

Read the text of **Archbishop Justin's Thought for the Day on Radio 4 this morning.**

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To set aside your own rights and interests in order to serve others is always difficult, but as we reflect on the life of His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh, we are reminded of how much it is possible to achieve when we dedicate our lives to larger causes than ourselves. Prince Philip shows how someone dedicated to bringing people together and encouraging the journeys of others achieved so much more than we can ever hope to on our own.

Like all of us, Prince Philip had visions and dreams. He was amusing and witty. He had remarkable intellectual gifts and a willingness to test his opinion against others and listen to them. He was impatient with complacency about bad things happening. Whether in wildlife conservation and climate change, in working with young people, in interfaith relations in a world where more than eight out of ten belong to a faith he was 50 years ahead of his time. And he was criticised for that, but sooner or later others followed. He was a founder and a pioneer himself, but the way he achieved these dreams was through helping unlock the potential of others, through encouragement, support and seeking and providing opportunity.

We might be capable of doing remarkable things by ourselves, but Prince Philip set the example of something even better. His life's work showed that serving others might not always be visible, but it is always essential.

Above all he served the Queen, for 73 years. That meant setting aside those things to which many people might have felt entitled, a glittering naval career, prominence in his own right, and counting everything else as less important than serving Queen and country, following his duty in that service, walking behind. In that he followed the example of Christ who calls every person to follow him.

Grief is not alien to us at the moment: so many of us have experienced loss during the pandemic. To lose someone after such a long life is a unique and particular pain to those who love them. I pray we can comfort ourselves by seeing their life and legacy live on in the opportunities and dreams they have inspired in others.

Perhaps the challenge which Prince Philip sets us is to look afresh at what we hold onto out of entitlement which, if humbly set aside, will make our lives transformative for others.

May His Royal Highness rest in peace, and rise in glory, in the eternal arms of the Servant King.

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3 min read

