

Our sharing in the Kingship of Christ

Today is the last Sunday of the liturgical year and we are asked to meditate on the Kingship of Christ. It is important then to ask ourselves how this understanding of kingship impacts upon us and how it affects our attitude and outlook.

For this reflection, the gospel offers us the stark image of Jesus on the cross. Shamed and mocked, the inscription above his head *This is the King of the Jews*, is meant to deride him. He is a convict, whose last conversation is to be with another convict, but one who is bold enough to address him simply by his name alone, stripped of any title or designation, as he makes his plaintive request: *Remember me when you come into your kingdom*. Here surely is a moment of revelation for us; that in our lives, our prayer is that we too are not to be forgotten, or overlooked, but to sense our place of belonging, as people loved for who we are, regardless of circumstance or status. Jesus' response to this dying man is to promise him that: *today you will be with me in paradise*. Through our baptism, we too have *died* to this life and in rising to the *new life in Christ* we have a share in this dramatic conversation. As the baptised we are anointed with the oil of Chrism, we are gathered into the priestly, prophetic and kingly life of Jesus. We are asked to carry on the conversation and to make it real among the people we live alongside in our families and in our communities. We are invited to respond to the same request that so many people make that they will not be forgotten, or in other words, that they too can share in the kingship of Christ.

To make this conversation a reality for us, our parish is about to embark on a new initiative. It is an initiative which offers us all the opportunity to put in to active practice and ministry, the core elements of that exchange which takes place on the cross between Jesus and the dying thief. As a parish we hope to put in place a network which will ensure that no-one is overlooked or forgotten. We want to ensure that we have in place the capacity to help and assist those who are in need of care, and in search of friendship, to give people the security of knowing that such help is available in the parish from people whom they know they can trust, those who will respond to their requests out of love and generosity. Making this possible will require on our part, as parishioners, a commitment to this service. It will mean offering our time and energy over and above the many other demands which are made upon us. It will mean immersing ourselves a little deeper into the reality of the promises that we made when we rose from those baptismal waters: it will mean sacrifice. It will also mean that we are engaged in the conversation. It is of course a living testament to you, the parishioners that many are already involved in this conversation, through caring for your loved ones and others, and it is a great example for us all to follow. An invitation therefore goes out to all our parishioners to respond to the request that is spoken with such heartfelt desire by the dying thief, but which also echoes in so many of our hearts, and come along to Church on Tuesday 26 November at 7.00 pm to see what we can do and offer, in support of each other.

The kingdom which Jesus established is a kingdom of service. It is a kingdom in which each one of us is asked to take our place and express our sharing in it. Let us share the fruits of the kingdom, in our hearts and through our deeds.