

**ADDRESS BY ANTHONY MILLS
AT THE LYONSHALL JUBILEE SERVICE
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On May 10th 1940, the then Princess Elizabeth was to see the third of the three men who were to have such a profound influence on her life and even on the course of history. Her father, King George VI, had already begun to instruct her in the duties and responsibilities of a constitutional monarch; she had already met and fallen in love with Prince Philip (a marriage which has joyfully lasted for 64 years); and on that day the King had sent for Winston Churchill to ask him to be Prime Minister, at a solemn hour in the history of our country, for 1940 was to prove the most dramatic and fateful year in our long island story.

Churchill wrote of becoming Prime Minister: "I felt as if I were walking with destiny and that all my past life has been but a preparation for this hour." Churchill was 65, Princess Elizabeth 14. She was already walking with *her* destiny, which only death could prevent or end.

Many of The Queen's predecessors had squandered their inheritance, ignored the wise advice available and misused their power and opportunities. Princess Elizabeth was determined to learn all that she could in order to reign as a dutiful constitutional monarch.

By one of those quirks of fate, when King George VI died on February 6th 1952 and she became Queen (and 41st monarch since William I), her first Prime Minister was Winston Churchill – how could one fail to be inspired by such a great Englishman?

The Queen was not only walking with destiny but also history for at her Coronation on June 2nd 1953 she wore the Imperial State Crown (which she wore at last month's State Opening of Parliament). Its 3,093 jewels include a sapphire from Edward the Confessor's ring, the Black Prince's ruby worn by Henry V at Agincourt, four pearls which were Elizabeth I's earrings, the Stuart sapphire of Charles II, and the Star of Africa, part of the famous Cullinan diamond.

On becoming Queen the proclamation ran thus: "Elizabeth II by the grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of her other realms and territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith." She also holds the title of Duke of Lancaster, Duke of Normandy (in relation to the Channel Islands) and Lord of Mann (in relation to the Isle of Man). Not only is she Queen of our own country but also of fifteen others including Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The Queen is also the bond and symbol of the Commonwealth. It has 54 member states with no common race, language, religion or flag and is a voluntary association of independent states in the business of promoting democracy, good government, economic development and human rights, which The Queen tirelessly supports.

She is also head of the legal system, head of the armed forces and patron of several hundred organisations, societies and charities and also the fount of honour.

I mention all this not as a history lesson but to show that many thousands of people in a variety of institutions and situations and from all over the world all have a claim on The Queen's time and interest. So how can she relate to them all?

In the 16th century after the defeat of the Spanish Armada with England at the dawn of a new glorious age of literature, music, architecture and exploration and the world's foremost power, Elizabeth I was asked how she might wish to be seen (after all, there had been an Alfred the Great). She is said to have replied: "I am myself; I am content." In our own Queen's case, unmoved by the march of history or passing fads and fancies but not unaware of change and criticism, whether it is

meeting the President of the USA or accepting a posy from a small child, she is herself and we can be content.

For us in this church, The Queen holds a special place for she is Head of the Church of England – or Supreme Governor to give her correct title – and it is her duty to defend it. The Queen invariably attends church every Sunday and on important festivals, wherever she is in the world; and this through belief and conviction and not just duty. Uncompromising in her personal religious standards she is understanding in her appreciation of the different ways in which her subjects and citizens all over the world reach up to God.

Although The Queen takes no part in the Church's formal religious deliberations she does express her views. In February of this year she delivered an impassioned defence of the established Church and stressed the continuing importance of religion in an increasingly secular society. She emphasised that while the Church of which she was head was "woven into the fabric of this country" it also had a duty to protect freedom of worship for other faiths in order to build a better society. She ended her speech: "Faith plays a key role in the identity of millions of people, providing not only a system of belief but also a sense of belonging. Indeed religious groups have a proud track record of helping those in greatest need."

In constitutional terms The Queen reigns but does not rule. Her role as Head of State is not written down but has changed and developed since Magna Carta and the Civil War. Her long continuity as sovereign means that she is extremely well informed on the affairs of state and better informed than virtually all her ministers.

The Queen's role in Parliament is to grant royal assent to all bills – she has already signed 3,500. She opens every session of Parliament and also formally dissolves it. But she has three unwritten rights which are to encourage, advise and warn and this is done through weekly meetings with the Prime Minister (whom she appoints) where she keeps up to date with legislative matters and international issues. The Prime Minister in turn has the opportunity to speak with someone wise, discreet, and with a wealth of experience to whom he can talk freely knowing that nothing would ever be repeated. It would indeed be a foolish Prime Minister who ignored her rights, for she has unrivalled knowledge of people and events and has met more properly important people in positions of authority both here and throughout the world than almost anyone alive which includes numerous Heads of State (which includes 11 US Presidents).

