



THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OF CHRIST THE KING

THE PRESBYTERY, 4 LORDS CROFT, AMESBURY, WILTS., SP47EP

PARISH PRIEST: Rev Saji Mathew
saji.mathew@cliftondiocese.com

Parish Office Telephone: 01980 622177
Website: Amesbury.cliftondiocese.com
PARISH MOBILE 07412604880

WELCOME TO CHRIST THE KING

We welcome visitors, family and friends to our Mass today.

SOLEMNITY OF JESUS CHRIST THE KING OF THE UNIVERSE-YEAR- A-2023

FROM THE DESK OF FATHER SAJI-HE IS A SHEPHERD KING Most of us, when given the image of a king or queen, imagine a person sitting on a throne ruling with great authority and having great power. When we call Jesus a king, we know he certainly has a position of esteem and power, but a power that is used in service and in sacrifice rather than in overpowering manipulation. Each year, when we celebrate the Feast of Christ the King, we re-dedicate our lives to a Shepherd King, one who sacrifices and serves others. Jesus as the Shepherd King has two qualities that are prominent in the scripture readings this weekend. One of the qualities is endearing, and the other is a little scary. The first quality I'm talking about is a shepherd who seeks the lost, places them on his shoulders, and brings them back to where they belong. The other quality is as a shepherd who separates the sheep from the goats, and whose voice is known by his own sheep. One is incredibly loving, and the other calls us to accountability. In our beautiful church, we have a statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. That image is constantly in front of us reminding us that Jesus is always looking for us, especially if we have lost our way or turned ourselves away from him. Instead of being a shepherd that would hold grudges or enacts punishment against those who wander away from the flock, Jesus finds the lost, comforts the lost and brings the lost back to the flock. Incredible love and faithfulness are the qualities that the Shepherd gives to his flock. Jesus is endearing towards us and is our constant source of hope. The vision from Matthew's gospel of a shepherd separating sheep from goats, reminds us that we are accountable for the kind of life we live. The scripture tells us that the only thing we are able to take into eternity are the acts of love that we have committed in our lifetime. The image from Matthew's gospel shows us how Jesus is looking for someone who feeds the hungry and clothes the naked. Jesus is looking for those who are strangers and accompany those who are not as well as they are. The feast we celebrate this weekend marks the official end of this church year. It is meant to be a time of taking stock of the past year. It is a reminder and a call to take accountability for the lives that we are living. If you were trying to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, notice how you treat those who are lost and turn their back on Jesus. Do you accompany them with love and do you have a willingness in your heart to lead them back to the flock? Do you love them with a kind of love that is supportive and encouraging and not manipulative or overpowering? Do you remember the pain that you suffered when you last wandered away from Jesus and has that created a compassion in you for those that you know have wandered away? Instead of each of us waiting till we are on our deathbed, today might be a good day to take stock of our treatment of those who are hungry, thirsty, naked, imprisoned and sick. Are these all groups that we hope we can avoid? Do we go out of our way to place ourselves in the presence of this group of people or do we do all that we can so that we never have to have a personal encounter with one of them? Do we see them as our sister and brother or are they foreign to us and we'd like to keep it that way? Jesus, the Good Shepherd and Christ the King, looks for each of us to love and cherish. Let him love you and others through you.

In the midst of the chaos of the holiday season, we can easily get distracted from the things that matter the most. Thankfully, the Church gives us the season of Advent to help us focus on our relationship with the Lord and to help us keep Jesus at the centre of the season and our lives. This year Advent is very short because the Fourth Sunday of Advent is Christmas Eve, so it would be good for all of us to get focused early. Next Sunday, the First Sunday in Advent, we will be reminded to "keep watch" for the Lord. This is great advice for us all, especially during a busy holiday season, because keeping watch requires us to slow down and to be intentional about our relationship with the Lord. So, as we begin Advent next week perhaps the best starting point is to find some time in our day to slow down and just sit in prayer with the Lord. If we give Him the time, He will surely come to us and make Himself known and teach us to make Him the centre of our lives. We need the simple message of the beginning of Advent. Slow down. Keep watch and trust that the Lord will come to us in His time. Praised be Jesus Christ, the King of the Universe Now and Forever! Peace in Christ. Have a great weekend. BE BLESSED AND BE A BLESSING

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON: How worthy is the Lamb who is slain, to receive power and divinity, and wisdom and strength and honour. To him belong glory and power forever and ever.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessings on the coming kingdom of our father David! Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON: The Lord sits as King forever. The Lord will bless his people with peace.

