



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

## **Christ the King – Year B**

### ***King of the Universe***

*Readings: Daniel 7: 13-14, Ps 92, Revelation 1: 9-8, John 18: 33-37*

For all but the first two and last two years of my life I have lived without a constitutional King. Thus, when it comes to singing the National Anthem or praying the collect for the monarch, I all too often find myself reverting to the language of the Queen.

Monarchy, of course, in this day and age is an increasing rarity. Our continent has now only the vaguest memory of such an institution and an entrenched disbelief in dynasty. We are all too aware of the frailties of the governing class, not least because, all too often, we share those frailties and we are duly critical of our own failings writ large in others. But unlike in former ages, we are not afraid to advertise or criticise this elite because they are now largely impotent to take revenge on such lese majeste. We also now see the aristocracy for what it always has been, that is to say, either the distant genetic remnant of the once most brutal and efficient warlords and gangsters, or the inheritors of purchased title.

As for 'royal blood' that is now simply a convenient fiction for a peculiar

constitutional settlement that has both miraculously survived and mysteriously works.

For all that I, personally, maintain a marked preference for the idiosyncratic romance of royalty over the ruthless rigours of republicanism. I subscribe to the 'If it aint broke, don't fix it' school of political philosophy. In a monarchy such as ours, we recently witnessed the coronation of a well-meaning influencer and a man with a track record of prophetic thinking. As an agent of continuity in an age of dizzying change, he was crowned and anointed in a ceremony which seemed to utterly lack the sense of the numinous and, in which, agents of the State Church foisted upon a politically impotent figurehead, a sort of constitutional bureaucracy in outmoded but significant fancy dress. The only participant who seemed comfortable with all this power dressing was the Sword Bearer, Penny Mordaunt MP. You got the impression that you might have had an even chance against an armed but diffident king but that Miss Mordaunt would have cheerfully had your head off before you could articulate an 'AVE'.

For all those exposed shortcomings, contradictions and absurdities, the monarchy remains a vital part of our social and national cohesion and I for one am grateful for that.

Contrast and compare. Today we celebrate,  
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST THE KING OF THE UNIVERSE

I might add that it seems a rather measly and vaguely heretical title to limit the Lord of ALL to one smoky backwater of the entire Cosmos which He alone has created. But it gives some drift, however

inadequate, of the monarchy, the One over All, to which Catholic Christians both owe and pledge lasting fealty and service.

For this is no constitutional monarchy, enslaved to the idiosyncrasies of time or the conventions of human culture. Here is the author of all authority. Here is the absolute before which all relativism falls. Here is the source of all the Law by which in nature all is governed and in conformity with which is the fulfilment of each intended purpose. Here is the origin and end of all things – the Alpha and the Omega – the purpose and the Presence towards which our destiny is set. Here is the Creator from whom all our pro-creation comes, the Dominus from whom all dominion flows and of which we are but passing stewards. Here is no pantomime potentate but rather the Supreme Sovereign. Here is the power behind the power of the unleashed atom which has capacity unleashed to return all things to dust in the light of a thousand suns.

This is the God we worship. We may do so in churches where the vivid theatricality of the Baroque attempts to explain and explore the drama of salvation. We may adore in the simple whitewashed Orthodox island chapel with its single ikon. We may worship in the apparent ordinariness and familiarity of the workaday parish church. We hide with Elijah in the cleft in the rock and hear, with him, in the thin silence, still small voice. We may bear witness to the fiery power of the horsemen and chariots of Israel who sweep the living prophet heavenwards in the great ascent as a double portion of his spirit descends upon his successor. A preview of Pentecost.

We acknowledge the authority and power of the unseen Father, whom to

see is to die. Yet we also recognise the Godhead, given, in the child in the arms of Mary, whose tortured arms will, in the ultimate sacrifice, embrace the whole world and offer redemption to all who will kneel and receive. In this Kingship we acknowledge ultimate supremacy coupled with a servant heart. We see the Lord of all judgement as the fount of all mercy. We experience our rightful and justified fear, in the face of absolute and eternal power, transformed by love into a relationship that is that of family and faith. We live in this paradox of Paradise and know that the road home is both illuminated by the effulgent glory of the Kingdom and passes by the throne of the Cross where Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, reigns from the Tree of Life and purges sin and conquers death.

‘Rejoice the Lord is king. You Lord and King adore. Mortals give thanks and sing and triumph evermore. Lift up your heart, lift up your voice. Rejoice, again I say, rejoice.’