***Jesus Reigns, Mary Hails***

One of my greatest privileges is being a Guardian at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in England (near Norwich). One year I was greatly honored to be the Preacher at the National Pilgrimage (Bank holiday – in late May). As we prepared for the Procession from the Shrine Church to the Abbey, it began to rain. One of the Sisters from one of the Religious Orders at the Shrine, after having made certain that I was appropriately vested, was concerned that the rain would be a problem for me (and for the silk vestments) and placed a large umbrella over me as we processed. As the rain continued, I said, “Sister, does this remind you of the hymn, “Jesus shall reign?” Without missing a beat, she said, “Yes, Bishop, but remember ‘Mary Hails.'” This was not the first time that I was trumped by a Nun!

 All too often we have forgotten the Kingdom of Christ. In the Lord’s Prayer we pray for that Kingdom, and in His Passion, Jesus reminds us that His Kingdom is not of this world. Sadly, we forget that we are not only subjects but also children of the King. By virtue of our Baptism, we are heirs of His Kingdom, but as members of the Church Militant (here on earth) we are also His subjects – bound, by faith, to follow Him.

 Unfortunately, we often have acceded to the bondage of this world, which offers no hope, while ignoring the fact that we are, in fact, part of a Kingdom that offers us more hope than we can imagine.

 I can still, in my mind’s eye, hear the voice of the Sister as we processed to the grounds at the Walsingham Abbey, and it was as if I could hear the voices of the numerous pilgrims who had walked the “Walsingham Way” for centuries before. I often think that Americans are far more intrigued with Royalty than the English are, but my prayer has been and will continue to be that Americans will become more enamored with the Kingship of Jesus, who lives and reigns forever and ever. **Jesus Reigns – Mary Hails.**