

**24<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost – Year C**  
**To God Be the Glory**  
**Homily**  
**November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

Let us pray...

*To God be the glory, great things He hath done;  
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,  
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,  
And opened the life gate that all may go in.*

Every day, and particularly every Sunday, mass is an occasion to give thanks. We, as Episcopalians are a people of the Eucharist, a word which means thanksgiving. But, what are we truly thankful for in this life? How often do we take pause in the midst of our day and think about the ways in which Christ reigns in our life? When was the last time that you stopped and said, “You know, Lord, I am thankful for the possibility to live with you eternally.”

What are we thankful for in this reign of Christ? How do we see Christ’s reign to be? Is it a king over his subjects, or something else?

Here’s is what I think. I have come to know Jesus as the one who rules over all we see and have in this world. But, he is a king unlike any

other we have ever had. First, although he is perfect, he chooses to rule over our hearts. Jesus, unlike earthly kings, knows that the will of the heart will outlast any hardships and evils, and yet even if it is tempted and falls, it still can be recovered and redeemed. Earthly kings just rule over the body and the material world, and these things are corruptible and destructible.

In the past, when I would ask my students to list the qualities and characteristics of a great leader, what do you think they came up with?

*(Wait for some responses or not)*

They would come up with strength, wealth, connection, popularity, cleverness, etc... And, I would suggest to them that folks thought that Jesus was a great leader, because he was humble, chose the peaceful path, spoke the truth, and wasn't always popular. In fact, he was a self-sacrificial, servant leader, one who ministered and suffered, not only for his friends, but even for strangers. Last week, we recalled how Jesus chose to accept the cup that he had to endure in anticipation of his passion, and today we heard of him having hung on the cross in self-sacrifice. His self-

emptying opened room for our hearts to be transformed and healed. His suffering and humility opened the pathway for reconciliation and peace.

A true leader is one who knows the true depths of his followers and even the hearts of the ones who are not yet in the flock but could be. A true leader knows that out of this great suffering can perhaps come goodness.

*To God be the glory, great things He hath done.*

Jesus' Kingship is not of this world is the message that I am trying to share with you all today. For Jesus did not look for an empire. God, through Jesus, only sought to save this world. Often, the empire of this day tends to be the empire of the self. What do I need to be successful? And, if it benefits the other, fine. Jesus' view, on the other hand, is how might it benefit the other before me.

The reign of Christ awakens us to the glory of the abiding presence of God, and the eternal truth as we seek to understand the great mystery of the Christ.

As we prepare our hearts for a joyous season of Advent, may it be a time in which we open ourselves up to new realities, new possibilities of

transformation, from our hearts to our minds, to our lips and to our feet, as we go forth to serve one another and our neighbors in Christ's kingdom, in this church and outside of these doors in Stroudsburg.

It truly takes all of our collective gifts and callings in our daily vocations to build-up the kingdom. Siblings, you and I, just a few weeks ago, shared in the renewal of our baptismal vows. You and I are made new in Christ through the Sacrament of Baptism. This is not like the wealth that earthly leaders do store away, but rather we are called to put to good use the heavenly treasures that have been entrusted to us. We are agents of change, hope, and love. You are called in this kingdom to be a blessing to others.

It is in the giving of self, as we have witnessed in Christ, that we are truly blessed and can be a blessing to others. We the church, through Christ, call upon you to come into conversation with us. Let the Spirit move you on how you want to give. I know no one wants to talk about money. But, did you know that Jesus talked about giving quite often? This year, I want to challenge each and every one of you to give "more than enough," even if it's 10 more dollars per week than what you gave per

week last year. I want to challenge you, because I believe that you can do it. I believe that Christ Church can do it. Or, if not financially, come to me or any of the leadership and ask how you can give “more than enough” of your time. Can you give us 4 or 5 hours per month? That’s about one hour a week. True leadership and a mark of a great king or queen is in self-giving.

That is what we are to be thankful for today, as we prepare for a new church year in Christ.

*To God be the glory, great things He hath done.*

I’d like us to take some time this morning to be in silence, and an usher will be available for you, if you need a pledge card. If you have already filled one out and turned it in, then please take one of these colored notes cards that an usher will have, and simply write your full name. If you feel that you can’t commit to a specific financial gift, but you can give of your time and prayers, then write your full name and how much time in prayer or service you could give to Jesus and the church.

Or, perhaps you want to give, but you are not sure how, and that's OK. You can write your full name and simply mark the card with a question mark.

**SILENCE - 2-3 MINS**

From the bottom of my heart, I truly want to thank each and every one of you. Because of you, this church can see our future together for 2023 and beyond.

*Again, To God be the glory, great things He hath done.*

Amen.