

# Remembering The Duke of Edinburgh: A Sunday Service with the Archbishop of York

## REFLECTION

### *The Archbishop of York*

In the last week we've been hearing again and again the words of The Queen, describing her beloved husband on their fiftieth wedding anniversary as her 'strength and stay'.

I'm struck by that phrase, which probably came into The Queen's vocabulary via the hymn 'O Strength and Stay, upholding all creation'. Those Victorian words are actually a translation of an ancient hymn which prays that God, the strength and stay of all of us, who alone remains unmoved in all the changes and chances of this world, might grant to each one of us a 'calm, unclouded ending... with dawning glories of the eternal day'.

The Duke of Edinburgh was such a stalwart support, ever to be seen at The Queen's side at the public engagements they shared. He supported her work in other ways. And he was there for her at difficult times, too, in their over seventy years of devoted marriage. He broke the news to her that her own father had died and that she was now Queen. And in all the years since then, his love for her, and their mutual joy, support, and comfort have been an inspiration to many.

In this generous loving care, Prince Philip helped to reveal for us something of the love that God wants to show each one of us. As the First Letter of St. John says, 'if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us... God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God in them.' And perfect love, a stalwart support, a strength and stay, casts out fear. Fear of the future, fear of separation, fear of the end of our lives. Casts out that fear because in Jesus, God has destroyed death and has gathered all people to himself.

As we remember Prince Philip, let us pray for the Queen, the Royal Family, and for all who mourn, that they may experience something of that perfect love of God, shown to us in his Son Jesus Christ, who died and rose again and has prepared a place in glory for those who love him.