There are two certificates on the wall of my father and step mothers’ apartment, both signed Phillip. Both were members/officers of the order of the British Empire and HRH Prince Phillip was the Grand Master. You would have had to be locked away in a cave not to know that His Royal Highness the Prince Phillip the Duke of Edinburgh died on Friday. He was the British queen’s consort for 74 years and there will be a time of mourning and much celebration of the life of the Prince. He didn’t like formality much, but was a deeply spiritual man with a good deal of scepticism. He co-wrote a book in 1989 Survival Or Extinction: A Christian Attitude to the Environment. That’s a polite word for doubt, and no wonder if you are married to the defender of the faith and the supreme governor of the Church of England. My boss’s spouse.

Another death this week was Hans Kung. I remember trying to read a book by him in 1978 as I commuted to London every day on the train. A Catholic theologian who questioned everything. A man of faith.

Scepticism is rife in the resurrection. I talked last week about the difficulty that Peter and John had even believing that someone had taken the body of Jesus, never mind believing that Jesus was risen from the dead. Mary could not believe until her senses were overwhelmed with evidence that defied all logic. And in our story today Thomas, unfairly labelled the doubter, encounters Jesus in such a way that he absolutely has to believe in a resurrection. I say unfairly – because all of us are doubters to some extent.

Jesus absolutely does not chastise Thomas for his scepticism. Instead, as Thomas returns – wanting evidence, the following Sabbath – effectively today in the Christian year – then Jesus provides the evidence, and Thomas says it all – My Lord and my God.

As Prince Charles said of his father, ‘he would like to be remembered as being his own man’. He was not going to take all the theology sitting down. He questioned – a scary place to be if you had just preached a sermon.

Some Christians question. They want to know more. Some don’t. Is any brand of Christian better than the other? No. The motley crowd of disciples came from all stock, all cultures, all backgrounds and education levels and some, according to Luke’s story from Acts, were so unquestioning that they sold their property for the common good. It was an early form of communism – sharing – but it does not suit everyone. Still many go for the ascetic life of a monastery or convent, but not all. Some are fishermen, tax collectors, retired and there was Mary from last week – goodness know. Some are students.

I used to sing in my father’s junior choir, and one of those songs came from the Baptist Hymnal: I sing a song of the saints of God. It celebrates the overwhelming variety of Christian living.

You can meet them in school, or in lanes, or at sea,/in church, or in trains, or in shops, or at tea;/for the saints of God are just folk like me,/and I mean to be one too.

Whether you associate with Mary, Thomas, Martha, Peter, or John – Simon from Cyrene now near Shahhat on the coast of Libya, or Paul from Tarsus – Lydia from Macedonia, you are welcome. Keep your culture and embrace the God of love resurrected for all the world. God created diversity and we celebrate diversity, value difference. You never need to be like me to be a Christian, nor I like you! Prince Phillip knew that more than most and he was willing to say it. Amen