

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

How worthy is the Lamb who was slain,
to receive power and divinity,
and wisdom and strength and honour.
To him belong glory and power for ever and
ever.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

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 in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Ezekiel 34: 11-12, 15-17

A reading from the Prophet Ezekiel

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.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 22

Response:

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

1. The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he give me repose. (R.)
2. Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit.

He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name. (R.)

3. You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing. (R.)
4. Surely goodness and kindness shall
follow me all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever. (R.)

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 15:20-26,28

A reading from St Paul's first letter to the
Corinthians

Christ has been raised from the dead, the
first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep.
Death came through one man and in the
same way the resurrection of the dead has
come through one man. Just as all men die
in Adam, so all men will be brought to life in
Christ; but all of them in their proper order:
Christ as the first-fruits and then, after the
coming of Christ, those who belong to him.
After that will come the end, when he hands
over the kingdom to God the Father, having
done away with every sovereignty, authority
and power. For he must be king until he has
put all his enemies under his feet and the last
of the enemies to be destroyed is death. And
when everything is subjected to him, then the
Son himself will be subject in his turn to the
One who subjected all things to him, so that
God may be all in all.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

**Blessings on him who comes in the name of
the Lord!**
**Blessings on the coming kingdom of our
father David! Alleluia!**

GOSPEL

Matthew 25:31-46

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Matthew.

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 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, 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, in
prison, and did not come to your help?' The
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.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

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,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit 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.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

As we offer you, O Lord, the sacrifice
by which the human race is reconciled to you,
we humbly pray
that your Son himself may bestow on all
nations
the gifts of unity and peace.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**The Lord sits as King for ever.
The Lord will bless his people with peace.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having received the food of immortality,
we ask, O Lord,
that, glorying in obedience
to the commands of Christ, the King of the
universe,
we may live with him eternally in his
heavenly Kingdom.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.



Christ the King Monument, Swiebodzin, Poland

In the first two chapters of Matthew's account, known generally as the *Infancy Narrative*, the theme of Jesus, *King of the Jews* is introduced.

The Magi come to Jerusalem looking for the newborn King of the Jews, a quest which alarms Herod exceedingly. Here at the end of the story of Jesus' ministry this theme of him as King is presented in terms of the final judgment. The term will feature again in the account of the crucifixion: the four evangelists agree that the charge on the cross describes Jesus as *King of the Jews*, and Matthew presents the soldiers as making fun of Jesus the King with the crown of thorns and the scarlet robe.

It might be helpful to remember that in the opening verse of Matthew's gospel, Jesus is called son of *David*, as is Joseph, the husband of Mary. David was the king who united all the tribes of Israel around him. The principal duty of the king in peacetime was the administration of justice, and these two characteristics are to be found in the feast we celebrate today. Christ is the focus of unity, not only for human beings, but for the universe. The vision in the Gospel is that of the glorious Son of Man dispensing justice as King. It tells us that the glorious Christ whom we will meet is the one we encounter today in the poor, the stranger, the sick and those in prison. We are told during the Mass that Christ's kingdom is to be one of truth and life, holiness and grace, justice, love and peace. This is not a kingdom which we can leave to some future existence, but one which we should try to bring about in our own world here and now, in whatever way we can. The idea of judgment is uncomfortable, but it is meant to be. It is intended to remind us that to believe in God, in Jesus is not something completely private, to be expressed only in personal prayer and public liturgy, but also lived out in our dealings with other people. ■

REFLECT

Some symbols which might help us appreciate the kind of king Christ is:

Crib: the word of God took flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary; through the person of Jesus the risen and glorified Christ understands what it means to be human;

Crook: Christ is the shepherd king like David; today's reading from Ezekiel and the Psalm recall the Lord as shepherd, gathering the flock and judging between its members;

Cross: Jesus is proclaimed King on the Cross, the symbol of his complete obedience and dedication to the mission entrusted to him by the Father;

Crown: Jesus is exalted as Son of God through his offering of himself for our sake; this is expressed in the New Testament by means of psalms used at the coronation of the Israelite kings. ■

LEARN

The title *Son of Man* is used in the Gospels in the context of Jesus' suffering; it also occurs in texts to do with the final judgment which echo the book of Daniel.

The true king of Israel was the Lord.

The human king was still subject to the word of God mediated by the prophet.

The image of the *Shepherd King* was common in the Ancient Near East.

DO

Reflect on the scene in today's gospel reading and the criteria the king uses in judging: decide how you could better put your faith into action.

SAY

The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.