

St. James Episcopal Church * Morning Prayer


Worship Leader BC Franson

Processional Hymn 154 "All Glory Laud and Honor"


The Liturgy of the Palms: Processional

154


Refrain




All glo - ry, laud, and hon - or to thee, Re - deem - er, King!




to whom the lips of chil - dren made sweet ho - san - nas ring.




1 Thou art the King of Is - ra - el, thou Da - vid's roy - al Son,
2 The com - pa - ny of an - gels is prais - ing thee on high;
3 The peo - ple of the He - brews with palms be - fore thee went;
4 To thee be - fore thy pas - sion they sang their hymns of praise;
5 Thou didst ac - cept their prais - es; ac - cept the prayers we bring,



Repeat Refrain



1 who in the Lord's Name com - est, the King and Bless - ed One.
2 and we with all cre - a - tion in cho - rus make re - ply.
3 our praise and prayers and an - thems be - fore thee we pre - sent.
4 to thee, now high ex - alt - ed, our mel - o - dy we raise.
5 who in all good de - light - est, thou good and gra - cious King.



The stanzas may be sung by choir alone or alternately by contrasted groups; all sing the refrain.

Words: Theodulph of Orleans (d. 821); tr. John Mason Neale (1818-1866), alt.

Music: *Valet will ich dir geben*, melody Melchior Teschner (1584-1635), alt.;
harm. Wiliam Henry Monk (1823-1889)

76. 76. D

Leader Alleluia! Christ is risen

People **The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

Confession

BCP 79

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen

Absolution Prayer

BCP 80

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

The Invitatory and Psalter

BCP 80

Lord, open our lips

And our mouth shall proclaim your praise. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen

Jubilate

BCP 82

Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands; serve the Lord with gladness and come before his presence with a song. Know this: The Lord himself is God; he himself has made us, and we are his; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise; give thanks to him and call upon his Name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his faithfulness endures from age to age.

Psalm 93

¹ The Lord is King;

he has put on splendid apparel; *

the Lord has put on his apparel

and girded himself with strength.

² He has made the whole world so sure *

that it cannot be moved;

³ Ever since the world began, your throne has been established; *

you are from everlasting.

⁴ The waters have lifted up, O Lord,

the waters have lifted up their voice; *

the waters have lifted up their pounding waves.

⁵ Mightier than the sound of many waters,
mightier than the breakers of the sea, *
mightier is the Lord who dwells on high.

⁶ Your testimonies are very sure, *
and holiness adorns your house, O Lord,
for ever and for evermore.

The Lessons

First Lesson: Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

⁹As I watched, thrones were set in place, and an Ancient One took his throne, his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, and its wheels were burning fire. ¹⁰A stream of fire issued and flowed out from his presence. A thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him. The court sat in judgment, and the books were opened. ¹³As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a human being coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One and was presented before him. ¹⁴To him was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed.

Second Lesson: Revelation 1:4b-8

⁴Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, ⁵and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, ⁶and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. ⁷Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail. So it is to be. Amen. ⁸"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

Gradual Hymn 388 *Oh Worship the King*

1 O wor - ship the King, all glo - rious a - bove!
 2 O tell of his might! O sing of his grace!
 3 The earth, with its store of won - ders un - told,
 4 Thy boun - ti - ful care, what tongue can re - cite?
 5 Frail chil - dren of dust, and fee - ble as frail,

1 O grate - ful - ly sing his power and his love!
 2 Whose robe is the light, whose can - o - py space.
 3 Al - might - y, thy power hath found - ed of old,
 4 It breathes in the air; it shines in the light;
 5 in thee do we trust, nor find thee to fail;

1 Our shield and de - fend - er, the An - cient of Days,
 2 His char - iots of wrath the deep thun - der - clouds form,
 3 hath stab - lished it fast by a change - less de - cree,
 4 it streams from the hills, it de - scends to the plain,
 5 thy mer - cies, how ten - der! how firm to the end!

