

My dear Friends,

We will all remember the moment and place that we were when on Thursday 8th September 2022 we heard the news of the death of our beloved and devoted Queen, Elizabeth the Second. Most of us will have known no other Monarch. Our feelings were of great sadness and also shock, sadness at her passing from this life but shock that someone who has been so much part of our national life is now no longer with us. I was immediately reminded of the prayer that I often use at committal services, "Father of all we pray for those we love, but now no longer see." For indeed it is clear from recent days and the outpouring of sentiments that there is an extraordinary love for Queen Elizabeth. We as a nation are now feeling grief because of that deep feeling for Her late Majesty. Indeed the Queen herself famously said that grief is the price we pay for love. She has indeed known bereavement herself and has supported her loved ones and the Nation and Commonwealth at times of individual and national tragedy.

Many of the reflections on her life have recalled her fifteen Prime Ministers. The first, Winston Churchill was born in 1874 and was an MP during the reign of Queen Victoria. The last, only appointed this week, Liz Truss was born in 1975. It reminds us that the life and reign of the monarch has spanned almost a century. A period of one hundred years that has seen enormous advances in science, technology and communication and great changes in political, social, community and cultural life. However throughout that time our Sovereign Lady has remained constant and a focus of unity, continuity and harmony for all the people of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth. She has also adapted to those fast changing times with care, attention to detail and sometimes humour. We might recall the words of the 19th century constitutional historian Walter Bagheot who said the monarch is "to have the right to be consulted, to encourage and to warn". Elizabeth has sought behind the scenes to do this in her Constitutional role in leading our nation.

Queen Elizabeth from her magnificent Coronation, through many dignified State Openings of Parliament and countless formal, grand occasions had conducted herself with dignity, poise and elegance. In less structured events, she had walkabouts and royal visits to schools, hospitals and places of commerce and industry, there she showed a warmth and keen interest in the lives and work of her subjects. This has endeared her to many generations and people of all backgrounds, races and beliefs. On a personal note Karen and I were amazed at the Queen's energy and enthusiasm when we were privileged to be in her presence at a Buckingham Palace Garden party. Our daughters, Lydia and Sophie were honoured to be chosen to present the official bouquet to the Queen on her Diamond Jubilee visit to Llandaff. We, like everyone else who have been in the company of the Queen will have felt the thrill and magic of monarchy that she embodied.

Our new Prime Minister described Queen Elizabeth as the rock upon which our nation is built. For the Sovereign herself she built her life on the firm foundation of her Faith. It was clear from her words in Christmas broadcasts that her belief in God and the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ informed the way she lived and worked. She held the title Defender of the Faith, yet even before her coronation she asked that people of all faiths would pray for her as she began her reign. Regular Sunday worship, devoutly taking communion and daily prayer have supported her throughout the long life and reign. This inspired her from the beginning when at 21 she promised "I declare that my whole life, whether it be long or short,

shall be devoted to your service.” That service or ministry has been fulfilled beyond all expectations for us all. At the same time Queen Elizabeth was a loving daughter, sister, mother and grandmother, and a devoted wife. The importance of family life to her has made such an impact as she has known all the joys and sorrows, like every other family does.

You might recall the words of the sometime Poet Laureate, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “Kind hearts are more than coronets, and simple faith more than Norman blood.” Queen Elizabeth often wore coronets and crowns and her lineage, her Royal blood is undoubted. However the grace, joy and love that she displayed came as a result of her generous, kind heart and humble yet profound simple faith. May Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth rest in peace and rise in heaven in glory.