



*If you look at any coin with the Queen's portrait on it you will see round her head 'ELIZABETH II D.G. REG. F.D.' This is short for 'Elizabeth II Dei Gratia Regina Fidei Defensor'. This can then be translated as 'Elizabeth II, by the Grace of God, Queen, Defender of the Faith'.*

*The Queen's position is inseparable from the Christian faith as the supreme governor of the Church of England. As a country we are in the privileged position of having a monarch who has a deep personal faith. The Queen gains strength and inspiration from her Christian faith to carry out her difficult and complex role. If you look back on her Christmas speeches over the last few years, it quickly becomes apparent just how much her faith means to her:*

The simple facts of Jesus' life give us little clue as to the influence he was to have on the world. As a boy he learnt his father's trade as a carpenter. He then became a preacher, recruiting twelve supporters to help him. But his ministry only lasted a few years and he himself never wrote anything down. In his early thirties he was arrested, tortured and crucified with two criminals. His death might have been the end of the story, but then came the resurrection and with it the foundation of the Christian faith.

For me the teachings of Christ and my own personal accountability before God provide a framework in which I try to lead my life. I, like so many of you, have drawn great comfort in difficult times from Christ's words and example." (2000)

I know just how much I rely on my own faith to guide me through the good times and the bad. Each day is a new beginning, I know that the only way to live my life is to try to do what is right, to take the long view, to give of my best in all that the day brings, and to put my trust in God. Like others of you who draw inspiration from your own faith, I draw strength from the message of hope in the Christian gospel." (2002)

For me, as a Christian, one of the most important of these teachings is contained in the parable of the Good Samaritan, when Jesus answers the question, Who is my neighbour?

It is a timeless story of a victim of a mugging who was ignored by his own countrymen but helped by a foreigner, and a despised foreigner at that.

The implication drawn by Jesus is clear. Everyone is our neighbour, no matter what race, creed or colour. The need to look after a fellow human being is far more important than any cultural or religious differences." (2004)

Although we are capable of great acts of kindness, history teaches us that we sometimes need saving from ourselves – from our recklessness or our greed.

God sent into the world a unique person – neither a philosopher nor a general, important though they are, but a Saviour, with the power to forgive.

Forgiveness lies at the heart of the Christian faith. It can heal broken families, it can restore friendships and it can reconcile divided communities. It is in forgiveness that we feel the power of God's love.

In the last verse of this beautiful carol, O Little Town of Bethlehem, there's a prayer:

O Holy Child of Bethlehem,  
Descend to us we pray.  
Cast out our sin  
And enter in.  
Be born in us today.

It is my prayer that on this Christmas day we might all find room in our lives for the message of the angels and for the love of God through Christ our Lord." (2011)

*The Queen spoke these words on Christmas day, but actually they are appropriate for any day. Everyone needs compassion, the kindness of a Saviour, and the Queen seems to understand that. If you would like to know more about the Queen's faith, or experience for yourself the forgiveness of past wrongs and the love of God made known through Jesus Christ, contact the address for further information.*

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# The Faith of a Queen



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