WELCOME TO CHRIST THE KING! We would like to extend a warm welcome to all our parishioners and visitors attending public Mass. Whether you are just passing through or looking for a spiritual home, we pray you find Christ the King inviting and spiritually uplifting. If you are attending Mass on a regular basis, we encourage you to register with the parish. Please call our parish office and start the conversation! To our visitors, we hope you enjoy your stay here in Amesbury. Our church is always open to you, your family, and friends. pax et bonum (peace and all good)

PARISH CONTRIBUTIONS AND GENEROSITY A big thank you for all your generous donations, which are greatly appreciated. If anyone would like to transfer to standing order or bank transfer, this would help to simplify our banking procedure. The Parish bank details are: Name: Christ the King Church, Amesbury, Bank: NatWest Account number 66286638 and Sort code-52-10-03. If you wish to remember the Parish in your Will, further information is available from the Parish Office.

CONFIRMATION - If you have a child that has just completed Year 8 (going into Yr 9 or above in September) and you wish to enrol them in the next programme, the deadline is February 2024.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY at Christ the King will occur at 11am Mass. The liturgy is for children in Year 3 and below, please note children younger than school age need to be accompanied by an adult.

OUR PATRONAL FEAST DAY 26th November On the last Sunday of each liturgical year, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, or Christ the King. Pope Pius XI instituted this feast in 1925 with his encyclical *Quas primas* ("In the first") to respond to growing secularism and atheism. He recognised that attempting to "thrust Jesus Christ and his holy law" out of public life would result in continuing discord among people and nations. This solemnity reminds us that while governments come and go, Christ reigns as King forever.

PRAY FOR VOCATIONS Please do all you can to encourage priestly and religious vocations. Your prayers and support make a difference.

THE LORD'S HOUSE Our parish church is a place of prayer where Jesus lives in the Blessed Sacrament. Please keep a reverent and respectful silence before, during and after Mass. Please be respectful of the Lord and those speaking with Him in prayer. Please also arrive on time for Mass so that all the graces of the Holy Sacrifice will be yours.

IN MEMORIAM Please remember in your prayers those who recently died and for all the deceased members of our family and parish, the souls in purgatory and those who died in service of our country. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord. Amen.

Please pray for God's grace for those who are ill: Please also pray for an increase in vocations, especially in our diocese and our country.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION - If you have a Child that has just completed Year 2 (going into Yr 3 or above in September) and you wish to enrol them in the next programme, the deadline is November 2023.

CONFESSIONS/SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION In the Sacrament of Penance, the love and mercy of the Lord Jesus is made manifest in the forgiveness of sins, thereby reconciling the penitent with God and with his Church. Confession is every Saturday from 5.00pm-5.40pm or by appointment.

RED BOXES 2023: Through our Red Boxes and donations to Missio and the Mill Hill Missionaries we are helping the Universal Church in reaching out to others in their desperate need. It is time for you to return the Red Mission Boxes to the Church in the coming weeks. Please make sure your name and address is written on the sticker at the bottom of the box. Please leave the box in the sacristy – not in the church porch – and you can pick it up again a week later. Thank You! God bless you!

WELCOME VISITORS AND NEW MEMBERS Christ The King welcomes those new to our community or those who may be visiting family and friends. Please don't hesitate to introduce yourself to those worshipping with you. Also, if you've recently moved into our parish, please register at the parish office. We are glad you're here and hope you will come back often.

POPE'S INTENTION FOR DECEMBER For persons with disabilities. We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programmes which value their active participation.

