

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY 12TH SEPTEMBER 2022

Good Morning

It's thought that some three million people around the world have had an encounter with Queen Elizabeth – some fleeting, others more prolonged.

My own goes back to an invitation from the Queen to me and my wife to stay at Windsor Castle for a night, for what our children called 'a sleep over'. There were a dozen guests and their partners at Dinner.

After the meal The Queen led us all to the Library where the Archivist had curated a personal exhibition for each of the twelve principal guests. One table was adorned by a jaw-dropping collection of Michael Angelo drawings!

The Queen led me to mine - it included the diary of Queen Victoria writing about her appointment of the first Bishop of Liverpool in a spat between the outgoing and incoming Prime Ministers – Disraeli and Gladstone.

Just like her predecessor faith has been integral to the life of Queen Elizabeth.

One of her most significant speeches was at Lambeth Palace in 2012 at a Reception for Faith Leaders to mark her Diamond Jubilee. She spoke about the Established Church.

"Its role is not to defend Anglicanism to the exclusion of other religions. Instead, the church has a duty to protect the free practice of all faiths in this country".

She was reiterating what the Prince of Wales had said 18 years earlier in 1994, that as the future Defender of the Faith his desire was to be 'the protector' of all faiths. As so often, King Charles was ahead of his time.

This commitment by both Queen and King has contributed to the harmony between the different religions in the United Kingdom.

It's done so in the face of hostile forces that distort religion and threaten the security of the world. Indeed, the future stability of our society depends on harmonising relationships between the faiths and between ethnic groups. And the King has committed himself to such diversity throughout his life.

At that Lambeth Palace Reception Rowan Williams, the then Archbishop of Canterbury, drew laughter from the multifaith gathering by saying, with a twinkle in his eye, that the Queen had shown that being religious was 'not eccentric or abnormal'!

I believe many will see in the Queen's Funeral and at the King's Coronation that their values of faith will be, in these moments, both natural and eternal.

The Right Reverend James Jones KBE

Author of 'Justice for Christ's Sake' (SPCK)