

Revd Michael Burns
Christ Church West Wimbledon
Sermon : February 6th, 2022
“The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee”

6 FEBRUARY 2022 – THE QUEEN PLATINUM JUBILEE

Today is a very significant day in the life of Her Majesty the Queen and of our nation – the first time a monarch has ever reigned for 70 years. It was on this day, 6 February 1952, 70 years ago, that she succeeded to the throne at the age of 25 on the death at Sandringham of her father, King George VI. He had been unwell for some time but his death at the young age of 56 was unexpected. In fact, the Princess Elizabeth was on tour in Africa when she became Queen. She never went to university but has been the advisor and confidant to Prime Ministers. She is the most famous woman in the world but always seems very relaxed when meeting people.

I was fortunate to meet her exactly 30 years ago next month when she attended the dedication of the new City Centre Ecumenical Church of Christ the Cornerstone in Milton Keynes – a service broadcast live by the BBC and when Cardinal Basil Hume became the first Roman Catholic to preach to the Monarch since before the Reformation! I’ve got a photo of my meeting her – she is smiling at me and I am smiling at her – mind you not a word passed between us as the brass music being played at the end of the church service was so deafening. But it was a good moment.

And others of you have met her – four of you were brave enough to share your memories today – *4 members spoke briefly of their encountering the Queen.*

Others of you will also have met her – and also met other members of the Royal Family. It is amazing the impact they have had on so many of us.

And one of our children reflected on the question ‘If you could be Queen - or King - for the day, what would you want to do, perhaps to change something in our world for the better’?

Of course, not everyone is a royalist or expected to be – but a huge majority do have great respect and admiration for the Queen over these past 70 years. She has shown herself to be remarkably adaptable to so many changes in our world. She has preserved the dignity of the role she has been asked to play – but has also known when to engage more informally. Indeed, it is said she was delighted to make her film debut in the Bond-themed cameo at the opening of the 2012 Olympic Games! Two things stand out – the Queen’s constant sense of duty and her devotion to God. Yes, there is much more to the Queen than her faith in Christ, but it is said you cannot understand her without understanding her devotion to him. It shapes everything she does. As one commentator put it, her religious beliefs are ‘quietly held, authentic and well-known’. She has perhaps, in the words of the Gospel reading for today, caught many people for Christ.

Of her faith, she speaks humbly but openly, especially in her Christmas broadcasts. She said this in 2002:

“I know just how much I rely on my faith to guide me through the good times and the bad. 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 for I draw great strength from the message of hope in the Christian Gospel”.

Six months before her Coronation, which took place in June 1953, she asked the people of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth to: *“Pray that God may give me wisdom and strength to carry out the solemn promises I shall be making, and that I may faithfully serve Him and you, all the days of my life”.*

And we give thanks today that, over the past 70 years, she has done just that. Amen.