

Princess Diana's Funeral as Global Event: A Prophetic Comment

by Art Katz

Art Katz's sermon critiques the global idolization of Princess Diana, urging the Church to reflect on its implications for faith and society.

Scripture: Exodus 20:3-5, Psalm 115:4-8, Isaiah 42:8, Jeremiah 10:14, Matthew 6:24, Acts 19:27, 1 Corinthians 10:14, Galatians 1:10, Colossians 3:2, 1 John 5:21

Topics: "Idolatry", "Prophetic Voice"

Description

Art Katz reflects on the global response to Princess Diana's funeral, questioning the depth of the adoration and the implications of such fervent devotion. He notes that while Diana was admired for her charitable work and beauty, her life and death may symbolize a troubling idolatry that distracts from true Christian faith. Katz emphasizes the need for the Church to critique this phenomenon rather than celebrate it, warning against the dangers of misplaced reverence for a figure who may not have acknowledged Christ. He draws parallels to biblical idolatry, urging a prophetic response to the cultural obsession with celebrity. Ultimately, he calls for a return to honoring God above all else.

Transcript

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I think that it behooves the Church to attempt some evaluation or critique of the remarkable and unprecedented world-wide response to the untimely passing of this lady. No figure of international prominence has known such adoration or received such tribute and evoked such sorrow in passing as she. One newspaper editorial speaks of "An emerging Cult of Diana that won't fade away anytime soon." Billions in over forty languages watched the lavish funeral spectacle cherishing every detail and nuance that could be wrung from it as the Royal family and the English Establishment had to bow to the epic flood by a state funeral exceeding that of royalty itself!

One wants to be kind and to give charity and good works their due. Certainly she was foremost in such causes that need not have been adopted and displayed an evident real heart of sincerity for its victims. Though I did not follow the details of the marital collapse, she evidently displayed some spunk in opposing a rigid or staid monarchical establishment to win the esteem and cheers of many. She was certainly a winsome beauty and it was regrettable that so dutiful a mother and celebrated personality had to be cut off so early in her life.

Yet having said all that could yet be said along those lines, is that enough to explain the groundswell of fervent (mesmeric?) devotion that broke over the world? Her name is derived from the Roman goddess "identified with the Greek Artemis and represented as a huntress and worshipped as a moon-goddess" (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary). Certainly though the final rites were performed by the highest echelon of the Anglican church's hierarchy, the Arch-Bishop of Canterbury himself, in the loftiest of its cathedrals, the jet-setter life-style of the deceased, her death with a Muslim escort of immeasurable wealth at reckless high speeds has more the resonance of pagan revelry and indulgence than Christian austerity.

I am not aware of any testimony of Diana as to being a Christian or to an acknowledgment of Christ as savior or Lord, yet she was nonetheless accorded a Christian funeral with every assumption implied or spoken of an eternal assurance of heaven and of the hope of Resurrection. All that is esteemed of men in civility, eulogy and talented choir, the whole weight of what is best in British civilization was admirably displayed. The vast throngs that assembled outside must have felt the euphoric sense of oneness in their shared grief rare in the experience of this anesthetized, sense-deadened generation.

Had a wilderness prophet appeared to question the validity of the proceedings, or the apostle Paul as in challenging the Ephesians, one could question the slim prospect of survival of such a one at the hands of an outraged mob whose savored mournings would have been so disturbed. What of the purveyors of souvenirs, who like the silversmiths of Paul's time precipitated a riot against the apostle lest their "craft be set at nought, but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth"(Acts 19:27)?

Certainly respect and solemn service for the dead and the pathos of regret for a young and beautiful life half-lived has an unquestionable place. But something much more is represented here of near or actual idolatry ("Excessive love or veneration for anything." Webster) that could not have part were Christ and the God of Israel on the heart's throne of an ostensibly Christian public. Lest that void be filled with that intended reality, what defense against the glitz of PR figures yet to appear before an impoverished public and the Antichrist himself when his hour shall come?

For the Church to condescend to agreement in the celebration of Diana not unwillingly but even with an enthusiastic heart does not bode well for the faith. Rather should its prophetic voice be raised to hold a mirror up to the British nation and to the world for what its secret heart has revealed in the adulation of a mere earthling, however dear, while, in effect, despising the God of those of whom the world is not worthy.

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