

## **A message from Bishop Jonathan Gibbs to the parishes of the Diocese of Rochester following the death of Her Late Majesty The Queen**

None of us could have imagined that the first time I would be speaking to you as your new bishop would be in the sad circumstances of the death of Her Majesty the Queen. The news of her death came as a huge shock to all of us.

It's just beginning to sink in.

Her Majesty has been a beacon of Christian faith, hope, and love to us in this nation, to the Church of England, to the Commonwealth, and indeed to the wider world for these past 70 years of her reign.

Rightly, we feel a great sense of sadness and of loss as we mourn her passing.

At the same time, in the days ahead, quite rightly, we'll pause to remember and to give thanks for a tremendous example of Christian service. For the way in which she has been a beacon of stability, of faith and hope to our nation throughout her reign.

At the same time of course, in our sadness, we stand alongside His Majesty the King and the whole Royal Family in their bereavement as loss and we seek to uphold them in our prayers.

Thank you for all that you are doing in your local communities to open your churches as places of reflection and prayer.

I know that many of our churches will see many visitors coming this Sunday and next Sunday as people gather to seek solace and support and comfort in a time of loss and of uncertainty for our nation.

At the heart of Her Majesty's life was her faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. That faith which she spoke about so openly in recent years, that faith which sustained her in all the ups and downs of the life of our nation and in need in her own life.

We remember her dignity and courage at the time of the loss of her dear husband Prince Philip.

We remember also the way in which she has led our nation in times of celebration and in times of sorrow.

Thank you for the ways in which you will support your local communities in the days ahead. May we all be inspired by Her Majesty's Christian example.

May we hold to the faith that was so central to her life and may we bring the message of faith, hope and love which inspired her, and through her inspired so many, to those whom we seek to serve in this Diocese of Rochester.

I will be praying for you as I know you will be praying for our nation and for the Royal Family in the days ahead.

Thank you.

Bishop Jonathan Gibbs  
**Bishop of Rochester**