

# Death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and proclamation of His Majesty King Charles III: address to the House of Assembly of the Turks and Caicos

Mr Speaker, and Honourable Members of this House of Assembly.

Mr Speaker you have kindly offered me the opportunity to make a statement to the House.

This will be the first time I have done so since my Inauguration. The circumstances that prompt it would never be wished for, but given our late Queen has left us and our new King is proclaimed, it is an opportunity I am most grateful for.

Members of the House will be aware I served Her Majesty, both in uniform and in wider public service, for 40 years. As a result I have my own strong feelings about Her Majesty's death and, more importantly, her most remarkable of lives.

On this though I will keep my counsel, not least because I know there are Members of this House of Assembly who have met Her late Majesty more often than I have, and more importantly this is your House, and I would not presume for my own words and thoughts to lead your tribute.

I will therefore only reflect on yesterday, when the King accompanied by his Queen Consort, spoke to the combined Houses of Parliament in Westminster Hall. This monumental structure, built in 1097, is where our late Queen's coffin will shortly Lie-in-State, and where the Premier and myself will go to pay our last respects to her on behalf of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

On our late Sovereign her son, now Charles III, said to Parliament yesterday:

We gather today in remembrance of the remarkable span of The Queen's dedicated service to her nations and peoples. While very young, Her late Majesty pledged herself to serve her country and her people and to maintain the precious principles of constitutional government which lie at the heart of our nation.

This vow she kept with unsurpassed devotion. She set an example of selfless duty which, with God's help and your counsels, I am resolved faithfully to follow.

He went on:

As I stand before you today, I cannot help but feel the weight of history which surrounds us and which reminds us of the vital parliamentary traditions to which members of both Houses dedicate yourselves, with such personal commitment for the betterment of us all. Parliament is the living and breathing instrument of our democracy.

The Speaker of the House of Commons, in addressing the King, said:

We know you hold the greatest respect, the precious traditions, the freedoms, and responsibilities of our unique history and our system of parliamentary government and we know that you will bear those responsibilities which fall to you with the fortitude and dignity, demonstrated by Her late Majesty.

For my part, I would only say that this relationship between Parliament and Crown, and the seamless transfer of power between both a past and a present monarch, and a past and present prime minister, in the same week, is built on many of the traditions and courtesies we extend to each other, and more to the point the courtesies that you extend to each other, in this Chamber. It is at moments like this that tradition is not only important in providing comfort, but also delivering certainty.

Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the courtesy you pay our late Sovereign in convening the House for this sad but special occasion. She was many things but at her very core she was a committed Christian and will, I know, both rest in peace and rise again in glory. And so I wish her son, and our new King Charles III, a long and successful Reign. He had the most exemplary of women, both as his mother and as his Queen, to show him the way.

May God Bless these Turks and Caicos Islands, may God receive his faithful servant, Queen Elizabeth II, as she was faithful to us, and may God Save the King.