

Revd Michael Burns  
Christ Church West Wimbledon  
Sermon : Jubilee & Pentecost  
Sunday 5th June 2022

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**JUBILEE AND PENTECOST 2022**

I begin with reading the introduction to this little booklet written for the Jubilee and called Queen CJ and the Bouncy Castle, given to our younger members. It starts like this:

“Dear Reader, of course there are lots of things we’d like to be able to do brilliantly – painting pictures, playing a sport, singing a song or working out maths. Having these skills can sometimes impress other people. But the qualities that make a difference are the ones that really can impact other people – like kindness, understanding, respect and faithfulness. It’s this quality of faithfulness that stands out as we think about Her Majesty the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. Faithfulness is like loyalty, trustworthiness and commitment rolled into one. The Queen has set a wonderful example of this and she has taken her inspiration from God. God is faithful – completely trustworthy, utterly loyal and forever committed to us”.

And we would say a loud Amen to those words. This jubilee has been such a remarkable event to celebrate – real history in the making. It has felt – to me at least – a real privilege to be alive to be able to see and enjoy the celebrations of these past few days. It has certainly been good to now know with absolute certainty what the Queen keeps in her handbag! Of course, we suspect that the Queen will probably have felt a bit overwhelmed and embarrassed at times – witness her priceless reaction when a certain broadcaster paid an over fulsome tribute to her during the Windsor Horse Show. But nevertheless, hers is by any measure a remarkable act of faithfulness.

It is very clear that the Queen has taken her sovereignty as a vocation – a calling to serve and lead. She has spoken to us of faith every Christmas and, uniquely at Easter during the pandemic, with well-chosen, caring and insightful words of comfort joy and encouragement grounded in her faithfulness to Jesus Christ. The Queen's service to the nation in state, charity work, diplomacy and Commonwealth support and by being a fixed point in an ever-changing world is something too easy to take for granted – and we thank God for her faithfulness to the vow of service she made in 1947 when 21 and which was then repeated by the vows and promises made at her Coronation.

All of us at one time or another in our lives will have made vows and promises. At a baptism, at a confirmation, at a marriage, at an ordination – or perhaps as a Scout or Guide – vows and promises are at the heart of all of these life milestones. Of course, as we are human, so it is inevitable that at times the vows and promises we make in good faith can sometimes be broken. But we also know that God forgives us for the times when we fail – and he has the remarkable capacity to enable us to 'pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off and start all over again'.

By a happy coincidence today the Church celebrates Pentecost – the wonderful feast when we remember the mysterious and strange event when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples to mark the start of the Church.

The need for faithfulness continues to be a quality which our world needs still today. What have we just heard read in John's Gospel? 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments'. The relationship with God which we can enjoy as Christians is at the very centre of our Christian life. Our humanity is soaked with the Spirit of God. When we are open to that, when we co-operate with God's will for us, then our faithfulness – incorporating our loyalty, trustworthiness and commitment – will be evident to all.

So, enjoy the double celebration today: both the birthday of the Church and the Jubilee of 70 years – and may God bless both the Queen and us all in whatever the future may hold. Amen.