

Church News Ireland



Image of the day

Grace. Dignity. Dedication. Portrait by Colin Davidson

Church tributes to HM Queen Elizabeth II

What a life. What an extraordinary life - Archbishop of Canterbury's Thought For The Day on BBC Radio 4

What a life. What an extraordinary life.

And yet the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is a shock to our sense of permanence, because of her long and steadfast reign, which helped us make sense of our identity as a nation. It was a reign that was not only for the United Kingdom. It was a reign that was for the whole world. Round the world in the work I do I hear so many people who spoke of her not as anything other than The Queen. She showed us permanence. She gave us a sense that life wouldn't change, and so with her death, we feel that permanence is rocked. And for many of us it is almost impossible to imagine a world without her.

For all those who yesterday found themselves bereaved in their own families or from their own friends, because many other people died yesterday, they will know especially that



sense of great loss, the uncertainty, the loss of identity, the fading of what seemed permanent.

But that is the lie of death.

For Her Late Majesty showed us that when we build our lives on God's faithfulness, we are on the solid ground of eternity that cannot be shaken

In Coventry Cathedral hangs a tapestry called 'Christ in Glory'. It is an

image of Christ after his death, resurrection and ascension, but with the wounds of the Cross. It's 80-foot high, and between his feet is an almost life size human figure. That figure can't see Jesus. That figure is looking out from between the feet. He can only see the mark of the nails in the feet.

They are vulnerable, exposed, unprotected, but they are sheltered by the Christ they cannot see. In times of grief, fear, or vulnerability, we can cling to the wounded feet of Christ. It is offered to all of us.

We can look out at the world, and can find that our lives can be abundant, as Her Late Majesty's was, that our lives can find hope, even in the face of death.

September 10, 2022

We remember today especially the Royal Family in their grief. We pray for the reign of His Majesty King Charles III. He will feel especially the weight of this change.

In the Christian story of life, death, and resurrection, there is space for our grief and uncertainty. We see the wounds of Christ who died with us. But with God, the final words are abundant life and fulfilled hope. And in Her Majesty's life we saw that and can be inspired.



Pope Francis mourns death of Queen Elizabeth II

Pope Francis has sent his condolences to King Charles III and the people of the United Kingdom after the death of Queen Elizabeth II on Thursday.

The Holy Father said in his message: "Deeply saddened to learn of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, I offer heartfelt condolences to Your Majesty, the Members of the Royal Family, the People of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth."

The Pope said he joins everyone who mourns her loss "in praying for the late Queen's eternal rest, and in paying tribute to her life of unstinting service to the good of the Nation and the Commonwealth, her example of devotion to duty, her steadfast witness of faith in Jesus Christ and her firm hope in his promises."

Pope Francis also commended "her noble soul" to the mercy of God the Father.

"I assure Your Majesty of my prayers that Almighty God will sustain you with his unfailing grace as you now take up your high responsibilities as King. Upon you and all who cherish the memory of your late mother, I invoke an abundance of divine blessings as a pledge of comfort and strength in the Lord."

Her affection for Ireland as a whole was clear for all to see

The Most Revd John McDowell, Archbishop of Armagh & Primate of All Ireland

“Queen Elizabeth II, like her father, did not pass her childhood in any certain expectation of the Crown. But already we know her well ...”



Those words were written by Winston Churchill on hearing of the death of Queen Elizabeth's father, King George VI. If the old statesman could claim that the young Queen was well known to her people then, how much more can we say so now, who have watched and admired as her steady hand, her searching eyes and her warm smile graced so many occasions of great significance in the life of the United Kingdom.

All deaths are inevitable, but few are as unimaginable as that of Queen Elizabeth II. She has been on the throne and the stage of public life longer than any person, living or



dead. The burden of such a life was rarely visible except when she chose to share her feelings about a particular event or “annus horribilis” with a sympathetic public. Mostly when she spoke it was to draw attention to others.

