

COME, YOU WHO ARE BLESSED BY MY FATHER.

Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Whatever you did for one of these least ones, you did for me.

Matthew 25:34, 40



OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE

November 22, 2020

THE SERVANT KING

As we celebrate the solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, many of the traditional hymns and images for the day are joyful and triumphal. For some, these connotations may be perceived as negative. In these days when there are strong divisions within the Church, and when some government leaders are so far away from the people, we need to hear all of today's scriptures, and draw a bigger, fuller picture of Christ as servant king. In Ezekiel, we see God as both the tender, loving shepherd and the one who will judge at the Second Coming. This ties in with Matthew's Gospel and separation of sheep and goats and "whatsoever you do." We pray Psalm 23 with great familiarity and hope. First Corinthians carefully explains to us the order in which all will happen. This is not an evil dictatorship, or a power-hungry leader, but the culmination of a plan that was carefully laid out in love.

OLD IDEA, RECENT ADDITION

Perhaps it is important to remember that while the image of Christ as King has been known throughout Christianity, this feast was founded in 1925 as a reaction and a response to growing secularism, communism, and atheism that were becoming prevalent after World War I. If we pull back the lens even further, we will remember that throughout history there has seldom been a peaceful time in the Christian world. The Holy Land itself has frequently been a battle ground. There have been schisms and divisions in the history of the church itself, and every church council was convened to try to correct some mistaken notion, world event, or church heresy. Nor has church leadership always had clean hands, and there have been wars, genocides, and insurrections "in the name of Christ." Today, when more and more people are leaving organized religion altogether, and people identify themselves as "spiritual but not religious" or "nones," the need for Christ as leader and ruler and guide is more pressing than ever.

INHERIT THE KINGDOM

The world in which we live is complex. We are a diverse, global society and there are many issues and opinions ranging from climate change to politics to creed. Sometimes we try and sort it all out, and it is hard to know who and what to believe. One can find multiple takes on the same news story, and social media can easily sway us. Yet when we focus on the Gospel story, it seems very simple indeed. We do not have to know it all or figure it all out. We are not the one on the throne during the Last Judgment. When God starts separating the sheep from the goats, the formula is a simple rule of thumb. "When did you see Christ in others? When did you respond accordingly?" It does not ask if you are Catholic or even Christian; whether you had a police record or an incurable disease; whether you had a PhD or a fifth-grade education, or what languages you spoke. The call is to remember that "Whatsoever you did to the least you did for me." And then there will be the invitation, "Come you who are blessed. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

TODAY'S READINGS

Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17
Psalm 23:1-2, 2-3, 5-6
1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28
Matthew 25:31-46

Immaculate Conception Parish

Immaculate Conception Church & St. Joseph Church

Pastor: Rev. James J. Ward • Deacon: Mr. Jack Mroz

ICC: 570-325-2791 • iccjt@ptd.net • www.iccjimthorpe.org

SJC: 570-325-3731 • stjosjt@ptd.net • www.saintjosephchurch-jimthorpe.org

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Mondays 6:30 - 7:00 p.m. @ St. Joseph Church

Thursdays 4:30 - 5:00 p.m. @ Immaculate Conception Church

Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator: Wendy S. Krisak, MA, NCC, LPC Direct Phone: 800-791-9209

Diocesan Secretary for Youth Protection: Pamela J. Russo, MSW, MS Phone: 610-871-5200, Ext. 2204

Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service: If you have an allegation of abuse against a bishop, please contact the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service at www.ReportBishopAbuse.org or by calling 800-276-1562.

Our Lord Jesus, Christ the King of the Universe



- Sat. Nov. 21** 4:30 pm (ICC) **Meg Dougherty** (Jerry & Judy Nederostek)
Ben Walbert (Clem & Sophie McGinley)
- Sun. Nov. 22** 9:00 am (SJC) **All Souls**
Arthur Krasowski (Gloria Kehrli)
- Mon. Nov. 23** (private) **Rita Dever** (Roush Family)
Eleanor Roecker (Margaret Moser)
- Tues. Nov. 24** 8:00 am (ICC) **Dolores "Lori Busocker" Reynolds** (Cathy & Ed Hawk)
Francis M. Vugrin, 6th anniv. (Steve Kuhtic & Mary Nausieda)
- Wed. Nov. 25** (private) **Bert Daday** (Diane B. Hackett)
Michael Carpenter (Parents)
- Thurs. Nov. 26** 9:00 am (SJC) **Thanksgiving Day** *note time change
Bishop Joseph McShea
Anna & Edward Lienhard (Family)
- Fri. Nov. 27** (private) **All Parishioners, Living & Deceased**
Thomas Bing (Tom Wildoner)
- First Sunday of Advent*
- Sat. Nov. 28** 4:30 pm (ICC) **Al "Butch" Heaney** (Salli, Sarah & Jake)
William & Gen Gavornik (Anna Marie)
- Sun. Nov. 29** 9:00 am (SJC) **James J. Ward** (John Melly)
Fay Blum (Dolores Becker)



God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords.
1 Timothy 6:15, NIV

RESPONSORIAL PSALM ~ THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD; THERE IS NOTHING I SHALL WANT.

