



THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OF CHRIST THE KING

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WELCOME TO CHRIST THE KING

We welcome visitors, family and friends to our Mass today.
We are glad you are joining us today.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT(LAETARE SUNDAY) -YEAR-B-2024

FROM THE DESK OF FATHER SAJI: SURPRISING AND UNEXPECTED CHOICES In your understanding of how God works, I hope that you have understood that God makes some very unusual choices. From our scripture readings this weekend, we are able to see both in the Old Testament and the New Testament examples of God's unusual choices. When Samuel is sent out by God to anoint a new leader, people of his time would normally look for the oldest son. That was the one who was expected to inherit the possessions and the land of the father. That was the person who was expected to be the next in line. When God chose the youngest, everyone was surprised. It seems they were surprised because it's not what was expected, but also because it didn't follow the patterns of the way life went in those days. In the gospel this weekend, Jesus chooses to heal a person who has been blind from birth. That kind of person, during the time of Jesus, would have been rejected because it was thought that he was punished by God for some sin he had committed or his parents had committed. His blindness was seen as a punishment from God. When Jesus chose to interact with him and heal him, he was going against the norms of his time, and the expected behaviour of a rabbi and prophet. By the time we get to this part of Lent, our resolutions and sacrificial behaviours should have kicked in so that there is some emptiness and room for growth in each of us. Instead of thinking about finding even more ways to make ourselves suffer or to do penance, I would suggest that this might be a great time for us to look at how we can use the wisdom of the scripture readings in our own lives today. I would suggest that the first way to do that is to accept the fact that God has chosen us to do his work here on earth. I would encourage you and challenge you to take that personally. No excuses. God has chosen you to do his work on the earth. It doesn't matter how young or old you are. It doesn't matter what gender you are. It doesn't matter how much schooling you've had or how much money you have. God has chosen you. You might not be the person that you would normally think God would choose to do his work.

Maybe other people don't see you as a person that God would choose. No excuses. If you notice in the gospel, that blind man who could now see, had to put up with a lot of people's prejudices. They didn't think he was worthy, but Jesus did. Now is the time to step forward and act as Jesus would ask you to act. What is your next step in being a clearer and more evident disciple of Jesus? If you were a part of a Christian community, you know that we keep trying to push people back into the slots that we think they belong in. How often have we thought of, or said that somebody should know their place. "Who do they think they are?" There is a way for that to stop and that is if we stop doing it. We don't like when people do it to us but we continue to do it to other people. Why is it necessary for us to categorise everybody? Why can't we let each other evolve in our own time into the person God wants us to be? Why can't we help each other do that instead of feeling threatened when someone else's gifts look different than mine? The blind man's parents missed an opportunity to stand in support of their son. They were willing to claim him as their son, but stepped back when they were asked to give some testimony about the effect that Jesus had had on his life. They felt threatened. Have you ever allowed the fear of being ostracized to keep you from standing with someone who needs a companion in a difficult situation? Have you ever missed the opportunity to be the advocate for someone who is standing all by themselves? May our eyes be opened so that we can see the work among us, done by so many people, and support anyone who God calls to be his disciple. Have a great weekend! BE BLESSED AND BE A BLESSING.

WEEKLY LENTEN QUOTE "Lent is a time of going very deeply into ourselves. What is it that stands between us and God? Between us and our brothers and sisters? Between us and life, the life of the Spirit? Whatever it is, let us relentlessly tear it out without a moment's hesitation." (Catherine Doherty)

POPE FRANCIS' MONTHLY PRAYER INTENTION FOR MARCH "Let us pray that those who risk their lives for the Gospel in various parts of the world might imbue the Church with their courage and missionary drive."

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her. Be joyful, all who were in mourning; exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM O let my tongue cleave to my mouth if I remember you not!

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Glory and praise to you, O Christ! God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son; everyone who believes in him has eternal life. Glory and praise to you, O Christ!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON Jerusalem is built as a city bonded as one together. It is there that the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, to praise the name of the Lord.

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 Treasurer or office

PARENTS JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND Anybody remember the old rap song by the Fresh Prince, aka Will Smith, "Parents Just Don't Understand?" As we grow up, it is sometimes a struggle for us to imagine that our parents understand us. It can seem impossible that Mom and Dad remember the stress of exam week or peer pressure. We never saw them as children; we never saw their disappointed faces when they weren't invited to a party, or their dashed hopes at a bad test grade. We never saw them homesick their first week of college or nervous to ask their crush to Homecoming. We're often the same way about God. We gripe about what He asks of us. "He doesn't understand sin — he 's all -good," we think. "He doesn't understand temptation — He is perfect. " In Scripture, God can be very much a father, telling us what we can and cannot do. And yet, in His divine genius, He is sometimes simply a man at a well, asking for a drink. For me, it turns out I didn't need to tell my parents anything about what I was going through as a kid — they knew already. What I needed was for them to tell me what to do, and how to do it. Similarly, we don't need to tell God about human nature. We need God to tell us about His nature. He's good enough to ask us for a drink, to enter into our humanity. But we have to remember, for our own sakes, to have the humility to ask Him for something, too — the water that will quench our eternal thirst.