She reigned at a time when monarchy was under unparalleled and unforgiving scrutiny, often accompanied by searing comment. It was with the support of the late Duke of Edinburgh that she weathered the storms with unfailing dignity and cheerfulness. Can anyone doubt that the loss of

her “liegeman of life and limb” after over sixty years of love and friendship was perhaps the greatest sorrow Queen Elizabeth ever faced in her long and eventful life?

For all who met her, it was clear that she was interested in people from all backgrounds and that she respected them. In the privacy of their meetings she also shared the riches of her incomparable experience of public affairs with 15 Prime Ministers. Her many visits to Northern Ireland were evidence of her awareness that she had been crowned Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and her conscientiousness in living out that role.

I was privileged to be there when, on her Diamond Jubilee visit to Enniskillen, she walked the twenty yards from the Church of Ireland Cathedral of St Macartin and into St Michael’s Roman Catholic church. Barely a hundred paces, but a walk which covered countless miles in the long and unfinished journey of peace on these islands.

Her affection for Ireland as a whole was clear for all to see during the memorable State Visit to the Republic of Ireland in 2011, and her speech at the State Banquet ranks in political foresight and Christian conviction with the Golden Speech which Queen Elizabeth I made to the House of Commons in 1601. That in the past “we would have done things differently or not done them at all” and that “we should bow to the past but not be bound by it” have been little gems of hope to many peacemakers in the following years. That they came from someone who had felt the tragedy of Ireland so close to hand and who had lived through the uncertainties of a World War, when the outcome

was often far from clear, gave her words an unchallengeable authority.

We thank God for the life of Queen Elizabeth II, for her faithfulness to Him and to her calling, from which we have gained so much. To finish with some words from the first Elizabeth's Golden Speech but which find an echo in the life of Queen Elizabeth II, "... and we do confess that we passed not so much to be a Queen, as to be a Queen of such subjects ... for whom we would willingly lose our life, ere see such to perish. I bless God that he hath never given me this fault or fear; for he knows best, whether ever fear possessed me, for all my dangers; I know it is his gift; and not to hide his glory, I say it".

The prayers of the people of the Church of Ireland are with the Queen's family and all who were closest to her. May they know the presence of God very near to them.'

God save the King

'Deepest, heartfelt and sincere condolences' - The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