WEEKLY SPOTLIGHT ON A SAINT ST. FRANCIS XAVIER 1506 -1552 Feast Day, December 3 St. Francis Xavier, a close companion of Saint Ignatius Loyola, was one of the founders of the Jesuits. He is known as the patron saint of foreign missions for his work in India, China, Japan, and the East Indies. In his 10 years of missionary work, he is said to have baptized more than 40,000 converts. He preached in the streets, worked with the sick, the poor and the forgotten, washed the sores of lepers, and taught children their catechism. He is the patron saint of foreign missions. (Catholic Saints. Org.) "It is not the actual physical exertion that counts towards one's progress, nor the nature of the task, but by the spirit of faith with which it is undertaken." (St. Francis Xavier)

REST IN PEACE May those who have died enter into the mercy of God and the joy of the Kingdom.

A STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT. Whatever you did for one of the least of my brothers or sisters, you did for me. [Matthew 25:40] Most of us are generous when it's convenient for us. We are generous when we have the time or the money. But, real generosity is the opposite of that. It means giving of one's time, money, compassion, forgiveness or mercy when it's not convenient to us, when it's not on our schedule, but on the other person's timeline.

QUESTION OF THE WEEK-Whom do I overlook and in whom do I fail to see Christ? How can I force myself to look past surface impressions?

RECONCILIATION During Advent Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation while waiting for the coming of Jesus Christ! During the liturgical season of Advent, Christ the King Parish will offer private reconciliation on Friday evenings from 6:30 pm – 7.00 pm in addition to Saturday afternoons from 5.00 pm -5:40 pm in the church. The Sacrament of Reconciliation frees us from our sins and challenges us to have the same kind of compassion and forgiveness towards others that God, our Father, shows us.

MASS SCHEDULE STARTING FROM 25TH NOVEMBER 2023

SATURDAY 25TH NOVEMBER MASS AT 6.00PM FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE PARISH

SUNDAY 26TH NOVEMBER MASS AT 11.00AM PETER BOUCHER, RIP

MONDAY 27TH NOVEMBER ADORATION AT 9.00AM AND MASS AT 10.00AM FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

TUESDAY 28TH NOVEMBER ADORATION AT 9.00AM AND MASS AT 10.00AM HOLY SOULS (BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE)

WEDNESDAY 29TH NOVEMBER ADORATION AT 9.00AM AND MASS AT 10.00AM NO MASS

THURSDAY 30TH NOVEMBER ADORATION AT 9.00AM AND MASS AT 10.00AM GAY TARRANT (INTENTIONS)

FRIDAY 1ST DECEMBER ADORATION AT 9.00AM AND MASS AT 10.00AM VOCATIONS TO THE PRIESTHOOD AND RELIGIOUS LIFE

SATURDAY 2ND DECEMBER MASS AT 6.00PM FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE PARISH

SUNDAY 3RD DECEMBER MASS AT 11.00AM BRENDON COCKING (INTENTIONS)

CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC SCHOOL celebrates its 60th anniversary of providing education to children in Amesbury and the School would love you to join them to celebrate this special event. Please see the attached invitation on the notice board. Bishop Declan will attend the School for a formal blessing on 28th November at 2.00pm and this will be followed by light refreshments/afternoon tea for those who would like to join them. If you would like to join for the occasion of blessing and thanksgiving, please put your name down in the list at the Narthex by the weekend.

WORLD YOUTH SUNDAY – 26TH NOVEMBER 2023 –SECOND COLLECTION This weekend, 25-26 November, there will be a 2nd collection in support of the Catholic Youth Service, a collection taken to support Youth Work in the Diocese and beyond, especially the Clifton Catholic Youth Service. Any money raised on will go towards supporting those in need of financial support to go on pilgrimages and to events, as well as allowing the Diocesan Youth group to continue running events, such as the monthly Youth Masses, provide support and training to those working with young people and so much more. Please pray for all our young people that they may consider their vocations in the religious and priestly life for the future of the church and for those who work with them.

