

When I answered my cell phone on Thursday afternoon and the first thing I heard from the parishioner who called was, “The Queen is dead,” I was shocked. The last I heard was that doctors were concerned about her health. Only two days previous, the Queen had given permission for the new Prime Minister to form a government; and now you are telling me she is dead? As I processed the scale of this news my racing mind become suddenly stunned and my slow reaction meant that I completely overlooked what should and could have been the needed and necessary reply to such an announcement, which is “Long live the King.”

During these ten days of mourning we have a focussed opportunity to pause and process our collective grief, and express our gratitude for the remarkable life, faith, and witness of Queen Elizabeth II.

This morning’s liturgy is one of many that will occur on various scales and locations to allow us to process the death of Queen Elizabeth with other people. After all, it is collectively, in community, with others that we do that best.

I find it interesting how much the discourse on the Queen’s death uses the language of death and dead rather than “passing”. The starkness of the announcement “The Queen is dead” is one example of that. Such an announcement appropriately requires the response, “Long live the King,” because the very nature of the monarchy is that, for the sake of civic peace and stability, the monarchy is an institution that is continuous and uninterrupted. There is no *interim* monarch. There is simply the office of the Monarch, which is *always* filled with someone, never vacant, never absent. This intentional continuity is intended to provide stability and peace and promote goodwill between peoples.

It is there so that while we may *feel* lost, we are always found. We may *feel* that we lose our bearings, that we’ve been forgotten or abandoned, that our moorings are loosed, but we are always in a secure and safe place because there is always given to us a reigning Monarch. That is how the institution is designed. And this earthly Monarch points us to and lives from the very core foundation of a heavenly Monarch. The one who always and ultimately finds us, anchors us, and gives us stability: that is the God

of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the God of the desert; the God who surrendered all power and was revealed in a manger, the God who healed and restored the downtrodden and lowly, the God who was humiliated and crucified outside the city walls, and who was raised from the dead, the God who ascended to the throne to become the King of kings and Lord of lords. That is where our earthly monarch lives from.

This is the same God who reveals himself to one untimely born, that one who is regarded as the lowest, the least, the persecutor and the violent murderer, Saul; and it this God who calls him, of all people, to become someone who will give the earliest articulation the Christian faith as a way of mercy, forgiveness, restoration and communion between different peoples.

I was lost but now I am found. I was an alien, but now I am a citizen. If there's hope for Saul, there's hope for us all. So no one, no one is ever lost.

There is much rejoicing over the one lost coin, or the one lost sheep that is found, because in this kingdom, with this Monarch, *all* have been found and *none are ever lost*.

Jesus said, I will not lose any of the ones that you have given me. Not one.

Whether it be an earthly monarchy, like the one that Queen Elizabeth so capably filled, or the one that King Charles is now inheriting; or the heavenly monarchy, that from John the Baptist, to the blessed Mary, from the Apostle Paul to Queen Elizabeth, we are constantly being reminded of and pointed to, so that we can know this: we are always sought after and forever found. Never lost, but always secure.

This security is what we rejoice in for the life of Queen Elizabeth, for all our loved ones gone before us, for the great communion of the saints in light, and for our own lives and souls.

To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only god, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.