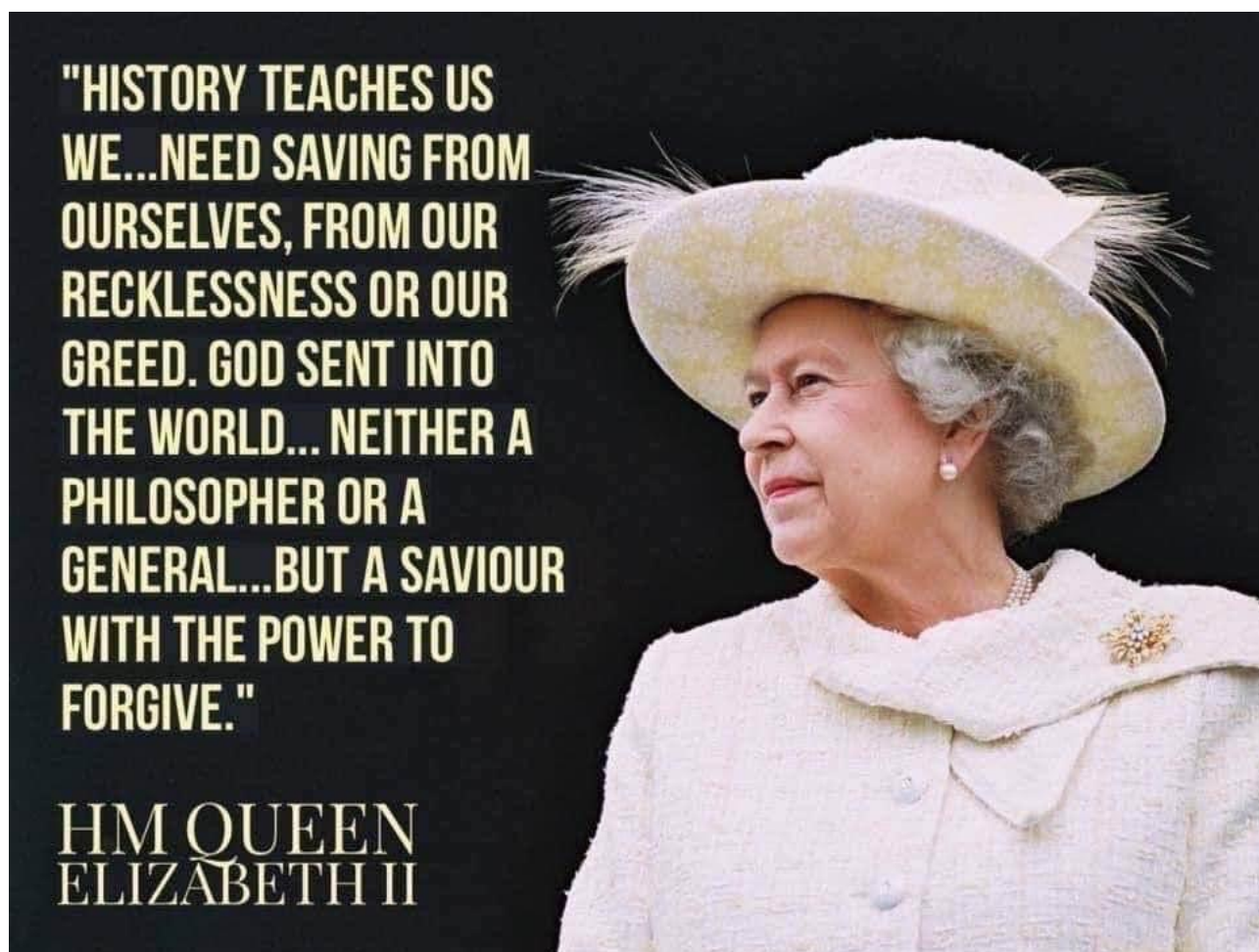
Right Reverend Dr John Kirkpatrick, has offered the Church's 'deepest, heartfelt and sincere condolences' to His Majesty the King, on the announcement that Her Majesty the Queen passed away peacefully at Balmoral.

"On behalf of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, I would like to extend our deepest,



heartfelt and sincere condolences to His Majesty the King and the Royal Family, on the loss of one so loved and respected.

“For those in Northern Ireland who express their loyalty to the Crown, few can remember a time when The Queen was not part of the very fabric of national life, as her Platinum Jubilee in June demonstrated. At the same time, for many who do not share that same sense of loyalty, in her long life



Queen Elizabeth became one of the most recognisable and respected figures across these islands.

“The Queen will be remembered for her sense of duty and quiet dedication to the service of the people of the United Kingdom, and those farther afield. Her promise, made long ago on her 21st birthday, that her ‘whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service...’ has now been fulfilled, and we give thanks to God for that long and dutiful life,” Dr Kirkpatrick said.

Dr Kirkpatrick continued, “As an all-Ireland denomination, many of our members, and indeed non-members alike, found much hope and encouragement in Her Majesty’s many visits to Northern Ireland, not least during the darkest

of days. Few will also forget her state visit to the Republic of Ireland with her late husband, Prince Philip, 11 years ago.

“In a long and significant reign, they were four days in May that not only made history, but quietly closed a chapter in Ireland’s story. A short visit that left a long-lasting impression, which will be remembered for many years to come, alongside her commitment to peace and reconciliation,” he said.

The Moderator concluded by saying, “In acknowledging a life of devotion to public service, I will always remember The Queen’s willingness to talk about her personal faith in Jesus Christ. I was greatly encouraged by her Christian witness, which was a wonderful example for everyone who acknowledges the name of Jesus as their Saviour.

“A blessing to so many, I remember Her Majesty talking of Jesus in one Christmas broadcast as ‘an inspiration and an anchor in my life’. At this time of great sadness, bereavement and loss, it is my prayer that His Majesty the King, and Royal family, will take heart in that simple, but profound declaration. It is also my prayer that they may know the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the anchor of our soul, and our ultimate comforter in times of great sadness.”

