

## Address for 21 November by Howard Friend

Christ the King

On the subject of Kings. How well do you know your Jungle Book – the Disney film version that is?

Do you perhaps remember King Louie's song? (Ah I see some of you do!)

Now - it may not be immediately obvious what this has to do Christ the King. But - stay tuned - as they say - and you'll find out.

And talking of tunes – from memory - I think his song goes something like this.

Well - I'm the King of the Swingers Yeah – a Jungle VIP

I've reached the top and had to stop and that's what bothering me.

I wanna be a Man – man cub – and stroll right into town

And be just like the other men

I'm tired of monkeying around

Oh - Oe be do I wanna be like you.etc etc

And I won't ask you to join in the chorus for fear of lowering the tone around here - in this sacred space!

But - if you're lucky you might get another verse later!

Well now - King Louie's dilemma - what exactly is it? - perhaps it's something we can all identify with. – What he's got - just isn't enough any more.

His little kingdom doesn't hack it, it doesn't satisfy. He wants more, he wants better.

Does that feel familiar?

Let's look at it another way - maybe our little world, our kingdom, which seemed so secure just a short while ago - now – suddenly - seems very fragile, rather wobbly.

Maybe that best describes your position – you're in a world turned upside down by grief or illness or circumstance and worry. Your little Kingdom is in a mess. It's in decline.

Cos that's the thing about Kings and Kingdoms isn't it? They come and they go – principally because they're built on top-down power, might and ruthless acquisition. Eventually another stronger power exploits a weakness and takes over.

Our own personal Kingdoms - too are often built on self interest, acquisition, and if not a disregard for others then at least a prioritisation of self.

And sometimes, just now and again, we have cause to question their permanence.

So whether you think you've reached the top and had to stop and are bothered, whether you want something more - or whether your kingdom, your world is in a mess - what exactly does the Kingdom of God with Christ as King have to offer. What is the truth Pilate so famously sought in that conversation he had with Jesus in his Palace that we read about in our Gospel reading just now.

Well here's the answer Jesus just might have given – perhaps:

Yeah they say I'm the King of the Jews but perhaps it's harder to see that I'm the King of the whole wide world from now to eternity.

So if you've got some sense Man – get up and follow me – cos I'm the King of Love and Peace from here to Eternity. .

Oh do be dee - you gotta be like me, (walk like me, talk like me and pretty soon you'll see).

And - I could go on – but for those of you who are perhaps not Disney fans – and care not for King Louie.

Let me finish on a more orthodox note.

The Feast of Christ the King, the culmination of our liturgical year, was instituted not that long ago in 1925 by Pope Pius XI – as a counterbalance - to what he saw as the twin dangers of rising secularism and nationalism. He got that right didn't he?

This feast was and is a call to recognise Christ as King of our Hearts and King of our World.

His is a Kingdom of Love and Peace, and Justice.

Perhaps most importantly the King is no ordinary King, as he intimates in his reply to Pilate's question. He is a Servant King, a King who washes his own disciples feet. It's an upside down Kingdom. Where the ruler of all is the Servant of all.

This Kingdom is not geographic it's spiritual.

It is the place where God's love rules: in our hearts, in our community here at St David's / St Michaels.

Whatever the state of our world, our Kingdom – today – I urge us all to get our priorities right to allow God's Holy Spirit to refocus our lives on what is really important:

When we pray as we will shortly:

Our Father who art in Heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name

Thy Kingdom come

Let's take those words a little more seriously than we normally do as we skip through the prayer.

Today of all days:

Christ the King invites us all to be part of his present reality and future hope.

Christ the Servant King.

Do be doo!