

## Homily for Palm Sunday



**Texts:** Philippians 2: 5-11, Luke 19: 28-40,

Kings, the autocrats, the people of power come in a cavalcade of gleaming, expensive limousines, sometimes even bullet proof cars accompanied by outriders and security detail to give protection from the disaffected, the dispossessed the desperate and the hopeless. Those rulers who regard such people as of no importance, of no value, an inconvenience, an irritation as they pursue their own ascent to ever greater power. God, who is our King, does not come in this way. Our King comes astride a lowly beast of burden, unprotected with no one to watch out for him as he rides through the cheering crowds among whom are those who watch with the poison of envy, jealousy, hypocrisy and self-interest who feel threatened and exposed by his overwhelming humanity and his message of mercy, justice and love for all, and who plot to unseat him.

Kings, autocrats, the people of power who wear hand- made suits and clothes of the highest quality; whose shoes are of the finest leather and whose watches cost a king's ransom while their subjects cannot afford to feed their families and dress themselves from charity shops or rely on handouts; who have pawned or sold anything of value to buy time before the next bill arrives or the bailiff comes knocking. God, who is our King, comes in everyday, nondescript travel worn clothes with dust encrusted sandals worn down by constant use on stony paths; our King who only knows the time by watching the passage of the sun but who has unlimited and unrestricted time for all in need of him.; who comes 'Just as I am' and gives his very self for God's children

Kings, the autocrats, the people of power who have a retinue of servants, of PR people, of speech writers and consultants to ease their way through life; to ensure that the message of power they wish to convey is dressed up in terms to attract their people. Messages which all too often hide the truth and are so subtly designed as to hoodwink and mislead their subjects into believing the lies dressed as platitudinous truth. God, who is our King, comes without any

court, anyone to do his work for him, to doctor and massage his message, for he alone is **the** message; a message which has the power of eternal truth; the message which is good news for **all** people and not just the chosen few. He is and was the Word made flesh who lived among us bringing the true light which can enlighten all God's children

Kings, autocrats, the people of power, who often orchestrate their public appearances to provide a circus show for their people; public appearances which are carefully stage managed so that they only meet with the selected few; only speak with those deemed loyal supporters, sycophants whose flattery will only increase their vanity, their engorged sense of power. God, who is our King comes unexpectedly, unplanned, to ride amidst the people who are all God's children. To ride among the people who admire and sincerely adulate him and the people who have allowed hate against him to grow in their hearts and whose shouts are false; people whose lives have been changed by him and people who are deaf to his message; people who long to know God's love in their lives and those whose love is only for themselves. He comes to be among them all, be they saint or sinner, rich or poor, strong or weak, somebody or no one. He is completely unafraid of any threat that might be posed by his enemies because he trusts implicitly that nothing can separate him from being held within the impregnable security of his Father's love.

Kings, autocrats, the people of power who love to surround themselves with 'yes' people with their adulation and flattery; who love and crave all the trappings of power which can so easily corrupt and destroy their moral compass. Who may well imprison, torture or kill those who fail to accord them the respect they demand and speak words of criticism and complaint against their unjust systems, their self-serving practices and their bare-faced, blatant and often bullying abuse of power. God, who is our King, hears both the shouts of adulation 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!' and the vitriolic shouts of 'Crucify him, crucify him' but these cries are swallowed within the silence of that still small voice of God which seeks to reassure and to comfort that all will be well. Nothing, neither the shouts of praise nor the shouts of condemnation, can affect or alter the divine purposes of God to bring redemption and salvation to all his people.

On this Palm Sunday at the start of Holy Week may we too in spirit be among that crowd who followed Jesus into Jerusalem. And in so doing may we recognise within us the conflicting emotions of love for God and neighbour and love of ourselves. The conflicting emotions of sincere and self-sacrificing humility and servitude set beside the desire for a sense of impregnable security and self-determination in our own lives. May we look with honesty and

maybe even with shame as we think of how we personally have used power to manipulate others and feather our own nests at their expense. May we look with honesty at our neglect of those of your children in need; our unwillingness to turn aside and to share the gifts that bless our lives with others. May we reflect with honesty when we have merely paid lip service to the plight of others, content to voice our dismay and disgust when others suffer but never ready to actively help and sacrifice our own comforts to bring them the very basic comforts of life.

As we accompany our Lord, our King on this journey through Holy Week we pray that we will remain true disciples not turning away, not denying that we know him, until we find ourselves kneeling at the foot of his cross and see our King crowned not with precious gem encrusted gold but with the thorns of the most priceless jewels of sacrificial love.



*Ride on, ride on in majesty!*

*In lowly pomp ride on to die;*

*Bow thy meek head to mortal pain,*

*Then take, O God, thy power, and reign*