

A Reflection by the Bishop of Coventry
The Rt Revd Dr Christopher Cocksworth
at An Act of Thanksgiving for the Consecration of Coventry Cathedral
in the presence of
Their Royal Highnesses,
The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall
on 25th May 2021

The Consecration of Coventry Cathedral fifty-nine years ago took place in the presence of Her Majesty The Queen; and so it is a deep joy, Your Royal Highnesses, that you have graced us today with your presence.

The life of His Royal Highness has run, in a sense, parallel to the Cathedral's. Eight years to the day after the former Cathedral burned in the fires of war, the birth of Prince Charles on 14th November 1948 witnessed the beginning of a new era of peace and hope. Forty-Two years later on 14th November 1990, Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother, was joined here by Richard von Weizsäcker, President of the then newly unified Germany, to mark the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Coventry and its Cathedral, sealing the post-war reconciliation between our nations, and the triumph of peace. Their relationship of mutual respect is now mirrored in His Royal Highness' own relationship with today's Federal President of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, movingly expressed in shared acts of remembrance in London and Berlin.

Throughout decades of public service, His Royal Highness has been dedicated to the nurturing of understanding between peoples, to building peace in the world and to the restoration of hope among those who might despair. Time does not allow me to pay proper tribute to those efforts to improve community relationships, deepen interfaith understanding, and raise the aspirations and life-chances of young people. But, if I may, I would like to draw attention to the way – in the Balkans, in Northern Ireland, in the Holy Land and elsewhere – His Royal Highness has spoken poignantly about the futility of vengeance, the need for enemies to build bridges that reach out to each other so that they may become friends, and the power of forgiveness. These principles lie at the heart of the ministry of Coventry Cathedral.

A newer theme for the Cathedral to which we have committed ourselves over recent years, has long been a priority of The Prince of Wales: God's calling on humanity to live well and at peace with the earth. For the saving work of Jesus Christ and his cross is *upwards*, reconciling humanity to God, *outwards*, reconciling us to each other and *downwards*, reconciling us to the earth in which we live.

Let us give thanks for the work of this Cathedral and let us pray for all who work for the establishment of peace and the growing of hope in our world.