

# Solemnity of Christ the King- November 26 2023

## Acknowledgment of Land, Seas, Skies and Waterways

We acknowledge the First Nations peoples as the first inhabitants of the nation and the traditional custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work. We pay our respect to the Elders past, present, and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of First Nations peoples across the nation. We acknowledge the deep spiritual attachment and relationship of First Nations peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

## Context: Christ the King

As a celebration in the Church, the Solemnity of Christ the King is a relatively 'young' one. In the years following WWI, the Catholic Church faced many challenges as a consequence of a changing world society. Governments that emerged post WWI were fragile and often unstable, creating an environment of uncertainty. This uncertainty was coupled with rising secularism and atheism. Pope Pius XI responded to this changing world in his encyclical *Quas primas*. The Solemnity of Christ the King was instituted as part of this encyclical as a reminder that even though 'governments may come and go, Christ will reign as King forever (USSCB, 2023)'. Whilst secularism continues to thrive, and often we are left to feel as though our faith should be a private matter, the Solemnity of Christ the King gives us the opportunity to declare to the world, and remind ourselves, that Jesus Christ, the risen image of an always loving God, is Lord of the Church and the ultimate 'King' of our world.



Figure 1 Rembrandt, Adoration of the Magi, Draw.. Photo. Britannica ImageQuest, Encyclopædia Britannica, 25 May 2016. [quest.eb.com/images/109\\_231020](https://quest.eb.com/images/109_231020). Accessed 24 Nov 2023.

## Scripture: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

**Mt 25:31-46**

*He will take his seat on his throne of glory, and he will separate men one from another.*

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



Figure 2 Giving drink to Thirsty, scene from Seven Works of Mercy, by Lorenzo Filippino Paladini (died 1609), glazed terracotta frieze, Ceppo Hospital, Pistoia, Detail, Italy, 1585. Photograph. Britannica ImageQuest, Encyclopædia Britannica, 25 May 2016. [quest.eb.com](https://quest.eb.com)

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.’

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

## **Reflection by Kirby Will, Project Officer Identity and Outreach.**

As we approach the end of the Church year and reflect on 2023, we may see parallels of the environment in which Pope Pius XI instituted the feast of Christ the King. Unstable governments and conflicts have dominated much of the international news this year and uncertainty around the economy has been at the forefront here in Australia. It can be overwhelming at times when we stop and consider all the events of the world but as Pope Pius XI reminded us in 1925, it is important to remember that Christ is the one constant that will endure and offer certainty in uncertain times.

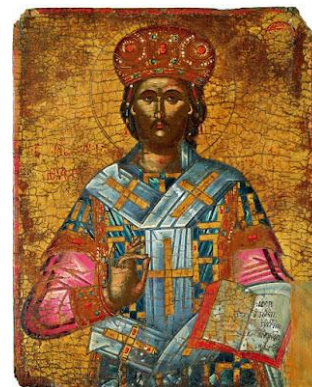


Figure 3 Christ the King of Kings,  
Source <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-image/ink.pl?RC=55319>  
Artist: Unknown. From Greece, approx 1600.

The Gospel this week includes an invitation to us all to live out our faith through acts of compassion and kindness and to follow Jesus’ example of service and love. We don’t have the answers to the uncertainty and turmoil of the world, but we do have the ability to offer ourselves to the assistance of others, to lighten their load and help them navigate the uncertainties of their world. Just as a King cannot serve his Kingdom alone and requires the assistance of a vast support staff, Jesus cannot serve the Kingdom without the support of the faithful. It is in serving others that we serve Christ the King and bring his Kingdom to its fullness here on Earth.

## **Prayer: From the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States Spirit and Verse Column by Cameron Bellm**

O Christ the King, turn our hearts this day  
Not only to the world around us but to the world within us-  
Where your Kingdom comes anew  
With each act of love we offer, each prayer we whisper, each breath we draw.  
Amen.

### **Call to Action:**

- pray the [Litany to Christ the King](#) as a family.
- listen to some of the music from the [Christ the King playlist](#).
- create a crown using this [template](#).

