

Sunday Message

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

THE WORD

Year C • 20 November 2022 • Season Colour: White • Psalter Week 2

SUFFERING KING

LUKE 23:35-43



One of the most popular books and TV series of modern times is *Game of Thrones*. With a magnificent plot and glorious cinematography, the drama has all the elements fans seem to love – greed, ambition, lust, brutality, power struggles, betrayal, intrigue. ‘Game’ is an appropriate word for its title, for there are power games aplenty, games of thrones.

Humanity has always been fascinated by royalty. Think of the popularity of the Netflix series, *The Crown*, or people’s obsession with the British royal family.

In times past, kings and queens were closer to the image portrayed on *Games of Thrones* than the royal houses of today. Absolute monarchs ruled by decree. They commanded respect, fear, obedience. They fought battles and conquered territory and lorded it over their subjects. They got rid of anyone who got in their way. Their wealth and power afforded them the luxury and lifestyle their subjects could only dream of.

Thankfully, this isn’t the case anymore (at least in the West), so we can find it hard to understand why we celebrate a feast of Christ as king. The Jesus of the Gospels, the carpenter’s boy from Nazareth, doesn’t fit our image of a monarch. It’s essential, then, to remember how and why this feast came about.

Pope Pius XI inaugurated it in 1925 during a time of increasing political turmoil. The Blackshirts under Mussolini were in power in Italy. A demagogue called Adolf Hitler was organising the Nazi Party in Germany. In Moscow, Josef Stalin was ruthlessly consolidating his control of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The world was tumbling toward the Great Depression, and populism and militant nationalism were on the rise. In creating this feast, Pope Pius was declaring to the world that despite dictatorships and economic collapse and the false values of the time, Jesus Christ remained King of the Universe and a model for how authority should be exercised.

Pius XI was declaring that in a world filled with division, conflict and tears, Christ the King offers both the ideal example and an uncomfortable model of behaviour. He is the model for how authority should be exercised. He is the model for how people should relate to one another.

The kingship of Jesus turns our commonly accepted notions of royalty on their head. His crown symbolises his majesty, made not of gold but thorns. He rules not by threat or decree but by a moral authority, a message of love. He is interested not in possessions, money or status but mercy, compassion and justice. Our king rules by washing feet.

In the midst of the humiliation of the cross, today’s Gospel account paints a picture of someone every inch a king. Jesus pardons his executioners; he bestows the gift of the kingdom on someone who has done little to merit it until that moment. In the act of dying, he calmly resigns his Spirit into the hands of God. ■

REFLECT

Jesus’ model of authority is what Pope Francis seeks to demonstrate. It has been a hallmark of his papacy since the night he first appeared on the balcony in St Peter’s almost a decade ago. People noticed it straight away – how he wore only the simple white cassock and black shoes, how he refused to live in the spacious papal apartments, how he shuns ostentation and has kept the focus on simplicity. They noted how his first trip outside Italy was not to visit a head of state or major shrine but to a Mediterranean island swamped with refugees.

Pope Francis’ message is clear – we must imitate Jesus by living as simply and humbly as possible. Whatever our rank in society or the church, we must never lord it over anyone. Our model must always be Christ, the servant king.

This is a tough ask because it runs counter to the values of today, which are about celebrity and wealth and power. To be a follower of the servant king is to live a life at odds with the prevailing culture. It is to be a counter-witness.

The feast of Christ the King also has a new urgency today, with right-wing populism again on the rise and narrow tribalism dominating so much of politics. It reminds us that God’s kingdom is different from any earthly kingdom, and its values are different. As Christians, we are called to worship Jesus Christ as our king and imitate his way of living. ■

LEARN

The kingdom of God is based not on power, wealth and military might but justice, peace and love.

The followers of Jesus live by the values of his kingdom.

When we reach out in love and compassion to the lost and forsaken, those in prison, the sick, the homeless, we are living by the values of the kingdom.

SAY

Lord Jesus, you are my master and my king. Help me to follow your example to the best of my ability. Amen.

PRAY

Pray for our leaders of church and state that what they do and how they live will reflect kingdom values of service, humility and love.

DO

Think about your values. How closely do they reflect the values of the kingdom?

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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20th November 2022

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

Weekend masses

Sat 6:00pm Dechomet
7:30pm Leitrim
Sun 9:00am Gargory
11:00am Dromara

Weekday masses

Mon 9:00am Leitrim 7:30pm Dechomet
Tues 9:00am Dromara
Wed 7:30pm Leitrim
Fri 7:30pm Dromara

Masses for Christmas 2022

Christmas Eve Christmas Day

Gargory	7:00pm	9:00am
Dromara	7:00pm	11:00am
Dechomet	8:15pm	-
Leitrim	9:30pm	10:00am

Choir Rehearsals St Mary's Church, Dechomet, will take place for a short time after 6pm Sat Masses

Recently deceased Lizzie Mitchell (nee Morgan), Birmingham, formerly Legananny

Anniversaries (2023 Anniversary Book now available)

Dechomet

Sat 19th Mary Ellen O'Hare

Gargory

Sun 20th James and Doreen Gribben

Sun 27th Felix McCartan and Deceased Family Members

Dromara

Sun 20th Mary McEvoy and Bridget Gorman

Fri 25th Teresa McNeill; Mary McNeill

Leitrim

Wed 23rd Mick, Mary and Michael Cassidy
Rosemary Doherty

Sat 26th Ryan Doyle, Hugh and Roseann Doyle
Gerard McElroy

St Michael's Hall - Anyone who wishes to use the Hall must pre-book with Mary McCann on 07738838191. The attendance sheet must be completed. Please leave the Hall and the toilets clean for the next group.

SVP - If you are struggling with food/heating bills, etc., please contact us: Drumgooland 078 2541 9067
Dromara 077 3883 8191

Collections

Parish

Dromara

£568

Drumgooland

£1175

We welcome into Dromara Parish Saorlaith Kelly

Holy Cross Missionary Group, Bethlehem

Afif will be in Banbridge 26th/27th Nov.

If you wish to contact him - Mob: 075 5348 1765
or Email: holy-cross@hotmail.co.uk

Festive Coffee Morning Fundraiser in aid of Action Cancer and Dromara & Drumgooland Lourdes Fund, Finnis Hall, Sun 27th Nov, 11:30am - 3:30pm. Christmas Crafts and Raffle. Everyone Welcome!

Christmas Bingo Join the 'Friends of St Michael's Finnis Parents Group' for a Festive Bingo on Sun 4th Dec at 3pm in the Parish Hall. Doors open 2:30pm. Good fun, refreshments and great raffle prizes to be won, so please come along and show your support for the school.

Advent Reflection at SMA Dromantine

Tues 13th Dec 4pm to Wed 14th Dec 5pm.

An Advent reflection in preparation for Christmas given by SMA Community and a celebration of the Sacraments (Eucharist, Reconciliation and Anointing of the sick).

Cost £120/€145. To book a place Tel: (028) 30821224 or email: admin@dromantineconference.com

SVP Dromara Christmas Appeal 2022

An Amazon Wish List had been setup for anyone who wishes to purchase a present for a local child to receive this Christmas. Any support, no matter how small, is greatly appreciated and will go directly to local families in need of support during these difficult times. The Wish List can be found at:

https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/1RET2PL08GHHT?ref=wl_share

If you have any difficulties, or if you would prefer to make a donation towards heating oil/food hampers, please contact Mary on 077 3883 8191. Many thanks for your continued support, St Vincent de Paul Finnis, Dromara.

Safeguarding P Carville 077 8991 7741