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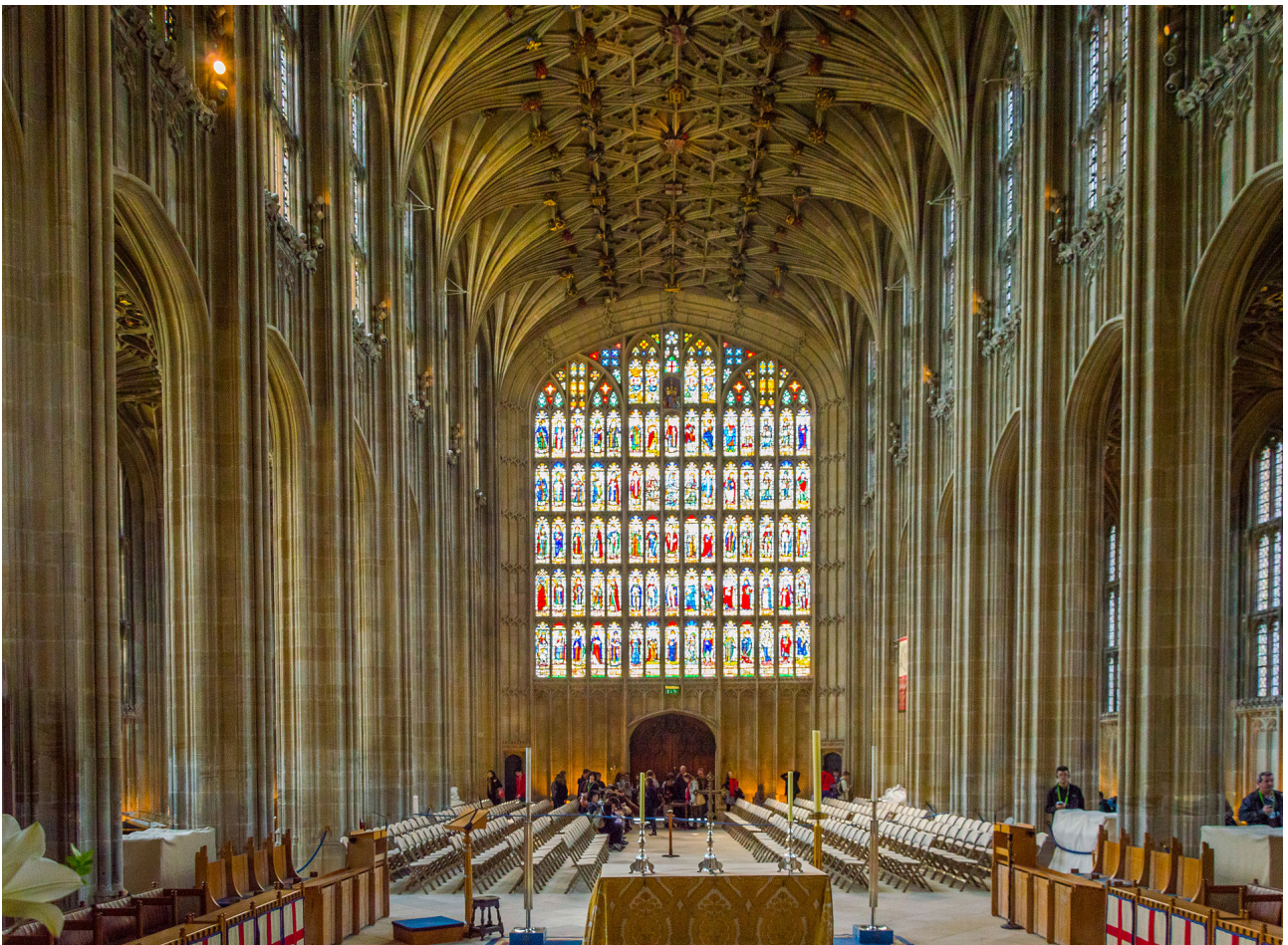


Image of the day
St George's Chapel, Windsor

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Three generations with very special memories of the Duke



Stephen, Alex and Don -Three generations of the McBride family from Co Antrim achieved their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Awards, becoming only the second family to do so.

One Northern Ireland family felt a special poignancy following the death of Prince Philip, writes Gareth Cross in the Belfast Telegraph

Grandfather Donald, his son Stephen and Stephen's son Alex gained the honours between 1960 and 2016 and met the Duke on a number of occasions over the years.

