



**The Duke of Edinburgh**  
**1921 - 2021**

“He has, quite simply, been my  
strength and stay all these years.”

- Her Majesty The Queen

## Tributes follow death of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh



The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip, accompanies Queen Elizabeth II to Church House, Westminster, for the official opening of the Quinquennium of the Church of England's General Synod in November 2015.

**The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and other church leaders have paid tribute to the husband of Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Philip, who died yesterday morning (Friday, 9 April).**

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## **Archbishop of Canterbury's tribute to HRH Prince Philip's extraordinary life of dedicated service**

Following the death of Prince Philip yesterday, Most Reverend Justin Welby stated -

I join with the rest of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth in mourning the loss of His Royal Highness Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh, and give thanks to God for his extraordinary life of dedicated service. Prince Philip continually demonstrated his unfailing support and unstinting loyalty to Her Majesty The Queen for 73 years.

He consistently put the interests of others ahead of his own and, in so doing, provided an outstanding example of Christian service. During his naval career, in which he served with distinction in the Second World War, he won the respect of his peers as an outstanding officer.

On the occasions when I met him, I was always struck by his obvious joy at life, his enquiring mind and his ability to communicate to people from every background and walk of life. He was a master at putting people at their ease and making them feel special.

The legacy he leaves is enormous. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which he founded in 1956, has inspired generations of young people to help others and instilled in them a vision for citizenship and a desire to serve their communities. His work with countless charities and organisations reflected his wide- ranging, global interests in topics including wildlife, sport, design, engineering and inter-faith dialogue.





## Prince Philip and Queen Elizabeth II attend the annual Commonwealth Day Service at Westminster Abbey in 2015

In his powerful advocacy for conservation his was a prophetic voice for over half a century, as he brought people from around the world to a new concern and commitment to action for the future of our planet.

As we recover and rebuild after the terrible trial of the coronavirus pandemic, we will need fortitude and a deep sense of commitment to serving others. Throughout his life Prince Philip displayed those qualities in abundance, and I pray that we can take inspiration from his example.

I also join many people in giving thanks for the marriage of Her Majesty the Queen and Prince Philip, and for their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Theirs was

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a marriage grounded in friendship and mutual respect and sustained by shared faith in Christ.

I pray that God will comfort Her Majesty and the rest of the Royal Family at this time. May His Royal Highness rest in peace and rise in glory.

### **The Primate of All Ireland, Archbishop of Armagh John McDowell, has paid tribute to the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip**

The Most Reverend John McDowell said, “With profound sympathy for Her Majesty the Queen, I wish to express my sincere condolences to her and her whole family on the death of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh”, Archbishop John said. “Her Majesty’s sense of loss must be very great after nearly seventy years of unbroken love and friendship.

“In remembering and reflecting on a life of service, including as a Naval Officer in the Second World War, we recall his exemplary sense of duty to the nation and Commonwealth over seven decades and, most especially, his love, honour and obedience to Her Majesty.

“Prince Philip accepted and developed a unique role in the life of the United Kingdom, always closely supporting the Queen as her ‘liege man of life and limb’, and continuing to serve in an active public life which continued long after many would have sought to lay aside a heavy burden of public service. My prayers will be with the Royal Family in the days to come.”

## **Leaders of Methodist Church in Ireland call all people of faith, to stand against violence**

**Rev. Dr. Thomas McKnight, President of the Methodist and Rev. Dr. Heather Morris, General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland have issued the following statement:**

We are facing a time of crisis in Northern Ireland. The possibility of violence spiraling out of control is a reality that causes us great concern. Whatever explanations are given for the present tensions and unrest, there are no excuses for violent attacks on the PSNI, and the self-destructive damage being done across communities.

All of us who want to live in a civilized, peaceful and stable society are dependent on the police service. We all have a responsibility to support and encourage the PSNI in their difficult work – even on occasions when we might disagree with a particular tactic.

We call on politicians to choose their language carefully and even when being critical of others to be alert to the danger of inflaming passions that might lead some to engage in violence.

We call on everyone in our society, parents, teachers, youth and community workers, and all who have any influence with children and young people, to use that influence to steer them away from rioting and attacks on the police. We

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condemn without reserve any sinister forces that are initiating and manipulating these young people involved in the rioting.

Finally, we call on all Methodist people, and all people of faith, to stand against violence, to commit themselves to working for peace and the common good and to pray earnestly for those in the PSNI who face the difficult and at times very dangerous task of keeping all safe and secure.

