Reflection Wednesday Week 24 Exaltation of the Holy Cross 2022

The Exaltation of the Cross is an occasion to rejoice that something so terrible was transformed into a means of redemption for the whole human race. It shows that Christianity is not an abstract and spiritual religion. It springs from God's direct intervention in the affairs of the world, a real historical event involving real people and a real execution on a real cross. All our theorising and theologising are nothing without the history on which they are based. Take away that history – take away the Cross – and Christianity is nonsense.

It is not easy for us to think of the mantle worn by Queen Elizabeth as her cross and she would not have seen it in this way but it symbolised her mission of service to the people for whom she was responsible. Similarly, to equate her crown with the crown of thorns worn by Jesus seems ludicrous but Jesus wore his crown with dignity, so did she. The cross has become a symbol of Christ's victory over sin and death – a symbol of life. Elizabeth's crown symbolised the life she offered to people wherever she went as she worked diligently for harmony, honour and respect between people and for people.

When life seems hard, the courageous do not lie down and accept defeat; instead, they are all the more determined to struggle for a better future.

Families, friends and communities often find a source of courage rising up from within. Indeed, sadly, it seems that it is tragedy that often draws out the most and the best from the human spirit.

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."

"I know of no single formula for success, but over the years I have observed that some attributes of leadership are universal and are often about finding ways of encouraging people to combine their efforts, their talents, their insights, their enthusiasm and their inspiration to work together."