

## **CHRIST THE KING.**

### **The Church and the Kingdom of God.**

*The* Church is not itself the Kingdom, but it creates the space within which the Kingdom can operate here and now. It gathers the faithful and prepares them for Kingdom life.

The Church or the churches? Actually, there is only One Church though there are countless churches. The institutional church, the church as it exists formally is fragmented and fractious. The Church must have some institutional form – when humans get together in this world, they create institutions, whether they like it or not. The Church exists in a world divided and enslaved by sin, and reflects it in its fragmentation.

But the Kingdom can operate in each fragment, though perhaps more fully in some than in others, but every gathering in Christ's name provides Him with an entry, provides the Kingdom with an 'operational center.'

So the Church can be said to be One in that each fragment still represents the One Kingdom.

One magnificent example of this is the 10 new statues on the West Front of Westminster Abbey honoring modern martyrs. They include, of course several Anglican martyrs: a Ugandan Archbishop, a Pakistani catechist – but also a Polish Roman Catholic priest and a Salvadorian Archbishop, a Russian Orthodox Princess, a German Lutheran pastor, a Chinese Protestant evangelist, and an American Baptist preacher. Both the ethnic and the denominational diversity attest to the underlying unity and universality of the Church: all these men and women died in the service of the One King.

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So, when Christians gather as we do this morning to share in Christ's Sacrament, the Kingdom is present. Our King comes among us, He is fully present and we are fully present to angels and archangels and the whole company of heaven. And here, once again, He offers Himself as bread to be broken and shared – the dynamics of this wonderful Kingdom – and sends us, out into the world to work alongside Him in the task of its redemption.

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**SAINTS:**

**Edmund, King of the East Angles, 20 November.** Born in about the year 840, Edmund was nominated as king while still a boy. He was crowned King of Norfolk in 855 and of Suffolk the following year. As king, he won the hearts of his subjects by his care of the poor and his steady suppression of wrong-doing. When attacked by the Danes, he refused to give over his kingdom or to renounce his faith in Christ. He was tied to a tree, shot with arrows and finally beheaded on this day in the year 870.

**Cecilia, Martyr at Rome, c.230, 22 November.** Cecilia was one of the most revered martyrs of the Roman Church, but the only thing we know for certain is that at some point in the second or third century, a woman called Cecilia allowed the Church to meet in her house in Trastevere in the city of Rome and that subsequently the church erected on that site bore her name. She was remembered as a brave woman who risked giving hospitality to the Christian Church when to do so was to court censure and possibly death. According to a tradition that can be dated no earlier than the fifth century, she converted her pagan husband and his brother to the faith, both of whom were martyred before her. She is honoured as the patron saint of musicians.

**NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:**

**ADVENT YEAR A**

Isaiah 2:1-5

Psalms 122

Romans 13:11-14

Matthew 24:36-44

**COMING UP:**

Dec. 2. Wedding, 2:00 p.m.

Dec. 17. Wedding, 2:30 p.m.

Dec. 18. Wedding, 2:00 p.m.

**Advent Lessons & Carols -TBA**