



A NEW BISHOP FOR THE DIOCESE OF PLYMOUTH

Biography of Bishop-elect Christopher Whitehead

Born in Gloucester in August 1969 to parents Leslie and Christine, Bishop-elect Christopher Whitehead is the oldest of three siblings, with brothers Craig and Anthony. His youngest brother, Anthony, lives in the Diocese of Plymouth.

His local parish, St Peter's, was to lie at the heart of his education and formation. He was baptised, made his first Holy Communion, was confirmed and ordained in St Peter's Church.

Bishop-elect Christopher attended St Peter's Catholic Infant, Primary and Secondary School before studying for the priesthood at St Mary's, Oscott after leaving school in 1987.

On 30 November 1993, he was ordained deacon at St Peter's Catholic Church, and then seven months later on 1 July 1994, was ordained priest by Bishop Mervyn Alexander.

The Bishop-elect has never forgotten the guiding hand of Bishop Alexander, who he says offered him the opportunity to grow as a man of faith. It was his inspiration, encouragement, and example of gentleness, patience, and love that drew him towards the priesthood.

He was to serve the Diocese of Clifton as a priest for almost three decades, his first post as a curate at St Mary's, Bath, from 1994-1996. His next appointment was to Holy Family parish in Swindon, before serving at St Mary-on-the-Quay in Bristol from 1996–1998. During this time, he was also chaplain to University Hospital Bristol.

Having served at the Cathedral as an assistant priest for two years until 2000, he was appointed to his first parish St George's in Warminster.

Bishop-elect Christopher has also served the diocesan curia in a number of important roles:

Director of Adult Education (to 2018), Director of Ongoing Formation of Priests (until 2020), Director of Formation for the permanent diaconate (to present).

In 2018, he returned to parish ministry at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Stroud, before moving to his present post as parish priest of St John the Evangelist in Bath, a year later in 2019.

He was appointed a member of the Cathedral Chapter in 2020.

Bishop-elect Christopher has a great love and appreciation for art, and in his spare time enjoys going to the cinema and sharing food with friends and family.

He will be ordained and installed the tenth Bishop of Plymouth in the Cathedral Church of Saint Mary and Saint Boniface in the city.



The Diocese of Plymouth

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Plymouth was erected as the Diocese of Plymouth in 1850 by Pope Pius IX, from the Apostolic Vicariate of the Western District, the diocese has remained jurisdictionally constant since. The diocese is currently a suffragan see of the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Southwark. The episcopal see is in the city of Plymouth, Devon, where the bishop's seat (cathedra) is located at the Cathedral Church of St Mary and St Boniface. The diocese covers the counties of Cornwall, Devon and Dorset, stretching from Penzance and the Isles of Scilly in the west, to parts of Bournemouth in the east. It is divided into five deaneries: Cornwall, Dorset, Exeter, Plymouth, and Torbay.