Her faith has been an inspiration

Cardinal Vincent Nichols paid tribute to Her Majesty following the announcement of the death of Her Majesty The Queen on 8 September 2022,

On 21 April 1947, on her twenty-first birthday, Princess Elizabeth said, 'I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service.'

Now, seventy-five years later, we are heartbroken in our loss at her death, and so full of admiration for the unfailing way in which she fulfilled that declaration.

Even in my sorrow, shared with so many around the world, I am filled with an immense sense of gratitude for the gift to the world that has been the life of Queen Elizabeth II.

At this time, we pray for the repose of the soul of Her Majesty. We do so with confidence, because the Christian faith marked every day of her life and activity.

In her Millennium Christmas message, she said, 'To many of us, our beliefs are of fundamental importance. For me the teachings of Christ and my own personal accountability before God provide a framework in which I try to lead my life. I, like so many of you, have drawn great comfort in difficult times from Christ's words and example.'

This faith, so often and so eloquently proclaimed in her public messages, has been an inspiration to me, and I am sure to many. The wisdom, stability and service which she consistently embodied, often in circumstances of extreme difficulty, are a shining legacy and testament to her faith.

Our prayer is that she is now received into the merciful presence of God, there to be reunited with her beloved Prince Philip. This is the promise of our faith, and our deep consolation.

September 10, 2022

Queen Elizabeth II will remain, always, a shining light in our history. May she now rest in peace.

We pray for His Majesty the King, as he assumes his new office even as he mourns his mother.

God save the King.

Faith was worn in her heart, not on her sleeve

Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York

The news of Queen Elizabeth II's death has reverberated around the world. The deep sadness felt in the United Kingdom is shared across the globe, not least in the Commonwealth which meant so much to her.

Her grace and dependability – what seemed a rocklike permanence – impressed everyone.

We pray in great thanksgiving for her life and service, for the life of a nation, for all who mourn and especially her family and for our new King Charles. In times of danger, uncertainty and personal grief, Her Majesty consistently exemplified a courage and a confidence that flowed from her faith in Jesus Christ. We all need that now.

I am reminded of Christ's words to his disciples on Easter Day: "Do not be afraid... peace be with you... I am with you always, even to the end of the age."



Queen Elizabeth II made no secret of the fact that the Christian faith and a disciplined life of duty and devotion were the source of her guidance and a constant solace. “For me,” she said, “the life of Jesus Christ, the prince of peace, is an inspiration and an anchor in my life. A role model of reconciliation and forgiveness, he stretched out his hands in love, acceptance and healing.”

It was Christ’s servant leadership which shaped her sovereignty. Jesus confounded the prevailing perceptions of authority. For instance, at the Last Supper he noted that none of his disciples was willing to perform the customary task of a servant by washing the dirt off the feet of the others. So he did it. He gave them a new commandment, that they should love one another and that by this love, people would know that they were his disciples.

He also gave them this astonishing definition of leadership: “The kings of the gentiles lord it over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather, the greatest among you must become like the youngest and the leader like one who serves.

“For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.”

**THROUGHOUT MY LIFE,
THE MESSAGE AND
TEACHINGS OF
CHRIST HAVE BEEN
MY GUIDE AND IN
THEM I FIND HOPE.**

QUEEN ELIZABETH II
3RD AUGUST 2022



On her 21st birthday in 1947, the then Princess Elizabeth was touring South Africa with her parents. She made this personal, Christian commitment that day and she lived by it throughout her reign: “I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service.”

Indeed, right until the end, when she invited the new Prime Minister to form a government, she was doing her duty. She broke into her summer holiday at Balmoral to give an audience, first with Boris Johnson as the outgoing prime minister, and then with Liz Truss, the 15th premier of her reign. We will treasure the photograph published then, which showed her at the age of 96, looking frail but beaming with warmth and kindness.

Queen Elizabeth II wore her faith in her heart, not on her sleeve. It is the best place for faith. From there it can shape everything.