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Retired schoolteacher Donald, now aged 80, completed his award in 1960 through the 72nd Boys' Brigade Company which belonged to St Mary's Parish in Crumlin Road.

As this was only four years after the award scheme was launched he became one of the earliest recipients of the Gold Award, and travelled to Buckingham Palace in May 1960 to receive it. The flights for Donald and his parents to attend the event cost just £24.

Donald and son Stephen, who is vicar of Antrim and Archdeacon of Connor, became the first father and son duo to achieve the award.

Stephen gained his while attending the Royal Belfast Academical Institution and attended Buckingham Palace in 1981, while his son Alex completed his through Antrim Grammar School.

All three generations travelled to Buckingham Palace in February 2016 for Alex to receive his award.

Donald said his experience with the award scheme helped him secure a post in Belfast's Orangefield Boys' School in the early 1960s. "The headmaster, John Malone, had recently introduced the scheme in the school and was very keen to have a staff member who had gained the award. So in having the Gold Award, it was seen as an important element in my CV," Donald said.

Alex, now 27, is a P7 teacher in Antrim Primary School and said the scheme had also helped his career and given him many life skills.



HRH Prince Philip with Don and Stephen McBride in 1981

Stephen recalled his first encounter with Prince Philip.

“My memory of the day was one of awe in getting the opportunity of meeting the Duke in person, even if it was for such a short period of time,” he said.

In acknowledgement of being the first father and son to achieve the honour, Stephen and Donald were invited in 1997 by Prime Minister Tony Blair to attend a luncheon at Whitehall, in celebration of the Queen and Prince Philip's golden wedding anniversary.

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“During her speech at the dinner, the Queen memorably said of Prince Philip, 'He is someone who doesn't take easily to compliments but he has, quite simply, been my strength and stay all these years, and I, and his whole family, and this and many other countries, owe him a debt greater than he would ever claim, or we shall ever know',” he recalled.

Stephen met the Duke for the final time when his own son received the award.

“Even though we just missed out on being the first grandfather, father and son to gain the award, we were presented to the Duke. It was a privilege to have another opportunity to meet him,” he said. “I was so impressed at how a man who was 94 was blessed with such energy. He did his best to engage with every recipient in the room and make them feel special.”

Stephen paid tribute to the impact the prince had on young people's lives through the Duke of Edinburgh awards.

“He has led by example and in everything he was connected with, he gave of himself to the fullest. The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme was far ahead of its time in 1956 and its success is to be seen in its thriving 65 years later. Of the many legacies that the Duke has given his name to during his life, this is surely one of the most enduring in that it is open to every young adult to participate in throughout the Commonwealth,” he said.

“Through its various sections, it encourages you to develop personal skills, for example through the playing of a musical

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instrument, to engage in a sporting activity and to look beyond yourself and participate in some form of community service.” Belfast Telegraph 15.04.2022

'Screaming fundamentalists' have taken over some church parishes, warns Waterford Dean

The Church of Ireland's Dean of Waterford has announced she will be stepping down in the coming months, vowing to be an “enormous thorn” in the side of the country’s religious leadership in her retirement, Eoghan Dalton writes in the Irish Examiner.

Reverend Maria Jansson said that "screaming fundamentalists" have taken over some parishes in the Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic Church but they will "invariably fail" as followers will inevitably leave.

Bigotry, homophobia and “supremacism” must be “called out and named and challenged”, Rev Jansson said.

“All of that is dysfunctional,” she told local radio station WLR FM, adding: “Every empire falls, every dictator dies”.

Rev Jansson, who is of Irish Swedish extraction, took up the role in December 2011 but will tender her resignation in the next four months.

“[It’s not done] easily and not done glibly. I'm going to be 66 in a few weeks,” she said.



Very Reverend Maria Jansson, Dean of Waterford

“There’s a real danger with someone like me, that you rest on your laurels, you stay too long and you kill off the community you love. That you’re there because the community means so much to you emotionally that you stay when maybe it’s time to go.”

“I promised the community I would see them through the pandemic.”

She said she will stay on to help organise the succession and “go scouting for functioning clergy” to ensure the “parish is happy and the transition is properly managed and that God willing there will be a queue of people for the job”.

Having been a teacher and academic before her ordination 20 years ago in Galway, Rev Jansson served as Rector of Wexford before coming to Waterford, and said she has served in the faith for 46 years.

