

Homily 25th Sunday Year C National Mourning for HM Queen Elizabeth II 2022

Adapted from the Cardinal's homily on 11th September 2022

Much has happened since the 8th September, the birthday of Our Blessed Lady, the day on which the Lord called Queen Elizabeth to her heavenly home. Despite the impact and the changes that have happened since then, there has also been great continuity. There was the ceremony, at the Accession Council, that brought together the elements that underpin our institutional stability: the Crown, Parliamentary democracy and the military. This ancient process of succession is also underpinned by Christian faith in God and provides a pathway into the future and safety from any chasm caused by uncertainty.

We mourn the death of our Sovereign with profound and immense sorrow. But our Faith in Jesus, like that of Queen Elizabeth, reassures us that her life continues. At death life is changed not ended so we pray that she will gain an everlasting dwelling-place in heaven, where nothing of her great love and goodness is lost but rather brought to its fulfilment.

The earthly remains of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth were first taken to lie in state at the Palace of Holyroodhouse, in Edinburgh. This is where, in 2010, she welcomed Pope Benedict on his visit to these countries. It was wonderful to see how two great leaders, both in their 86th year, greeted each other with such warmth and empathy. In his address, Pope Benedict alluded to the name of Holyroodhouse, saying that it recalls the Holy Cross of our Blessed Lord, the instrument of our salvation.

We are encouraged and inspired by the way Queen Elizabeth spoke to us of her enduring faith in our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Year after year, in her Christmas messages, she said that her faith was the foundation and guide for her life of service; that her faith gave her stability, an openness to all, comfort in sorrow and strength in crisis. (Wis 3.1). *The soul of this virtuous lady is now in the hands of God and no further trouble can ever touch her... she is at peace.*

As we bear the burden of grief, we turn to our loving Lord, for in him alone is the fulness of love that overcomes every grief. Cardinal Hume wrote: *'It is the love of God, warm and true, which will touch the grieving heart and heal it. ... Jesus came among us to learn about grief, and much else too. This Man of Sorrows knows and he understands.'*

As we turn to Jesus in sorrow and prayer for our Sovereign Lady let us remember, to recall, to ponder again and again, to celebrate the wonders of the life and reign of Queen Elizabeth II. Let us continue to pray for her and to pray for the dead.

We also remember that the burden of grief falls most sharply on those whose love is closest and most strong: her family. We pray for the Royal family, for its many members, that each will know the comfort of family love and that troubles and tensions may be resolved in the enduring light of a grandmother's shining example and selflessness.

Remember that from this *'grandmother to us all'*, now taken from us, we still have much to learn.

Eternal rest

"Over the years, those who have seemed to me to be the most happy, contented and fulfilled have always been the people who have lived the most outgoing and unselfish lives."

"Each day is a new beginning, I know that the only way to live my life is to try to do what is right, to take the long view, to give of my best in all that the day brings, and to put my trust in God."

"With age does come experience and that can be a virtue if it is sensibly used."