



Christ the King 21st November

Father God help us to come to you this morning with open and thankful hearts. Fill us with the joy and peace that comes with knowing you. Be with us as we walk in your light, rejoice in your love and reflect your glory.

Amen

Hymn 137: Crown him with many crowns

Welcome

The Lord be with you,
and also with you

Prayer of Preparation

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord.
Amen

Prayer of Confession

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: The first commandment is this: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbour as yourself". There is no other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,**

through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen

Lord have mercy
Lord have mercy
Christ have mercy
Christ have mercy
Lord have mercy
Lord have mercy

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in life eternal through Jesus Christ our lord. **Amen**

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. 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 for today:

Eternal Father, whose Son Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of heaven that he might rule over all things as Lord and King: keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace, and bring the whole created order to worship at his feet; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

New Testament Reading: Revelation 5: 1 - 10

Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals; and I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?' And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. And I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. Then one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep.

See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.'

Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne. When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. They sing a new song: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation; you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God, and they will reign on earth.'

Hymn 205: Glorious things of thee ae spoken

Gospel Reading: *Luke 19: 41 - 44*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

Glory to you, O Lord

As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, 'If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ

Sermon: Rosey from Thursday 18th November

Elizabeth of Hungary

Things ain't what they used to be, are they, nor what they seem, in this strange and wonderful life? But God is within, around and about us all and Jesus warned that what is hidden is also likely to come to light one day and make a difference. This may be for our encouragement as well as to challenge us. Our readings both contain tears; these too may offer various meanings.

I remember reading as a child about St. Elizabeth of Hungary: how she was happy with her friends in the sunshine, lay in the warm grass, feeling God's companionship – later it somehow turned to tears, as her happy marriage proved short, her husband died, and she was driven from court to another life of much hardship and pain until her death in 1231. In her new home in Germany, she had a harsh mentor, yet dedicated her life to gruelling service of the poor, certainly wiping their tears, hiding her own, while discerning the face of Christ in their stained faces. She found a way of happiness, setting herself aside to make way for Jesus to reveal in her and around her His kingdom of love.

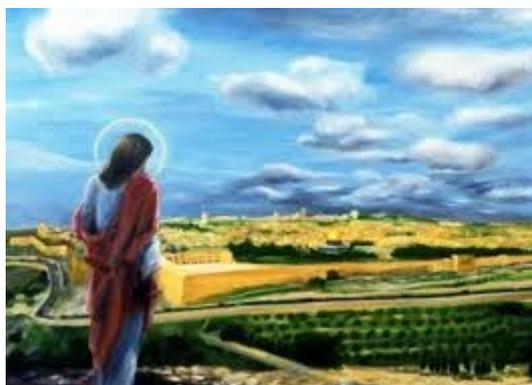
Our readings are marked by different kinds of tears: those of the human race, from the perspective of heaven, and the tears of Jesus Himself, anticipating His still hidden sufferings in Jerusalem.



In our First Reading, John, in heaven, sees a scroll in God's hand, and glimpses its hidden message running over both sides of the parchment. Excitement, however, turns to tears as he and the whole gathered host realise nobody, nobody, was fitted to open it up and share its hidden content. John weeps bitterly that nobody can even yet look into these mysteries. Then a victorious Lion is mentioned, and hope returns.

The Lion, though, is not quite what appears: no warrior! John expects strength, vigour, supremacy, but it is a wounded Lamb that rises to the challenge, His scars fresh, His power so natural and gentle. All the host acknowledge Him with reverence and singing: the victorious One Who has pulled all nations back towards God and alone has the prerogative of revealing the scroll's content. Tears are suddenly wiped as all heaven, earth and angels, welcome Him: Him Who by tears and self-giving anguish opens the way *beyond tears* into God's new plan for earth, history and a new creation. All this is still hidden from view, but fervently anticipated. The unseen world is opened just enough for us to believe and worship the Source of all Life.

Our Gospel, though, works on us differently. It heightens the divine involvement with what is not yet revealed, in terms of suffering, as we pause with a not yet captured Jesus outside the city of Jerusalem, where this victory will be won. Jesus weeps over what remains hidden: the tragedy of the city, whether He is recalling Nebuchadnezzar's sack of 587BC, or prophesying the later destruction by the Romans. He laments their blindness, their lack of attention to what is unseen, only partly known, but crucial: the things that make for peace. Meanwhile, only siege and desecration seem likely for such a proud bastion of Jewish pride.



Jesus weeps over Jerusalem's destiny, and probably over its lack of connection with what He longs to give. Elsewhere Jesus tells us of Jerusalem's tragic tendencies to kill prophets and stone its envoys – but more movingly He reveals that time:

“How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings. and you were not willing.” (Lk 13:34)

One might hear suppressed sobs from a few listeners who really understood this verdict on them and their loss of His immediate love and nurture. Jesus Himself would feel this sharply. Once more the true nature of things is somewhat obscured, hidden by the way human beings are – and there is space here for our tears at our own lack of reception of Jesus' deep love.

Yet we are very ready to feel our own griefs, and usually those of people we love and respect. But what about the tears of God? The tears of the polluted, abused planet? Or those of the miserable marginalised men and women outside our various comfort zones? Yes, we'd like to help, and know God, and work for good, but we also so much love our own needs and priorities and crave affections that reward us in return.

Jesus has explained to us how we might give without return and in this way become His Father's real children. (Lk 6: 32-36) Jesus and John both make clear to us what is already established from God's side, though hidden, or far from obvious to us, most of the time. That is maybe enough for divine tears, or even the tears of a spiritually gifted man like John.

The greater invitation here is surely to see in all this the tears of God's love, and to grasp His desire we should become somewhat more in tune with His secrets, His realities as they unravel for us. Our tears too are welcome and may bring out with God things that are greatly to our good.

Meanwhile we might reflect that His tears show us His love, His desire for us, and our world – and in no sense deflect Him from His purpose of saving us to the uttermost – initially of course on the Cross at Jerusalem.

He takes our tears up – the psalms even suggest they're recorded and kept in a bottle (Psalm 56:8), but it is clear that God Who calls me longs for me to call out to Him, and to transform my tears and variable efforts into something restorative, maybe something that makes for greater peace.

Let us pray:

Jesus said, “Come to the waters, stand by My side;
I know you are thirsty and won't be denied.
I felt every teardrop when in darkness you cried,
And I strove to remind you for those tears I died.” **

Saviour, Lamb and Lion of God, let us take to heart what You show us of the true life of the world, and let us from now on be hidden only in the sense of being safe in you.

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made,

of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again 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.

We 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 worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers

The Peace:

Take a moment and offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for each other and our church family church community. Maybe call or text someone who would enjoy sharing the peace with you.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy, that you may be kept safe and blameless in spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours.

Now and for ever.

Amen.

Hymn 381: Let all mortal flesh keep silence

Remembering the Lord's Supper:

Take a moment to remember the final meal that Jesus shared with his disciples. As we think about this meal - with the washing of feet and bread and wine shared with friends - we remember Jesus' offering of himself on the cross. We rejoice in his resurrection from the dead and look forward to the coming of God's Kingdom. While we cannot receive Christ in the sacraments in the usual way, we can be the presence of Christ in our homes and communities and we can be a

praying presence wherever we are.

Hymn 625: take my life and let it be

Closing Prayer:

Lord God, we thank you for this time of worship; may your love and peace remain with us in the coming days. Be with us in all that we will think, say and do so that our lives may reflect your glory. We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ. Amen