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.

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.

FRIDAY 8TH MARCH IS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY. The day is dedicated to recognising and celebrating the achievements of women across different social, economic, cultural and political spheres. The day also serves a reminder of the need to continually strive for gender equality and to promote social change. On this day the church gives recognition to the opening of a film about the life of Mother Cabrini titled Cabrini. In that an immigration crisis is nothing new to the world, in the 1880's the plight of New York's one million Italian immigrants was so grave that the Pope Leo XIII sent a diminutive nun, Frances Cabrini to minister to them. The film features Cristiana Dell'Anna as Mother Cabrini who goes head to head with a combative mayor (John Lithgow) and dismissive archbishop (David Morse). The movie offers a gritty reminder of the eternal value of selfless good works. This Sunday's Gospel brings forth the way Jesus cures a man who had been blind since birth. Throughout the scriptures Jesus uses physical diseases and handicaps as an avenue to show God's goodness. Like the blind man there are pockets of blindness in all

our lives. What is it about your life that you wish to see but feel unable to do so?

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

MORE FOR LENT-Stations of the Cross- Every Friday during Lent **10.30 AM AND 7.00PM. The Lent Encounter-**Stuart Ford, who spent a year in Salisbury parish as a seminarian, and who now works for the Bible Society, has edited and contributed to a series of Lenten devotions called: **The Lent Encounter: where is Jesus in the Old Testament?** Take a journey through the Old Testament this Lent to find the answer. Sign up for free at: <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/resources/the-lent-encounter-sign-up/> and you'll receive a free daily devotion from Ash Wednesday to Easter.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION DURING LENT: Throughout the season of Lent we will celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation every Friday from 6-30-7.00pm before the Stations of the Cross at 7.00pm. Also 30 minutes after the stations of the Cross every Friday evening. Apart from that Sacrament of Penance is administered every Saturday from 5pm-5-40pm prior to the Vigil Mass

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING HAPPY WITH YOURSELF Being happy with yourself means that you accept who you are, and where you are in life and feel positive about yourself. Most of us feel unhappy with our lives because we want more than what we have, are not satisfied with our achievements or focus more on our weaknesses. If we are unsatisfied from within, no matter what we achieve, how much we make or how much others do for us, we remain unhappy. Feel positive about yourself by focusing on your strengths. Appreciate what you have in life. Do not compare yourself with others. Involve in things that bring inner satisfaction, and look at life with optimism, you will feel happy from within and find charm in your life as well.

MASS SCHEDULE STARTING FROM 9TH MARCH 2024

SATURDAY 9TH MARCH MASS AT 6.00PM ANN COCKRELL, RIP

SUNDAY 10TH MARCH MASS AT 11.00AM SYLVIA AND NEVILLE DAVIS, RIP (DONOR LORETTA DAVIS)

MONDAY 11TH MARCH ADORATION AT 9.00AM AND MASS AT 10.00AM HOLY SOULS

TUESDAY 12TH MARCH ADORATION AT 9.00AM MASS AT 10.00AM BERT CAVILL (DONOR CHRISTINE KINGHORN)

WEDNESDAY 13TH MARCH AT 9.00AM ADORATION AND MASS AT 10.00AM MAURA O' MAHONY (HEALING)

THURSDAY 14TH MARCH ADORATION AT 9.00AM AND MASS AT 10.00AM GAY TARRANT (INTENTIONS)

FRIDAY 15TH MARCH ADORATION AT 9.00AM AND MASS AT 10.00AM MASS STATIONS OF THE CROSS AT 10.30AM. AND 7.00PM

SATURDAY 16TH MARCH MASS AT 6.00PM MARY CHAPPELL, RIP (DONOR SLAV AND MARZENA DABROSZ)

SUNDAY 17TH MARCH MASS AT 11.00AM JO CHAMBERS FAMILY (INTENTIONS)

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY We honour our mothers today and always and we say thank you to them for their love and vocation of motherhood. We pray for all of our mothers both living and dead. We pray that we and our society may esteem motherhood, life, and children, more and more. We pray that all married couples will be open to God's gift of life. We offer our thanks and praise to God for the gift of our mothers. We pray our mothers will always know the love and the grace of God for them in their special and unique vocation of motherhood!

