

Measuring Rulers!

Psalm 72; 1 Samuel 8⁴⁻²⁰; John 18³³⁻³⁷

For this I was born and for this I came into the world. (John 18³⁷)

The news today carries the information that President-elect Trump is to be invited by the Queen to Windsor. The government say that she is our 'secret weapon'. There may be some interesting insights into monarchy and how it is perceived if one could be a fly on the wall as Trump's advisors try to prepare him for this encounter!

Christ the King is a very modern festival for the Church and recently moved from the middle of the year to the Sunday before the relative privations of Advent.

The readings for this Evensong explore quite well the idea of Kingship:

- ✦ The reading from Samuel has that petulant event in Israel's history where they demand a king. Samuel says that they don't need one and the Hebrews stamp their feet saying that they want to be like everyone else. They are prepared for the cost in land, money and life and so God gives in! With the first three kings, Saul, David and Solomon, there wasn't a vice or weakness left to explore! The rest is history!
- ✦ The Psalm reveals a notion of kingship that is far removed from the notion of our benign Constitutional Monarchy as we have known it in our gracious Sovereign, Queen Elizabeth. The notion of absolute kingship as revealed in this enthronement Psalm is quite different. The king is second only to God in majesty and power - and perhaps less dependable and less consistent than God in his judgements.
- ✦ John records the clash of two kingdoms - the Roman Empire with its absolute and cruel authority and the kingdom that **is not of this world** that makes its absolute demands on the commitment and even the lives of its subjects. Jesus plays with Pilate in this apparent clash of power with authority in which only the looser could win!

Our challenge is to reject Christian Republicanism that refuses the right of Christ to rule us and, like the Hebrews to argue for his rule, whatever the cost.