

It is with profound sadness that I join the nation, the Commonwealth and the world in mourning the death of Her Late Majesty The Queen. My prayers are with The King and the Royal Family. May God draw near them and comfort them in the days, weeks and months ahead.

As we grieve together, we know that, in losing our beloved Queen, we have lost the person whose steadfast loyalty, service and humility has helped us make sense of who we are through decades of extraordinary change in our world, nation and society.

As deep as our grief runs, even deeper is our gratitude for Her Late Majesty's extraordinary dedication to the United Kingdom, her Realms and the Commonwealth. Through times of war and hardship, through seasons of upheaval and change, and through moments of joy and celebration, we have been sustained by Her Late Majesty's faith in what and who we are called to be.

In the darkest days of the Coronavirus pandemic, The Late Queen spoke powerfully of the light that no darkness can overcome. As she had done before, she reminded us of a deep truth about ourselves – we are a people of hope who care for one another. Even as The Late Queen mourned the loss of her beloved husband, Prince Philip, we saw once again evidence of her courage, resilience and instinct for putting the needs of others first – all signs of a deeply rooted Christian faith.

As we sustain one another in the face of this challenge, our shared grieving will also be a work of shared reimagining. I pray that we commence this journey with a sense of Her Late Majesty's faith and confidence in the future.

As a faithful Christian disciple, and also Supreme Governor of the Church of England, she lived out her faith every day of her life. Her trust in God and profound love for God was foundational in how she led her life – hour by hour, day by day.

In The Late Queen's life, we saw what it means to receive the gift of life we have been given by God and – through patient, humble, selfless service – share it as a gift to others.

Her Late Majesty found great joy and fulfilment in the service of her people and her God, – whose service is perfect freedom – (BCP). For giving her whole life to us, and allowing her life of service to be an instrument of God's peace among us, we owe her a debt of gratitude beyond measure.

The Late Queen leaves behind a truly extraordinary legacy: one that is found in almost every corner of our national life, as well as the lives of so many nations around the world, and especially in the Commonwealth.

It was my great privilege to meet Her Late Majesty on many occasions. Her clarity of thinking, capacity for careful listening, inquiring mind, humour, remarkable memory and extraordinary kindness invariably left me conscious of the blessing that she has been to us all.

In my prayers at this time I also give thanks for the marriage of The Late Queen and His Late Royal Highness Prince Philip. Theirs was an inspirational example of Christian marriage – rooted in friendship, nourished by shared faith, and turned outwards in service to others.

May Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II rest in peace and rise in glory.

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The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby

Archbishop of Canterbury

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