POVERTY RELIEF FUND: Every November the Diocese of Allentown participates in the annual Poverty Relief Fund collection to provide support for local projects & programs that alleviate & address poverty. These efforts provide food, clothing, rental assistance, & more for individuals & families in our own cities, towns, & neighborhoods. If you prefer to make your offertory gifts online, you can support the Diocese of Allentown Poverty Relief Fund at www.allentowndiocese.org/poverty-relief.

Wishing all our parishioners a Healthy, Safe, Thanksgiving Holiday!



Our Thanksgiving Mass will be celebrated at St. Joseph Church at 9am on Thursday.

CHRISTMAS FLOWER MEMORIALS: Flower envelopes are included in your mailed packet. If you wish to memorialize Christmas flowers **Please Print legibly** the name(s) on the envelope or you may use any plain envelope. Please indicate if its in Memory of a Loved one, or In Honor of, or for a special Intention. To be sure your donation is included in the booklet please return your envelope before Monday, Dec. 7th.



WOMEN'S CLUB BASKET RAFFLE TICKETS ON SALE NOW! Over 123 prizes! Tickets are available at the Rectory during normal business hours. Tickets will also be available at the entrance of church to take with you and return (no sales will be done in the church). 1 ticket for \$2 or 3 for \$5, each ticket a chance to win one of over 123 prizes! Winners will be drawn on Dec. 11th and winners will



be contacted. Thank you for supporting the Women's Club and all they do for the parish!!

MOTHER PAULINE'S will be closed for the Thanksgiving Holiday, Wednesday, Nov. 25, Saturday, Nov. 28 and Monday, Nov. 30.

JIM THORPE TOURISM EXTENDS A HEARTFELT THANK YOU To Fr. Ward and parishioners. Over the month of October Jim Thorpe Tourism asked the Church for use of the lower lot to help with town parking. They would like to thank everyone for your understanding and kindness during that time. We thank them for their donation of \$1,000.00 for the Church.

MARIAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL "An exceptional education rooted in faith, family and tradition" Early registration incentives: \$50 fee if you apply by 12/8; \$100 if you apply between 12/9 and 1/8; \$150 after 1/8. Personal tours available! Upcoming evening information sessions on 11/23 & 12/3! Please call Mary Milosh for more information: 570-467-3335, ext 116.

COVID-19 PROCEDURES

Mass attendance is voluntary until further notice. Those who are sick, do not feel safe, or who have compromising health conditions, should not attend. **MASKS ARE REQUIRED**, covering your mouth and nose properly. **Contact Tracing:** We ask those attending Mass provide ushers with a name & phone number to allow for contact tracing in the event someone who attends Mass test positive for Covid-19. **Thank you for your understanding and patience.**

ADVENT GIVING TREE: Unfortunately, due to restrictions of the pandemic we will not have our traditional Giving Tree this year.

WHAT WE CAN DO!! We know that people want to buy gifts for those in need, especially children at Christmas, but we need to consider everyone's safety. The Domestic Violence Service Center of Carbon & Monroe, which has been one of the beneficiaries of our gifts, would appreciate any monetary donation to assist with providing for the families housed at the shelter. Be assured your monetary gifts will be used by the Shelter's staff to make sure all of the children and families receive gifts on Christmas.



If you wish to support this cause, we will be collecting cash gifts and checks (made out to Immaculate Conception Church). We will then send one check to the Domestic Violence Center. We will be accepting donations until Monday, December 7th. A separate receptacle will be in at front of church to collect donations, please look for the sign, or mail/drop off to the Rectory office. Thank you for all your support towards this worthy cause and for helping to spread joy this season!

LEAP OF FAITH ~ Today's Gospel could be seen as an example of what St. Paul is explaining in the second reading. Since death came into the world with the sin of Adam, Christ's death saved us from sin and his resurrection saves us from death. And since Christ had to die before he could rise, the last enemy to be subjected is death; so too do we have to die before we can rise.

When all this happens, God will be seen in all of creation. Jesus will be seen as equal to God, not just a man, but the Son of God. The Gospel gives us the image of a king on his throne, surrounded by his subjects. And then comes the final judgment.

I always thought the point of this parable was that we recognize God in the poor, the sick, the homeless, prisoners, etc. But the people in the parable who helped all those in need did not recognize Christ in the needy. That's why he tells them that whatever we do for "these least ones," we do for Christ.

That is actually good news, because it is not always easy to recognize Christ in others. I used to think that once I start seeing Christ in all people, I'll be more willing to help them. But it also works the other way. When you help someone in need, you begin to see Christ there, too. Whether it is a death-row prisoner or a homeless family, we take that leap of faith to help, not because we see Christ in them but just because they need help. Remember, God forgives and saves us because we need God, not because we deserve it.