

# TRINITY NEWS

WEEK 37  
September 11, 2022

*I had an article prepared for this morning, but given the events of this week, I decided to replace it with the following reflections on the Queen and the Monarchy by Andrew Sullivan, a writer born and bred in England, now an American citizen and long time resident of the United States. Needless to say, any political views expressed are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect my own!*

**I**t was a coincidence that The Crown debuted on US television in November 2016. America had just elected a new president ... unstable, indifferent to rules, [and] contemptuous of the law... There was no impulse he didn't indulge, no tradition he wasn't willing to trash.

At the same time, I found myself watching the life of an entirely different head of state: a young, somewhat shy woman suddenly elevated to immense responsibilities and duties in her twenties, hemmed in by protocol, rigidified by discipline. The new president could barely get through the day without some provocation, insult, [or] threat, ... Elizabeth Windsor was tasked as a twenty-something with a job that required her to say or do nothing that could be misconstrued, controversial, or even interestingly human — *for the rest of her life*.

The immense difficulty of this is proven by the failure of almost every other member of her family — including her husband — to pull it off. We know her son King Charles III's views on a host of different subjects, many admirable, some cringe-inducing. We know so much of the psychological struggles of Diana; the reactionary outbursts of Philip; the trauma of Harry; the depravity of Andrew; the agonies of Margaret. We still know nothing like that about the Queen. Because whatever else her life was about, it was not about her.

Part of the hard-to-explain grief I feel today is related to how staggeringly rare that level of self-restraint is today. Narcissism is everywhere. Every feeling we have is bound to be expressed. Self-revelation, transparency, authenticity — these are our values. The idea that we are firstly humans with duties to others that will require and demand the suppression of our own needs and feelings seems archaic. Elizabeth kept it alive simply by example.

*To page 2*

*From page 3*

deeply linked to the present by the monarchy's persistence and the nation's thousand-year survival as a sovereign state — something [few other countries] can claim.

The Queen was crowned in the cathedral where kings and queens have been crowned for centuries, in the same ceremony, with the same liturgy. To have that kind of symbolic, sacred, mystical thread through time and space is something that is simply a gift from the past that the British people, in their collective wisdom, have refused to return.

Long live the King.

### **In memoriam Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II**

In memoriam and to commemorate the life of our dearly beloved Queen Elizabeth II, the Church of the Holy Trinity wish to advise the following services and extend a warm welcome to all those who wish to attend.

#### **Sunday 11th September:**

7:30am regular Eucharist with added prayers in memoriam.

9:30am regular Eucharist with added prayers in memoriam  
and also added in prayer, the UK National Anthem.

#### **Thursday 15th September:**

6:00pm Requiem Mass

#### **Sunday 18th September:**

9:30am commemorative Memorial Service

*From page 1*

With her death, it's hard not to fear that so much she exemplified — restraint, duty, grace, reticence, persistence — are disappearing from the world. As long as she was there, they were at the center of an idea of Britishness that helped define the culture at its best. Perhaps the most famous woman in the world, she remained a sphinx, hard to decipher, impossible to label. She was not particularly beautiful or dashing or inspiring. She said nothing surprising. She was simply the Queen. She showed up. She got on with it. She was there. She was always there.

Whatever else happened to the other royals, she stayed the same. And whatever else happened in Britain — from the end of Empire to Brexit — she stayed the same. This is an achievement of nearly inhuman proportions, requiring discipline beyond most mortals. Think of a year, 1992, in which one son, Andrew, divorced . . . , a daughter, Anne, separated, another son's famously failed marriage, Charles', dominated the headlines, and your house burns down. Here is how Her Majesty "vented":

*1992 is not a year on which I shall look back with undiluted pleasure. In the words of one of my more sympathetic correspondents, it has turned out to be an 'Annus Horribilis.'*

Dry, understated, with the only vivid phrase ascribed to a correspondent. Flawless.

She was an icon, but not an idol. An idol requires the vivid expression of virtues, personality, style. Diana was an idol — fusing a compelling and vulnerable temperament with Hollywood glamor. And Diana, of course, was in her time loved far more intensely than her mother-in-law; connected emotionally with ordinary people like a rockstar; only eventually to face the longterm consequences of that exposure and crumble under the murderous spotlight of it all.

Elizabeth never rode those tides of acclaim or celebrity. She never pressed the easy buttons of conventional popularity. She didn't even become known for her caustic wit like the Queen Mother, or her compulsively social sorties like Margaret. The gays of Britain could turn both of these queens into camp divas. But not her. In private as in public, she had the kind of integrity no one can mock successfully.

*To page 3*

*From page 2*

You can make all sorts of solid arguments against a constitutional monarchy — but the point of monarchy is precisely that it is not the fruit of an argument. It is emphatically *not* an Enlightenment institution. It's a primordial institution smuggled into a democratic system. It has nothing to do with merit and logic and everything to do with authority and mystery — two deeply human needs our modern world has trouble satisfying without danger.

The Crown satisfies those needs, which keeps other more malign alternatives at bay. No one has expressed this better than C.S. Lewis:

*Where men are forbidden to honor a king, they honor millionaires, athletes, or film stars instead; even famous prostitutes or gangsters. For spiritual nature, like bodily nature, will be served; deny it food and it will gobble poison.*

The Crown represents something from the ancient past, a logically indefensible but emotionally salient symbol of something called a nation, something that gives its members meaning and happiness. However [rotten] the economy, or awful the prime minister, or ugly the discourse, the monarch is able to represent the *nation* all the time. In a living, breathing, mortal person.

The importance of this in a deeply polarized and ideological world, where fellow citizens have come to despise their opponents as enemies, is hard to measure. But it matters that divisive figures such as Boris Johnson or Margaret Thatcher were never required or expected to represent the entire nation. It matters that in times of profound acrimony, something unites. It matters that in a pandemic when the country was shut down, the Queen too followed the rules, even at her husband's funeral, and was able to refer to a phrase — “we'll meet again” — that instantly reconjured the days of the Blitz, when she and the royal family stayed in London even as Hitler's bombs fell from the sky.

Every Brit has a memory like this. She was part of every family's consciousness, woven into the stories of our lives, representing a continuity and stability over decades of massive change and dislocation. [It is hard to describe] that kind of comfort, that very human form of patriotism across the decades in one's own life and then the centuries before. When I grew up studying the Normans and the Plantagenets and the Tudors, they were not just artifacts of the distant past, but

*To page 4*