HONOURING MOTHERS Some years ago I celebrated First Communion in a particular parish. A visiting Grandmother told me this story. She was babysitting her darling granddaughter who had recently lost her front teeth, that caused her to talk with a bit of a lisp. Since the child was soon to make her First Communion, before bedtime, Grandma, who isn't Catholic, thought she would read to her from her Bible, which was the King James version. She read such words as "sayeth" and "hath" and "doth", and so on. Sleepily, the little girl asked, "Grandma, did God's teeth fall out too?" I always wondered why the King James version read like that... Today we remember, honour and pray for all mothers both living and dead. We are indebted to mothers who not only gave birth to us but lead us by word and example. Take a moment and reflect on your mother and thank God for the gift of life and love. Aside from our relationship with God, the relationship we have with our mother is likely the most important we'll ever have. It may well be the most powerful relationship we'll ever have on earth. A mother is she who can take the place of all others but whose place no one can take. Thank your Mother for her constant example of faithfulness and for raising you in the faith. – (Deuteronomy 6:7) You can see a catalogue of examples your Mother has exemplified love in action.

St. Zélie Guérin Martin, mother of St. Thérèse of Lisieux says "Above all, during the months immediately preceding the birth of her child, the mother should keep close to God, of whom the infant she bears within her is the image, the handiwork, the gift and the child. She should be for her offspring, as it were, a temple, a sanctuary, an altar, a tabernacle. In short, her life should be, so to speak, the life of a living sacrament, a sacrament in act, burying herself in the bosom of that God who has so truly instituted it and hallowed it, so that there she may draw that energy, that enlightening, that natural and supernatural beauty which He wills, and wills precisely by her means, to impart to the child she bears and to be born of her." We know the comfort of being in our mother's arms at those times when our joys and hopes, our fears and anxieties are intimately shared and securely held. It's been in the embrace of our mother's unconditional love that right values have been taught, and our lives enriched. A young family recently moved into the parish. In meeting them, I asked the children how they liked their new home. The 8 year old son said, "It's really great. I have my own room and so do my other brothers. We all have our own rooms...except poor Mom, she's still in with Dad...and he snores really loud. Poor Mom, indeed...Not every mother's life is blessed. And no mother's whole life is blessed. No family is perfect, and mothers are inevitably caught in the centre of the mess. For many mothers, life brings great burdens and tragedy. Today we particularly remember those mothers who live the motherhood in agony, particularly those who have endured the loss of a miscarriage, those who carry the burden of caring for a child with acute disabilities, and those who have known abuse and violence in the home. And we remember those who though not mothers have done much good mothering to nurture up-and-coming generations. Our modern culture teaches us so surely that you don't need to have children and you certainly don't need to get married. All we need is gratification. And this is the message we all hear every day all day in every corner of our society.

A prayer for God's blessing on mothers, spiritual mothers, god-mothers and all women who long to be mothers is a beautiful thing. The Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen tells "Motherhood becomes a kind of priesthood. She brings God to man by preparing the flesh in which the soul will be implanted; she brings man to God in offering the child back again to the Creator....she is nature's constant challenge to death, the bearer of cosmic plenitude, the herald of eternal realities, God's great cooperator." The church honours Mary, the mother of our Lord. She is mother to the motherless, and she understands the agony of losing a child. Pray for God's blessing on mothers (heaven knows, mothers need it!). May Mother Mary be a mother to all mothers and be a mother to the sorrowful in particular, now and always.

The church honours Mary, the mother of our Lord. She is mother to the motherless, and she understands the agony of losing a child. Pray for God's blessing on mothers (heaven knows, mothers need it!). May Mother Mary be a mother to all mothers and be a mother to the sorrowful in particular, now and always. We acknowledge the tremendous impact mothers have on their children. It is said "if you educate a man you educate one individual and if you educate a woman you educate a family." Let us gratefully admit the fact that none of us is able to return to our mothers, in the same measure, all the sacrificial love that they have given us. Today I will offer prayers for all our mothers and mother figures during the Mass, whether they are alive or have gone to their eternal reward, and offer prayers for them with gratitude on the Sacred Altar. As we celebrate Mothers' day on this Sunday I wish all mothers in our parish a very special Happy Mothers' day. On this day we celebrate the unconditional love of mothers to their children and children's love for their mothers. "Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails." (1 Cor. Ch. 13) **HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!**

PASTORAL AREA PENITENTIAL SERVICE WITH BISHOP DECLAN AT CHRIST THE KING Our pastoral area Lenten Penitential Service with Bishop Declan Lang will be on Wednesday 20th March starts at 7.00pm in our Church. It will be a wonderful opportunity for us to join the Bishop and other priests, and people of the deanery to celebrate God's mercy through the Sacrament of Penance. Bishop Declan will be the principal celebrant.

PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES: The Society of Our Lady of Lourdes (SOLL) are pleased to announce that their annual pilgrimage of the sick to Lourdes will be on the 24th to the 31st May 2024. SOLL seeks to ensure that sick pilgrims are offered an opportunity to travel to Lourdes, minimising the barriers of disability and finance. Applications are now open. Please think if there is someone in the parish who SOLL can help. Applications are also welcomed for volunteer helpers, carers, nurses, doctors and priests! For further information, please contact SOLL on [0208 8489833](tel:02088489833) or www.soll-lourdes.com or call your parish contact, Sacha Blanchard on [07768 622880](tel:07768622880)

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION: First Holy Communion is a wonderful moment in a child's life and represents a sign of growth in the knowledge and love of God for each and every child. Parents who bring their child or children for First Holy Communion are fulfilling the vow they made publicly at their child's baptism some years before to be the "first and best teachers of their child in the ways of faith". Now they are more actively fulfilling this vow. The celebration of First Holy Communion each year is primarily a Parish Community Celebration. There is great expectation that the family are full practising members of the community and that they regularly come to Mass. On this understanding, the parish will provide all the necessary help to parents and children, particularly those children not attending Catholic schools. The support from parents for this and other elements of the course cannot be emphasized enough. No child will be denied First Holy Communion; however, children who miss two or at most three sessions will have missed key catechesis. In such cases and after discussion with catechists and parents, the parish priest may remove a child from the course and invite parents to reapply for the following year. Sports events, parties and other such competing attractions must come second to First Holy Communion preparation and the regular attendance of Mass during the First Holy Communion year. First Communion Class Sunday 17th March at 12.15pm Sunday 14th April at 12.15pm Sunday 21st April, Sunday 28th April at 12.15pm Sunday 5th May at 12.15pm and Sunday 12th May at 12.15pm **First Holy Communion Mass on Sunday 19th May at 12.30pm.**

ON THE WAY-THE SEVEN LAST WORDS: MARY OUR MOTHER She had interceded with him early in his ministry, at the wedding feast in Cana (see Jn 2:1-11): "They have no wine." He had given a curious response: "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come." This wasn't a denial of her request but a reminder and warning. Her intercession would set into motion his work and therefore his journey to the Cross. That journey would include her. She would become no longer just his mother, but the woman prophesied in Genesis – the woman whose offspring (or whose own heel) would crush the head of the serpent (see Gen 3:15). She didn't flinch. "Do whatever he tells you," she instructed the servers. And he changed the water into wine. "Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him." The journey to Calvary had begun. Now what her son had intimated has become a reality (see Jn 19:25-28). She is at the foot of his Cross, watching him endure unspeakable suffering. She isn't there passively or as merely a bystander. She's his greatest conspirator in the work of salvation. He now addresses her again as "Woman." Now she is fully revealed as the woman at enmity with the serpent and crushing his head through her Son. Now, at this moment of hidden victory, Jesus gives us to her: "Woman, behold your son." The one he entrusts to her is "the disciple whom he loved." That phrase refers immediately to the Apostle John, but by extension to every disciple of Christ. For every disciple is beloved. Thus, John is the representative for all disciples – indeed, for the faithful as a whole. So, Mary receives us as her children and, suffering birth pangs at the Cross, becomes Mother of the Church. Her response to her Son's dying words is to look upon us as her own children, to take us as her own, and to direct her maternal love and solicitude to us. Which means that we should see her as our Mother. "Behold, your mother," Jesus says to the disciple – and to all of us. Technically, we refer to her as our Mother in the order of grace – which doesn't mean in make believe. By grace we are so united to Christ that we participate in every aspect of his life. "For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin" (Heb 2:11).

Our union with him by grace is so intimate and profound that through, with, and in him we call God our "Father." What Jesus is by nature, we are by grace – children of God. So also, we participate in his being the Son of Mary. Through, with, and in him we are her children as well. "And from that hour the disciple took her into his home." The disciple whom Jesus loved cared for the widowed Mary for the rest of her life. But took her into his home means more than that he provided what children ought to provide for their parents. The phrase means, literally, that he took her into his own – into his own life, thoughts, affections, etc. He integrated Mary and devotion to her into every aspect of his life. John then tells us, "After this, aware that everything was now finished..." This is an extraordinary line: everything was now finished. Our Lord's work was not complete until he had given his Mother and us to one another. So also now, he completes his work within us by way of Mary, when we take her into our own.

