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Covid, crown and crosier: A lockdown reflection on monarchy and episcopacy

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This study was conducted during 111 days of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) lockdown and reviewed current media articles that revealed government bodies and institutions have come to view people not as priceless treasures, but in terms of the money they can generate and the economic value they may give to a nation. This view was contrasted with the historic Christian concept of inherent royalty and value that is intrinsic to all people, and embodied in monarchs and bishops. This study focuses on a review of historical literature and biblical texts around monarchy and the episcopacy in light of current media articles related to COVID-19. It found that politics and policy need to be grounded into the more fundamental aspects of our human condition and that it is the compassion and care people have for those who are more fragile: be it financially, physically, mentally or spiritually, that bishops and monarchs should be embodying in a time of COVID-19.

Contribution: This study drew its key insights from contested historical thoughts on the role of monarchs and bishops. The results of this line of thinking challenge us as we consider the future function and role of these positions, and what they mean in times of crises. The key insight gained is the reminder that the lives of all people in our communities are important as each person holds an intrinsic value that cannot be traded for the sake of a country's economy and business desires to turn a profit during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19; episcopacy; monarchy; divine right; economic value; Anglican theology; apostolic succession; kingdom of God.

Introduction

Looking around the world today, especially in the shadow of lockdowns imposed as a response to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), it is evident that we have been living in a construct of superficiality and meaninglessness. Governments and institutions seem to view people not as priceless treasures but in terms of the money they can generate and the economic value they may give (London Daily 2020). In this moment, a blanket of melancholy has descended upon us.

Throughout history, there have been various forms of government (Lovenduski 1998:197–212) and religious identities (Queen 1996:489–495). On some level, these structures speak about how people perceive and understand their intrinsic value and place in the world. At times, such as during a global pandemic like COVID-19, these views and values (De Jong, Ziegler & Schippers 2020) bring to the fore a situation highlighting many psychological challenges. The emotions people experience from the communal effects of government responses to COVID-19 include sadness and hollowness around the loss of their normal lives, leading to a loss of meaning in life (Berinato 2020). A review of historical Christian and biblical literature around the positions of Judeo-Christian monarchy and the episcopacy can once again be useful in grounding people back into an in-depth understanding of self-worth, value and meaning, especially if the ideals embodied in these positions can be brought back into the public sphere of engagement.

Background

The Anglican Church is intrinsically monarchical, regardless of where people sit in current polity (The Nicene Creed 1662; Cross 2017). Our essence as a 'church' arises from our institutional relationships (be they current, historical, positive or negative) with the British Crown ('Crown' in this context refers to the British monarchy). Acknowledging the fact that these relationships lie somewhat in the past (McMullin 2014:81–92), and there are some who would desire they were left there, we need to remember that we build the future through the lens of the past and use our history to give us meaning and value: one of the losses suffered through COVID-19 lockdowns.

Some may find the idea of monarchs and bishops a quaint relic held over from a bygone era, for we live today in a world that, in the process of attempting to make all people equal, has, by accident rather than design, stripped our worlds and lives of beauty, mysticism, magic and ceremony (Hierotheos 1998). We have excised and cauterised public expressions and rituals (Ivanescu 2016:15) that mark our faith journeys and display our spirituality. Society has turned people away from their intrinsic royalty (by this I mean the Christian idea that, through the rite of Baptism, we become joint heirs with Christ of God's Kingdom, and as such should have an internal sense of being royal) and self-worth, and we have devoted our energy and lives in a world that has dragged people down to the lowest common denominator and made each person a statistic (Liddy, Hanrahan & Byrd 2020). Though this change in thinking and living did not occur overnight, the actions of governments and their treatment of people in places like Britain and Australia have brought this reality and banality of being to the fore. Yet our monarchs and bishops (in this sense, all bishops within the threefold order of ministry: bishops, priests and deacons) remind us of a divine value and justice. They bring the dream of a future – rich and vibrant, in contact with our past: our history and our faith – and anchor us in the present along the continuum of God's creation, including in the midst of a COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. This is evidenced from current media messages, which are reviewed below, followed by a historical literature review on monarchy and episcopacy, and then the findings and discussions thereof.

