



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

"Our mission is to bring the good news of Jesus Christ's love to our entire community through traditional Anglo-Catholic worship, fellowship, outreach, and Christian formation."

Our Vision: *"We strive to be a haven of healing, reconciliation, joy and peace in service to our wider community and beyond, so that our example in prayer and practice may reflect Christ's love for us all."*

THIS SUNDAY —October 2 & Beyond

"Queen Elizabeth's Anglican Faithfulness"

The Rt. Rev. Rowan Williams



A great deal has by now been written about Queen Elizabeth, and ample tribute has been paid to her stature. It has been intriguing to see how commentators have tiptoed around the question of her personal faith: everyone who has given this more than a second's thought recognizes that her Christian commitment was deeply part of her, but it has been obvious that, for many, this is something impenetrably strange, almost exotic.

And in a way you can see their problem. Her Anglican faith — like that of her father and grandfather — was redolent of a lost world in which weekly Matins, fervent but infrequent Communion, very private prayer, and unquestioning honesty and uprightness went together. John Betjeman's poem on the death of King George V described his mourners as "Old men who never cheated, never doubted, / Communicated monthly"; something of this lived on in the queen. That deep, unshowy piety, nourished by the prayer book and the King James Bible, seems very

remote in an Anglican world like ours. Even the most dedicated supporter of the prayer book will have grown up in a cultural climate where none of this could be taken for granted as it once had been.

But it would be a crass mistake to think that it produced an inflexible conservatism, let alone moralism. The depth of this subdued devotion seems to have allowed the queen — as it had allowed some of Betjeman’s “old men” — to adapt with stoical courage to new circumstances, to look with charity if not always approval at new styles of behavior, even to think new thoughts where necessary. The queen proved adaptable, self-critical, tolerant, and unfazed through a near-century of colossal upheaval. Her patent conviction that her role was a matter of divine vocation and that her anointing was a promise of grace and divine faithfulness allowed her to be strong enough to grow and change.

When she was awaiting her Coronation, Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher, for whom she retained much respect, prepared for her a book of daily prayers and meditations to guide her through the months. It was a book she used and continued to treasure. Some visitors to Windsor Castle would be shown the book, preserved along with other mementos of that period, and it was obvious that it had been formative — almost an equivalent for her of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises.

These were the foundations for her thinking about her calling. And they helped her make what must have been a difficult discernment in her later years. As British society grew both more religiously plural and more secular, she responded not by watering down what she had to say in her annual Christmas broadcasts but by gently increasing the references to her faith and to the role of religious faith in general.

Reading through these Christmas texts, it is striking that, as her society ceased to take for granted the frame of reference that was hers, she recognized that part of her task was to remind us of it. Never triumphalist, never aggressive, she simply reiterated her own commitment, her acknowledgment of God’s grace, and her insistence on the need to remember what the Christmas festival was actually about.

Contrary to what some over-anxious and over-apologetic observers might have feared, this did not offend or alienate the faithful of other communities. It reassured them that the monarch understood how and why faith mattered. And that was partly because she was increasingly willing to take part in interfaith events (and was indeed criticized by some Christian rigorists for doing so). This might be at large public events like Commonwealth Day services.

But my strongest memory is of an event at Lambeth Palace, late in my time as archbishop, when we had organized a small exhibition of treasures from different faith traditions and invited the queen to come and view this, to meet a number of religious leaders, and to address the group. What she said in her address was a powerful statement of a genuinely theological rationale for the Church of England's role in a religiously plural society.

If there is an “established” church, to which certain legal privileges are given, it is essential for it, in its collective imitation of Christ, to use whatever privilege, access, or resource it has to make sure that other communities are not excluded, to reinforce the voice of minorities in the public realm. If the Church of England was in some sense the “state church” (not the most helpful of terms), it must be a church willing to act for the good of the whole social community; and that meant being attentive and supportive to those whose voices might be muted or suppressed, those who did not feel that they had an entrée into public discussion.

In the United Kingdom, solidarity with Jewish and Muslim communities under different kinds of threat was an obvious imperative, but all faith groups would need the same faithful friendship. It was a vision the Church of England tried to flesh out in various local and national projects, including Near Neighbours, which looked to build local collaborative ventures by faith communities in support of the needy or marginalized. The queen gave her unambiguous backing to this vision.

So: a deeply traditional believer, whose adherence to the faith was beyond doubt (and who could privately, so they say, be a bit caustic about over-enthusiastic liturgical or theological reformers); but one whose depth of fidelity allowed her to discern, adjust, think ahead. Someone who had a clear sense of the church's role in changing times,

who did not confuse firmness of faith with loudness of utterance or hostility to strangers.

Queen Elizabeth was an incalculably important person for British society, without doubt. But she also, without ever advertising it, helped to model for her church a particular kind of Anglican faithfulness, confident without arrogance and generous to the entire community she and that church sought to serve. We owe her a very great debt for this, as for so much.

The Rt. Rev. Rowan Williams has served as the 104th Archbishop of Canterbury (2002-12) and 35th Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge (2013-20).

Readings for The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Habakkuk 1:1-6 2 Timothy 1:1-14 Psalm 7:3-10 Luke 17:5-10

CALENDAR

Note: We are worshipping in our historic church. The service will also be on Zoom. The service time is 10am. Tuesday Noon Mass and Friday Morning Prayer are held in All Saints' St. Mary Chapel.

SUNDAY Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

10:00am Mass in All Saints' Church

Join Zoom Meeting from our web site at www.allsaintschurch.org

Recording of Mass available before noon at www.allsaintschurch.org

Christian Formation and First Communion Instruction for Children

Ages 5-12 in the Parish Hall from 10:00am-10:45am

Christian Formation every second and fourth Sunday of the month at

Noon. Topic: Communicating with God Rector's Study

TUESDAY Noon Mass in St. Mary Chapel

THURSDAY Spanish Class 1:00pm to 3:00pm in the Flower Room. Taught by Fr. Carlos

FRIDAY 10:00am Morning Prayer in St. Mary Chapel

SATURDAY Societies of Mary Day of Devotion at 11am in St. Mary Chapel

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OUR CORE VALUES:

- Welcoming strangers like old friends
- Embracing the Anglo-Catholic tradition
- Being dependable members of a caring community
- Respecting each other's differences
- Being faithful stewards of God's gift
- Remembering that God loves everyone unconditionally

An Anglo-Catholic Parish in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego

www.allsaintschurch.org