## **Tribute - The Reverend Canon Michael Bourdeaux**

### **Priest who championed the cause of Christians persecuted in eastern Europe during the Cold War**

The Reverend Canon Michael Bourdeaux, who has died aged 87, was a scholarly Church of England priest who during the years of the Cold War pioneered the study of religious conditions in the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries; he also, virtually single-handedly, established Keston College in Kent, which became the leading international centre for the collection and dissemination of information about Christians and other religious believers who were witnessing to their faith in difficult circumstances and often under severe persecution.

He was recognised internationally as the best-informed authority on the subject, which came as a surprise to those who knew him only as a professional tennis umpire and a frequent occupant of the high chair at Wimbledon. In 1984 he was awarded the valuable Templeton Prize for Progress

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in Religion; in 1990 he became an Honorary Canon of Rochester Cathedral and in 1993-94 was a member of the European Commission's Experts' Group on Foreign Policy and Common Security.

Bourdeaux's interest in the religious situation in the Soviet Union began in his student days when, having read Modern Languages, including Russian, at Oxford, he spent 1959-60 at Moscow State University.

At this time the only information about the position of Christians in the Communist bloc was confined to press handouts issued by the embassies of the eastern European nations which suggested that in their countries the churches were flourishing as never before – or at the other extreme to the literature of anti-communist organisations which alleged that religion had been driven underground to a catacomb-like existence.

Bourdeaux discovered that neither was the case, and he sought to enlighten the churches and the political leaders of the West by gathering information, usually from clandestinely published sources but also through personal contacts in the Soviet Union and elsewhere, then after scholarly analysis making it available in books, specialist journals and articles in the general media.

Initially, he received next to no official support, and the work was never adequately financed, but eventually Keston College had a staff of full-time researchers, together with a number of volunteers, a council of management made up of distinguished scholars and churchmen, and enjoyed the patronage of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Cardinal



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Archbishop of Westminster and the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain.

The early years also called for a great deal of courage on Bourdeaux's part since his highlighting of the plight of Christians under persecution occasionally led to accusations of his having anti-communist, Right-wing leanings. There was no truth in this, though he made no secret of his sympathy with those who were suffering. The Soviet authorities disliked his activities and often refused him an entry visa.

Michael Alan Bourdeaux was born at Praze-an-Beeble in Cornwall on March 19 1934 and went from Truro School to St Edmund's Hall, Oxford. Following his year at Moscow State University he decided to seek Holy Orders and, belonging to the moderate Evangelical wing of the Church of England, went to Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, for training. He then spent the years from 1960 until 1964 as a curate at Enfield in north London.

During this time he also pursued his research into the religious situation in the Soviet Union, and this led to the publication of his first, ground-breaking book, *Opium of the People* (1965), which had a second edition in 1977.

He then had a year as priest-in-charge of St Luke's Church, Charlton, in the Southwark diocese, but the offer of a three-year grant from the Geneva-based Centre de Recherches led him to leave parish ministry – as it turned out, for good, though he was always ready to lend a hand in the North Kent parishes where he spent the next 25 years.

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In 1968 he published *Religious Ferment in Russia*, which called attention to the intense persecution being faced by nonconforming Baptists in Russia and was based on his research for an Oxford BD. Then, after spells as a Visiting Fellow at the London School of Economics and as a Visiting Professor in New York, he opened, in 1970, a Centre for the Study of Religion and Communism at Chislehurst.

Three years later he published the first issue of *Religion in Communist Lands*, a quarterly journal of very high quality which over the next two decades achieved international status and became compulsory reading for all students of eastern Europe.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Empire, of necessity its contents changed, and in 1992 it was retitled *Religion, State and Society: the Keston Journal*. The move from Chislehurst to Keston had taken place in 1971, dictated by the need for larger premises, which were provided by the former village school.

Besides its own research work – more than 400 items of religious samizdat from the Soviet Union alone were registered in 1980 – Keston College, as it was now named, had links with similar bodies in the US and Switzerland. The quarterly journal was augmented by the more frequent Keston News Service, which fed information to the secular and religious media, and a newsletter, *The Right to Believe*. The staff visited eastern Europe whenever they could get visas, and welcomed visitors to Britain.

Bourdeaux was fortunate to have as chairman of his council Sir John Lawrence, who had been a wartime press attaché

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in Moscow and became a leading authority on Russian affairs. He accepted much responsibility for the College's administration and finance, leaving Bourdeaux greater freedom to accept visiting professorships – in Britain and the US – and to continue his own writing.