THE WEAK, SICK AND AGED Anointing of the Sick liturgy within the Mass will take place on March 23 Saturday at 11.00am. It is a way Christ The King Church celebrates Christ's loving concern for those who live with any type illness or addiction whether it be physical, psychological, or spiritual. Coming forward to be anointed is a rewarding experience that generates incredible peace as we near the end of our Lenten journey.

CHURCH CLEANING-THANK YOU! We express our gratitude to all our Church cleaners for their dedicated work last week. Our sincere thanks go to Gay Tarrant for coordinating the Cleaning Rota and making sure that our parish church is spotlessly clean and immaculate. Thank you to Gay Tarrant and her unit for their hardwork and love. God bless you!

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER- Thank you! A word of gratitude and appreciation to everyone who took part and who were involved in the World Day of Prayer on Friday 1st March. I am very grateful to Margaret Ryan for coordinating the day's prayer with the best of her abilities involving people representing our parish

END OF MASS QUESTION: IS IT EVER OK TO LEAVE MASS BEFORE IT ENDS? Answer: This is an interesting question because beneath the surface there seems to be an assumption that if it's okay, then why do we have to stay after we receive communion? The short answer is "no," but we definitely want to go a bit deeper as we consider why. First, when we think about questions like this, we must consider this in adult terms. If there is something gravely important that we need to do, then we must attend to that. However, if it is a matter of convenience or preference, then we really have to stop and think again. First, while we always want to recognise the importance of sacramental communion in the Mass, we also need to understand how important the time of thanksgiving and prayer after communion is. This is summarized in the Prayer After Communion offered by the celebrant and then we are also commissioned to "Go forth" during the Dismissal of the Mass, reminding us that we have been entrusted with a gift — the Word of God and the Presence of Christ in the sacrament — and that we are to share that gift with others. If we simply leave after we receive communion, we risk two things. First, there is the possibility that we will turn our reception of communion into a purely personal, individual experience that is separated from our common experience of worship — and communion in the fullest sense — and, second, we lose an opportunity for gratitude and serious reflection if we simply leave after communion. This time of thanksgiving, reflection, and, ultimately, missioning, are important and, in the end, an essential part of the celebration of the Mass.

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE OR CONFESSIONS WITH BISHOP DECLAN LANG-Please note on your calendars that on Wednesday, March 20th at 7:00pm at Christ The king Church, we will be having a pastoral area penance service with multiple priests available where you can receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I invite you to do an examination of conscience and be open to this opportunity of grace and receiving God's embrace. There can be hesitancy in approaching this sacrament and sometimes people look for reasons to avoid listening to God and their conscience, but be not afraid! I offer you some words to begin reflecting upon that Pope Francis gave in a homily for the celebration of reconciliation last year: "Brothers, sisters, let us remember this: the Lord comes to us when we step back from our presumptuous ego. Let us reflect: Am I conceited? Do I think I'm better than others? Do I look at someone with a little contempt? 'I thank you, Lord, because you have saved me and I'm not like those people who understand nothing; I go to church, I attend Mass; I am married, married in church, whereas they are divorced sinners...': is your heart like this? That is the way to perdition. Yet to get closer to God, we must say to the Lord: 'I am the first of sinners, and if I have not fallen into the worst filth it is because your mercy has taken me by the hand. Thanks to you, Lord, I am alive; thanks to you, Lord, I have not destroyed myself with sin'. God can bridge the distance whenever, with honesty and sincerity, we bring our weaknesses before him. He holds out his hand and lifts us up whenever we realise we are 'hitting rock bottom' and we turn back to him with a sincere heart. That is how God is. He is waiting for us, deep down, for in Jesus he chose to 'descend to the depths' because he is unafraid to descend even to our inner abysses, to touch the wounds of our flesh, to embrace our poverty, to accept our failures in life and the mistakes we make through weakness and negligence, and all of us have done so. There, deep down, God waits for us, and he waits for us especially in the sacrament of Penance, when, with much humility, we go to ask forgiveness, as we do today. God is waiting for us there." (Pope Francis, March 17, 2023).

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER- Thank you! A word of gratitude and appreciation to everyone who took part and who were involved in the World Day of Prayer on Friday 1st March. I am very grateful to Margaret Ryan for coordinating the day's prayer with the best of her abilities involving people representing our parish and other churches in the area. Thank you to all who helped with coffee, tea and cleaning. Thank you and God bless you!