

# The Queen's Platinum Jubilee



A year after Queen Elizabeth's accession to the throne, published in the official souvenir programme for her Coronation, the Poet Laureate, John Masefield wrote,

*May the fair Spring of her beginning  
Ripen to all things worth the winning*

Seventy years is a long period of time over which to reflect on how well one has done in pursuing a vocation. For many, the joyous celebrations taking place in our village communities over the long bank holiday weekend will be a moment to recall particular memories and events from within the Queen's life that have connected with our own. She is after all only human, a woman, made of flesh and blood, has children and grandchildren, has suffered life's ups and downs and knows what it is to grieve. She also knows what it is to laugh and to poke fun at the ridiculous. All of this she has shared not just with those within her immediate circle, but she has shared with all of us over her long reign. When Elizabeth II inherited the throne, she did so as one very vulnerable human being. And it is that vulnerability that has endeared her to her people.

Monarchy is a deeply religious institution. Our own Christian tradition goes all the way back to King David and Solomon in the Old Testament and the understanding that monarchy is a vocation ordained by God. It is ultimately to God that the monarch is answerable. This understanding is one to which the Queen has always held. It has helped her keep a sense of proportion in her own role and in all that she undertakes. In her Christmas Address in 2002, she said, "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 my best in all that the day brings, and to put my trust in God..." There is no hint of omnipotence here, only a strong sense of duty. Doing one's duty for the cause of right and the sake of others is the hallmark of both the Queen's life and reign. Often when events have left our country feeling unsteady and shaken, the Queen's steadfastness has given us as a nation a capacity to endure.

Queen Elizabeth's humanity expressed in her vulnerability and her purposeful sense of duty are two traits for which, during this Platinum Jubilee, we give thanks to God. Such traits have enabled her to bring us together and at crucial times in our recent history to unite us when all else would divide. This is the true purpose of monarchy, to bring people together. Enjoy the party!

God Bless & God Save the Queen.

*Revd Mark Bailey*