



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

Christ the King – Year C

Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom

Readings: 2 Samuel 5: 1-3, Ps 122, Colossians 1: 12-20, Luke 23, 35-43

My encounters with our monarch have been infrequent. I have a dim memory of sitting on my father's shoulders, aged three, and being told to look at what turned out to be the Coronation procession. Our second meeting was her arriving to inaugurate work on a reservoir to be named after her. It rained all day and all of us children in my class of eight year olds were covered in mud for which, inexplicably, the Headmaster later blamed me.

Since then our relationship has been entirely televisual. Her Majesty has never invited me to any of her garden parties and, to avoid embarrassing her, I have never invited her to one of mine. One cannot do everything and we are both busy people.

She has always struck me as a good, decent, loyal, committed and hard working person who has fulfilled her calling in an exemplary fashion. One cannot blame her for the prejudicial constitutional constraints that uniquely prevent her from embracing the Universal Church. As a result I have always been a default monarchist – not sold on the idea but recognising that the alternatives for Head of State are so much worse. The prospect of a presidential republic – President Blair, Heath, Thatcher, Corbyn - do not appeal though we wish our American

cousins well with their curious arrangements. To me a choice between Trump, Clinton or Elizabeth Windsor is a no-brainer.

The trouble for us as Christians as we celebrate the Feast of Christ the King is that our charming British constitutional arrangements give us a very bizarre view of Monarchy. The Mono – Arch, the one over all in this case, has, at best advisory capacity and would risk her throne if she were minded to defy the will of the Demos, the people, through their elected representatives. We have been through these hoops in the 17th century and it did not end well for the Royal Line.

Modern Christians, living in a democracy, may be tempted to view the authority of Jesus similarly. A nice dedicated and exemplary man whose ‘views’ are largely advisory and whose autocracy need not interfere with our autonomy. Rather than conforming ourselves to be like Him we prefer a process of amending Jesus to be more like us. That, however, is not the Gospel. That is not the teaching of the Church.

It was theologically fashionable, when I was at seminary in the 1970s, to predicate arguments for changes to the Apostolic Faith with phrases like, ‘If Jesus were alive today he would...’ Here the ‘reformer’ is free to insert his or her own opinion and claim a mandate. Or.... ‘You have to remember that Jesus couldn’t have said anything else at that time because He was culturally conditioned’. Thus leaving the stable door open for any number of horses to bolt.

We live in the tail end of the time when that sort of nonsense was promulgated and solemnly believed. Unfortunately the ‘baby boomers’ of my generation have held onto this tosh with a vice-like grip and often, from positions of

power, continue to inflict it on much of the Western Church with devastating consequences for its attendance and commitment and salvation.

When we proclaim Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords we are announcing a real monarchy and an eternal one. When a man begins his argument with, 'if Jesus was alive today', I know I am listening to a non-Christian, someone who has spectacularly missed the point.

In the light of the Resurrection the central kerygma of the Faith is that, in Christ, God has raised Man from the dead. In Jesus we are encountering the divine life that, as the Second Person of the Trinity, is God from God. As the Word that brought creation into being He is the source and origin of all that is and the reason we exist at all. Jesus is not only alive today but yesterday and forever. He is. It is we who are in danger of not being.

When a man seeks to amend the Faith, to a version usually that makes himself more comfortable with his sins, he blames Jesus' cultural conditioning. Poor old Jesus was doing his benighted best in a peasant backwater of civilisation in a sociologically challenging environment. No wonder He didn't get everything right. No wonder He wasn't as clever or enlightened as us. That is the ad absurdum of the Modernist argument. To arrive there they must prefer their own cultural conditioning – we are right all the rest of humankind is wrong. To conclude that is an exercise of monstrous and satanic pride that denies sovereignty to God and reduces the Divine Wisdom, the Incarnate Word, the Eternal One, the Light of the World, The Way, the Truth and the Life to a bit part player in His own creation. 'He came to His own and His own received Him not.'

To remind us of the eternal divine realities Mother Church, in her wisdom, gives us, as the climax of our liturgical year, the final destination of the pilgrimage of Faith – the revelation of Jesus Christ as King of all, the One over all, the Mono Arche, the Sovereign Ruler of the eternal kingdom.

Listen again to St. Paul. 'Give thanks to the Father because He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities--all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. THE CHURCH IS HIS BODY...'

We, therefore, brothers and sisters are agents for the coming Kingdom and our Gospel must be the whole truth – no dilutions or cultural accommodations. The world must come to know Jesus and to love Him. To know that, for all His universal power and authority, Our Lord is not a tyrant but a loving Saviour. He has humbled Himself to be one with us and reigns from the Tree of Sacrifice on Calvary where the penitent sinners like you and me can place our dying trust in Him and receive His remarkable promise.

Daily we pray, *'Your Kingdom come.'*

'Lord, remember me when you come into your Kingdom'.