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SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT B

24th November 2024

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

Take a moment to be peaceful.

If you are able you may like to plant your feet on the floor and concentrate on your body being still (if this is hard then do just sit quietly and comfortably). Notice how you feel and what you are thinking about and let those things float away giving thanks for each even if they are difficult feelings or thoughts.

When you are ready: raise your hands open before you and give thanks for the moment you are in.

Pause

Place your open hands on your lap and consider all that's happened this week and what you might want to lay down before God asking for help or offering thanks.

Pause

Lift one hand high in the air and think about what you will offer of yourself as you worship today.

Pause

Lower your hands and pick up this service sheet. If you feel able offer the following prayer:

Loving God, I am here in this moment to worship you. Amen.

You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar

Hymn:

44 STF – Come on and celebrate – [YouTube](#)

Reading: John 18:33-37 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading

On Christ the King Sunday, we reflect on John 18:33-37, where Jesus stands before Pontius Pilate, and we hear this interesting conversation about kingship, truth, and power. I always love the idea that this passage from the end of Jesus' earthly ministry comes into the lectionary just before we plunge into a time of remembering and celebrating the Christmas story.

This passage invites us to contemplate the nature of Jesus' kingdom and his style of leadership, contrasting sharply with worldly notions of authority. It's an opportunity for us to explore what it means to follow a king whose reign defies conventional expectations.

Jesus tells Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world." This statement invites us to think about the nature of divine authority as totally different from earthly power. Jesus' kingdom does not rely on force or violence but is founded on the principles of love, justice, and truth.

For a moment, reflect on the implications of this for your own life. How does this understanding of Jesus' kingdom challenge the ways you interact with power and

leadership? Are there areas in your life where you can promote the values of this heavenly kingdom, perhaps by advocating for justice, peace, or by showing radical love?

When Jesus declares that he came into the world to testify to the truth, and that everyone who belongs to the truth listens to his voice, he sets truth as a central pillar of his kingdom. In an era where truth can often seem flexible and elusive, amongst all the talk of fake news, this is particularly important for us to hear. As a disciple, you are called to seek the truth and to align yourself with it, even when it is inconvenient or demands sacrifice. Consider how commitment to truth affects your actions. How does truth guide your decisions, and how can you better listen to the voice of Jesus in your daily life?

Christ the King Sunday also compels us to examine our understanding of leadership. Jesus' leadership, marked by service and sacrifice, inverts traditional images of kingship. As followers of Christ, we are called to lead by serving. Reflect on your own roles, whether in work, community, or family. How can you incorporate more service into your leadership? Think about ways you can serve others that might strengthen your witness as a disciple of Christ.

Finally, embracing a kingdom "not of this world" encourages us to live with a different set of priorities. It invites us to look beyond material success and societal approval, focusing instead on spiritual values and eternal impacts. As you go about your week, challenge yourself to prioritise the values of Jesus' kingdom over worldly values. How can you embody the peace, mercy, and justice of Christ's kingdom in the world around you?

How does Jesus reign as King today?

Are we waiting for him to "come again" and sort it all out for us, or are we able to find the role we have to play?

Blessing

May you go from this place,
With joy in your heart, with peace in your soul, and with the hope that comes from your faith
in a story where love wins.

May you go out and meet with our, living, loving God, at work in our world,

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers

Monday 25th November

- Today, why not spend time in your garden or a nearby park.
- Observe the natural world around you and offer prayers of appreciation for God's creation.

Tuesday 26th November

- God of all grace
Today I lift up in prayer the dedicated doctors and medical staff who tirelessly care for the sick and suffering. Bless them with strength, wisdom, and compassion as they heal and comfort. Protect them in their selfless service and grant them resilience in the face of challenges. May their work be a reflection of your love and healing grace. Amen.

Wednesday 27th November

- You might like to gather some magazines, newspapers, or printed images and create a collage that represents the blessings in your life.
As you cut and paste, offer prayers of gratitude for each blessing depicted.

Thursday 28th November

- Intercessions: Make a list of five people and three concerns you want to lift up in prayer. Spend a few minutes during the day praying for them. You might like to break it up and come back to one thing on your list each hour during the day.

Friday 29th November

- Find a piece of music or music style that you find relaxing or which helps invite you into a prayerful space. Something like this, if you find the Celtic style helpful - [YouTube](#)
- Spend as long as you can just sitting, still, and listening. Let the music wash over you, and listen for the still small voice in the calm...

Saturday 30th November

- As the Advent season is about to begin, walk through your home, praying for each room and its inhabitants. Ask for God's presence and blessings to fill your home, and to help you prepare a room to encounter the incarnate God this season.