Current media messages

The value of life has been given an economic value, which is then used to quantify the benefits of avoiding a fatality (Hopkins 2014). During this pandemic, governments considering reopening and pushing their communities back to normalcy for the sake of economic growth do so in the light of contemplating the transaction between lives and money. Putting monetary values on human life, and indeed all aspects that make up our lives, is an action governments have become accustomed to, and frequently do so. Yet every death from the COVID-19 pandemic is a tragedy for any loved one who cannot look forward to rejoicing when it is all over. This tragedy is even more poignant when people die alone: discarded and forgotten.

People as a statistic in Australia

A recent media dialogue surrounding COVID-19 responses has brought this commoditised view of people to the fore. The vice-chancellor of the University of Melbourne, Duncan Maskell, was reported asking the question, 'what is our tolerance for death in this global pandemic?' (Le Grand 2020). His suggestion was that, going forward, governments should use a unit of measurement employed by economists to predict and assess the impact of health policies: the quality-adjusted life year (QALY) (The Department of Health 2002). The QALY works on the belief that a life nearer its end, regardless of how it got there, (be it through age, disease, socio-economic factors, illness or accident), is empirically different from a healthy life closer to its beginning. As such, the motivating principal value judgement that this belief is built on is that some lives are worth more than others. Maskell (Le Grand 2020) said:

> We have to look at this as an overall picture. My personal view is there should be some forms of sensible, public health, QALY-based analysis done and tough calls made. It boils down to a basic but very hard moral philosophy: 'What is the value of a 90-year-old's life versus the value of the continuing livelihood and happiness of a 25-year-old?' (n.p.).

His comments are not the anomaly. Much of our world has focused not on how to help people, or the desire to save lives, but rather the effect government reactions to COVID-19 have had on their respective economies.

People as a statistic in Britain

In Britain, news articles have focused on how its economy has contracted, suffered and shrunk because of the effects of lockdown measures (Chan & Plummer 2020). Business lobby groups are urging the British government to do more to support the economic recovery. Their priority of the economy comes at a growing risk of infection, long-term side effects from infection and more deaths. These groups are opposed to the British prime minister discouraging office workers from returning to their desks (Neate 2020). The director general of the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), Adam Marshall, felt such a move risked derailing an already fragile recovery and that:

> Businesses understand that further restrictions are necessary to tackle the rising number of coronavirus cases, but these measures will impact business and consumer confidence at a delicate time for the economy (Neate 2020).

Within Anglican theology and doctrine, there are theological and political leanings of the church that are oftentimes overlooked, but yet are intrinsically bound to who we are. When we look at monarchs and bishops, our thinking and way of seeing the world are jarred, and we are reminded of other realities and ways of being. This is a way of seeing that says: all lives matter, that all lives have more value than we can express, and that, no matter how easy or hard a decision is, sometimes there are clearly right and wrong ones. Whilst politicians, prime ministers and presidents come and go – voted in and out based on popularity and greedy promises – a monarch is called to sit at a distance from such games.

Monarchy

Regardless of what powers a monarch theoretically has, or uses, the monarchy embodies something deeply symbolic. This is brought into stark relief when we look at politicians across the globe and how they appear perplexed, ill informed, impotent or deceitful. Monarchy rises above and takes the people with it: representing the best of us in even the worst of circumstances.

Position of monarch

This deeply symbolic position in the Western world has been built on the concept of the Divine Right of Kings, which is still seen in the monarch today. In Britain, the Queen is officially titled, 'Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God …' (Royal Central 2020). The concept of the Divine Right of Kings is that God has granted temporal power to the political ruler, corresponding God's granting of spiritual power to the Church (ed. Duignan 2019). Such a concept might be dismissed by many, or even mocked by those who misconstrue this Divine Right to mean Divine Absolutism: a form of government where the head of state has absolute power, doing whatever they want and with their power being both unlimited and unchallengeable (Fox 1960:128–142).

