

The readings for the last Sunday after Pentecost are full of references to the return of Christ, when evil will be defeated and Jesus will begin his final reign as King of kings. In Advent, the Church year begins with a focus on the final restoration of all creation to its original glory.

In preparation, on the last Sunday of the Church year, we proclaim the advent of the Lord of lords and King of kings.

After Vatican Council II (1962-65), the Roman Catholic Church moved this celebration to the last Sunday of the Church's liturgical year (from late October where it had been celebrated since 1925) in order to make it coincide with the revised lectionary readings. This festival is known as Christ the King in Lutheran and Episcopal churches, and celebrated with hymns, banners and pennants, and a special procession.

Most of us Americans have no experience of being the subjects of a monarch. How can we understand the kingship of Christ and integrate its implications into our lives?

The Anglican Prayer of the Day gives us at least one phrase to help us understand, in part, the nature of the kingship of Christ: "Grant that all the people of the earth, now divided by the power of sin, may be united under the glorious and gentle rule of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ." Unlike earthly kings who simply maintain order, the kingship of Christ involves the restoration of all things to their original relationship to God.

Celebrating Christ's kingship proclaims the good news that his second coming will bring joy rather than fear, hope rather than despair. We are cleansed and renewed and brought closer to our God. How appropriate it is to sing hymns and carry banners on this festival of our King!

Christ's kingdom begins in the community of people who live in a new and different way because of God's presence in their lives. This kingdom community will always contrast with earthly political and social systems; we cannot disconnect our relation to God from our relations with others.

In Advent, the new Church year will begin with a focus on the final restoration of all creation to its original glory. In preparation, on the last Sunday of the Church year, we proclaim the expected advent of the Lord of lords and King of kings.

*Living the Good News is a lectionary-based curriculum for all ages published by [Morehouse Education Resources](#).*