgin Mary gave her to Christ in mystical marriage.

As a young adult, she visited her contemporary, the Roman Emperor Maxentius, and attempted to convince him of the moral error in persecuting Christians for not worshipping idols. The emperor arranged for a plethora of the best pagan philosophers and orators to dispute with her, hoping that they would refute her pro-Christian arguments, but Catherine won the debate. Several of her adversaries, conquered by her eloquence, declared themselves Christians and were at once put to death.

Catherine was then scourged and imprisoned, during which time over 200 people came to see her, including Maxentius' wife, the Empress; all converted to Christianity and were subsequently martyred. Upon the failure of Maxentius to make Catherine yield by way of torture, he tried to win the beautiful and wise princess over by proposing marriage. The saint refused, declaring that her spouse was Jesus Christ, to whom she had consecrated her virginity. The furious emperor condemned Catherine to death on the spiked breaking wheel, but, at her touch, this instrument of torture was miraculously destroyed. Maxentius finally had her beheaded.

She is the patroness of philosophers and preachers. Catherine is very frequently depicted in art, especially in the late Middle Ages. She can usually be easily recognised as she is richly dressed and crowned, as befits her rank as a princess, and often holds or stands next to a segment of her wheel as an attribute. She also often carries either a martyr's palm or the sword with which she was actually executed.