



## Worship at Home – Third Sunday of Easter – 18<sup>th</sup> April

Father God help us to come to you this morning with open and thankful hearts. Fill us with the joy and peace that comes with knowing you. Be with us as we walk in your light, rejoice in your love and reflect your glory.

**Amen**

### Hymn 590 Seek ye first

#### Welcome

The Lord be with you,  
**and also with you**

#### Prayer of Preparation

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord.  
Amen**

#### Prayer of Confession

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: The first commandment is this: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbour as yourself". There is no other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

**Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you and against our neighbour in thought and word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins. For the sake of your son Jesus Christ, who died for us, forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen**

Lord have mercy

**Lord have mercy**

Christ have mercy

## **Christ have mercy**

Lord have mercy

**Lord have mercy**

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in life eternal through Jesus Christ our lord. **Amen**

## **Collect**

Risen Christ, for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred: open the doors of our hearts, that we may seek the good of others and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace, to the praise of God the Father.

## **Wisdom of Solomon 3: 1 – 5, 9**

But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be a disaster, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in the sight of others they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself; those who trust in him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love, because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones, and he watches over his elect.

## **Hymn 297 How sweet the name of Jesus sounds**

## **Revelation 21: 1 - 6**

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.'

And the one who was seated on the throne said,

'See, I am making all things new.' Also he said,

'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.'

Then he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.'

## **Homily by The Bishop of Ely, The Right Reverend Stephen Conway**

We gather today in love and sadness, in sorrow and great thanksgiving, as – with our Nation, and the wider Commonwealth, but above all with Her Majesty the Queen and the Royal Family – we mourn the passing of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh. We remember someone who was a great public figure, but was also a husband of many decades, a father, grand-father, great-grandfather. Today marks both public mourning and private grief, and the recognition of a long and full life.

As we have heard already, we give thanks for a life lived out in duty and service. These are words and concepts which can feel rather old-fashioned, belonging perhaps to an earlier generation, but they are of great value, and were so wholly exemplified in the way the Duke of Edinburgh lived. Most of us will be able to picture a state occasion or a royal visit, as he walked upright and stood alongside Her Majesty. Comparatively recently and remarkably, we might recall the way in which he – even then an old man – stood straight and dignified in the rain as the royal barge made its way down the Thames on the occasion of Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee.

And we might reflect on the way in which his example of civic responsibility and character formation have inspired so many thousands of young people through the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme. Maybe some of you, or your children or grandchildren, have participated in that, and learnt skills of leadership and teamwork, of public service and endurance, the value of perseverance and of putting others' needs first. As we give thanks for The Duke of Edinburgh's life, we are giving thanks for the ways in which he inhabited those virtues, and encouraged others to develop them for the greater good of the whole of society, and across the generations. That is part of the legacy for which we give thanks today, and so too we recall the many other charities and organisations to which he dedicated his attention and patronage.

The first reading we heard was from the Wisdom of Solomon, from the part of the Bible known as the Apocrypha, which sits between the Old and New Testaments. The book begins with the appeal "Love righteousness, you rulers of the earth, think of the Lord in goodness and seek him in sincerity of heart;" (Wisd 1:1) For the writer, righteousness goes with seeking wisdom. Lives are lived well when they are lived in the knowledge and fear of God. The search for Wisdom is the search for understanding and right judgement, for justice and peace. The writer draws a contrast between the 'ungodly' who think that how we live does not matter, because 'short and sorrowful is our life, and there is no remedy when a life comes to its end' (Wisd 2:1) and the righteous, whose souls are in the hand of God, and their hope full of immortality. There is the promise that "Those who trust in him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love" (Wisd 3:9).

This theme of death overcome, and of God and his faithful dwelling together, is expressed most beautifully and powerfully in the passage from Revelation, from the very end of the Bible. St John the Divine, in exile on the island of Patmos in his old age, has received visions of the glorious heavenly worship, and also of the torments of the end time. Then he sees a new heaven and new earth, all things made new, and the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. This passage, with its great promise of all suffering, sorrow and death overcome, is often read at funerals, and on occasions such as today. It promises that death is not the end, because all things are held together in Christ, who is Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

Both these readings point us forwards – to the promise of 'hope full of immortality', to the promise of everything made new in Christ. As we gather in sorrow, as we give thanks for Prince Philip's life and for all that he has given in the course of it, we do so not merely looking backwards at what has been, but also looking forwards to what will be. The great promise of the Christian faith is that all things hold together in Christ, who makes all things new. Because God raised Christ from the dead, the pain we might experience, or the sorrow we know as we mourn, do not have the last word. Because God raised Christ from the dead, we can trust that death is not the end – not for Prince Philip, for any of our own departed loved ones, and not for any of us. The Christian hope is

full of immortality, of the promise of eternal life in the risen Christ. And because we live in the light of that promise, we are free to be honest about our own mortality, and so to ask for grace to use our lives well – in duty and service others. This recognition is expressed by the seventeenth-century poet and preacher, John Donne, as he reminds his hearers

‘Any man’s death diminishes me.

Therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls. It tolls for thee.’

Facing mortality that honestly enables Donne to give expression to that vision of Revelation, to that hope of immortality, in a prayer that seeks eternal life dwelling with God, and which was used at the funeral of Her Late Majesty the Queen Mother, and with which I close: Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening into the house and gate of heaven, to enter into that gate and dwell in that house, were there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light; no noise nor silence, but one equal music; no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession; no ends nor beginnings, but one equal eternity; in the habitations of thy majesty and glory, world without end. Amen

## Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## Prayers

### The Peace

Take a moment and offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for each other and our church family church community. Maybe call or text someone who would enjoy sharing the peace with you.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy, that you may be kept safe and blameless in spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**And also with you.**

## Hymn 654 The Lord's my shepherd TUNE 1 Crimond

### Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours.  
Now and for ever.  
Amen.

### Remembering the Lord's Supper

Take a moment to remember the final meal that Jesus shared with his disciples. As we think about this meal - with the washing of feet and bread and wine shared with friends - we remember Jesus' offering of himself on the cross. We rejoice in his resurrection from the dead and look forward to the coming of God's Kingdom. While we cannot receive Christ in the sacraments in the usual way, we can be the presence of Christ in our homes and communities and we can be a praying presence wherever we are.

## Hymn 463 My song is love unknown

### Closing Prayer

Lord God, we thank you for this time of worship; may your love and peace remain with us in the coming days. Be with us in all that we will think, say and do so that our lives may reflect your glory. We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord  
**In the name of Christ. Amen**