

What will happen to the British monarchy when our present much-beloved Queen Elizabeth goes to her rest? It has already been suggested that the people of Australia will get rid of the present system altogether and will become a republic. What will happen here? Will we be happy with having King Charles III as our sovereign Lord. In our egalitarian and democratic world, is it still appropriate to talk about Kings and Kingdoms?

“Are you the King of the Jews?” asks Pilate. Even Jesus is uncomfortable with the idea of being a king. When pushed, he says, *“My kingdom is not of this world”* ...my kingdom is not a kingdom of force and power. Pilate presses further, *“So you are a King, then?”* ‘Well I am a King’, says Jesus, ‘but not the sort of King that you would understand’. *“I was born for this”*, ‘I came into the world and stand accused by you and Pontius Pilate. That’s my whole purpose, to be condemned, to suffer and to die’, *to offer myself on the altar of the cross as a spotless sacrifice.*

Any words we use to describe Jesus, to describe what Jesus does for us, pushes human language to its limits. Let’s look at what it says in our opening prayer. “Grant, we pray, that the whole creation **set free from slavery** may render your majesty service.” Jesus **is** King. Jesus is **our** King but he is not a King who is going to force himself on anybody. Loving God, loving Jesus, has to come from the heart. It’s got to be our choice, our desire.

Maybe this partly explains what is happening in the Church at the moment. Is the Church supposed to be a strong hierarchical body, telling people what to believe and how to behave; instilling fear and obedience? Or is the Church supposed to be a body that listens to people and accompanies people; a body that shares people’s suffering and difficulties; a body that offers itself with Jesus *on the altar of the cross*?

St John, in our second reading, tells us that Jesus *has washed away our sins with his blood, and made us a line of Kings*. So what sort of Kings should we be? How are we to stand witness? Not, I suggest, by throwing our weight around or by asserting our will over others. We will be Kings by drawing alongside Jesus, by being with Jesus, by sharing with Jesus. We will be Kings by being listeners and servants, by being men and women of prayer, by keeping our eyes fixed on the *eternal and universal Kingdom* that will be revealed at the end of time.

So, offer yourselves today with Jesus, on the altar of the Cross. Offer yourself from the freedom and love of your own heart. Become a co-worker of Christ in the work of human redemption, of bringing all people into his love and his peace.

Does it really matter who sits on the throne of the UK and the Commonwealth? All that matters is that Jesus sits on the throne of the Cross, the throne of heaven, the throne of eternity. Let’s make sure that we are there with him.