A matter of deep concern in the 1970s was the plight of the severely persecuted Roman Catholic community in Lithuania, which Bourdeaux highlighted in his 1979 book *Land of Crosses*, as well as in other ways, and which was recognised by the award in 1999 of the Lithuanian Order of Grand Duke Gediminas.

A sign of hope came in 1987 with the publication of his *Ten Growing Soviet Churches*, and to his great joy he was able to follow this with *Gorbachev, Glasnost and the Gospel* (1990) and *The Gospel's Triumph Over Communism* (1991). The dramatic changes recorded in these volumes inevitably demanded the rethinking of Keston College's role – though there soon emerged some new problems in Russia, created by an intolerant Orthodox Church that wished to deny freedom to other Christian communities.

Bourdeaux was the joint editor of *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia* (1999), which dealt with a serious rift between Moscow and Rome. There was also work to be done monitoring developments in other former communist nations and documenting the persecution of religious believers by repressive regimes in other parts of the world.

Keston therefore turned in this direction, scaled down its activities and moved to smaller premises in Oxford, where it

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was renamed the Keston Institute. Bourdeaux retired from the directorship in 1999 and became president.

Since 2007 the Keston Institute's archive and library have been under the care of the Keston Center for Religion, Politics and Society at Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

Bourdeaux had been awarded a Lambeth DD in 1996, and in the same year, being a fine singer and lover of music, he directed the Iffley Festival. He also continued to write, and remained an active member of the Association of British Tennis Officials.

Michael Bourdeaux's first wife, Gillian, died in 1978, and he is survived by his second wife, Lorna, along with their daughter and son, and by a daughter and a son of his first marriage.

Michael Bourdeaux, born March 19 1934, died March 29 2021

## **Media review**

### **EU committee concerned over scrutiny of NI Protocol**

Belfast Telegraph

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/eu-committee-concerned-over-scrutiny-of-ni-protocol-40290386.html>

### **Northern Ireland Protocol blasted as 'totally disproportionate' by First Minister**



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Belfast Telegraph

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/northern-ireland-protocol-blasted-as-totally-disproportionate-40285078.html>



**Brexit: EU and UK 'still at odds' over subsidy rules.**

BBC News

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-56684166>

**What is behind the violence in Northern Ireland?**

BBC News

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-56664378>

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## **US blacklists seven Chinese supercomputer groups.**

BBC News

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-56685136>

## **North Korea: Kim Jong-un warns of 'difficult' crisis.**

BBC News

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-56685356>

## **Ian Marshall: Sinn Féin to support unionist in Irish senate election**

BBC News

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-56616792>

## **Opinion - Now's time for our political leaders to show their mettle - Jon Tonge**

**The shocking and depressing scenes witnessed over the last week reflect abject longer-term failures of political leadership. So many that it is difficult to know where to start. Let us begin at the top, with the Prime Minister.**

Many of us observers at the DUP conference three years ago winced as Boris Johnson whipped up his audience, denouncing any form of Brexit which involved an Irish Sea border. Whilst politics is rarely bereft of cynical actions, this was as reckless and crass as it gets.

Johnson was entirely self-interested, using one party to launch a leadership bid in another, without the slightest regard for the consequences.

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The inevitable betrayal of the DUP and unionism more broadly was not long in coming.

Boris Johnson might think it acceptable to use and abuse people in this way, to fulfil his personal ambition. Others might see his performance as utterly unedifying and downright dangerous.

That Arlene Foster, as First Minister, failed to see the Prime Minister's U-turn coming displayed an extraordinary absence of political antennae. And the mistakes have kept on coming, extending beyond Brexit.

Foster was atop the moral high ground on Covid, critical of rule-breaches and emphasising the need for collective sacrifice.

As Northern Ireland burned, the First Minister — albeit briefly — adopted the extraordinary position of not meeting the Chief Constable.

The Loyalist Communities Council, the political arm of loyalist paramilitarism, could have an audience, but not Simon Byrne, a man who wanted prosecutions after the Storey funeral but was overruled by the independent Public Prosecution Service.

Whilst the PSNI's policing and culpability can fairly be questioned, calling for the Chief Constable's head at this time hardly helps a difficult situation.

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Deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill's 'sorry but not too much' approach since the Bobby Storey funeral has also invited derision.

Whatever confusion existed over Covid regulations, they definitely did not contain a clause saying it was fine to put thousands of mourners on to the streets. The display sent out a message that Sinn Fein controls the local state. Loyalists have taken cues and engaged in shows of strength in theirs.