Support from Mary McAleese

She shares the views of former president of Ireland Mary McAleese, who has regularly criticised the stances by church leadership on feminism and homosexuality, and who had even discouraged her from leaving the church, telling her: "Don't you dare go."

"Mary's a friend, and we're both warrior women and we both passionately care about the future of faith as a positive in society and we both loathe the way religion can be narrow, conceited and cruel," she added.

Rev Jansson said that for anyone who is a member of a parish that is being overseen by someone with "fundamentalist" views, including expressing bigotry, they should "church-surf" and go elsewhere.

If your local church has a lunatic, move on, find someone that actually has a heart and brain.

"I don't think Christ ever stood up and humiliated a person on the grounds of their humanity."

Rev Jansson added that she would "challenge the scapegoating" and feels that women will "always be a bit unacceptable and dodgy anyway" in the eyes of some religious people.

"I think [religion] has always been politicised, I think fundamentalism will always appeal to people who can't live

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with ambiguity and a lot of them have psychosexual problems as well.

"You can hide all of the issues of your life behind a religious fanaticism and it's unhealthy, especially when it's organised," she told WLR, adding: "It doesn't have the staying power of a thinking faith."

The Irish Examiner. 16.04.2021

Presbyterian Moderator calls for prayers in wake of Cyclone Seroja

The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Rt Rev David Bruce has called for prayer and support in wake of Cyclone Seroja.

As other events capture the headlines, Tropical Cyclone Seroja swept across south eastern Indonesia, and Timor-Leste, causing loss of life and widespread devastation over the Easter weekend. Heavy rain and winds also caused flooding, landslides and storm surges, killing over 200 people with tens of thousands having to flee their homes. As a result, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI), Right Reverend Dr David Bruce, has encouraged PCI to pray for its partner churches in the region and, if possible, to give practical support to the relief effort.

Rev Uel Marrs, Secretary to PCI's Council for Global Mission, said that the area worst hit was the island of Timor and smaller neighbouring islands, "PCI has a long-standing partnership with the Evangelical Christian Church of Timor, who have shared distressing accounts and images of the



situation there with us. They report that as thousands of people filled hospitals and evacuation centres in search of medical aid, shelter and food, they also had the additional pressure of seeking to prevent the spread of Covid-19. The remoteness and difficult terrain has hampered the rescue and recovery effort,” he said.

Talking about the natural disaster, Dr Bruce said, “It is distressing to hear of the devastation caused by Cyclone Seroja, the tragic loss of life and damage done by the severe winds and rain. At a time when the world is focused on the Covid-19 pandemic, other disasters such as this, often go largely unnoticed.

Rev Dr Liz Hughes, Convener of the Council for Global Mission said, “Having visited the region twice in the last five

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years, and met with church leaders from both islands each time, I have a special place in my heart for this part of the world. Despite the devastation, however, it has also been truly inspirational to hear that some churches were still able to hold short Easter services to worship the Lord and seek refuge in Him. Indeed, I have been deeply moved by the account of one minister, Rev Niko Selan, serving on Alor Island.”

“Even with landslides early on Easter Sunday morning, which washed away nine homes, homeless members of his congregation still asked him to lead a simple short service, which he did. I along with our Moderator, I commend them and all our brothers and sisters in Christ who have been affected by this cyclone to our Church in prayer, and encourage our members to consider supporting the relief efforts.”

As it did following devastating explosion in Beirut last year, PCI’s Mission Department is ready to channel any donations to the emergency initiatives being undertaken by its partners. Anyone wishing to donate to the relief effort can do so in via the PCI website [www.presbyterianireland.org/appeals] or by sending a cheque made payable to ‘The Presbyterian Church in Ireland’ and posting to at Assembly Buildings, 6-10 Fisherwick Place, Belfast, BT1 6DW. Please state the donation is for Indonesian Cyclone relief.

Mums in May

Mums in May is an All-Ireland Fund of the Mothers’ Union supporting new and on-going MU projects.

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For example, the fund has provided clothing and food for those who have been forced to leave their homes due to domestic violence, school books and uniforms for struggling families, help for families enduring food poverty.

All Ireland President June Butler, is planning walks in each diocese in support of the Fund beginning in March and to be completed by November 2021 - a total of 252 kilometres! She started in her home parish of Saintfield and will be passing our way in the near future and has asked one part of the journey start at Castle Archdale.

Due to covid restrictions the details of this cannot be publicised in advance.