Third Lesson John 18:33-37

³³Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” ³⁴Jesus answered, “Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?” ³⁵Pilate replied, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?” ³⁶Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.” ³⁷Pilate asked him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”

Sermon

Today’s Gospel finds Pontius Pilate in a state of utter mystification. A seemingly harmless rabbi, Jesus of Nazareth, has been hauled before him as a crucial threat to the existence of the Roman Empire — a rival king — and to Pilate, this makes no sense whatsoever.

Ancient monarchs were very different from those in our own day: Modern queens and kings serve as hereditary symbols of national unity. The king is the country personified, he speaks for the nation and represents the nation, but his power is purely symbolic. This kind of kingship would have sounded ridiculously bizarre to a first-century Roman.

For the Romans, to be king really meant one thing: you have the power to force others to submit to your will. You command armies, wage wars. So, when Pilate asks Jesus if he is a king, Pilate is not asking if Jesus wields symbolic power or will someday inherit a kingship. Instead, Pilate is asking: Do you really have legions of troops at your command? Are you really planning to overthrow the power of Rome?

And Jesus understands the logic of Pilate’s question perfectly: He says, “My Kingdom is not of this world.” If my kingdom were a *this world* kind of kingdom, my disciples would be staging a jailbreak, a coup, or a bloody riot in the streets, but instead, here I am, alone, powerless, at the mercy of Roman Law... or so it seems.

But Jesus doesn’t deny his kingship. Jesus doesn’t deny that he *could*, in fact, overthrow the Roman Empire or, for that matter, all the kingdoms of the earth. Jesus is not merely powerful, he is the source of all power, the Alpha and the Omega, God the Son incarnate. But if this is the case, then why did he allow the Romans to arrest him, to beat and humiliate him? Why does he allow the crucifixion to happen at all?

Couldn’t Jesus have just shown his infinite power to Pilate and called it a day? For that matter, couldn’t Jesus have just transformed every human being into a paragon of goodness and love, avoiding the following 2,000 years of bloodshed, poverty, political wrangling, and robocalls? If so, why didn’t he just do it? Why endure the suffering of the crucifixion?

This question gets to the heart of the greatest difficulty about Christianity: If God wants us to be faithful, to be transformed, to do his will on earth as it is in heaven, then why doesn't he do something about it? Why does he speak only in the still, small voice? Why not overwhelm us with his power, make us perfectly ethical, perfectly good, so that evil is forever wiped out from the world?

In answer to this question, Soren Kierkegaard told a story: Once upon a time, there lived a great king. The whole country was his and he held all the power. He could elevate any commoner to a life of wealth and ease or condemn whole cities to destruction with a snap of his fingers. It was the custom of the country that, once every few years, the king would travel through all the land, inspecting every city, town, and village.

It was a great and terrible day when his vast armada of coaches would roar through a village. All the houses would be newly painted, the village hung with garlands of flowers, and all the villagers, decked in their most beautiful garments, would kneel by the sides of the roads all day, awaiting his approach.

While traveling through one village, the king spied a peasant woman out the window of his coach. He bid his driver stop, and the king stood stock still, just staring. Despite her poverty and rough appearance, she was the most noble woman that he had ever seen, and this bachelor king knew that he had found his queen.

The king began to leave the coach to kneel down in the street before her and ask her to be his wife, but he suddenly realized that he was in a pickle; no matter how she felt about him, she was certain to say yes to his proposal – not because she loved him – but because he could satisfy her every material desire, or destroy her whole village with a word. The king realized that this woman could fear him or seek to gain from him, but that she could never love him, for love is not the product of a bribe or a threat, but is a gift that must be given freely. So, the king shut the carriage door and said, "Drive on!" with the new knowledge that no one would ever love him.

That night, the king had a "eureka" moment! Upon returning to the castle, he went up to his chamber, he took off his heavy golden crown, laid aside his finely made sword, removed his ermine robes, and put on the old potato sack of a beggar.

Taking neither money nor dagger, the king crept out of the castle by night to walk all the way back to the village. His plan was to arrive at the woman's cottage door helpless, destitute, and hungry. He would beg for shelter, beg for a crust of bread, and eventually open his heart to her, for only in his weakness and poverty could she genuinely fall in love with him.

