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*The Pope and the Queen walk through the gardens
at the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh (PA photo)*

Pope Benedict XVI has said in a letter to the Queen that she has given the world an “inspiring example” of the role of a Christian monarch.

The letter, read out at a service of Thanksgiving in Rome, said: “I write to offer my warmest congratulations to Your Majesty on the happy occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of your reign. During the past 60 years you have offered to your subjects and to the whole world an inspiring example of dedication to duty and a commitment to maintaining the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, in keeping with a noble vision of the role of a Christian monarch.

“I retain warm memories of the gracious welcome accorded to me by Your Majesty at Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh at the beginning of my Apostolic Visit to the United Kingdom in September 2010, and I

renew my thanks for the hospitality that I received throughout those four days. Your personal commitment to cooperation and mutual respect between the followers of different religious traditions has contributed in no small measure to improving ecumenical and interreligious relations throughout your realms.

“Commending Your Majesty and all the Royal Family to the protection of Almighty God, I renew my heartfelt good wishes on this joyful occasion and I assure you of my prayers for your continuing health and prosperity.”

According to Vatican Radio, the service of Thanksgiving was attended by Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Dean of the College of Cardinals, Cardinal George Pell of Sydney, Australia, as well as Christian leaders from different denominations and ambassadors from around the world.

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