

The Bishops of Burnley and Lancaster
The Rt Revds Philip North & Jill Duff

9th September 2022

A letter from the Bishops of Burnley and Lancaster to the pupils of Church of England Schools in the Diocese of Blackburn

Dear Friends,

These are sad and strange days for our country. You have been privileged to grow up with Elizabeth II as your Queen, one of the most remarkable people of modern times. With her death, many people are feeling the pain of loss.

We are writing first and foremost to ask you to pray. Jesus listens to all of our prayers, but the prayers of children and young people are especially powerful. So please pray for our country at this time when many people are feeling sad and lost. And pray for King Charles as he takes on big new responsibilities.

So here is a suggestion. *Why don't you work together to write a class prayer for our country and then pray it together every day until Her Majesty's funeral?*

As well as praying, we can learn two really important things from the life of Queen Elizabeth II.

The first is about service. The Queen offered her whole self in serving this nation and the Commonwealth family. She made her life a gift which is something which all Christians try to do, just like Jesus who made his life a gift when he died for us.

So how can you follow the Queen's example and serve other people? We all have gifts we can use in service. We can visit elderly family members. We can raise money for charity. We can be good friends to people who are going through difficult times. We can help out with jobs at home. We can take steps to protect the environment. By living as servants, we can make a difference, just like the Queen did.

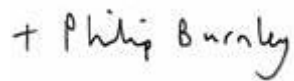
So here is a suggestion. *Why don't you think of one way in which you can serve your school, family or community over the next week? You could then keep a record of all the different ways you have served?*

And the second thing we can learn from Queen Elizabeth is about faithfulness. Through good times and bad, the Queen went on trusting in Jesus, believing with all her heart that he had set her free. She also spoke about her faith and was never afraid to share it with others. She shows us the importance of faith in giving us courage and hope.

So here is a suggestion. *Why don't you find some time to be quiet and on your own over the next ten days and think about your own faith and who it is that you believe in?*

These are sad days for our country. Maybe that will be unlocking memories for you about a time when someone you love has died, and if that's the case, make sure you talk to an adult. And remember, Jesus is always close to those who grieve. Christians believe that Jesus has conquered death so that those who trust in him can live for ever. Elizabeth II may have been our Queen, but now she knows an even greater joy as she takes her place with Jesus in the glory of heaven.

This comes with our prayers for you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Philip Burnley". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly informal style.

Bishop Philip

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Jill Lancaster". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly informal style.

Bishop Jill