

The Archbishop has written in the [Daily Telegraph](#) on the occasion of Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Amid all the pomp, pageantry and pleasure the Platinum Jubilee brings, it is easy to forget that at its heart, the Coronation seventy years ago was a religious event. And while television cameras may have been granted access to Westminster Abbey, one moment was hidden from public view. Her Majesty was anointed with oil and afforded a time of stillness and reflection before God. She was also given a Bible by Archbishop Fisher and reminded that scripture is "the most valuable thing this world affords".

Geoffrey Fisher was the Archbishop of Canterbury at the time. He came alongside Her Majesty as she prepared for the spiritual journey that lay ahead. One of the treasures in the Lambeth Palace library is the book of devotions, which he prepared and presented to Her Majesty all those years ago. It includes prayers, passages of scripture and daily meditations.

For Her Majesty, the Coronation was "an intimate encounter between a monarch and her God, a moment where the Queen would be called by name and given a lifelong vocation. It marked a moment where her personal relationship with Christ met the national events and public moments that remind us that this country, its laws and customs and culture, is shaped by the Christian faith."

The Queen's Christmas addresses have long been a powerful and public example of this faith in our national life. They show how faith in Christ informs and sustains the values of duty, service, honour and sacrifice we so rightly commend this Jubilee. It is the lens through which she has viewed the world.

Invoking the parable of the Good Samaritan in her Christmas address in 1989, she said "our neighbours are those of our friends, or complete strangers, who need a helping hand. Do you think they might also be some of the living species threatened by spoiled rivers, or some of the children in places like Ethiopia and Sudan who don't have enough to eat?" And referencing the same story in 1985 she concluded her address by saying "that the story of the Good Samaritan reminds us of our duty to our neighbour. We should try to follow Christ's clear instruction at the end of that story: 'Go and do thou likewise.'"

As Supreme Governor of the Church of England, when addressing General Synod the Queen has often spoken about the "ministry of reconciliation" to which Christians are called. She has lived that ministry out in a most remarkable way. In 2012, the Queen famously shook hands with Martin McGuinness, despite the long and painful history and, indeed, her beloved uncle's death at the hands of the IRA in 1979. Her understanding of Jesus' call to be a peacemaker enabled her to quite literally extend the hand of friendship.

All of this has been sustained, replenished and shaped by the rhythms of daily prayer and weekly worship that are the bedrock of a Christian life. This Christian faith is sacrificial as well as deeply practical. It urges behaviour which reflects the heart of God and the life of Christ. In a world that has changed so greatly during Her Majesty's reign, she has, as the Primate of Wales once said, "regarded the Christian faith as the rock on which you have been able to draw strength and comfort", and in turn has so often been the strength and comfort of the nation. This is a discipleship that, gently but truly and generously, makes the love of Christ and the care of God known. Quite simply, she could not be as she has been without her faith in Christ.

In Archbishop Fisher's book of private devotions, the first prayer he gave the Queen to consider was Psalm 25:3-4 "Shew me they ways, O Lord: and teach me thy paths. Lead me forth in thy truth, and learn me: for thou art the God of my salvation; in thee hath been my hope all the day long."

This prayer which Her Majesty prayed seventy years ago is still as relevant today and as a Christian I too take great comfort in it as I seek to follow in the way of Christ. It is, indeed, a calling for all of us.

4 min read

Source URL: <https://www.archbishopofyork.org/news/latest-news/queens-christianity-lens-through-which-she-views-world>