

WEEKLY SERMON

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A Royal Journey

The coronation of our new King is fast approaching, and we are being drip fed a number of titbits about what we can expect on the day itself.

We know that the celebrations will start with a procession of King Charles and Queen Consort Camilla from Buckingham Palace, up The Mall, through Whitehall and arriving at Westminster Abbey.

They are expected to travel in the 1762 gold state coach, in both directions, flanked by Beefeaters and military personnel whilst passing hundreds of thousands of spectators. The route will be bedecked with drapes, union flags, and bunting. In the Abbey itself there will be around two thousand guests, composed of representatives from multiple faith communities around Britain; heads of state from other countries; along with the expected politicians and celebrities.

The King and Queen Consort will be led in a procession into the Abbey followed by representatives of the church and state.

During the ceremony that will follow, The King will pledge himself to service; will be anointed with oil from the Holy Land, will be crowned and given the orb and sceptre. It will be a glittering affair from start to finish.

How different from the royal procession we remember this weekend on Palm Sunday. Jesus comes as the long-awaited completion of the hope of Israel. The pomp and ceremony are different.

He rides into Jerusalem, not in a gold state coach, but on the back of a donkey. The crowd are not waving flags and bunting, but palm branches and throw their cloaks on the ground. The way the procession is recorded in the gospel passages, there is no mistaking the fact that Jesus is asserting himself as the king who has been foretold through the prophets.

This is a royal procession, the King comes!

Despite the pomp of the branches, cloaks and shouts of hosanna, Jesus is set apart from other kings. He is humble, modest, and meek, characteristics that we don't normally associate with royalty, but are part of the very essence of Jesus and those who follow him.

As we begin our own journey through Holy Week, we know that Jesus' journey into city forced a question onto the people of Jerusalem. What will they do with a king who wants to bring about peace rather than warfare?

Perhaps we should be asking the more important question: 'what will we do?'

Rev Calum Crombie, Managing Chaplain, HMP Wymott

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