

ctkAlive! Scripture Study
Feast of Christ the King
2021—B Cycle



*Christ the King Church
stained glass window*

Opening Prayer

(Edited for use here)

Prayer to Christ Our King

Christ our King,
enthroned in glory over all creation,
you are shepherd to the *lost* . . . and to the *least*.
Help me to imagine you among the *poor*...
feeding the hungry... *giving drink* to the thirsty...
welcoming the stranger... *clothing* the naked...
and *visiting* those sick or in prison,
so I may follow your example
and share in your eternal kingdom.
Let your work in me make you present
to reign with justice... compassion... and love.
Amen.

Source: [Presbyterian Church of the USA](#)

History of the Feast of Christ the King

Presidents and world leaders, both good and evil, come to the fore then fade into history. Christ our King is always present to us, front and center.

In 1925, [Pope Pius XI](#) instituted the Feast of Christ the King in response to growing secularism and nationalism around the world. In 1970, [Pope Paul VI](#) amended the title of the “Feast to Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.” He also moved the date from late October to the last Sunday of the year’s liturgical cycle, thereby passing the torch to the new liturgical year beginning on the First Sunday of [Advent](#).

Catholics share this feast with the [Lutheran Church](#), [Anglican Communion](#), [Moravian Church](#), Methodist churches, Reformed churches, and other Christian denominations.

Scripture Readings

Daniel 7: 13-14 "I saw one like a son of man coming."

Psalm 93: 1-2, 5 "The Lord is king in splendor robed."

Revelation 1: 5-8 "Jesus Christ is the faithful witness."

John 18: 33-37 "Pontius Pilate said to Jesus, 'Are you the king of the Jews?'"

A Reading from the Book Daniel (7: 13-14)

"I (Daniel) continued watching the nocturnal vision: One like a son of man came on the clouds of heaven. He faced the One of Great Age and was brought into his presence. Dominion, honor, and kingship were given him, and all the peoples and nations of every language served him. His dominion is eternal and shall never pass away; his kingdom will never be destroyed."

Personal Reflection

Jews of the second century BC/BCE felt crushed by large landowners who passed the wealth of the country to the king of Egypt. The Jewish people did not know how to react. Their traditional heritage seemed passé. Furthermore, they no longer cared about their traditions (sound familiar?). The predominantly Greek world culture of the time offered only sports, art and culture, international relations, and money. Judaism became caught up in the prevailing materialism. When persecution came, many surrendered their religious heritage to live in the "modern world" of the day.

A remnant of younger Jews, especially younger priests, started looking for something new in their traditional faith. The Hasideans (the "pious ones") dropped out of mainstream a corrupted Judaism. They went to the desert, devoting themselves to prayer and inner soul searching. For guidance, they studied the Jewish prophetic books in hope of discovering the secrets of Yahweh's work in the past and present. From this they set a new tone for Judaism in the future. It's in this time and culture that the Book of Daniel originated.

— *In my opinion, what is missing in American and worldwide Catholicism that causes younger Catholics to opt out of regular participation in Mass and reception of Eucharist? What might be a solution to this disappointing reality? What is my role in God's plan for the future of Catholic Christianity?*

— *What hopeful signs do I see of revival of faith and practice within Catholicism today?*

Responsorial Psalm 93 (1-2, 5)

Praise of God, king of the world.

The lord is King; he is robed in majesty.

Yahweh reigns, robed in majesty;
Yahweh is girded with strength.
The lord is King; he is robed on majesty.

The world now is firm;
it cannot be moved.
Your throne stands from long ago, O Yahweh;
from all eternity you are.
The lord is King; he is robed in majesty.

Your decrees can be trusted;
holiness dwells in your house,
day after day without end, O Yahweh.
The lord is King; he is robed in majesty.

Personal Reflection

Psalm 93 (including the verses not sung at Mass this weekend) celebrates the kingship of Yahweh, who created the world and populated it with human and myriad other forms of life. The ancient understanding of creation envisioned the sea completely covering the land, making it impossible for the human community to live. By divine decree, God overcame the sea to produce habitable land.

“The world now is firm; it cannot be moved.”

— *How do I make personal the kingship of Christ in my everyday life?*

— *What is my usual reaction when I look up and see a spectacular sunset or a full moon (or some other phenomenon of the natural world)?*

A Reading from the Book of Revelation (1: 5-8)

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ. God gave it to him, to let his servants know what is soon to take place. He sent his angel to make it known to his servant, John.... From Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has washed away our sins with his own blood, making us a kingdom, and priests for God, his Father, to him, be the glory and power, for ever and ever. Amen. See, he comes with the clouds, and everyone will see him, even those who pierced him; on his account, all the nations of the earth will beat their breast. Yes. It will be so.

“‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘the one who is, and who was, and who is to come: the Master of the universe.’”

