

Rev Tim Perkins  
April 15<sup>th</sup> 2021

***“They still did not believe it because of joy and amazement!”*** Luke 24: 41

Dear Friends,

This weekend sees two major events in the life of our nation: the funeral service for HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, and the semi-finals of the FA Cup. Believe it or not, I think both can help to illuminate for us something of the resurrection accounts that we focus on in our worship between Easter and Pentecost!

Whether you are a supporter of the British Monarchy or you wish to see us become a Republic or whether you do not have strong feelings either way, we all have to recognise that the Duke has lived a life of service to the Crown and the State. Yes, it has been a very privileged life, though his early years were marked with great anguish and uncertainty. Yes, he has been well-known for making off-the-cuff remarks that have not been appropriate. But he has embodied a sense of service and duty to others that could be seen as a good use of power and influence on behalf of those less fortunate, unlike many other global leaders with similar status and influence. He has put his life on the line through his service in the Royal Navy and he has championed countless charities and good causes. And his name will forever be associated with the award scheme he set up to enable young people to stretch themselves and offer their own service to their own communities. All of this influenced by his faith in Jesus Christ, the humble King who gave up his crown in exchange for a cross to seek, serve and save the lost.

Prince Philip's death, during this time of Covid, has, I think brought a new dimension to the grief of many thousands of people around the country who have struggled to express their own loss due to the social restrictions upon us all. In a sense, his death and the funeral on Saturday could well be a cathartic experience for many as they are able to bring their own sense of loss and offer it to God along with their own loved ones.

The Prince died as a man of faith, believing in the resurrection of Jesus and the hope of eternal life and so we are able to pray in confidence for him: *“May he rest in peace and rise in glory.”* We offer our prayers too for Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, and her family. We cannot begin to imagine the tension she is living through, needing to grieve for her beloved husband whilst continuing to take on engagements as her own expression of service to the people of this nation and the wider Commonwealth. We pray that *“God would deal graciously with her and all those who mourn, that they may cast every care on God and know the consolation of God's love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* May they be assured of the joy and amazement that awaits us all when the Kingdom of God is fully revealed.

As many of you will know, I am an avid supporter of Leicester City Football Club. For the first time since 1982 they have reached the FA Cup semi-final and play Southampton at Wembley on Sunday evening. A little-known fact to anyone outside of Leicester is that they hold the record for the most appearances in an FA Cup final without actually winning it! Though Leicester are currently reaching above their long-held status as a yo-yo club, who bounce back and forward between the top two divisions of football on a regular basis, despite their current status as a top 4 club, I am not expecting their FA cup record to change!

If you are a follower of football, then you may well know that Leicester's club sponsors are a Thai duty-free company called “King Power.” The work that the company and the family who own it have done to invest in and transform not just the club but the city, is another example of the good use

of status, influence and money. Yes, of course, their primary aim is to achieve success as a football club but they demonstrate a concern for all their employees, from the least to the greatest and through the setting up of a charitable foundation, they are using their status to support others in need. It has not been an easy ride with tragedy and heart-break accompanying the joy and celebration of that great title triumph. But despite the loss, the same sense of calling and service that has been seen in the Duke's life can be seen in the club's relationships with it's wider community. That, I think, is an example of the right sort of "King Power!" And I pray that all of us, who in many ways have privilege and influence beyond what we think, may use it for the good of those in our communities and nation who are often forgotten or downtrodden.

I hope that both on Sunday and when the FA Cup final is played, I am able to relate to our quotation from Luke's gospel, *"They still did not believe it because of joy and amazement!"*

Every blessing,

Rev Tim

### **Christian Aid & Yorkshire West Methodist District Vaccine Appeal**

Yorkshire West Methodist District has partnered with Christian Aid to give people an opportunity to give thanks for their Covid-19 vaccine and help others in crisis across the world. Recognising the deep sense of relief and gratitude experienced by many people after being vaccinated, the two organisations have come together to enable people to pass the blessing on by making a donation to Christian Aid's Coronavirus Appeal. Funds from the appeal are helping vulnerable communities around the world access soap, water, food and vital health information in the face of the pandemic. Many communities around the world face an uncertain wait for a vaccine as questions remain around the cost and timing of a global vaccine programme.

Revd Kerry Tankard, Chair of the District says, "The vaccine is bringing with it a deep sense of relief and hope for families across the UK and we saw that many people wanted to express their gratitude by reaching out to others. This is good news for us all and we genuinely give thanks for how fortunate we are. However, we are acutely aware that this good news is not being experienced equally across the world. While the pandemic affects all of us, it has highlighted the deep disparities in how communities and families are able to protect themselves both within our country and around the world. My hope is that people will give generously to the work of Christian Aid from a place of thanksgiving and a desire to see all people being able to live safely. Whether people can give just a few pounds or a much larger sum, it will be an opportunity to share hope and love with our brothers and sisters across the world who do not have the benefits we have."

You can donate to the Yorkshire West Methodist District's appeal by visiting <https://events.tapsimple.org/online/christian-aid/yorkshirwestvaccineappeal>