CHRISTMAS CARDS Christmas cards are available in the Parish from this week onwards

CHRISTMAS PARTY FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN AND YOUNGER: This will once again be run by the teenagers of the parish supported by Sue Winfrey-Harvey and Helen James. Date = Saturday 16th December from 11am until 2pm in the Parish Hall. Food and entertainment will be provided and we hope Fr. Christmas will be able to pay a visit too. If your child is below 5 they should be accompanied by an adult. Please sign up at the back of church. Any teenagers who would like to help Sofia, Jerome, Darryl and Ropa with the party should let Fr. Saji know.

STARTING SCHOOL? If you have a child born between **1 September 2019 and 31 August 2020**, then **now** is the time to apply for a place at a primary school for admission from **September 2024** onwards. You must complete an application form that is available from the school admissions team of the Wiltshire County Council. If your child has been baptised and you are applying for a Catholic school, you **must** also provide a copy of the baptism certificate to the school. Please ensure you apply by the closing date of **15 January 2024**.

CHILDREN'S NATIVITY Sunday December 17th 4pm the Children's Liturgy Group will produce the Nativity in the Church, followed by a Bring and Share Supper. If you would like your child/children to be involved please see me, Sharon Jameson, after Mass or contact mob 07933785368 jamesonsharon11@gmail.com Rehearsals will be after Mass in the Church Nov 26th and Dec 3 rd /10th and 17th . If you have not yet completed a Parental Consent Form please collect/return to Children's Liturgy Team asap. Thankyou.

COFFEE MORNING BY THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF UNBORN CHILDREN (SPUC) AT ST OSMUNDS PARISH ROOMS. Please come and enjoy a Coffee or Tea with Cake ON **SATURDAY 25TH NOVEMBER from 10.30am-12.30pm.** There will be cake stall, gifts and cards for Christmas, plus raffle. Proceeds are for SPUC-for the important work of raising awareness, education, fighting to change laws and counselling

A SPIN THROUGH ADVENT This year, Advent is as short as it can possibly be. Unlike Lent, which is always a full forty days, the length of Advent varies from year to year. Last year, Christmas was on a Sunday, so we had a full four weeks of Advent. This year, Christmas is on a Monday. This means that Sunday morning is the Fourth Sunday of Advent and Sunday evening is Christmas Eve. The fourth violet candle barely gets lighted before it's put out and the wreath put away! Hardly seems worth it, but that's the way the Christmas cookie crumbles. It's also a reminder of one of the harshest realities of life: we don't know how long it's going to last. Even in a short season, we know there are four Advent candles to light before Christmas arrives. We have no idea how many candles life holds for us before the ultimate Christmas Day arrives when we will meet the Lord Jesus in all His glory. Advent and the Church's liturgical season begin with a continuation of the themes that concluded the last liturgical year: the conclusion of life here below and the coming of Christ on the Last Day. Advent adds the sense of joyful expectation that the Messiah Who came once in Bethlehem will come again to definitively vanquish the effects of sin and death for all eternity. The saints shall join Him in glory while the damned will go off to eternal punishment. "He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead." This year Advent will be just 21½ days long. We will prepare quickly. There will be at the same time a rush to get everything in and a serene expectation that the pattern is set and all we have to do is do the right thing – then all will be prepared when Christmas arrives. This is a good way to approach life. It all seems a rush but if we walk serenely and with purpose, everything moves apace as it should. We know how to live the life of a disciple of Jesus; we just need to walk with neither haste nor dawdling. It is particularly important to keep a sense of joy. If we look at most of what disturbs us in life, from the media to our own circumstances, the absence of joy runs throughout. So many people revel in always being keyed up about something or angry, scared, frustrated, condescending, hopeless – all without joy. Christians always find joy in Christ's light and presence among us. We should be so convinced of His nearness that we can brighten others with joy. To have the fun and challenge of building others up – especially strangers – is one of the delights of being Catholic. The sad-sack, dour looking Catholic is the biggest turnoff in the world. So wrapped in piety, they look miserable – and give the impression that the most miserable person is the winner or God's favourite. That's Advent turned upside down! Enjoy this Advent Season, every minute of it. Prepare with joy and expectation. Do this, and Christmas will bring more blessings than you can ever imagine – both the Christmas on the 25th and the Christmas of Heaven.

