

Proper 29 C/ Christ the King  
St. Luke 23:33-43  
November 20, 2016  
St. George's Bolton  
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## Who Did You Vote For?

*"And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his Chosen one!' The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine and saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!' There was also an inscription over him, 'This is the King of the Jews.'"*

God's idea of what a king *is*, is very different from ours. Here He is, ruler of the universe, Creator, sustainer, come to walk among us, and here he is, hanging mocked upon a cross. This image challenges our notion of being a king or a God.

These are difficult times for our country. The divisions are deep and deeply felt by many, and here we find ourselves, a group of Christians in the midst of all this division.

Less than a few weeks ago, at the beginning of this month, we were all aware that no matter how the election turned out, we would be bitterly divided. The election is over, a winner has been declared, and there was no surprise about what followed. More division. It would have been the same no matter who won the election.

We sound like spoiled children. We have been given one of the greatest gifts in the history of civilization: the right to choose our leaders. Yet like the prodigal son, we have squandered our

inheritance on the way we have lived out this process, infusing it with money and corruption, meanness and division. Why don't we have better candidates? Look at what it takes to become president. Look at what sort of person would subject themselves to such scrutiny, criticism and invasion of their personal lives. Look at what it costs to get elected to most political offices.

We have met the enemy, and it is us. So what can we do in this time of division and emotion and fear and heartfelt disappointment which many are experiencing? I answer by saying, be Christians. ***Be a Christian.*** Remember you are a citizen of God's kingdom first. What is the first thing Christians do? Pray. Pray for our country. Pray for those who are hurting. Pray for those who feel or believe differently from you. Pray for healing in our country. Empathize with others who are hurting. Reach out and listen. Do not gloat. Do not allow anger and fear to rule your day. Do not embellish and stir up controversy where none exists. Remember we are all God's children, and remember also, as Christians, we are brothers and sisters on the same team: the team of Jesus Christ, and that always comes first and counts the most.

Jesus taught us when asked about political unrest and strife, to "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God, the things that are God's." It is time for all of us to render unto God.

In Luke 12:49-53, Jesus said the following, which I believe is prescient as regards our present situation in America: *"I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but*

*rather division! From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.*" These are the sad divisions we experience widely today. What is a Christian to do? A Christian is to remember that our Christianity transcends these sad divisions. A Christian is to embrace the other, *especially* when that other is your brother or sister in Christ. We of all people should not rub salt in the wounds of others, and we must be careful and sensitive that not all Christians think alike when it comes to politics. That is because we must not assume that one political party or the other represents the views and position of God on political matters.

Interested in God's political views? Read Matthew 25 or the Sermon on the Mount, or better yet, one of the Gospels like St. Luke's, and you will have a very good sense of how God thinks about what we are or are not doing on this earth.

I have never thought or acted as though this means we should shirk the responsibility for us to stand up against injustice. On that we should all be clear and be joined arm in arm in the struggle, and willing to sacrifice, as God sacrificed for us. I may not have been the best witness for justice in the past, but I hope to be on God's side in the future. And remember, that side always transcends any brand of human politics.

Politicians promise much to us to get elected. I have lived through thirteen presidential elections and many more local ones, and not much has changed afterwards in my experience of them, regardless of the individual or the political party. The one thing we do know for sure is that no human being, no politician is our savior, save the one human being who lived

2000 years ago. No politician can love you the way God does, and none compare with the good shepherd, because the sheep are not theirs to tend and keep and protect. We must not look to politicians for the salvation of our problems. They can help a little. We can hope they will help us. We can pray for them that by God's grace they will make the right choices and decisions and govern with integrity. The good news is though, *our God is not a politician.*

Consider what our God did for each of us as described in this morning's Gospel. This God truly loves us. This God goes the extra mile for us. This God will not let you down. The words of this God are true. Embrace this God, and you will find peace and true security, not as this world gives.

Here we stand at the end of November, as we do each year at this time, and the question I put to you, and the Church puts to you, and this day puts to you is this: Who do you say your King and ruler is? To whom do you belong? What Kingdom do you live in?

When someone asks you whom you voted for, I hope your answer is Jesus. I vote for God to rule the kingdom in which I live. I invite you do so also. AMEN