

Christ the King

The Psalm in today's liturgy is the best known psalm 'The Lord is my shepherd'. This psalm and the majority of the psalms are traditionally attributed to David, the shepherd boy who became the greatest of the kings of Israel. From a Christian perspective his significance is that he is an ancestor of Jesus, the Jesus who today we acclaim as our shepherd and our king.

In the First Reading (Ezekiel 34:11-12.15-17) the prophet Ezekiel describes the shepherd standing in the middle of his sheep keeping them all in view and being ready to rescue them if they are scattered in the mist and darkness. We give thanks that in Jesus we have such a shepherd who came into the world, who dwelt among us, so that he could not only keep us in view but indeed find and rescue us from the mist and darkness of our sins.

In the Gospel Reading (Matthew 25:31-46) we see the King judging and separating people in the same way as a shepherd would separate sheep from goats. The criteria by which he judges and separates is simply on how they have treated others, whether they have shown compassion and mercy to those in need. We pray that when it comes to our turn to stand in front of the Son of Man in his glory our acts of mercy to others will bear witness that we do belong at his right hand. In the meantime, when we act in this way then we are building and spreading his kingdom, a kingdom which is already with us in the present but which will be known in its fulness when he does come again in his glory.

In the Second Reading (1 Corinthians 15:20-26.28) we also hear about those who 'belong to Christ', those who will share in his glory when death has been destroyed. In a little while when we profess our faith in the Creed we end with 'I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come'. How often do we think about this? It is worth remembering that we have a glorious future to look forward to.

Today's Liturgy of the Word tells us a number of things about Jesus as our shepherd and our king. If we were only to think of him as the shepherd who judges and separates then this could be quite worrying and disturbing. Therefore we must also think of him as the shepherd who goes out to look for the lost and to bring back the stray, the shepherd who guides us along the right path which will bring us to the banquet which he has prepared for us.

This weekend we remember especially those who have died in the past twelve months, we pray that our shepherd and king has gathered them safely into his kingdom and that they are already enjoying the banquet of heaven which we look forward to one day also sharing in.

Parishioners and some people closely associated with our parish who have died since November 2019. May they rest in peace:

Jim Conroy, Patrick Togher, Brian Wilks, Rose Hay, Francesco Iannotta, John Billingham, Gordon Billingham, Genny Woods, Leve Fox, John Fox, Canon Colin Taylor, Geoge Mayers, Sybil Fields, Hazel Grainger, Betty Joshi, Audrey Brown, Michelle Dolby, Betty Vaughan, Gerard Manterfield, Linda Hughes-Davies, Marie Prone, Les Naile, Ann Foxon, Jackie Taylor,

Elaine Luginbuhl, Nikki Papini, Michael Riley, Andrew Cybulski, Teresa Scoley, Margaret Calcagnile, Seamus Dillon, Helen Challis, Marian Webster, Douglas Pearman.