

**Statement from the President of the Bishop's Conference, Cardinal Nichols, following the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II.**

On 21 April 1947, on her twenty-first birthday, Princess Elizabeth said, 'I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service.'

Now, seventy-five years later, we are heartbroken in our loss at her death, and so full of admiration for the unfailing way in which she fulfilled that declaration.

Even in my sorrow, shared with so many around the world, I am filled with an immense sense of gratitude for the gift to the world that has been the life of Queen Elizabeth II.

At this time, we pray for the repose of the soul of Her Majesty. We do so with confidence, because the Christian faith marked every day of her life and activity.

In her Millennium Christmas message, she said, 'To many of us, our beliefs are of fundamental importance. For me the teachings of Christ and my own personal accountability before God provide a framework in which I try to lead my life. I, like so many of you, have drawn great comfort in difficult times from Christ's words and example.'

This faith, so often and so eloquently proclaimed in her public messages, has been an inspiration to me, and I am sure to many. The wisdom, stability and service which she consistently embodied, often in circumstances of extreme difficulty, are a shining legacy and testament to her faith.

Our prayer is that she is now received into the merciful presence of God, there to be reunited with her beloved Prince Philip. This is the promise of our faith, and our deep consolation.

Queen Elizabeth II will remain, always, a shining light in our history. May she now rest in peace.

We pray for His Majesty the King, as he assumes his new office even as he mourns his mother.

God save the King.