

MESSAGE ON 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF QUARR ABBEY CHURCH

I thank you for inviting me today to be the chief celebrant at this Mass. My first visit to Quarr was as a teenager, when a teacher from school brought a small group of us here on retreat, and ever since every couple of years or so, I've continued to come back for a few days of quiet prayer and reflection. For me, Quarr occupies a special place in my heart and in my spiritual development, and for three reasons.

First, the warmth, joy and love of you, this monastic community, Benedictines in the great Solesmes tradition. Thank you for your inspiring witness to Jesus, lived in a life of total dedication through the rhythms of prayer every day.

Secondly, the beauty and solemnity of the sacred liturgy celebrated here, the culmination of all that Prosper Gueranger and the Liturgical Movement strove for, especially your dedication to Gregorian chant, which with its lilting melodies and changing moods, expresses so eloquently the sentiments of the human spirit in the presence of the Almighty.

And thirdly, what we thank God particularly for today, the majesty and lasting memorial of Dom Paul Bellot's architecture, above all, the Abbey Church which speaks so powerfully of transcendence and God's otherness, a timely corrective to today's temptation to internalise God to a warm feeling within.

So on behalf of myself, and Bishop Crispian, and all the priests and people of the Diocese of Portsmouth, I thank you profoundly for all you do, for your fidelity and discipleship, for your witness to the Triune God. I pray for His blessing upon you now as you look not to the past but to the future. May the Love that streams from the Heart of Jesus bring you new energy and new vocations, and many new blessings as you journey across the next one hundred years.