PARISH PRIMARY SCHOOL ANNIVERSARY. Our school is 60years old this year and Bishop Declan will visit on Tuesday 28th to bless the children and the staff. We have members of our congregation who were students there and now have children and even grandchildren attending the school. There are retired teachers and current teachers from CTK School among us, who deserve our thanks and congratulations for keeping the faith alive with their dedication to Catholic education. "Great oaks from tiny acorns grow". May God bless them all.

COME AND CAROL Saturday Dec. 9th after Mass 7pm in the Church Hall. 'Come and Carol' You are invited to an all-age Christmas Celebration with music, carols, readings, sketches, poems, children's activities and more! Mulled wine, tea, coffee, mince pies. Donations to 'Mary's Meals'.

FLOWER DONATIONS: This week, flowers for the Tabernacle and the Sacred Heart were very kindly offered by Joan Boucher in honour of her beloved husband Peter Boucher who died a few years ago May his soul rest in peace and rise in glory with God! God bless you and your family.

THE NEW LANDSCAPE Once upon a time there was a man who found a piece of land with a beautiful view in all directions. So he bought the land and built on it a house with four large windows (one window in each wall of the house). The man thought that this way no matter what direction he faced, he would be able to see the beautiful view. But many years passed and, with that, many new people were moving onto the land and the beautiful view was changing. The man did not like this change because he thought it was ruining his view. The man then hired an artist to come to his house and to paint on each of the windows the old view that he loved so much. The man was now happy again in that no matter what direction he faced, he could see the beautiful old view. More years passed and the man stopped going outside because he could not accept how much the view had changed. Instead, he just stayed inside, sat in his chair, and looked at the old view painted on his windows, and he thought, "What a beautiful view! Now, isn't this living?" Today the church puts closure on the liturgical year with the feast of Christ the King as we have journeyed through a cycle that began on November 26, 2022 with the beginning of Advent. Through a progression of scripture readings, prayers, holidays and selected feast days, we have been enriched in the celebration of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Today's feast of Christ as King invites us to evaluate our image of Christ as King, and give proper meaning to this title. For some it provides comfort to envision the "Kingship of Christ" through windows of riches, crowns, gold, power, and authority as well as imitate the man in the story and exist with an image of Christ through a pre-Vatican II church that was experienced in the past. A closer look at Christ's Kingship from today's Gospel (Mt 25:31-46) equates "kingship" with service through acts of mercy. This contains a strong focus on charity and justice as well as participation in ministries that render an assortment of ways to make better Christ the King Church and others in need. Some of us recall a vision of church whereby most functions were carried out by "the clergy." Like the man who enjoyed the beautiful view outside his house, it became uncomfortable to accept a changing view that welcomed all believers to active participation in many of these responsibilities. Some objected to this, and even today seek to return to those days.

I recall my own awkwardness in my initial experience in receiving Eucharist from a lay minister; however, through time and education I comprehended that the important factor in the reception of Eucharist was not the person who distributes communion; but, on me as an individual who welcomes the presence of Christ into my heart each time I say "Amen" to the prayer, "The Body/Blood of Christ." This new landscape generated new ministries into the Catholic scenery that evolved around scripture reading, hospitality, music, parish administration, communion ministry, and service at the altar. This injected energy into the church and fuelled parishes with untapped talents and skills of many people. Although it was not easy for some who still wanted the "old view" of church, most accepted the new landscape but there were some who did not; and live with a view they have had painted on their walls which they believe to be beautiful. Unfortunately this pushes the church in a backward direction. In an article, Lay Ministry, Not Just for a Chosen Few, Thomas Richtigstatter, O.F.M., a Catholic priest since 1966, lists three main qualities needed for a Catholic to engage in parish ministry. The first is an attitude of service whereby a person volunteers for a ministry not to get one's own needs met, but to serve a community so that the assembly becomes a place where believers communicate with the living God. Second, lay ministers must demonstrate competence. The ability to know the things that a person does best and maintain willingness to participate in training sessions or attend practices for a specific ministry. Third, a person must be a team player in that "Liturgy is not a sole performance, but it is the worship of the entire community working together."