A "JUST GIVING PAGE" has been set up for this initiative, so friends and family can easily sponsor June's walking extravaganza. Simply log on to [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/MumsinMay21] to donate to the All-Ireland Mums in May Fund

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You will also find more information about this important ministry of the MU at [<http://mothersunion.ie/mums-in-may-2021.html>]

What we can learn from Prince Philip's extraordinary life

Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh and consort to Britain's Queen Elizabeth II who died on April 9, began the second of his 99 years as a refugee. It was 1922, and Philip's uncle, King Constantine I of Greece, had been forced to abdicate in the wake of his disastrous prosecution of the Greco-Turkish War, writes Matt Malone

Only 18 months old and just barely ahead of the riotous mob, Philip was smuggled out of Greece in an orange crate, which his family had converted into a makeshift crib. A British light cruiser then safely transported them to France. Such was the inauspicious beginning of the man who would become the longest reigning consort of a British monarch in history.

For more than 75 years, Prince Philip rendered tireless service to his adopted country. According to The Times of London, by the time of his death, he had undertaken 22,191 solo engagements, delivered 5,493 speeches and served as the patron of 800 charitable organizations. Those are pretty impressive tallies for a man who once described himself as "a discredited Balkan prince of no particular merit or distinction." Self-deprecation, of course, was one of his

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famous traits. But there were others, which point to some of the lessons to be gleaned from his extraordinary life.

For starters, luck counts for a lot in life. Being in the right place at the right time can make all the difference. Philip was fortunate to have survived the downfall of the Greek monarchy and luckier still to have relations close to the British Royal family, who made a new home for him and introduced him to the king and his daughter, Elizabeth. In interviews, when asked about his early life, Philip was always keen to point out the role that chance had played. This is in part why he founded the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, a phenomenally successful venture that helps prepare young people to make the most of their opportunities and to weather the fickle vicissitudes of life.

Yet another lesson is that old-fashioned notions of duty and hard work also matter. Prince Philip had a number of role models to choose from, not all of them good examples. He could have gone the way of many of his wife's ancestors, using the privileges at his disposal to pursue a life of ease and pleasure. That he did not do that is probably one of the reasons he lived such a long life—he never lost interest, never stopped asking what more he could do.

It is also true that he himself was not always a good role model. There were, of course, his infamous gaffes, mostly jokey attempts to make him sound down-to-earth and friendly but often with the opposite effect. "As so often happens," he said at the conclusion of a tour of Australia in 1968, "I discover that it would have been better to keep my mouth shut." And the occasionally offensive off-hand remark was not the only habit he may have carried with him from

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the wardroom culture of the Royal Navy. There were also rumours, especially in the early years of his marriage, about his late-night company.

Then again, all of that must be weighed against his countless contributions to the life of his country. A life lived without sin and error is not a human one. And very few of us would want to be remembered for the worst thing we ever did.

Marrying the queen is undoubtedly the best thing Philip ever did. For all the rumors of infidelities and squabbles, some of which are inevitable in any long marriage, theirs was a love match—itsself a historical oddity among royalty. She once famously called him “her strength and stay.” There’s a lesson there, too, from those 74 years of marriage. Our lives are not mainly defined by the big promises we make but by the thousands of little ways in which we keep them. Philip did promise at the queen’s coronation “to be her liege man of life and limb and of earthly worship.” But most of the way he made good on that vow was by simply showing up, being present, making sure his hand was there whenever she reached for it.

The principal advantage of a constitutional monarchy is its seeming permanence—its role as a symbol of continuity amid constant change. A monarch furnishes a direct connection to a people’s history and to its future and a link to what is fundamentally important about both. At the end of the day, however, like all creaturely things, monarchies come to an end. That day isn’t any time soon for the British monarchy, but it will surely come. It has endured for a

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thousand years, but even 10 centuries is nothing like forever.

Prince Philip's passing reminds us that only God is unaffected by time and space. Monarchy can only symbolize permanence or immortality—it cannot guarantee it. That is the job of the King of Kings.

By Matt Malone, S.J., who is the President and Editor in Chief of America Media.

Books, Broadcasts, resources and webinars

BBC Songs of Praise

Kath Jenkins talks with Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, about life after lockdown, Frank Skinner chats to Sean Fletcher about his relationship with God and York Minster show their newly refurbished Grand Organ. Songs Of Praise Sun 1.15 BBCOne & 2.15 BBCScotland also [<http://bbc.in/3uSde4F>]

CMSI Shine

CMSI is looking forward to next week's Shine event...