Patron of the Mothers' Union Worldwide

Sheran Harper, Worldwide President, Mothers' Union wrote to members -

It is with deep sadness that I receive the news of the passing of our beloved Patron, Her Majesty The Queen. On behalf of the Mothers' Union members around the world, I join with the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth in offering our love and sincere condolences to the entire Royal Family and all those dear to her.

Queen Elizabeth II

1926-2022



Gracious God, we give thanks
for the life of your servant Queen Elizabeth,
for her faith and her dedication to duty.
Bless our nation as we mourn her death
and may her example continue to inspire us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Her Majesty has had a long and extraordinary life in which she saw our world change dramatically. Yet Her Majesty's dedication and service to her country, the Church and Commonwealth remained steadfast and continued to be an inspiration to us all, keeping us together in all situations.

We give thanks to God for her being our Patron, for blessing her with special gifts for a life humbly dedicated to public service, her strong faith as she weathered many storms; her

commitment and devotion to family life; and her great concern for communities and all people.

Her guidance and support of Mothers' Union over the decades has enabled us to achieve so much in impacting communities and touching lives. During times of ongoing war and turmoil around the world, she reminded us of the healing power of forgiveness, peace and reconciliation. This inspired us and encouraged us to work for harmony and good relationships among all people in our communities.

Her spirit of acceptance to change and transformation through the years and her ability to take others on the journey of change is testimony to her great strength as a leader and her faith in change that is inevitable. This outlook on life strengthened Mothers' Union members to embrace all opportunities of change and transformation that truly reflect the worldwide nature of our movement.

We will always remember her intelligence and humility in making wise decisions, her charm and sense of humour, and her sincere caring and gentleness. Hers was a life born to serve God and all humanity and her legacy that will live on in so many ways and in the hearts of all Mothers' Union members for generations to come.

On behalf of the Worldwide Board of Trustees, Staff and Members all around the world, we pray for the peaceful resting of Her Majesty's soul with the sure hope of her rising in glory.

And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Romans 8:38a (NLT)

The Bible Society

The Bible Society's executive, Paul Williams, has joined millions of people around the world praising her life and service.

In a statement, Williams said the nation and the Commonwealth has lost "not only a remarkable public servant" but also "the presence of a much-loved and respected Christian leader".

The monarch was the patron of Bible Society from 1952 when she acceded to the throne.

"We cannot understand the Queen without reference to her Christian faith," Williams said. "There's a marvellous section in her Coronation service when she was presented with a Bible, described as the 'Rule for the whole life and government of Christian Princes' and 'the most valuable thing that this world affords'. The Queen's life and testimony make it clear that she took these words very seriously.

"The Queen's faith has made a real difference to her reign and to the nation. She attended church more than weekly, prayed and read the Bible. Her Christian faith has been her guide during the highs and lows of her life and because of that she has been able to be a stable and enduring presence in our national life.

'I think that the Queen's legacy is her example of what true service and duty looks like. Her whole life has been one of service. I think the Queen will be remembered in line with these words from Proverbs 10.7, "The memory of the righteous is a blessing."'"

Five facts about religion in the life of Queen Elizabeth II

She served Jesus her king. She wrote the foreword to a 2016 British Bible Society book titled "The Servant Queen and the King She Serves" (that king being Jesus):

1. She was the official head of the Church of England

The Associated Press obituary by Danica Kirka, Jill Lawless and Sylvia Hui explains:

In Britain's constitutional monarchy, the queen is head of state but has little direct power; in her official actions she does what the government orders. However, she was not without influence. The queen, officially the head of the Church of England, once reportedly commented that there was nothing she could do legally to block the appointment of a bishop, "but I can always say that I should like more information. That is an indication that the prime minister will not miss."

2. She spoke openly about her Christian faith

Writing for Religion News Service, Catherine Pepinster notes:

While Defender of the Faith has been an inherited title and little more, Elizabeth II embraced it and in recent years made it her own, speaking very openly about her faith and explaining how it provided the framework of her life.