In my address so far I have been trying to show just how much work is generated by the importance of her position. And yet I think that most people have little realisation of just what is involved, when all the public is shown are glimpses of state occasions and routine events such as opening buildings, planting trees, enjoying her most knowledgeable love of horses or meeting people on tours such as the current Jubilee one where she will travel with Prince Philip throughout the United Kingdom. The best analogy in the Titanic anniversary year is that with most of the iceberg being under water, so most of The Queen's work is out of sight.

Her diary is planned up to two or more years in advance. On a daily basis mornings see her at her desk in Buckingham Palace scanning newspapers, reading correspondence and making a start on dealing with the day's official papers. There may be people to receive in audience (new ambassadors, judges, bishops, armed forces officers etc); there might be an investiture or a morning visit. Many lunchtimes involve entertaining a cross-section of people. Afternoons often concern public engagements – last year she carried out about 500. In the late afternoon there are often Privy Council meetings and each Wednesday a meeting with the Prime Minister. Each day at 7.30pm a report of the day's parliamentary proceedings arrives. In the evening there may be other public engagements and she has initiated themed receptions to entertain people from a wide range of professions and interests. But the day is not yet over, for The Queen must go through what are called the 'red boxes'. These are

from the Government and contain classified security briefings, embassy reports from round the world, Commonwealth matters, Government policy papers, cabinet documents, telegrams, letters and state papers. They all have to be read and where necessary approved and signed and all are dealt with the same day. There are only two days in the year when she is free of these responsibilities – Christmas Day and Easter Day.

So much is expected of someone who is controlled by her constitutional position. For example her public speeches are either (like The Queen's Speech at the opening session of Parliament) written by the Government or approved by it. Her timetable fits in with state duties which include visits here or abroad. She must submerge her personal point of view for the good of the job yet not become a mere cipher. She is forced to lead a life remote from most people's as hers is an inescapable public existence. So she relishes chances to meet people wherever she can. She has combined regality and majesty with an unpretentious family life and like many of her subjects she has experienced the highs and lows of it. Through her the Monarchy has continued to evolve and the way she has adapted without succumbing to faddish fashions is a gift of genius. She does not believe in change simply for its own sake and is determined that our ancient rituals and traditions should not be lost. During all the changes of the last 60 years The Queen has been the one constant and it is hard to think of any other head of an institution who has so rarely put a foot wrong over such a long period of time.

The Queen may not wield political power but she certainly has influence, which is rarely seen publicly. Let me give you one recent example. Last year The Queen made the first visit by a Sovereign to the Irish Republic in 100 years. There were great security concerns and fears for her safety. There was definite tension until the State Banquet. The Queen began her speech with three words of Gaelic. The Irish President looked startled, looked round and just said: "Wow!" From that moment on tensions visibly relaxed as did security and the rest of her visit showed much popular support and even allowed her to carry out her noted walkabouts. A small gesture, but typical of The Queen, and with positive results which could not have been foreseen.

Queen Elizabeth I once said: "I have always so behaved myself that under God I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good will of my subjects." So it seems appropriate to conclude this address with our Queen's own words and promises for she regards her role very much as a partnership between herself and her people, and has always put duty before self.

On her 21st birthday in 1947 in a speech from South Africa, broadcast to the Commonwealth, she said: "I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service ... but I shall not have the strength to carry out this resolution alone unless you join in it with me."

In 1953, as part of her Coronation oath she promised: "I have in sincerity pledged myself to your service as so many of you are pledged to mine. Throughout my life and with all my heart I shall strive to be worthy of your trust."

Finally in her speech to Parliament in March of this year she said: "We are reminded here of our past, of the continuity of our national story and the virtues of resilience, ingenuity and tolerance which created it. I have been privileged to witness some of that history and with the support of my family rededicate myself to the service of our great country and its people now and in the years to come."

The Queen's virtues have been remarked on by many commentators – experience, insight, diligence, compassion, kindness, tolerance, selflessness and respect for all. Can anyone doubt that The Queen has in all sincerity kept her promises and devoted her life to our service – and will continue to do so? We are fortunate indeed that she is our Head of State.

I hope that we may be able to say for a long time to come: "Long to reign over us". GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!