Divine Right acknowledged that although the monarch derived their authority immediately from God, it also held with the view that monarchs were also limited by the law (Burgess 1992:840). Thus, far from making monarch's power absolute, which one can see as tyrannical, Divine Right was highly adverse to the notion that monarchs had any substantial latitude for the discretionary exercise of sovereign will. Instead, Divine Right embedded monarchs in a divinely created hierarchy, and this position required them to obey the rules and customs, whilst serving the purposes that God had set (Daly 1979:21–51). This requirement is because of the concept of Divine Right being a Scriptural argument. Whether it is a sign of later composition or not (Dietrich transl. Vette 2007:11), a passage in Deuteronomy speaks towards Israel's future and regulates for monarchy:

> When you enter the land the Lord, your God is giving you, and you take it over and inhabit it, you may think; 'I should select a king to rule over me like the other nations around me', you shall surely select a king the Lord God chooses. You must choose a brother to set as king over yourselves; he may not be a foreigner, who is not your brother. He shall not multiply horses for himself, nor shall he cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, since the Lord has said to you, 'You shall never again return that way'. He shall not take many wives for himself, because they will turn his heart away from the Lord. And he shall not increase silver and gold for himself. Now when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he must write for himself this book of Deuteronomy on a scroll before the Levitical priests. 19 He must always keep that with him and read it all the days of his life in order that he will learn to fear the Lord God by obeying all the words of these injunctions and righteous judgements, in order that his heart may not be lifted up above his brother, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or to the left, in order that he may live long in his kingdom and that he and his sons may live long in Israel. (Dt 17:14–20)

This passage shows that monarchs are not above the law, but must obey and uphold it, and also that those in authority must not abuse their power by enriching themselves. A monarch is one who would belong to the people who recognised the authority of God and who would rule according to God's principles: not chasing after power and ruling the people with armies and treaties that viewed people, particularly women, as commodities, nor chasing after wealth or putting themselves above their people, but serving and providing for the least (Work 2009). During the COVID-19 lockdown measures, attention was drawn to political leaders who did not follow the rules as many of those in power believed themselves to be above the law, with even the top advisor to the British Prime Minister admitting to travelling across the country by car to stay on his parents' property during the nationwide lockdown (Ketchell 2020). When those in power are at liberty to break the law, then the liberty of all people is compromised and this callous disregard by those in power to the difficulties and trauma of the people living under them (Cooper 2020) becomes a further sign of the fact that they have been turned into an economic value they may give to a nation.

A king in Israel

Israel did not go seeking a king until the time of the prophet Samuel. All the elders of Israel had requested a king because Samuel, having grown old, appointed his two sons, Joel and Abijah, as judges for Israel, but they were not godly men and had set themselves after dishonest gain, accepting bribes and perverting justice (1 Sm 8:1–4). However, the elders did not ask for a king who would rule with Divine Right, following the commandments and instructions of God, but rather 'a king to judge us, such as all the other nations have' (1 Sm 8:4). Whilst Samuel was displeased as he saw their as a rejection of himself, yet whilst praying God told Samuel this was actually a rejection of God, or God's anointed and told Samuel to warn them that a king, not of God would:

> Take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plough his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. Your menservants and maidservants and the best of your young men and donkeys he will take for his own use. He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. (1 Sm 8:11–17)

They wanted, so Samuel gave them, a monarch such as 'all the other nations had'. The elders of Israel did not ask for a king God would choose, but that the world would choose: much like one can see in debates today when candidates vie for presidencies.

Elected kingship

Samuel gave the people Saul, a man who could pay attention to donkeys in his care, and would rather take his servants' money to pay a seer than do so at his own expense (1 Sm 9:3–10). Saul failed at being king, and spent his rule satisfying his own desires. Whilst monarchs derive authority from God directly, and not directly from the popularity of their people, it does allow for the possibility that kings might be elected or chosen by their people. According to

James (VI and I), the monarch is then bound to protect the laws and people of that kingdom (James 1616:531). God would remove Saul and replace him with David, who was God's choice for king. David: a shepherd like God, living by the commandments, and keeping the Lord always before him. God said of David: 'I have found David, son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do' (Ac 13:22). David, as monarch, was loving (Ps 18:1), reverent (Ps 18:3), trusting (Ps 27:1), humble (Ps 62:9) and repentant (Ps 51:1).