Personal Reflection

In 95 AD/CE, John the Evangelist suffered deportation to tiny [Patmos Island](#). The Romans used Patmos as a prison for political prisoners and other criminals. Why John? Because of his steadfast faith in Christ. At the time, he was old (and most likely the last living apostle.) While there, John experienced visions and wrote about Christianity’s struggle to gain a foothold in the Roman Empire. John envisioned the

skies opening to reveal the present and future corruption of the well-to-do and the sanctifying blood of Christian martyrs.



*Site of St.
John's Tomb
in Ephesus*

Revelation has a reputation for being the most difficult and hard to understand book of the New Testament. Its many descriptive images and coded messages point to current events in his own time... and at every stage of history.



To avoid misunderstanding the images and style of Revelation, we should know that this type of writing was a popular form of literature in the culture during the time of Jesus. John wrote his visions down for the benefit of his own community of readers. He greets them and wishes them the peace that comes from the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. John's main emphasis is on Christ who came to us as a human.

John died in 98 AD/CE at his home in Ephesus, Turkey, and was buried there. No one seems to know why his body is missing from the burial site or when exactly it disappeared.

— *Why do most present-day Christians avoid reading Revelation? Am I among them? Why is that?*

Proclamation from the Gospel according to John (18: 33-37)

“Pilate then entered the court again, summoned Jesus and asked him, ‘Are you the King of the Jews?’



“Jesus replied, ‘Are you saying this on your own initiative; or have others told you about me?’

“Pilate answered, ‘Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?’

“Jesus answered, ‘My kingship does not come from this world. If I were a king, like those of this world, my servants would have fought to save me from being handed over to the Jews. But my kingship is not of this world.’

*“Behold the Man”
by Antonio Ciseri (1871)*

“Pilate asked him, ‘So you are a king?’

“And Jesus answered, ‘Just as you say, I am a king. For this I was born and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is on the side of truth hears my voice.’”

Personal Reflection

In Jesus' response to Pontius Pilate, he gave an other-world meaning to “kingdom.” He did not refer to a physical territory. Rather, to the *power* of a king. With his hands bound, Jesus behaved in a regal manner before Pilate, whose very office and selfish ambitions held him captive. Jesus did not imply lack of concern about the social and political problems of his time. Nor did he dismiss the earthly sufferings experienced by every human being.

Jesus is not like the royal families of history.* The King of the Jews did not come to revive an independent Davidic-style Jewish kingdom but to establish the kingdom of Truth, which God had promised the Jews for centuries through the prophets and other sacred writings.

* *Royalty in modern times rarely involves the exercise real power over their governments and the people. Typically, their role is ceremonial.*

— *What do I hear Jesus saying to me personally in this gospel passage?*

“Everyone who is on the side of truth hears my voice.”

— *We live in a nation—and world—that increasingly defines truth as “whatever I say it is.” How, then, do I discern the truth of anything I hear, read, see, or am taught?*

For Inspirational Viewing/Listening

Video

[John Michael Talbot](#) on the meaning of [Christ the King](#) (1.5 min.).

Music

[Hymn to Christ the King](#)—composed in the 1940s by [Fr. Martin B. Hellriegel](#) in Baden, PA.

The Week Ahead

Journaling Prompts

Based on this weekend’s Scripture readings, what does the Risen Christ ask me to do TODAY regarding . . .

- (1) *the quality of the love I bring to my personal relationships . . . and*
- (2) *my life as an emissary of Christ, committed to bringing God’s love to the people with whom I interact in person and on social media?*

Who this week needs to hear from me some expression of love?

Who needs to receive from me a moment of laughter and personal concern?

Why do I hesitate?

In light of this weekend’s Scriptures, take some time to write about events occurring in your life this week and what you see happening in the world.

Preview of Next Week’s Scriptures

First Sunday of Advent—C Cycle

Jeremiah 33: 14-16 “Jerusalem shall dwell secure... they shall call her... ‘The Lord our Justice.’”

Psalm 25: 4-5, 8-10, 14 “Guide me in your truth and teach me.”

1 Thessalonians 3: 12 to 4: 2 “May the Lord make you increase and abound in love.”

Luke 21; 25-28, 34-36 “Be vigilant at all times and pray that you have strength.”

Closing Prayer

(edited and abridged for use here)

To Christ Our King

O Lord our God,
you alone are the King and Ruler of all nations.
I pray to you in the great expectation of receiving
your mercy, peace, justice, and all good things.

Protect my family,
and the land of my birth.
Guard me I pray, forgive my sins against you.

Jesus, you are a King of Mercy.
Have mercy on me and forgive me.
Most awe-inspiring King, I bow before you and pray:
'May your Reign, your Kingdom, be recognized on earth. Amen.'

Source: [My Catholic Life](#)

Questions?

Send any questions or comments you might have to algarrotto@comcast.net

Gender usage in writing: We are conscious of gender references to God in the Scripture texts. Often, attempts to rewrite these passages result in awkward sentence structures. We have left the biblical translations as they are but do our best to be inclusive in all other parts of the reflection.

The Sunday readings are from [Christian Community Bible: Catholic Pastoral Edition](#)
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Coming very, VERY soon!! *Inspector Javert: at the Gates of Hell*
(a novel exploring "what happens next?" after death)