

The Fourth Sunday of the Kingdom: Christ the King

My dear Friends,

Some of you who receive this will be very familiar with the interior of St Margaret of Antioch Roath, others will not have visited yet. (You would be most welcome, especially on our heritage weekend when we have guided tours). However even regular attenders may not have seen one of its largest and most impressive treasures. High on the wall of the Bute Mausoleum chapel, hidden from the rest of the church is a magnificent mosaic added in the 1880s portraying Christ in Majesty. Our Lord is shown sitting on a throne looking down upon the world.

This was part of the rebuilding of St Margaret's by the Third Marquess of Bute, who converted from the Anglican Church to Roman Catholicism. It was done at a time when the Roman Catholic Church was developing the ideas relating to the feast of Christ the King which was eventually formally instituted by Pope Pius XI encyclical *Qui Primas* in 1925. This feast has now been adopted by the Anglican calendar and is marked this Sunday, formerly the Sunday before Advent.

On this day we celebrate the all embracing authority of Christ which shall lead the human race to seek the peace of Christ in his kingdom. It was in sharp contrast in Europe at that time when earthly kingdoms and monarchs like those in Russia, Germany and Austria were losing their thrones and their autocratic power over their countries and empires. It was also at a time in history when the rights, duties, responsibilities and freedoms of ordinary people were becoming more important and valued in the nations of the world.

Our Gospel reading from St Matthew, Ch25, v31-46, describes the Son of Man coming in glory with angels around him sitting on the throne of glory. "All nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." Jesus goes on to describe how those who give food and drink to the hungry and thirsty, those who clothe the naked, care for the sick and visit the imprisoned will inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

As we today seek to be followers of our Lord Jesus, Christ the King and submit ourselves to his rule we have plenty of opportunity to do what he requires of us. The Covid 19 pandemic continues to bring into sharp focus the needs of those less fortunate and although we may not be able at this time to offer our charity in the usual ways we can still find ways of supporting them with our generous and sacrificial giving.

Best wishes and prayers

Stewart

The Reverend Canon Stewart Lisk,
Vicar of Roath and Area Dean of Cardiff.