Suggested Opening Song: To Jesus Christ, Our Sovereign King #203

Today we celebrate Jesus Christ as king over the entire world, but not the kind of king that we think of when we think of kings throughout history. Christ's kingship is everlasting. He rules over a kingdom that is both among us and beyond us. Moreover, as today's scripture emphasizes, he rules his people as a shepherd tends his sheep, guiding us, rescuing us, comforting us, and choosing us to remain with him in the kingdom. He is our king and we are his flock.

As we gather let us begin our service by professing what we believe.

Profession of Faith p. 142
I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (*bow as we say*) ***and by the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.*** **For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Introductory Rite:
Greeting:
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
Blessed be God forever. **Blessed be God forever.**

Penitential Rite: p. 10
Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to participate in this sacred celebration.

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Opening Prayer:
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 and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Liturgy of the Word:
First Reading p. 132
A reading from the Book of Ezekiel *Ezekiel 34: 11-12, 15-17*

Thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will look after and tend my sheep. As a shepherd tends his flock when he finds himself among his scattered sheep, so will I tend my sheep. I will rescue them from every place where they were scattered when it was cloudy and dark. I, myself will pasture my sheep; I, myself will give them rest, says the Lord GOD. The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy, shepherding them rightly.

As for you, my sheep, says the Lord God, I will judge between one sheep and another, between rams and goats.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Responsorial Psalm *Psalm 23: 1-2, 2-3, 5-6*

R/. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.
R/. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
In verdant pastures he gives me repose. **R/.**

Beside restful waters he leads me; he refreshes my soul.
He guides me in right paths for his name's sake. **R/.**

You spread the table before me in the sight of my foes;
you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. **R/.**

Only goodness and kindness follow me all the days of my life;
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for years to come. **R/.**

Second Reading
A reading from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians *1 Corinthians 15: 20-26, 28*

Brothers and sisters: Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through man, the resurrection of the dead came also through man. For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life, but each one in proper order: Christ the firstfruits; then, at his coming, those who belong to Christ; then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to his God and Father, when he has destroyed every sovereignty and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. When everything is subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel *Matthew 25:31-46*
A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew **Glory to you, Lord**

Jesus said to his disciples: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. 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. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you

drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least brothers of mine, you did for me.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.' Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?' He will answer them, Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.' And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Reflection on the Word:

- The portrayal of God as a shepherd goes back a long way. God directed Moses to lead the Chosen People from captivity to the promised land as a shepherd would lead their flock out of danger and into a verdant pasture. The psalmist sings of God as a generous shepherd who provides us with all we need. During the Babylonian exile, Ezekiel portrays God as a merciful shepherd who gathers all the scattered sheep, rescuing the lost, binding their wounds, and giving them rest. Finally, Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd, telling them that he will lay down his life for his sheep.

- Pope Pius XI instituted the solemnity of Christ the King just over a hundred years ago—in 1925—as a response to the Great World War that had recently ended. Alarmed by the rise of nationalism, which divided God's children by their allegiance to their state, and fascism, which substituted the worship of Christ with the worship of a leader, he reminded Catholics of every nation that Jesus Christ is our true king. He must reign in our hearts and lives and so lead us to the true kingdom. Jesus, the Prince of Peace, will not allow enmity and discord to drive people or nations apart.

- If we pass a homeless person on the street begging for food, an undocumented immigrant looking for daywork, a mentally ill person shouting out at random, whom do we see? Do we see a failure who's taking our welfare dollars, an "illegal" who should be deported, or a danger to the community who stopped taking their meds? Or do we see Jesus? Because if we don't see Jesus, we haven't heard this Gospel correctly. Because he tells us right here that it's him. No asterisks, no exceptions. The hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the ill: they're Christ. May we leave today praying for the grace to see as Christ sees, so that we may see him right in front of us.

Question of the Week

How have I failed recently to see Christ in those I'd rather not look at? What will bring me to see "these least ones" as Christ does?

Prayer of the Faithful:

Our loving God shepherds us, tending to us, binding our wounds, bringing us home, and giving us rest.

- For Pope Leo and all the bishops, that they may guide the Church ever closer to the kingdom of God, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For leaders of nations, that they may work to see that the basic needs of the most vulnerable people in their care are met, treating them with kindness, mercy, and compassion, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For those who are unjustly oppressed, persecuted, or imprisoned, that our prayers and actions may bring them comfort and hope, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For those who have no home in which to enjoy Thanksgiving dinner, that they may find welcome, hospitality, and sustenance through the generous invitation of others, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- That Christ's reign may be made visible through our selfless service of the least of our sisters and brothers, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For what else should we pray? Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

God of goodness and kindness, you supply us with all we need. May we take your Son's words to heart and supply the least of your children with all they need as well. Hear this and all our prayers, through Jesus Christ our Lord, our king for ever and ever.

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer: p. 176
Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Rite of Peace:
The sign of peace outwardly expresses a deep spiritual reality; through this sign we acknowledge Christ's presence in each other and share the peace we have received from Him. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Communion:
Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The body of Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion:
Having received the food of immortality, we ask, O Lord, that, glorifying in obedience to the commands of Christ, the King of the universe, we may live with him eternally in his heavenly Kingdom.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Concluding Rite:
Final Blessing:
May the Lord bless us, ✠ protect us from all evil and lead us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Go in peace! **Thanks be to God.**

Suggested Closing Song: Make Us True Servants, #163