



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

Readings: 2 Samuel 5: 1-3, Psalm 121, Colossians 1: 12-20, Luke 23: 35-43

For very obvious reasons the subject of Monarchy has been much on the minds and hearts of the British People in recent days. The death of Queen Elizabeth and the succession of her son, Charles, have taken place in an atmosphere of both deep affection for what has been and hopeful prayer for what is to come. For the most part the republicans amongst us have kept a respectful silence during this time of national mourning. The debate on the future of the institution will no doubt rekindle at some point a little further down the road as we approach next year's coronation. I was fortunate enough to be in Rome for the whole of the period of death and burial and it was fascinating to see how another nation reacted to our grief and the anachronism of monarchy in a democratic age. For the most part, it has to be said, there was a sympathy for our mourning and even a touch of envy that we had kept a system which had long been outmoded, was wholly illogical to modern thinking but nonetheless bound a people together by a common focus of loyalty in a way that no un-anointed secular head of state could do. Such is the bond, which I believe we relinquish at our peril, that Catholics, no less than any other part of the population, were also in deep mourning. I attended the Requiem Mass for the Queen at the

Venerabile in Rome alongside the British Ambassador. A requiem for a monarch whose very constitutional existence is predicated upon her not being a Catholic and who purported to head a Church that does not believe in praying for the departed. The Mass and the widespread mourning by Catholics was a triumph of humanity, compassion and experience over the persecutions and exclusions of history.

Today, at the summit and conclusion of our liturgical year, we focus very much on monarchy. But we should not confuse the late Queen and the incoming king with the Kingship of Christ.

Christ is not a constitutional monarch ! He cannot be ordered around by the unelected political leadership of a sovereign state. Rather, every sovereign state must draw its authority from Him if it wishes to claim legitimacy. All ruling houses, human authorities, draw their claims to recognition from this supreme rule. If not, then they are simply usurpers, rebels against the Creator and Lord of all.

We tend to lose sight of the Kingship of Jesus in our current age. The concept of absolutism is unpopular because it is too often linked to tyranny. But we are committed to this principle of Absolutism – not in the workings of human temporal government but in the daily practicalities of our membership of the kingdom of God.

In the Person of Jesus Christ, Scripture tells us, we are dealing with (or rather, being dealt with by the supreme Lord of the Universe upon whose judgement depends our destiny. The significance of Christ Jesus being born of David's line, cannot be over – estimated. The sermons of the Early Church are shot through both with an emphasis on Christ's Davidic Kingship AND His solidarity in the Godhead. He manifests in Man what it is to be God. And God manifests in Jesus Christ what it is to be truly human, both as companion and exemplar. The route to the

Kingdom is not down The Mall but rather through the Calvary where Christ's kingship was tested to destruction, where the King of Glory wears the thorn crown of our sins washed by His precious Blood. It is there, far from the glorious splendour of court that the dying thief hears the words of grace and the promise of Paradise. It is on the throne of the Cross, that most unlikely furniture of glory, that mysterious springboard to eternity, that Man learns his destiny in Christ. It is only there, where all is surrendered to the supreme sovereignty of God and Man repents, proclaims Jesus as Lord and pleads for salvation that the true meaning of the Monarchy of Jesus Christ can be understood. It is not Constitutional. It is Absolute. Whatever acknowledges absolutely this Cosmic sovereignty of Christ is redeemed, salvaged, saved, welcomed into the Courts of Heaven. Whatever remains outside His merciful and just rule is scheduled for destruction. For Christ the King, Son of David, the once and future king, and Christ the Son of God, King of all and King in all ages and in eternity, alone holds this power and this sovereign sway.

As we celebrate the kingship of the King of Kings, let us joyfully surrender our whole selves to Him that nothing of who and what we are should stubbornly remain outside the mercy of His love or in rebellion against His transforming authority or unconfessed before His compassionate justice or resistant to His transforming grace.

Beneath the throne of the Cross of Christ, we stand to swear our allegiance to the King of Kings in the words of the Creed.