Today's Gospel from Matthew accentuates the message that all people will be judged on the mercy they show to the hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, imprisoned and ill. Like the man who refused to adjust to the new view, involvement in parish ministry warrants surprises that offers Christians the opportunity to provide service to the mentioned groups of people, which shows the way to Christ as your King.

SOLEMNITY OF JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE. Dear Parishioners, As we celebrate this Solemnity of Christ the King, we bring to a close another year of grace. It is, if you will, our final word: that Christ is Lord – Lord of the Universe and King in our hearts and lives. And then with Catholics around the world, we look forward next Sunday as we begin the holy season of Advent. Advent is a time filled with hope and enthusiasm, replete with promises and visions, charged with anticipation and eagerness, brimming with excitement and expectation. The Scriptures of Advent seem almost to stumble over each other as they hasten toward Christmas, with their sense of urgency, impatient to announce the good news of the promised Kingdom, what God can do if we let him in, with images of sight for the blind, strength for the weary, light for those in darkness, freedom for those imprisoned. The deserts and the parched land, we are told, will blossom and bloom, the valleys filled in, the mountains brought low, and the rough ways made smooth. What a wonderful hope for the dry and unwelcoming places in our society, the arid, often lonely spaces in our hearts. But I think not only of Advent. Before next Sunday, I look ahead this week to Thursday, November 30, the feast of St. Andrew. St. Andrew Day must have been a date regularly observed some of you in your family for years. There is a custom where people observe in Advent with a traditional devotional prayer, said every day from the feast of Saint Andrew until Christmas. As Catholics we are fortunate to be the heirs of a rich legacy of devotional spirituality that complements our formal liturgical prayer. Novenas, chaplets, particular prayers and invocations all help us to sustain a spirit of prayer throughout our lives to, in the words of a medieval mystic, "practice the presence of God" through each day. In my family we recite this Advent prayer fifteen times a day, from November 30 to Christmas. Perhaps I should say right now, as I said four weeks ago, that I do not think any prayer's efficacy is due in any part to the number of times that the prayer is recited, nor to the particular days on which it is offered. Sometimes people turn to prayer, which is supposed to be an expression of faith in God's free gift of love, into mechanical manipulation (read here, "magic") by specifying certain numbers or days required for that prayer, and then the prayer is "never known to fail." This is never necessary. It is God who is never known to fail, not our technique. Prayer does not depend on successfully completing arbitrary numbers of recitations.

Prayer derives its answers from God's limitless love and mercy; we have just to ask. The practice of reciting a prayer any number of times during a day is to extend that prayerful attitude throughout the day – to pray often during the day, not to pray a lot just once. Prayer does not "manage" God. Prayer disposes us to be more open to the action of God's grace in our hearts, to bring God into our daily lives. And so, my family's tradition of reciting this prayer several times each day during Advent. The prayer itself is quite simple. It might already be familiar. I offer it to you again, as I have in the past; and if you care to, you may offer it to your children, from my family to yours: Hail! And Blessed be the hour and the moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in piercing cold. In that hour, vouchsafe, O my God, to hear my prayers and grant my desires through the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ and of His Blessed Mother, Amen. It is fitting for the Advent season, because it reminds us that as the Father's promise of salvation was answered in that wondrous moment of Incarnation on the first Christmas, so we pray that our hopes and needs are answered this Christmas. And that, after all, is what Christmas is all about: for our needs, in our world, the Father's Love is born as the answer to our prayers, born in human flesh. And the implication of such hope is that our flesh, also, becomes the vehicle for God's healing and hope-filled love in the world. We must be part of the mystery we are preparing to celebrate – Christmas must happen not just for us, but also because of us. If you care to use the prayer, don't worry about how many times you recite it; that is not the important thing. Just recall it at different times throughout the day as a personal reminder that wherever we are, whatever we are doing, the promise and hope of Christmas lies ahead for us, the Lord is coming with blessings and graces.