

The Longest Queue

The British are noted for it – yet this queue surpassed them all. There was no official request for people to file past the late Queen's coffin in Westminster Hall, but they came in their hundreds of thousands for all kinds of reasons, often impossible to articulate, simply because they wanted to, felt compelled to, despite the cold and the 24 hour wait.



All ages and nationalities walked together, each person bringing personal memories. Long-lasting friendships were made between strangers. Everyone minded their neighbours with kindness and good humour. Shops and dwellings along the route opened their doors in support. Then the final silent moments inside Westminster Hall unwrapped the deepest emotions - within the sanctuary or 'thin place' betwixt earth and heaven. This queue, unlike the queues at airports or a foodbank or for NHS treatment, was a pilgrimage queue: the journey of faith, hope and love as life-giving as the destination.

*We look not to the things that are seen but to the things which are unseen;
for the things that are seen are transient but the things that are unseen are eternal.*

The queue to Westminster was not only about the Queen, though she was the focus of so much respect, love and admiration. It was also about a dimension which her role as constitutional monarch exemplified – that continuity through history – a connectedness beyond ourselves with the greater scheme of life. This queue was a symbol of the longest queue of all time – the queue of life. We all walk, alongside family, friends and strangers, through change and chance, behind the countless millions who have walked ahead of us, and before the countless millions who will join in the queue in due course. There is an eternal dimension to this kind of queue – a divine thread runs through its length and binds us together in ways beyond our understanding. We simply know we belong there – in communion with all others, part of something so much bigger and transcendent than anything we have experienced, yet gathering all our experiences into one safe homeland.

*One more step along the world I go; one more step along the world I go
from the old things to the new – keep me traveling along with you.*

As I travel through the bad and good, keep me travelling the way I should...

Give me courage when the world is rough, keep me loving when the world is tough....

Ever old and ever new, keep me travelling along with you.