God made a covenant with David: a promise that he and his descendants had a 'divine right' to rule, and that even if his descendants should do wrong, whilst God would punish them for their wrongdoing, this right would not be taken away:

> The Lord was not willing to destroy Judah, for the sake of his servant David, since the Lord had promised David to give a lamp to him through his descendants forever. (2 Ki 8:19)

This promise is the Divine Right of Kings. This covenant is unique in that it was the only covenant that God made unconditionally, every other covenant requires doing something in return:

> And when your days are full up and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will be your flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He will build a house for My Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. (2 Sm 7:12–13)

Divine right of kings

With this Divine Right, there is the acknowledgement that this covenant is not based on works, and one is not expected to see a monarch who does no fault, and nor does it promise that a tyrant will be allowed to prosper. We see this lived out in the lives and reigns of Ahaziah, Jehoash and Amaziah (2 Ki 8:26; 12:1; 14:1–4). If it were works or spiritual devotion, then Scripture would hold Josiah rather than David to be the more esteemed king:

> Before him, there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses, nor did any like him arise after. (2 Ki 23:25)

Yet as time went on, Israel's kings stopped following the requirements of Divine Right, and their monarchs fell from grace. Israel became a people in captivity, the land divided, suffering persecution at the hands of corrupt rulers, becoming a client state and eventually after a rebellion, being totally crushed and ruled by the Roman Empire. This, however, did not remove Divine Right: one does not need a throne, castle or crown to be royalty, and so, whilst Israel was living under the abusive power of Rome, God sent Jesus born as a king, of the Davidic line (Lk 3:23–38), who lived and embodied the model of monarchy that God had set: showing love, trust, reverence, humility and embracing repentance (Phlp 2:5–8). Jesus, the King, now reigns in the spiritual realm of the Kingdom of Heaven (Col 3:1–2).

English monarchs

Regardless of how history has portrayed British monarchs, when ruling with Divine Right, even allowing for human mistakes and frailties, they have tried to uphold the law. Even though Henry VIII in 1515 stated that: 'English kings had no superior but God' (Redworth 1987:31), when Henry VIII sought an annulment from his marriage to Catherine of Aragon in 1533 he turned first to the Pope who claimed he was the only one with the powers to annul the marriage, and refused to (Newman Brooks 2004:151), before turning to his lawyers. They pointed out, from the old statutes of praemunire, the illegality of appeals outside the realm of England, and argued that England had complete legal independence from Rome, thus only a local decision was required to dispense with canon law (Chapman 2006:15). Indeed, it is even said that the general objective of the apologists for the Elizabethan Ecclesiastical and Civil polities 'was to free the Crown from bondage to St. Peter while binding it to Magna Carta' (Lamont 1966:22–32, 24) for at no point is the monarchy free from or above the law. Thus, the monarchs are bound to exercise their authority through defined constitutional channels. William Wilkes, Chaplain in Ordinary to James I, declared that monarchs cannot alter and change the laws at their pleasure because the rule of 'his government is not onlie royall, but polhtick' (Wilkes 1605:49). It is ever the tyrant, of which our world appears to have many, who refuses to obey law (Rawlinson 1619:6–8).

Charles I, the only saint to be canonised by the Church of England after the Reformation, is held a martyr because he died for the Church. Whilst imprisoned, he was offered his life if he would abandon episcopacy (Lambeth Conference Resolutions 1888, *Resolution 11*), an offer that he refused: this would have taken the Church of England away from being part of the 'one Catholic and Apostolic Church' (The Nicene Creed 1662), changing her into a sect (The Society of King Charles the Martyr 2020). His views and understanding had great influence and bearing upon the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, regarded as 'the authorised standard of worship and doctrine in this Church' (The Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia). Charles (1649), before his execution, wrote:

> The best Government and highest Sovereignty, you can attain to, is, to be subject to him [God], that the Scepter of his Word and Spirit may rule in your heart. The true glory of Princes consists in advancing Gods' Glory in the maintenance of true Religion, and the Churches good. (p. 257)

Even in our world of work and mediocrity (Hermanowicz 2013:363–387), there is still so much excitement about a royal baby, especially a future heir, even though it will be at some indefinable time and moment that they will come to rule their kingdom and dominions, just like Christians who look forward with anticipation to the unknown time and moment when Jesus will come to rule in actuality over his kingdom and dominions (Rv 20; 1 Cor 15:24). Whilst Christians look towards a day when that Kingdom will be ushered into this world, the retaining of a monarchy serves as a living reminder

for when we see the monarch, how they behave, rule and live, there is the ability to hold them up to the image of Christ upon the throne and look forward to his coming again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom having no end (The Nicene Creed 1662). Monarchy can be hard to accept because a monarch is outside one's personal choice or control (Moore 2019). Indeed, for a person such as this, the arbiter of the fitness of their Head of State rests solely within themselves: whether or not that person performs well (or unwell) thus depends on what the individual wants them to be, which might change at any moment (Sinclair 2019). As such, they would rather prefer a model in which they pick their own 'little kings' based on any desires that need sating in the present, much like in the past when people turned away from God and how God called people to live:

> They caused kings to ascend and reign, but not by me. They make princes to rule, but without my approval. With their money (their silver and gold), they make themselves idols to cut off and consume to their own destruction. (Hs 8:4)

Some people, in their desire for power, and out of a resentment that others have what they do not, will tear or put other people down. This is an attempt to make everyone 'un-special' and equally low, and, like the politicians who flouted COVID-19 restrictions use the power they have to put themselves above others (Ketchell 2020). This is the opposite of what Jesus had done: 'The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. And if we are children, then we are heirs: heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ' (Rm 8:16–17). For through the gift of baptism, we become children of God and siblings of Jesus: thus princes and princesses of God's kingdom. All, through baptism, are affirmed as royally special and to be of intrinsic value: regardless of their circumstance, such as even the blood relatives of Jesus found themselves in:

> Of the family of the Lord there were still living the grandchildren of Jude, who is said to have been the Lord's brother according to the flesh. Information was given that they belonged to the family of David, and they were brought to the Emperor Domitian by the Evocatus. For Domitian feared the coming of Christ as Herod also had feared it. And he asked them if they were descendants of David, and they confessed that they were. Then he asked them how much property they had, or how much money they owned. And both of them answered that they had only nine thousand denarii, half of which belonged to each of them. And this property did not consist of silver, but of a piece of land which contained only thirty-nine acres, and from which they raised their taxes and supported themselves by their own labour. Then they showed their hands, exhibiting the hardness of their bodies and the callousness produced upon their hands by continuous toil as evidence of their own labour. And when they were asked concerning Christ and his kingdom, of what sort it was and where and when it was to appear, they answered that it was not a temporal nor an earthly kingdom, but a heavenly and angelic one, which would appear at the end of the world, when he should come in glory to judge the quick and the dead, and to give unto every one according to his works. (Eusebius 1890, *Historia Ecclesiae*, 3.20)

Here we see that members of the family of King David, and grand-nephews of Jesus, royal by both physical and spiritual right, confronted by the authorities of their day. They had no armies, no positions of worldly power, no servants and now no castles of their own. Between the two brothers, they owned 39 acres of land which they worked themselves to pay their taxes and survive. The rigours of life have been harsh and left its mark upon them. Yet they, poor and hardworking labourers, are royalty. This same sense of royalty and intrinsic self-value should be reflected back into each and every person suffering hardships and loss brought on by COVID-19 to affirm and lift them up at this time in their lives. If the position of monarchy itself is not being used to build this self-worth and value into people, then the Church, and in this context Anglican churches, needs to step into the void and provide this embodiment of intrinsic royalty.

Bishops

At times though a monarch's governorship over a territory fades away or ends, the secular reminder of God's identity ebbs from consciousness. 'The tarnish on the Crown, it seems, redound[s] to the lustre of the bishop's mitre' (Sirota 2014). It is here that the spiritual monarchy of the episcopate (Sirota 2014) is all the more needed. When there is no monarchy, the presence of a bishop highlights this absence but sill directs Christians to the future king.

The English term 'bishop' is derived from the Greek word ἐπίσκοπος meaning 'overseer' (Moulton 1978:160). Thus, a bishop is entrusted with the care, and a position of authority and oversight, of a local Church: a diocese (Mitchell & Young 2006:418). They are responsible for teaching, governing and sanctifying the faithful of their diocese and sharing these duties with the priests and deacons who serve under them (O'Grady 1997:17). Our bishops claim apostolic succession, a direct historical lineage dating back to the original 12 Apostles.

