

Parish of Malin (Clonca) Sunday 22nd November 2020
Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of The Universe (Year A Week 2)



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*In November
We Remember*

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Details on the times of online Masses and Prayers for the Covid 19 Crisis: <https://www.catholicbishops.ie>

Holy & Saints Days: 22nd – 28th November: Monday: *St. Columban* Tuesday: *Ss. Colman, Andrew Döng-Lac and Companions* Wednesday: *Ss. Catherine of Alexandria, Clement I & Colman* Friday: *St. Fergal*

Sincere Thanks to those who have sent in their collection envelopes, cheques and donations for the Parish during the past week. Please make cheques payable to “Malin Parochial”.

Knock Shrine: As we face into the winter months and a new routine, why not set aside some time in the evenings for prayer and reflection online. This is something you might like to do as an individual or with members of your household. Share it with friends or neighbours and take part online (virtually) together. Join us online each Friday evening during the month of November as we come together virtually for a period of extended prayer and reflection. The theme for the month is ‘Comfort on the Journey’ as we draw comfort and peace from knowing that our loved ones now enjoy the light of Heaven. 27th November:: Facing The Future. Join us online for Rosary at 7pm, Mass at 7:30pm and Holy Hour at 8pm on our website www.knockshrine.ie

The Net: The November edition is now available online, on www.derrydiocese.org. As always, it features a wide variety of news, interesting and inspiring interviews, articles and photos from parishes across the diocese. You are invited to read The Net, on the diocesan website, at your convenience.

Priory Institute: Registrations now for our Advent Retreat. It's a series of filmed reflections on the Sunday gospel readings of Advent. We are subsidising the production costs to encourage participation, the cost of the retreat is €40 and registration closes on Friday week, November 27th. Maybe it's a sign of the times but it seems people are interested in looking at the 'big' questions especially coming up to this very unusual Christmas. <https://prioryinstitute.com/events/2020-advent-retreat>

As you know Christmas is a busy time for Trócaire and we have recently launched our Christmas Gifts of Love which allows people to buy vital gifts for the people we support. We have 17 gifts in total this year ranging from a 6 months supply of Soap for a family to our new Quarantine Care Kit which gives a family everything they will need for 16 days of quarantine.

22 November, 2020. Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

On this, the last Sunday in the liturgical year, we honour Christ the King. It is a feast on which to renew our loyalty to Jesus our Saviour, shown in the way that we love our neighbour. The shepherd-theme is prominent, both as basis for our trusting God's care, and as a challenge to be, each in our own way, co-workers with the great Shepherd of our souls

1st Reading: Ezekiel 34: God promises to personally care for his people, as the shepherd cares for the sheep

Thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel.

I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice. As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord God: I shall judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and goats:

Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46 We will be judged by the standard of visible, tangible love

Jesus said to them, “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you

gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Reflection on the Readings: A Kingdom of Justice, Love and Peace

Paul visualises Jesus Christ handing over the kingdom to God the Father at the end of time. This ideal kingdom is not something merely hoped for as a future gift, but something being worked for by Christians in the present time. The kingdom is indeed to be hoped for, but somehow it is also in our midst, in the process of becoming. Today's gospel shows how we are to promote the fuller coming of God's kingdom in our world. It comes whenever justice is done for the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, and the oppressed. To behave in this way is to imitate the Shepherd-King himself who is presented in our Gospels as one who eases alienation, who feeds, gives rest, heals and makes strong. Among his final words was a promise to the thief being crucified at his side, that he would be enfolded by the eternal love of God, in paradise.

The best way to honour Christ our King is to work for the unfolding and promoting of his kingdom. In working for the relief of deprived, oppressed or marginalised people, we are serving Christ in person, because he fully identified with people in need, right up to his final moment in this life. The disciple of Christ the King cannot afford the luxury of living in a gated community, resolutely secure in a fortress, comfortably "keeping myself to myself" with the lame claim that "I do nobody any harm." To be deaf to the cries of my neighbour in need is to be deaf to Christ. To be blind to the anguish of the dying is to be blind to Christ. To recognise Jesus Christ as our Shepherd-king involves being carers or shepherds in some way ourselves; for the work of the Kingdom goes on until he comes again.

Two standards of judgement

A random act of kindness, a glass of water given out of goodness, seems like a very low threshold for a personal friendship with Christ. Christians have always had a strong trust in Christ's humanity; he was like us in every way except that he did not sin. Although this Sunday portrays him returning in regal splendour, the judgments of Jesus are not like ours either. He seeks good among the ordinary and the bad alike; too often we seek bad among the ordinary and the good alike. For Jesus, the sinner who does a single act in kindness can be saved. For the rest of us, the saint that does something wrong is tarnished forever.

His hands stretched out in forgiveness to those who had nailed them down. Ours stretch out to point in criticism at the wrongdoer. But we have a dominant image of what a judge is like and how a judge should act. It is not surprising that the image of Jesus as a fair but stern judge is deeply set with many Christians. There are even some who delight in the idea of bad people getting their just deserts.

Just as Jesus told the soldiers arresting him that his kingdom was not of this world; his standard of judgment is not of this world either. That should be good news, although not everybody sees it that way.

"Vengeance is mine," said the Lord. Traditionally Christ has been represented as coming in majesty and power. From Michelangelo's ceiling of the Sistine Chapel to the mosaics in many a church apse, that image is prominent in western art. It is familiar because it is like what we do in every way, except that we don't forgive. The classic picture includes tormented souls being dragged off to eternal flames.. It is likely that almost all of us have an idea of some of the people who should be in that category.

In the 1970s musical *Godspell*, Stephen Schwartz recreated that judgment scene. Only, this time, Jesus has second thoughts and brings the damned along too. They had sung a song asking for mercy and they received it. That is an image which is very much in keeping with the words of Christ the King: "Judge not and you will not be judged. Condemn not and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven."

He brings a different kind of rule, a rule where boundless mercy trumps self-righteous justice.