She did this mostly through her annual Christmas message, a tradition begun by her grandfather, George V, in 1932, and continued by her father. Her early Christmas Day broadcasts were platitudinous — the holidays as an occasion for family was a frequent theme. In 2000, however, she spoke of the millennium as the 2,000-year anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ, “who was destined to change the course of our history.”

She went on to speak very personally and frankly about her faith: “For me the teachings of Christ and my own personal accountability before God provide a framework in which I try to lead my life. I, like so many of you, have drawn great comfort in difficult times from Christ’s words and example.” Similar sentiments have been aired at Christmas ever since.

3. Trust in God was ‘foundational’ in her life

The Washington Times’ Mark A. Kellner reports:

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, the symbolic head of the global Anglican Communion, lauded the late monarch’s commitment to her Christian faith.

“As a faithful Christian disciple, and also Supreme Governor of the Church of England, she lived out her faith

every day of her life,” Archbishop Welby said in a statement. “Her trust in God and profound love for God was foundational in how she led her life — hour by hour, day by day,” he added.

4. She met with five popes in her lifetime

Francis X. Rocca, the Wall Street Journal’s Vatican correspondent, recounts:

Pope Francis met the queen and the Duke of Edinburgh at the Vatican in 2014, when the royal couple presented him with a gift of whiskey produced at her castle of Balmoral in Scotland.

Queen Elizabeth met with five popes in her lifetime, beginning with Pope Pius XII in 1951, when she was still a princess.

The others she met were Pope Benedict XVI in 2010, Pope John Paul II in 1980, 1982 and 2000 and Pope John XXIII in 1961, according to Catholic News Agency’s Courtney Mares.

5 She was friends with late evangelist Billy Graham

At Christianity Today, Dudley Delffs points out:

Her friend and confidant Billy Graham attested to the Queen’s love for the Bible, as well as the strength and depth of her Christian faith, in his autobiography, Just As I Am.



“No one in Britain has been more cordial toward us than Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II,” Graham wrote. “Almost every occasion I have been with her has been in a warm, informal setting, such as a luncheon or dinner, either alone or with a few family members or other close friends.”

They rarely publicized their meetings or leveraged their relationship professionally, but the two enjoyed a friendship that endured for more than 60 years until Graham’s passing in 2018. He wrote, “I always found her very interested in the Bible and its message.”

Thanksgiving and prayers

Well done, good and trustworthy servant, enter into the joy of of thy Lord (Matthew 25:21)

‘Eternal God, our heavenly Father, we bless your holy name for all that you have given us in and through the life of your servant Queen Elizabeth.

We give you thanks:

for her love of family and her gift of friendship;
for her devotion to this nation and the nations of the Commonwealth;

for her grace, dignity and courtesy;
and for her generosity and love of life.

We praise you for:

the courage that she showed in testing times;
the depth and of her Christian faith:
and the witness she bore to it in word and deed.

Accept our thanks and praise,

Grant to your servant our King

the Spirit of wisdom and discernment,

May he be devoted to you with his whole heart, may he so wisely reign,

that in his time we may live in hope and in peace;

through Jesus Christ our Lord we offer our prayers- Amen

God of love,

We thank you for the life of The Queen,

for her service to our nation,

and for her faith in you.

Be close to all of us who mourn,

that we may we find comfort and hope in your love,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Everlasting God, we pray for our new King.

Bless his reign and the life of our nation.

Help us to work together

so that truth and justice, harmony and fairness
flourish among us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Poem for today

More Than My Queen

by Susan Jarvis Bryant

My Queen has always been a noble force—
A force for good on chilly English days.
Her friendly face, her air of grace—my source
Of joy in more than crown-and-sceptre ways.
I saw her wave her white-gloved, regal hand
When I was nine and knotted up inside.
Her gilded, horse-drawn coach sailed up The Strand—
She looked at me and smiled a smile so wide,
I loved her from that London moment on,
Took comfort in her cozy, calming air—
I knew beneath the pomp her hug was warm.
I knew her heart was full of fun and care.

I'll always be her loyal, lifelong fan
Because she looks exactly like my Nan.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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