Apostolic succession is the manner whereby the ministry of the Church is understood to flow from the Apostles, by a continuous succession, through a succession of bishops. Each bishop is consecrated by other bishops, who themselves were similarly consecrated in a succession going back to the Apostles. During the early centuries of the Christian era (along with the life of the community and the transmission of the Gospel), bishops became one of the methods that the apostolic tradition of the Church was communicated through (World Council of Churches 1982). Apostles appointed bishops as successors to continue their work where they had planted churches, and directed that these bishops should, in turn, do the same and appoint their own (Clement of Rome, *The First Epistle of Clement*). Ignatius of Antioch (1885) wrote:

> See that you all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the presbytery as you would the apostles; and reverence the deacons, as being the institution of God. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop. (*The Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans*)

Apostolic succession is not simply a transmission of powers. It is succession in a church, a Christian community, that witnesses to the apostolic faith, in communion with other

episcopal churches, whose bishops also stand as witnesses of the same apostolic faith as a sign of the unity and continuity of the Church (which transcends denominational boundaries) (Eckerdal 2017). A continuity of being that can be traced from the lips of Jesus to our churches today. This continuity is a structure that brings the future Kingdom of God into our present. The mission and central theme of Jesus' preaching was that in his own work and person, instead of the Kingdom of God belonging exclusively to some future time, the Kingdom of God was now manifest present, even though it was not yet fully established. The Kingdom of God continues to be manifested in our present reality through the Church (Padilla 1984). The Church proclaims salvation through Jesus, and reminds us that God is at work bringing about God's purpose for Creation (1 Cor 15). The Church does this by establishing signs of the Kingdom. When James, the brother of Jesus and the first bishop of the Church, wrote about pure and undefiled religion, he wrote of it being to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and in keeping oneself uncorrupted from the world. As such, drawing from the prophets of the Old Testament, Christians are to learn to do right, seek justice, correct the oppressor, defend the fatherless and plead for the widow (Ja 1:27).

Discussion findings

It is rare for leaders in our society to have their political actions live out their spiritual beliefs. Instead, there is a large disconnect between what we hold to be true internally and the physical world we engage in. Our leaders 'oscillate between dead managerialism of technocratic jargon and the overwrought hyperbole of populism' (Lewis 2016). It is rare for politics and political policy to be grounded into the more fundamental aspects of our human condition, but historical thoughts on the role of monarchs and bishops, who embody their people, as well as being a living link of the continuum of the Christian faith, know their communities, and can speak for them in a way most leaders do not (Sherwood 2018). The review of media articles, however, found that politicians did not embody the people they represented, but set themselves above them. COVID-19 lockdown has shown that such a perspective has also affirmed the notion that people are merely a statistic and that some lives are worth more than others. However, by reflecting on our past, and reviewing our beliefs about ourselves that are embodied in our highest positions – that of monarch and bishop – the results of this line of thinking challenge us as we consider the future function and role of these positions, and what they mean in times of crises. The key insight gained is the reminder that the lives of all people in our communities are important as each person holds an intrinsic value that cannot be traded for the sake of a country's economy and business desires to turn a profit during the COVID-19 pandemic. To better reflect this, we need to promote a greater awareness of the importance of each person, regardless of wealth, age, education or circumstance of birth, and that, even if people's lives seem to be losing meaning, they have both intrinsic value and self-worth. Using the positions or monarchy and episcopacy to generate discussion, we should be able to affirm that each person is royalty and far more than a numerical statistic for businesses and governments to dehumanise.

The emotions people experience from the communal effects of government responses to COVID-19, including sadness and a hollowness around the loss of their normal lives that has led to a loss of meaning in life, create a pastoral situation that bishops can lead the church in ministering to. This raises great ministry potential to people who have experienced the descent of a blanket of melancholy compounded by the fact that government bodies and institutions have come to view them in terms of the money they can generate and the economic value they may give to a nation. It is a great gift to be able to affirm to others that they are priceless treasures and inherently royal, and that this belief of self-worth is built into historic and biblical concepts of monarchy and episcopacy.

Conclusion

Some people are more fragile than others: be it financially, physically, mentally or spiritually. This fragility, however it is measured, necessitates and demands from the community special care and attention for them. During times of crises and pandemic, such as COVID-19, it is the people: their care, their cries and their concerns, as well as the hope and compassion our communities hold towards them, that monarchs and bishops embody. In the end, this embodied is who we are, where we have come from and who we want to become. Monarchs and bishops remind us that whilst there is great flexibility in our lives, and in how we manage the world, there are some things that are intrinsically right or wrong. They shine as a light that says everyone matters to us. Everyone is valuable, equally and royally so.

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