

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY 6th JUNE 2022

Good Morning.

One of the captivating sights of yesterday's pageant was the shimmering Gold State Coach drawn by eight Windsor Grey horses wending their way to Buckingham Palace from Westminster Abbey where the Queen was crowned. The Coach was built for George III. Frank Prochaska in his book 'Royal Bounty' traces back to this King George the changing role of the Crown.

'As the political importance of the Monarchy ... declined the Royal Family ... forged a new and popular function for itself as patron ... and fundraiser for the ... underprivileged'.

Today members of the Royal Family inherit the patronage of hundreds of voluntary organisations, and take the initiative to create more charities to meet new needs.

In 1966 the last surviving grand daughter of Queen Victoria, Princess Alice, wrote that Royalty was 'an arduous profession...their daily tasks, for months ahead, are prescribed... from which only illness can excuse them. None but those trained from youth to such an ordeal can sustain it with amiability and composure.'

Because of the length of The Queen's Reign we've not seen a Coronation for nearly seven decades. it's a spiritual act of dedication, and more.

It's sometimes said that Britain's a country without a written constitution. But it is the Coronation Service that sets out how the Nations are to be governed with justice and mercy.

At the start of her own Coronation The Queen took the Oath to govern her peoples 'according to their respective laws'. Then as she received the Sword of State the Archbishop said, 'with this Sword do justice' and 'help and defend widows and orphans'. Shortly before the Crown was placed upon her head she heard these words, 'So execute justice that you forget not mercy'.

It's from these solemn-vows-before-God that the Crown institutions of the State - Parliament, the Judiciary, the Military - derive their authority over her subjects. This is not the stuff of celebrity culture. It's Great Britain's constitution earthed in the Christian religion.

Much of the commentary has rightly been about the Queen's personal qualities – faith, duty, service; her 'amiability and composure'. But to leave it there would be to overlook the constitutional significance of the Coronation oaths that govern both Sovereign and People.

It is these vows to those God-given values of justice and mercy that define the basis of the British constitution.

The Right Reverend James Jones KBE

Bishop James Jones is the author of 'Justice for Christ's Sake' (SPCK)