



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

## **Our Lord Jesus Christ, Universal King - Year B**

### ***Thy kingdom come***

*Readings: Daniel 7: 13-14, Ps 92, Ap 1: 5-8, John 18: 33-37*

As Queen Elizabeth II overtook Queen Victoria as the longest reigning monarch of these islands, there were quiet and understated celebrations as befitted the different temperament and different times of these respective sovereign ladies. We were then treated to the traditional amusement of a republican leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition wriggling on the hook of whether to bow the knee to join the Privy Council. We had not had so much fun since a previous leader of that party, Cherie Blair, had to decide whether to curtsy, nod or shake hands with this charming, dutiful and hardworking symbol of privilege and power. Hugely entertaining and I am only sorry that we were not privy to Prince Philip's take on it all.

Most of us, I suspect, are what I would call 'reluctant monarchists' – that is we like the family, we enjoy the limitations of their power, we are grateful for a symbol of unifying loyalty and the alternatives – dynasties of rapacious power grabbing politicians – is infinitely worse. Monarchy (meaning the rule of one over all) would seem to be the antithesis of democracy (the rule of the people) but the strange compromise seems to work and, if it ain't broke..... don't fix it.

Of course this isn't, in any real sense, a monarchy. If the first checks on supreme power came at Magna Carta, the wheels really began to come off the chariot after the foolish apostasy of Henry VIII. Appointing himself Supreme Governor of the Church ensured that it was but a century before the 'divine right of kings' tumbled on the scaffold with the head of Charles I. Henry removed the pretence of divine approval. Charles paid in blood. Within fifty years the hunt was on for a king that the new elite, the self-appointed nobility, approved. To avoid a Catholic they had to go to the forty second in line to the throne and wheel out a bewildered Hanoverian. Any pretence to a 'bloodline' vanished with this constitutional pantomime.

What we have now is a decent, hardworking, faithful woman (and her family) who is completely impotent and required to sign into statute laws of which no Christian monarch could approve and enoble rascals to whom she would not, left to herself, give houseroom.

I dwell on this long preamble because I fear that, all too often, the Feast of Christ the King leads us to similarly fuzzy thoughts about the Monarchy of God. A decent, long suffering, long serving elderly gentleman who is, by and large, quite content to 'go with the cultural flow' and let the people make up their own decisions and be more than understanding when they don't equate with his own necessarily more old fashioned views.

Well we can rip up that dreary, reductionist, relativist picture for a start.

Creating a 'constitutional divinity', one that suits our own tastes and panders to our fallenness is an evasion of reality and the recurrent sin of Man. It is our old friend idolatry and it is the veneration of matter and the worship of self.

Let us remind ourselves who Christ is and the extent of His governance. Let us join the vision of the prophet Daniel as he gazed 'into the vision of the night' as the patriarch, Abraham, had before him. From the star bejewelled sky, by the light of stars so distant we cannot compute them, from galaxies and nebulae whose towering beauty and magnificence we have but lately been privy to by the Hubble telescope, back into the very ages before we became and into the heartlands of the origin of the cosmos, Daniel sees 'one coming like a son of man'. He comes to receive power and sovereignty from the Ancient of Days, the Father creator of all that is, the I AM, the life, the true and eternal being from whom all being flow. The more we know the greater our vision of Almighty God.

That Son of Man, the title Jesus used for Himself, is the revelation of the LOGOS, the reason, will and person of the Godhead who becomes flesh and blood in the womb of the Immaculate and incarnates the eternity of God in the temporality of Man. Daniel's vision finds its fulfilment in the Second Coming of Christ, the moment that will wind up the bloody scroll of history and bring us to judgement.

To His only begotten and beloved Son, the Father gives eternal sovereignty over all. His authority is total. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end of all things – the origin and the destiny of the faithful. He is both Saviour of the world and judge of all.

We celebrate a monarchy like no other. There is no constitution other than the Word of God. It is the triumph of this sovereign that we worship in the Mass, in Adoration. No wonder we bow the knee.

A dear old friend of mine, non-Catholic, once said to me, 'If I believed what you believe, I wouldn't just bow the knee I'd be flat on my face before the altar.'

How could Jesus begin to tell Pontius Pilate that the one standing before him was mightier far than all the armies of Rome? How could He tell him that the One true almighty God had chosen, for love of His creation, to incarnate and suffer and reign from the torture tree of Calvary. How could He begin to explain that, at the end of time, He would come in cosmic glory to judge the living and the dead and gather to Himself those who have prayed with all their hearts and lives, 'Thy kingdom come.'

The story of our salvation, which will begin again its annual remembrance next week in the Advent call, finds its climax and fulfilment in the triumph of the light of the world over the darkness of sin and death and the proclamation of Jesus Christ as King of the Universe. The better we know and love Jesus the less our fear of the Judgement and the more our astonishment at the love of God and our hope of Heaven.