



ADDRESS AT EPISCOPAL ORDINATION

Dear Fellow Pilgrims on Life's Journey,

We inhabit a remarkable century, the 21st, which despite the current economic distemper, is witnessing momentous advances in every domain of human knowledge and endeavour, with new discoveries and new applications in science and engineering, in computing and cybernetics, in medicine and bio-technology, in the social sciences, arts and humanities, all of which manifest the limitless self-transcending reach of human experience, understanding and judgement and the cloud of burgeoning possibilities for human deciding, undreamt of by those who've gone before. Indeed, even as we speak, *Curiosity* is roving among the sand-dunes of Mars, in anticipation of a manned space-voyage to the Red Planet. With all these exhilarating developments, the Catholic Tradition must engage, the old with the new, in a mutually-enriching critical-conversation.

Yet the ordination of a Bishop, as Successor of the Apostles, in communion of mind, will and heart with the Pope, as the chief Shepherd, Teacher and High Priest of the diocese entrusted to him, who, like the Master, must lay down his life for his flock, reminds us that human needs ever remain essentially the same: the need to love and to be loved, the need for a purpose and vocation in life, the need to belong to family and community, the need for mercy and forgiveness, for peace and justice, for freedom and happiness, and most profoundly, the need for immortality and for the Divine. All these fundamental desires, hard-wired into the human heart: theology expresses in the word 'salvation,' and we profess that every child, woman and man on this planet can find that salvation. There is a Way - and it's the Truth! It's the true Way that leads to Life, real life, life to the full, a life that never ends.

There is a Way, and it's not a strategy, a philosophy or a package-deal. This Way has a Name, because it's a Person, the only Person in human history who really did rise from the dead, a Person alive here and now: Jesus of Nazareth,

God the Son Incarnate. He alone can save us. He alone can give us the salvation our spirits crave. He alone can reveal to us the Truth about God and about life, about happiness and humanism, about sexuality and family values, about how to bring to the world order, justice, reconciliation and peace.

This message of Good News, and the civilisation of love it occasions, we Catholics must now communicate imaginatively, with confidence and clarity, together with our fellow Christians, and all people of faith and good will, to the people of England, this wonderful land, Mary's Dowry. We must offer this salvific message to a people, sorely in need of new hope and direction, disenfranchised by the desert of modern British politics, wearied by the cycle of work, shopping, entertainment, and betrayed by educational, legal, medical and social policy-makers who, in the relativistic world they're creating, however well-intentioned, are sowing the seeds of a strangling counterculture of death.

My brothers and sisters, today, the Feast of Our Lady of Ransom, of England's Nazareth, let's go forth from this Mass with joyful vigour, resolved in the Holy Spirit, to help bring about the intellectual, moral and spiritual conversions needed, for everyone-we-meet to receive Jesus Christ, the Gospel of Life, the way to true, genuine, lasting human happiness and fulfilment.

Bishop Crispian, I thank you sincerely for your most gracious welcome here and on behalf of the whole diocese I express to you our deepest gratitude for the wonderful legacy you have bequeathed to us. Please pray I might be a worthy successor. Archbishop Peter Smith, our metropolitan, I thank you for coming here today as co-consecrator and Bishop Mark too, you have given me an inspiring example of what it means to be a brilliant diocesan Bishop. I thank Archbishop Vincent for his excellent homily, and all my brother bishops for your support and prayer. I also greet Mgr. Brian, asking him to express my gratitude to his Excellency, Archbishop Mennini, and through him to the Holy Father, Pope Benedict, who, in God's providence, has trustingly given me this appointment.

On everyone's behalf, many thanks to Canon Hopgood, Fr. Phillip, all the helpers here at the Cathedral, and to our musicians, servers, sacristans and others who have made this Liturgy so memorable. I also greet all our friends here today: first, our ecumenical guests, the naval dignitaries and civic leaders, then, the priests and people of the diocese, and those of Shrewsbury Diocese, and all my personal friends, many of whom have travelled from far away: from the US, California, Germany, France and the north. It's marvellous too that so many dear parishioners have come from Romiley, together with some of our best altar servers, all in fine array, - a huge journey - thank you so much.

And finally, I must add my love and thanks to my family, my three brothers and sisters in law, my nephews and nieces, and to one truly special person, without whom I wouldn't be here today: my Dad. Thanks Dad for everything - all my love to you, God bless and good health.

I must stop now or we'll be late for the 'do'! Thank you all, once again. Please pray for me to the Lord Jesus, whose Heart yearns for us in the Blessed Sacrament, that I might be a humble and holy, orthodox, creative and courageous, Bishop of Portsmouth, one fashioned after the Lord's own.

In Corde Iesu
+ Philip
Bishop of Portsmouth