And so it is with Christ the King. His infinite power and might *could* make us fear him. Christ *could* force us to obey him, but the thing is... God doesn't want our fear, God doesn't want our obedience, God only wants our love. Therefore, God the Son sets aside his glory, he sets aside his infinity and eternity, he sets aside all that he is and all that he has, and he comes to us in humility, in poverty: as a helpless baby, as a kind rabbi, as a beaten and humiliated prisoner, so that we can truly fall in love with him. "This is," said Kierkegaard, "the God as he stands upon the earth, like unto the humblest by the power of his omnipotent love."[\[1\]](#)

If we fall in love with this quiet teacher, this gentle friend, we will not do so coveting his power or fearing his wrath. Instead, he will be our hearts' delight: eternal life, the heaven of heavens, will simply be to stand in his presence. To obey him will be our second nature, to rejoice in him will be our constant occupation.

Do you fear God? Fear that he will punish you for your sins? Do you hope to gain something from God? Hope for God's favor in this life? Bliss in the life to come? What if God doesn't care a fig for your fear or your hope of gain, but only wants you to fall in love with him? What can you do to open your heart to the love of God? To fall deeper in love with Jesus through prayer, through serving your neighbors? Through hearing his word and receiving his sacraments?

Today, Christ the King stands knocking upon the door of your heart. Why not let him in?

The Rev. Bertie Pearson serves as rector of St. Alban's Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C.

The Apostles Creed

BCP 96

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dies, and was buried. He descended to the dead, On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the hold catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen

Peace

Announcements

Offertory (suspended)

The Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

BCP 97

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Suffrage A

BCP97

Show us your mercy, O Lord;
And grant us your salvation.
Clothe your ministers with righteousness;
Let your people sing with joy.
Give peace, O Lord, in all the world'
For only in you can we live in safety.
Lord, keep this nation under your care;
And guide us in the way of justice and truth.
Let your way be known upon the earth;
Your saving health among all nations.
Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;
Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.
Create in us clean hearts, O God'
And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.

The Collect of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, whose will it is to restore all things in your well-beloved Son, the King of kings and Lord of lords: Mercifully grant that the peoples of the earth, divided and enslaved by sin, may be freed and brought together under his most gracious rule; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

The Prayers of the People, Form III 387

Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;

That we all may be one.

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;

That your Name may be glorified by all people.

We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons;

That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;

That there may be justice and peace on the earth.

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;

That our works may find favor in your sight.

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;

That they may be delivered from their distress.

Give to the departed eternal rest.

Let light perpetual shine upon them.

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;

May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

Silence

The General Thanksgiving

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving kindness to us and to all whom you have made. We bless you for your creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen

Recessional Hymnal 494 “Crown him with many crowns”

1 Crown him with many crowns,
the Lamb upon his throne;

Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns
all music but its own;
awake, my soul, and sing
of him who died for thee,
and hail him as thy matchless King
through all eternity.

2 Crown him the Son of God
before the worlds began,
and ye, who tread where he hath trod,
crown him the Son of man;
who every grief hath known
that wrings the human breast,
and takes and bears them for his own,
that all in him may rest.

3 Crown him the Lord of life,
who triumphed over the grave,
and rose victorious in the strife
for those he came to save;
his glories now we sing
who died, and rose on high,
who died, eternal life to bring,
and lives that death may die.

4 Crown him of lords the Lord,
who over all doth reign,
who once on earth, the incarnate Word,
for ransomed sinners slain,
now lives in realms of light,
where saints with angels sing
their songs before him day and night,
their God, Redeemer, King.

5 Crown him the Lord of heaven,
enthroned in worlds above;
crown him the King, to whom is given,
the wondrous name of Love.

Crown him with many crowns,
as thrones before him fall,
crown him, ye kings, with many crowns,
for he is King of all.

Go in Peace to love and service the Lord – Alehulia

Thanks be to God – Alehulia, Alehulia, Alehulia