Loyalist paramilitaries continue to exercise influence, 23 years after a deal was supposed to put them out of existence. They offer proof that leadership still exists, just not of the type people desire.

There is no credible armed republican threat to Northern Ireland, the status of which can only be changed via a democratic vote. So why, according to intelligence reports, are there still loyalist paramilitary groups with a collective membership some 12,500 strong?

What would constitute better leadership? The Executive and Assembly emergency meetings represent a start. The parties must show willingness to co-operate.

External brokerage from the United States helped produce the Good Friday Agreement, and the Biden administration will be willing to help this time, but not to negotiate away the Protocol.

Relations between unionism and the Dublin government are in urgent need of repair.



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The EU needs to recognise the gravity of the situation and accept that the UK is not seeking to undermine its Single Market. That means light touch applications of the Protocol. Brexit was not desired by most Northern Ireland citizens, dragged out of the EU against their will and fearful of a harder border on the island. But the survey evidence shows they are not keen on a GB-NI border either.

So, the EU-UK Joint Committee needs to analyse how the protocol should be safely managed, on a minimalist basis. Immediate blame for recent events lies with the bus burners and rioters. Ask them to articulate knowledge of the protocol, Article 16, or export declarations and they might struggle.

There has been a lot said about how violence, or its threat, is futile and changes nothing.

Well, up to a point. The implicit risk of its return from republicans contributed to the protocol.

It is just that not many observers considered the possibility of loyalist violence. Responsible political leadership will diminish that threat. It is time for such leadership to begin.

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Courtesy the Belfast Telegraph 09.04.2021



## Pointers for prayer

Mighty God,  
in whom we know the power of redemption,  
you stand among us in the shadows of our time.  
As we move through every sorrow and trial of this life,  
uphold us with knowledge of the final morning  
when, in the glorious presence of your risen Son,  
we will share in his resurrection,  
redeemed and restored to the fullness of life  
and forever freed to be your people. Amen.

Living God,  
long ago, faithful women  
proclaimed the good news  
of Jesus' resurrection,  
and the world was changed forever.  
Teach us to keep faith with them,  
that our witness may be as bold,  
our love as deep,  
and our faith as true. Amen.

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Creator of the universe,  
you made the world in beauty,  
and restore all things in glory  
through the victory of Jesus Christ.

We pray that, wherever your image is still disfigured  
by poverty, sickness, selfishness, war and greed,  
the new creation in Jesus Christ may appear in justice, love,  
and peace,  
to the glory of your name. Amen.

Love divine,  
in raising Christ to new life  
you opened the path of salvation to all peoples.  
Send us out, with the joy of Mary Magdalene,  
to proclaim that we have seen the Lord,  
so that all the world may celebrate with you  
the banquet of your peace. Amen.

## Speaking to the Soul

**The disciples told Thomas, “We have seen the Lord!”  
But he replied, “I won’t believe it unless I see the nail  
wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and  
place my hand into the wound in his side.”**

John 20:25 NLT

I suspect that we all have some sympathy for Thomas and are not inclined to blame him for his reluctance to believe that Jesus had risen from death. We know that there was often a competitive spirit amongst the disciples, and they were no doubt happy to brag that they had seen the Lord. I

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am sure Thomas desperately wanted to believe that they were right, but he needed to be sure that that really was the case and so he asked for the evidence.

More than a week later Thomas was given his opportunity. Jesus came to the disciples who, once again, were meeting behind locked doors. He invited Thomas to see the evidence and to put his hand into the wound in his side. John doesn't record whether Thomas took Jesus up on this offer or not. Thomas simply exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" He was absolutely convinced. Jesus observed that Thomas believed because he had seen him and added "blessed are those who haven't seen me and believe anyway."

Clearly, we don't have the opportunity to check the evidence in the way that Thomas did. So what are we supposed to do with our doubts? Everyone has doubts. They are a normal part of life. I don't believe that God calls us to take a leap in the dark, which is what many people think faith is all about. I believe that God calls us to take a leap in the light. He has given us a huge amount of evidence. He invites us to look at his amazing creation, to see the way in which he reveals himself in the Bible, to listen to the testimony of people who have followed him over the past two thousand years and to learn from the experience of the Christians around us. Yes, God calls us to take a leap of faith – but it's a leap in the light.

## QUESTION

What do you do when you face doubts?



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## PRAYER

Lord God, thank you that you have given us so much evidence of yourself in creation, history and in the Christians around us. Amen

