



**St Andrew's Parish Church Guernsey**  
**Sunday 11 April 2021 - Reading: St John 20: 19-end**  
**Service in Remembrance and Thanksgiving for the life of**  
**HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh**  
**Written by Rev Juliette E C Robilliard**

### **Loyal to the end**

In what has been an unusual 12 months for us all, none more so than for the Queen who, in the ordinary course of her duties, would have met hundreds if not thousands of people. Instead, she was primarily in the company of just one man, Prince Philip, her beloved husband of 73 years or, as he vowed at her coronation, her "liege man of life and limb" and in the Queen's own words, "Her strength and stay." Prince Philip, was a loyal man who, in marrying the Queen also married her nation and Commonwealth. We can only imagine the void that is now in her heart. Now, behind closed doors, she comes to terms with her loss.

### **How to carry on**

In John's Gospel the scenario is comparable, the disciples had daily accompanied one man, to whom thousands flocked, yet, they too are behind closed doors after the death of Jesus, their 'strength and stay', hence shutting themselves away in their grief.

### **What's in a door?**

The function of doors seems totally obvious but just for a moment let's consider their purpose. They are barriers that either keep things in or out. In the Queen's case that is the public and the media. The doors give her privacy, protection and a hiding place. Though the disciples too are gathered in a place of safety, yet they are afraid for we are told that "the doors were locked for fear of the Jews". Life was now fearful and persecuted; how would they carry on?

### **Great expectations**

Similar to the many expectations that people have of the Royal Family so, the too disciples had many expectations of what Jesus would achieve in his ministry. After all, he was no ordinary person, through his miracles he brought people back to life and yet, he did not save himself. Then, into the midst of that highly charged situation Jesus appeared and said, 'Peace be with you.' With joy the disciples then understood his teachings: he's alive! Arisen! Peace, indeed!

### **What is peace?**

What does peace mean for us? The absence of war? Often most wars are fought within our own hearts, as conflicting pressures come at us from many sources. Though Prince Philip has

died, yet the Queen is still the Queen and has to juggle her grief with her duties. For us, perhaps we are juggling being Super-Dad or Wonder-Granny, whilst holding down jobs of work or voluntary service, as well as running a home. Prince Philip knew more than most that the public's high expectations are only matched by those the Queen sets for herself out of service to her nation. In our own sphere we can push ourselves too hard and then fear that our vulnerabilities will show. Where's the peace in that? What we really crave is to be accepted as we are: that would give peace.

### **Expectations satisfied**

Whether we be Royal or a Commoner, the Easter message is quite literally a God-send. When Jesus appeared in the midst of the disciples, they were in no doubt that he was real flesh and blood "See my hands and my side". Jesus showed that by his resurrection he had transcended human barriers. Even Thomas, the doubting latecomer, was granted the same reassuring presence of Jesus beside him: the evidence was tangible, so that Thomas was able to declare with total certainty "My Lord and my God!"

### **Our strength and stay**

When someone dear to us dies, life becomes unsettling then it is good to remind ourselves of the things that do not change, those things that are our strength and stay. Jesus proved that there is no door that he cannot step through, to reach out to us and give us his comfort and his peace, both in the present and for eternity. He accepts us as we are, offering to transform us into the whole person God created us to be. The Revelation of St John reminds us, that Jesus stands at the door of our hearts, our emotions, our physical frailties and spiritual uncertainties and he knocks saying "If any will hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and eat with them and they with me." Christ the true bread and the true vine offered his body and blood as the sacrifice for our salvation. At every Eucharist we are invited to dine with him, to be at one with him and each other and this gives us spiritual nourishment from which comes true peace and security. Of course, just as the Queen well knows, that does not mean that all of life's problems disappear but, in Christ's light, they are put into perspective. In his resurrection, Christ transcended time and space. All our fears can be shared with him at any time and in any place through prayer and reading his Holy Word supporting that peace, after all, where else will we read these comforting words "Come to me and rest: my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Inviting Christ in through the door of our hearts means that when the world comes knocking, we can go and answer the door together.

### **Peace be with you**

'Then Jesus came and stood in the midst of them and said "Peace be with you". We pray that Prince Philip now rests in peace eternal. We also pray that our beloved Queen may draw strength and find peace of heart in the comfort of her faith. How at peace do we feel? May we too, be blessed with the same certainty as St Thomas that our peace comes from "Our Lord and our God."

Amen