



Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Diana, Princess of Wales

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Notes: Sermon by the Bishop of London, the Rt. Rev. Richard Chartres, at the 10th anniversary service, held at the Guards Chapel, Westminster, to celebrate the life of the late Diana, Princess of Wales. "At a time when people are suspicious of rhetoric, the monarchy communicates by symbol and simple speech and the Princess brought her own gifts to this work. She was still only 26 when she shook the hand of a patient at the opening of the Middlesex Hospital's AIDS ward, the first in the UK. It is hard now to credit the degree of fear and prejudice which surrounded AIDS in the eighties. Those familiar with the field have no doubt that the Princess played a significant part in overcoming a harmful and even cruel taboo in a gesture which was not choreographed but sprang from a deep identification with those who were vulnerable and on the margin". "Her work in the very last year of her life for the victims of landmines also caught the popular imagination internationally and certainly accelerated the adoption of the Ottawa Convention, banning the use of weapon which disproportionately kills and maims women and children. She proved the eloquence of embrace and touch which of course have been used by royal healers through the centuries. And as she said 'the biggest disease today is not leprosy or TB but the feeling of being unwanted'." "Let this service mark the point at which we let her rest in peace and dwell on her memory with thanksgiving and compassion while we pray in the words of St. Paul for all those who serve our country as members of the Royal Family and most especially for the sons who were so precious to her".

Subjects: Diana, Princess of Wales, 1961-1997

AIDS (Disease) - Great Britain

Landmines