

The Coronation of King Charles III

I have not posted anything about the Coronation today, mostly because I have been watching the TV coverage for so long I have square eyes.

The plan was to watch TV until the King and Queen left the abbey, then a quick dash by tube to the Olympic Park to the high ground where we watched the [late Queen's Platinum Jubilee flypast](#) last year. The route was going to be the same – it's well honed for a flight path across London to the Mall and Buckingham Palace.

Except the weather wasn't with us. I don't mind a drop of rain but cloud was low and the rain was so thick the precision low level flying below the height of tall buildings like the Shard wasn't going to be safe. Yes, I know the armed forces do fight in far worse conditions, and the Dambusters did low precision flying, but the intention was to destroy what was on the ground below them, and 53 men and 8 Lancasters died on that raid. So we stayed glued to the goggle box. The flypast was cut to the helicopters (a mix of Army, Navy and RAF – they came out of the mist like little grey aliens) and then the Red Arrows with the classic red, white and blue smoke.

As for the service itself I was impressed. King Charles swore to be the Defender of the Faith (not defender of faiths) and to “foster an environment in which people of all faiths and beliefs may live freely” and then to “maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement of the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, as by law established in England”

As the [Catholic Herald](#) newspaper explains to their readers

It's neither particularly grammatical nor particularly clear,

but we get the gist: the C of E is committed to the free practice of all faiths and none. The King is upholding the Settlement of the Church of England, so it follows that he too will be protecting the practice of all beliefs (a nod to his remark about being Defender of Faith). . . an eirinic sentiment which is entirely characteristic of the Church of England.

I had to look up eirinic; it means aiming for peace. I won't argue with that. Some sneer at us Anglicans but we have spent 400 years managing to avoid the worst excesses of the 30 Years War. Just so long as we maintain our hold on what we really do believe.

It was good to see Holy Communion celebrated on Prime Time TV

So far as the input of other faiths is concerned I loved the ecumenical circle of other denominations who surrounded the King with their prayers, (including Orthodox, Catholic and Free Church). Rishi Sunak the Prime Minister read from St Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, a passage about God's creation of the universe which he was obviously happy was compatible with his own beliefs.

At one point in the ceremony the peers present items to the King symbolising elements of kingship. These items include both spiritual and secular qualities. Peers of the Jewish, Hindu, Sikh and Muslim faith were among those presenting items, such as the Jewish peeress, Baroness Merron who carried the beautifully embroidered and historic (1821, made for King George IV) mantle royal.

As the King left the abbey other faith leaders were waiting for him (I observed a Buddhist monk in saffron, and I think a Shia clergyman) and while the BBC didn't bring a camera in to convey the sound I believe they read a blessing in unison for which the King thanked them.

The music was divine. I doubt such a solemn but joyous occasion will produce anything so commercial as a soundtrack album but it would be worth it. Some of the best music was in the abbey while the congregation waited for the royal procession to arrive and I am only now picking it up on Youtube; TV coverage was focused on the procession to the Abbey. Not as elaborate as the procession back to the palace but still of greater general interest. Of the preliminary music I commend South African soprano Pretty Yende who sang two songs. One was Sacred Fire composed especially for the Coronation by Sarah Class and O Had I Jubla's Lyre from Handel's oratorio Joshua.

The King and Queen both looked very nervous which I found touching. Prince George was a page and handled it well. Prince Louis (he's 5) is very comical and was taken out for a break (to colour apostles like we do at my church?). Frivolity note – the Princess of Wales' hair was glorious.

I still can't get used to hearing about The King. I see the King and I think, 'Oh look – Prince Charles'
'The Queen' is still HM Queen Elizabeth II. Senior barristers are still QCs to me, and if the typos in the Crown Court lists are an indicator they are to many court clerks also; KC is a jolly man with a Sunshine Band. We will move on and I don't think it will take much longer.



Vivat, vivat Rex Carolus.