



Read the full text of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Sermon for The Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla

Colossians 1:9-17, Luke 4:16-21

Come Holy Spirit, and fill our hearts with the flame of your love. Amen.

We are here to crown a King, and we crown a King to serve.

What is *given* today is for the gain of all. For Jesus Christ announced a Kingdom in which the poor and oppressed are freed from the chains of injustice. The blind see. The bruised and broken-hearted are healed.

That Kingdom sets the *aims* of all righteous government, all authority. And the Kingdom also sets the *means* of all government and authority. For Jesus doesn't grasp power or hold onto status.

The King of Kings, Jesus Christ, was anointed not to be served, but to serve. He creates the unchangeable law of good authority that with the privilege of power comes the duty to serve.

Service is love in action. We see active love in our care for the most vulnerable, the way we nurture and encourage the young, in the conservation of the natural world. We have seen those priorities in the life of duty lived by our King.

Today we have the honour of being in this Abbey with so many who show such love; you work with charities and organisations, you build community, you serve the nation in Armed Forces, in emergency services, and so many other ways. Next door are 400 or more extraordinary young people in St Margaret's Church, whose lives speak of service. Around the world in the Realms and Commonwealth are so many more. You live your lives for the sake of others.

The unity you show, the example you give, is what binds us together and offers societies that are strong, joyful, happy and glorious. They bear heavy weights for us.

And the weight of the task given today, Your Majesties, is only bearable by the Spirit of God, who gives us the strength to give our lives to others.

With the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the King is given freely what no ruler can ever attain through will, or politics, or war, or tyranny: the Holy Spirit draws us to love in action.

This is promised by Jesus who put aside all privilege, because, as the first reading tells us, God will give all things for our sake, even His own life.

His throne was a Cross. His crown was made of thorns. His regalia were the wounds that pierced his body.

Each of us is called by God to serve. Whatever that looks like in our own lives, each of us can choose God’s way today.

We can say to the King of Kings, God Himself, as does the King here today, ‘give grace that in thy service I may find perfect freedom’.

In that prayer there is promise beyond measure, joy beyond dreams, hope that endures. By that prayer, for every King, every ruler, and, yes, for every person for all of us, we are opened to the transforming love of God.

3 min read

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