



Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

I pray that the Kingdom of Christ may live in my heart and come to our world. *Opening Prayer (adapted)*

(God's kingdom) is a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace.

Preface to the Eucharistic Prayer

You anointed your only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, with the oil of gladness as eternal Priest and King of all creation.

Preface

'Jesus,' he said, 'remember me when you come into your kingdom.' *Gospel*

REFLECTIONS

What does the week hold for me, and how do I feel God may be calling me? And ... what do I want to ask of God for myself and others?



AMDG
THE FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING
ORDINARY TIME YEAR C,
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Christ, victor over sin and death, brings a kingdom of peace into our hearts if we open them to him as we end the Church's year.

SECOND OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray that the Kingdom of Christ may live in our hearts and come to our world.

Father all-powerful, God of love, you have raised our Lord Jesus Christ from death to life, resplendent in glory as King of creation.

Open our hearts, free all the world to rejoice in his peace, to glory in his justice, to live in his love.

Bring all people together in Jesus Christ your Son, whose Kingdom is with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

This prayer invites me to open my heart to Jesus who is my King (or my Shepherd in the Old Testament). He is my wonderful, always-faithful, loving friend. He is the Christ. He is my Saviour and Redeemer from sin and death.

I pray to accept his values and so attain his peace, which I will long to give to others.

This week I ask for the grace and help of God's Spirit within me to draw me in to the wonderful mysteries that this prayer illustrates at the end of the Church's year.

I start by being absolutely quiet, wordless before my Lord. Patiently, I slowly allow each phrase to open up before me and reach into the depths of my heart.

What do I desire? What do I want to say to the Lord?

As always, with gratitude in my heart, I end my prayer slowly.

SECOND READING – COLOSSIANS 1: 11–20

You will have in you the strength, based on his own glorious power, never to give in, but to bear anything joyfully, thanking the Father who has made it possible for us to join the saints and with them to inherit the light. Because that is what he has done; he has taken us out of the power of darkness and created a place for us in the kingdom of the Son that he loves, and in him, we gain our freedom, the forgiveness of our sins.

He is the image of the unseen God and the first-born of all creation, for in him were created all things in heaven and on earth: everything visible and everything invisible – Thrones, Dominations, Sovereignities, Powers – all things were created through him and for him. Before anything was created, he existed, and he holds all things in unity. Now the church is his body, he is its head.

As he is the Beginning he was first to be born from the dead, so that he should be first in every way; because God wanted all perfection to be found in him and all things to be reconciled through him and for him, everything in heaven and everything on earth, when he made peace by his death on the cross.

The author marvels at God's love and power shown through the death and resurrection of Jesus: evil has been overcome – sin has been forgiven – we are destined to be with God for ever.

The second part of this passage (an early Christian hymn) affirms that Christ is truly the personification of God. Through him all things can be reconciled to God.

I take time to become still and make that act of deep faith that God's Spirit is praying within me; this is all that matters.

Very slowly I let myself reflect and then marvel on some of these statements about God, about Christ ...

I allow my heart to be touched and let feelings arise . . . Perhaps I then share with the Lord what I am feeling . . . then I fall back into a wondering grateful silence . . . and unhurriedly end my time of prayer giving thanks.

THE GOSPEL LUKE 23: 35–43

The people stayed there before the cross watching Jesus. As for the leaders, they jeered at him. 'He saved others,' they said, 'let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One.'

The soldiers mocked him too, and when they approached to offer him vinegar they said, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself.' Above him there was an inscription: 'This is the King of the Jews.'

One of the criminals hanging there abused him. 'Are you not the Christ?' he said. 'Save yourself and us as well.' But the other spoke up; and rebuked him. 'Have you no fear of God at all?' he said. 'You got the same sentence as he did, but in your case you deserved it: we are paying for what we did. But this man has done nothing wrong.'

'Jesus,' he said, 'remember me when you come into your kingdom.' 'Indeed, I promise you,' he replied, 'today you will be with me in paradise.'

Before starting my prayer, I spend some time trying to become still, putting aside for the time being my problems, my worries. Then I slowly read the text perhaps several times.

I may want to use my imagination and see myself in the scene. I hear the abuse, the taunting, the demands made of Jesus. When I feel helpless, do I too make demands of God, insisting He proves Himself to me?

I turn my attention to the good thief. He acknowledges his sins and accepts responsibility for his actions. Am I able to do the same, or do I look around for someone or something to blame?

I look at Christ on the cross. Here is my King. A leader who serves, full of compassion for others, full of love for us – for me, even when all seems hopeless.

As I contemplate Jesus on the cross I allow myself to be touched by the power of his great love, I tell him what is in my heart, my need for peace, for hope. I ask him to show me what I can do to help. I listen.

I conclude my prayer with a slow, heartfelt, sign of the cross.