

## Here's a text if you've only a minute ...

I shall look for the lost one ... bandage the wounded and make the weak strong. *First Reading*

All will be brought to life in Christ. *Second Reading*

Come, you whom my Father has blessed. *Gospel*

Almighty and merciful God,  
you break the power of evil and make all things new  
in your Son Jesus Christ, the King of the universe.

May all in heaven and earth acclaim your glory  
and never cease to praise you.

*Old Opening Prayer*

This week's texts if you want to explore further:  
Ezekiel 34:11-12,15-17; Ps. 22 (23); 1 Cor. 15: 20-26,28; Matt 25: 31-46



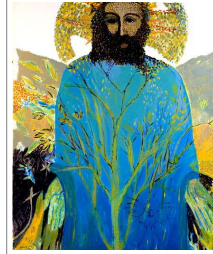
'Christ the King'  
painting and poem  
Fr Ronald Patrick Raab,  
CSC

I believe in the King.  
I believe his face overwhelms any darkness ...  
I believe even the wicked will find home  
under his crown.  
I believe we do not earn his mercy.  
I believe the lost shall show us the way to him.  
I believe the hungry reveal our deepest desires.  
I believe the prisoner unlocks our  
selfish confinement.  
I believe the naked shall show us  
not to live in shame.  
I believe the ill show us how to heal the world.  
I believe that we are to act justly  
and love honestly.  
I believe faith is measured by love alone ...  
I believe listening is rewarded  
in the King's presence ...  
I believe the King waits for us.

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**ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM**

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Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe  
Year A, 26th November 2023

'¡Viva Cristo Rey!'  
(‘Long live Christ the King!’)

The scripture texts of this solemnity, on the last Sunday of the Church year, sum up what we have been reading, listening to, and pondering all year. We have watched as Jesus taught, healed, freed, consoled, and reached out to all. From birth to death, and in his glorified life, he was the visible presence of the Father's kingdom of love on earth.

The **Second Reading** gives us a picture of Christ's kingship. St Paul reassures the church at Corinth that, despite the direst of circumstances, all earthly rule and authority will give way to Christ. When God's enemies, including sin and death, are destroyed, then all will be alive in God. How we need such a message in today's world!

The **Psalm** tells us that God, Shepherd and King, has such authority that we can safely feast, even within sight of our enemies. With him, we shall never be in want.

The **First Reading**, from the prophet Ezekiel, also contains the theme of shepherd. Though judge, the shepherd is one who serves. Jesus picks up this theme in the **Gospel**, but now he is found not only in the one who serves the poor, but also in the poor themselves. Both readings reveal a divine bias, if we can say such a thing – against those who would exploit, and for those who are exploited.

The response to '¡Viva Cristo Rey!' ('Long live Christ the King!') is '¡Que viva!' ('He lives!'). Let's pray that Christ the King will live in me; will live in my actions this coming week.



### 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.

### First Reading Ezekiel 34: 11–12, 15–17

The Lord says this: I am going to look after my flock myself and keep all of it in view. As a shepherd keeps all his flock in view when he stands up in the middle of his scattered sheep, so shall I keep my sheep in view. I shall rescue them from wherever they have been scattered during the mist and darkness. I myself will pasture my sheep, I myself will show them where to rest – it is the Lord who speaks. I shall look for the lost one, bring back the stray, bandage the wounded and make the weak strong. I shall watch over the fat and healthy. I shall be a true shepherd to them.

As for you, my sheep, the Lord says this: I will judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and he-goats.

As always, I take my time to settle into this time of prayer.

I don't rush but, ever so gently, I become calmer, quieter and still.

The Lord is going to speak, and I want to be able to pay close attention.

I take a couple of slow, deep breaths and, after I am quite comfortable but alert, I read very slowly the text from Ezekiel.

What is striking me as I read? Where do I feel drawn to linger?

I watch the Lord shepherding the flock. I see him stand as judge in the midst of his scattered sheep. How does he go about it? What am I noticing about this shepherd? What catches my attention?

Perhaps I see him stand in the scattered areas of my life. How does he look at the bits and pieces? Do I mind him keeping all of me in view? Does recognizing my loving Shepherd King help me see that I am being pastured, given rest and renewal ... that, even now, I am being invited into God's reign?

I thank God, in the time remaining, for this opportunity to celebrate Christ, Shepherd and King, and to ready myself for a new cycle of listening, learning, waiting and serving. *Glory be ...*

#### A text you may like to pray with this week's readings

*'May looking at the Last Judgement never frighten us: rather, may it impel us to live the present better. God offers us this time with mercy and patience so that we may learn every day to recognize him in the poor and in the lowly. Let us strive for goodness and be watchful in prayer and in love. May the Lord, at the end of our life and at the end of history, be able to recognize us as good and faithful servants.'* Pope Francis, 24 April 2013

### Gospel Matthew 25: 31–46 (shortened)

Jesus said to his disciples: 'When the Son of Man comes in his glory ... he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate people one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats ...

'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 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 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 ... 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.'

I pause to enter into stillness and ask for the help of the Spirit to pray this text with such loving trust in the Son of Man that I can perceive him both as One coming in glory, as well as already residing in my heart.

As I read this scene of final judgement I ask, who is Christ the King? Are the images of the Son of Man coming with hosts of angels to judge the two kinds of people leading me to fear and doubt?

Perhaps, as I read this gospel with the heart, I might do so with surprise. Like the hearers in the gospel, can I even remember doing some of the things Jesus is praising me for? How, am I, an actively loving person? Do I know that the King of the Universe has an unconditional love for me and seeks only my loving response?

I ponder for a few minutes on this truth: it has the power to free me to be able to say 'yes' to the reign of God in my life.