<https://bit.ly/2OU5Lmu>

[<https://www.redcoms.org/product/a-look-of-love-witnesses-to-jesus/>]

Webinar celebrating the centenary John Stott's birth.

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The Langham Partnership UK invites you to its special webinar celebrating the centenary of its founder John Stott's birth. "We'll hear from people who're seeing his legacy playing out in the Majority World - plus Chris Wright, Global Ambassador & Ministry Director, will share a reflection. Join us at 1pm or 7pm - sign up now for the Zoom details".

[<https://app.etapestry.com/onlineforms/TheLanghamPartnershipUKandIre/event-1-1.html?f>]

Clandeboyne Festival 2021

Barry Douglas has told CNI - "We are announcing very soon our Clandeboyne Festival 2021 for August this year. So excited." Follow the orchestra on [www.camerataireland.com] and twitter [[@camerataireland](https://twitter.com/camerataireland)]



Pointers for prayer

We pray for Mozambique. Escalating violence has meant 700,000 people have been displaced from a region of the

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country. God, we pray for a just peace in Mozambique, and an end to instability in the region.

We pray for Northern Ireland. Violence broke out in parts of Northern Ireland, as issues around Brexit have caused concern around peace in the country. God, we pray for your peace in Northern Ireland, and an end to divisions.

God, We reflect on and give praise for the life lived by Prince Philip. We thank you for his faith in Our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Comfort the Queen at this time and strengthen her Christian faith. Amen.

A prayer from the Church of Scotland...

Almighty and everlasting God, 'the life of mortals is like grass, they flourish like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.'

But You are forever, from everlasting to everlasting, and we put our trust in You for You have promised never to leave us nor forsake us.

Loving Lord, in this last year, through the worst of a global pandemic, we've been face to face with our fragility and vulnerability, perhaps for some of us as never before.

Against that backdrop of hurt and loss, we give you thanks for the life and service of Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh. Some are called to the front of the stage, others to supporting roles and we rejoice in the way he supported Her Majesty the Queen through all of the years of her reign.

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We remember, too, his work supporting charities and, perhaps most memorably for young people for over sixty years, his patronage of The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

In this hour of loss, we offer our heartfelt prayers for Her Majesty and her family. Comfort them in their loss, bind up their wounds and grant them the consolation of a store of treasured memories. Grant Her Majesty the peace that comes from knowing you and which passes all understanding.

These and all our prayers we ask in the name of Jesus, who through his life, death and resurrection offers us hope instead of despair, life instead of death.
Amen.

Some went down to the sea in ships,
doing business on the mighty waters;
they saw the deeds of the Lord,
his wondrous works in the deep.
For he commanded and raised the stormy wind,
which lifted up the waves of the sea.
They mounted up to heaven, they went down to the depths;
their courage melted away in their calamity;
they reeled and staggered like drunkards,
and were at their wits' end.
Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
and he brought them out from their distress;
he made the storm be still,
and the waves of the sea were hushed.
Then they were glad because they had quiet,

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and he brought them to their desired haven.
Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to humankind.

Speaking to the Soul

God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

Ephesians 2:8-9 NLT

I remember my first pay packet as a teenager. It was a small brown envelope and it contained what, at the time, seemed to me like a considerable amount of money. It wasn't really very much but I had never had a job before, and it compared favourably with pocket money! It was absolutely clear why I had received the money. It was because I had done many days of hard physical work in a warehouse and this was now my reward. It all made sense. The connection between the work and the money was clear. And it may well be that you can see a clear connection between all that you own and the hard work that you have put in. For this very reason it can be very difficult to accept that our salvation is completely unlike this. However hard we work and however nice we are, we will never be able to earn salvation.

The problem is that we are all sinners. We have all fallen short of God's standards. The fact that some people seem to be much worse than others is neither here nor there. We are all well short of perfection and so no amount of hard work is going to be enough to earn us salvation. All we can

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do is to accept the gift of God which Paul describes as grace. Grace is the totally undeserved gift of new life which God gives to those who are willing to receive it. And because it is entirely the result of God's generosity, and nothing to do with our good actions, we never have any reason to boast about what we have done. That would be completely out of place. All we can do is accept the gift, give thanks to God and then boast about how brilliant he is.

QUESTION

In what way are you able to boast of what God has done in your life?

PRAYER

Loving Father, thank you for the amazing generosity that you have shown to me. Help me today to find opportunities to boast about what you have done for me. Amen

