



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

Christ the King – Year A

Long live Man – even forever

Readings: Ezekiel 34: 11-12, 15-17, Ps 22, 1 Corinthians 15: 20-26, 28, Matthew 25: 31-46

Today is the feast of Christ the King. It is the climax and summation of the Christian Year. Before we begin again the long journey of hope and promise that is the Advent call. Before we recall the beginnings of our call homeward, the perilous trek from darkness into the ever growing light of the revelation of our salvation in Christ, we celebrate this glorious day. It is the end of all our weary pilgrimage of grace, the proclamation of the triumph of God over sin and death, the reconciliation of Man and the hope of glory in the victory of Christ and His eternal sovereignty. Christ the King, supreme and eternal.

Our difficulty, as modern people, is that we neither know what sovereignty looks like or would expect to accept it. Our charming constitutional convenience is not truly monarchy – one over all. It is largely decorative and preventative of less acceptable alternatives. It is not omnipotent but, rather, largely impotent.

Our ancestors 'enjoyed' a considerably less benevolent model where the leader of the most successful band of armed hooligans, the aristocracy,

could hoist a crown on his head and proclaim himself, by divine right, sovereign lord of all – at least until the next successful upstart led his hopeful men into battle.

So, for us, the concept of the sovereignty of God is, all too often, encumbered with inadequate human imagery, history and remembrances. In an age of relativism, the idea of absolutism seems anachronistic and hostile. In an age of democracy – the will of the demos, the people – where the vote of a wise man or a good man is worth no more and no less than that of an idiot or a malefactor, the will of the Supreme Being is held of little account. Indeed much modern theology is done in the light of human experience and preference. It is usually couched in language about bringing the Church up to date. It is predicated on the nonsensical notion that, if God were as wise as us He would see things differently. We have a problem because the heresy of the relativistic mindset has infected parts of the Church and parts of our own thinking. We are loathe to cede authority to anyone – and that includes God Himself. The concept of good authority has been largely swept away in the tide of anti-authoritarianism of every kind. 'Nobody tells me what to do!'

Yet we all have memories of good authority – sometimes parents, sometimes Church, sometimes school. Places and people where that power was not tyrannical but benevolent, where our good was the paramount aim and driving force. The rejection of authority per se is a recipe for lawlessness, anarchy and random brutality. As the stormers of the Bastille and the October rioters in St. Petersburg soon found, the vacuum of authority always attracts the worst kind of brutishness, the elevation of wickedness and wholesale slaughter. The rejection of the absolute and

loving authority of God is always replaced by the spectacular and vicious tyranny of Fallen Man.

This feast of Christ the King is, therefore, a critical time for us as Christians to reconnect to the deepest truths of the Kingdom, to know in whose sovereign name we preach to the world, for whose royal person we are ambassadors. It is a time to rehearse the Gospel edict that offers mere earthbound mortal creatures the dignity of sons and daughters of the Lord of all.

Our daily prayer, given us by the Lord Himself, is for the coming of that Kingdom.

The defining characteristics of that Kingdom are outlined in the great Gospel account of the Last Judgement that we have just received.

The mandate of that Kingdom are the works of mercy.

The enemies of that Kingdom are the Mercy-less.

The King of that Kingdom knows the deepest suffering of the children of men and reigns from the Calvary.

The tyranny of God is that of a love that will not let us go.

As subjects of this Royal Lord we find in our obedience the gateway to eternal reality and in our faithfulness the key to the mystery of this tremendous and unequal friendship. As servants of this Kingdom we are participants in that divine and saving love that transforms us from mere creatures into the children of God.

Human monarchy rejoices in the resounding acclamation, 'Long live the King'. The Divine Monarchy, Christ the King, the Eternal and Sovereign Lord

of all proclaims, in His and Ascended glory, to all who love and follow Him,
to all who submit to Him as Lord, 'Long live Man – even forever'.

This is the Kingdom. Christ is the King.

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