



Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe 2019  
8.30am Holy Communion & 11am Choral Eucharist and Baptism

‘Got ist mein Fuhrer’ ‘God is my Fuhrer’ a headline written by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German Protestant Theologian and Pastor. ‘God is my Fuhrer’ – I have no other. Most of the churches fell in behind the seemingly sensible and successful ideas of Hitler’s Nazi party. Bonhoeffer would be murdered with millions of others in a Concentration Camp.

As you know I am very vain, but even I cannot be sure that I would have known better. Do I really flatter myself that I would be tripping off to join the resistance? Much more likely, growing up in that world, my mind being formed in that milieu I would have joined the other right-thinking, good and sensible people who found good and sensible and right-thinking reasons to assent to an earthly Fuhrer.

So with this warning clanging in our ears, today on this Feast of Christ the King of the Universe we are asked – where is this still happening? Where is the horror of inhumanity enshrined in polite society? Where are we colluding with established, socially acceptable and sensible evil?

This Feast of Christ the King was instituted in 1925 by Pope Pius XI. It was a direct result of the political state of Europe: the advent of Communism, the rise of Fascism: Mussolini already in power and Hitler in the wings. In the midst of such confusion and darkness, power grabs, changing status quo and new political landscape (recognise the picture?) - in the midst of all that, the church proclaimed unequivocally: Jesus is King.

In our Parish Church He is enthroned in the apse. At the heart of this Church He is on His altar-throne, present in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood. But if those things are true, we must also enthrone Him in our hearts and in our lives. They all go together. Because He is King here, He must also be King when I am not here: King of my diary, and my bank account, and my household, and my relationships, and my sense of myself, and all the rest that we call life.

And Jesus is not a constitutional monarch. He is an absolute monarch. And this is good news, brothers and sisters. Jesus is King.

There is a tendency for us to think that things must be moderate to be safe. Our faith, we say, is safe because it is alloyed/mixed in with sensible liberal social values, sensible political calculations, wise financial decisions, and socially responsible emotional and human responses.

The trouble is, it was precisely these seemingly wise and sensible social values, mainstream and responsible as they were, that led those millions of good people that facilitated the rise of murderous regimes. They sang of God's love in the pews, but were all the time unwitting allies of unspeakable evil.

God is love. God is my King. If I mix His Kingship with that of others, imagining it to be safer, I am mixing His Kingship of pure love with that which is not love. And that is not safe. We are rightly nervous of extremism in our age of sectarian violence and religious terrorism. But the problem there is not that there is too much religion. It is that the truth that Jesus is King has become alloyed with fear and greed and human political calculations. Precisely the worldly things to which we turn for safety are the things that destroy us.

We do not need a clever combination of human machinations and some Religious sprinklings – like hundreds and thousands sprinkled on top of a mud pie. It is still a mud pie. We need to proclaim again to a confused and fearful world, to ourselves, Jesus is King. And if we proclaim it, and begin to live it, we will discover that our bumbling attempts to be our own saviour were just, well, silly.

Our earthly pilgrimage – this thing we call 'life' [that Erik is just beginning] – is not an extra-curricular activity, or a pleasant sideline, or a sprinkling of hundreds and thousands. It is life. Everything from our existence itself, to the moments that make up each day, to the mystery of our inner selves, our relationships - all these things are things of which Jesus is King.

At this time of course, we recognize that Jesus is also King of the way we vote. I encourage you to ask the Lord to show you which way He wants you to vote. I would encourage you to receive the grace of Holy Communion, go home and at some point pray, and read Mark's Gospel right through. It only takes an hour. Perhaps read it out loud, do it with the people you live with, taking passages in turn. Dwell in the scriptures and then ask Jesus our King to make your vote his. Just an idea – a way of living out Christ's Kingship.

To be a Christian, is to be a human being seeking to be fully human, fully alive. And of course that means doing life in relationship with the author of life – Jesus the Logos from whom all things come. Of course it means a relationship (like any relationship) which is nurtured and grows. Of course it means ups and downs, deserts as well as green pastures – like all relationships.

But through it all, Jesus is King. Of every moment – and of all time.

And this is not a comfort blanket or a easy sentiment. It is a great and mysterious truth. All the other schemes of man, designed to insulate us from our own existence or anaesthetise our deeper life are shadows. Worldly solutions to worldly problems have led us down many a garden path, the strange adolescent and forgetful apes that we are.

And if Jesus is King; if His monarchy of Love is absolute, then what will that do to our lives? To our time and money and energy? To the fears that whisper within? To the doubts that corrode our relationships and fossilize our humanity?

Next week, on Advent Sunday the Church year begins again. I cannot think of a better way to spend a year than learning what it means to live? To come before the throne of Grace, Jesus our King, and let Him – day by day - bring us to life.