



INSTALLATION MASS HOMILY: PLYMOUTH CATHEDRAL 29 NOVEMBER 2025

1. What a blessing it is to be able to celebrate together the feast of our co-Patron and hero, St Cuthbert Mayne!

It was on this day (or, according to some sources, tomorrow), 448 years ago, that he ascended the scaffold in Launceston.

He'd been found in possession of two forbidden objects: a papal bull like the one brought to us this day by the Apostolic Nuncio; the other, an *Agnus Dei* – the *Agnus Dei* being a wax image of the Lamb of God which Fr Cuthbert bore around his neck.

2. He was the first martyr to have been trained in Douai, across the water in France.

He'd chosen to return from Douai to keep alive the faith of Catholics in Cornwall.

He'd heard the Lord's call to feed the lambs, to feed the sheep, to look after the sheep; and come.

Passing, by day, as a steward, by night Fr Cuthbert would don the vestments of a priest to feed the flock with the food of the sacraments.

3. This would have been impossible without the courageous help of nobleman Francis Tregian.

Tregian allowed Fr Cuthbert to work out of his house at Probus in Cornwall; and to travel across his estates.

Tregian paid the price of life imprisonment and the seizure of all his estates; Fr Cuthbert the price of death by hanging, drawing and quartering.

Lay and ordained, they knew themselves to share responsibility – with others – for the mission here in England's South-West.

Of such vital partnerships – the partnership of lay and ordained for mission - Pope St John Paul II coined the term 'co-responsibility' in his reflection following the Synod on the Laity in 1988.

4. Mission, *the Mission*, is the word all those Colleges abroad used - and still use to this day - to describe the call to build up and nurture the Church at home.

And it's a mission more urgent today than ever.

Yes, there are encouraging shoots of recovery.



5. You may have heard of *The Quiet Revival*, a recent academic study which identified an upsurge in the number of people – especially young men – coming to Church in this country.

It rings true with what's being reported from many parishes across the land. But the challenge implicit in this is twofold: we need in our communities to help these new and returning Catholics really to find their place in their Church; and to draw many more people – both young and old - to Christ and the life of the sacraments.

6. Responsibility for this the more recent Synods, which took place in Rome in 2023 and 2024, identified as a 'co-responsibility – 'taking up and developing the term coined by Pope John Paul.

These Synods were clear that helping individuals find their place in the Church is something for which clergy and laity alike bear a shared responsibility.

The key to knowing how we do it, how we organise ourselves to welcome, the latest Synod was also clear, is to deepen our listening.

Deepen our listening?

Yes, that we need to deepen the quality of our listening to the Spirit, to one another, and to our context; our listening to every generation in the Church – but with a special attentiveness to the young, to the poor, to the marginalised, to those who stand on the outside looking in.

7. Popes from St John Paul II to Benedict XVI to Francis and I'm sure Pope Leo have all been clear that Evangelisation – the sharing of our faith – needs to be all-embracing; that it's aimed at three distinct categories - at those who belong to Christ and His Church, at those who no longer belong, as well as at those who never belonged.

To us who belong to Christ and his Church the onus is to find ways of telling others who is this Jesus whom we love and worship.

Put better, it's about communicating our relationship with Christ, in word and deed and in such a way that causes people to ask, "Who is this Jesus whom you love and worship?"

For that we - most of us at least - need to be more deeply evangelised ourselves; we need formation and the opportunity to find out how others succeed in drawing others into relationship with Christ.



8. In recent years, we've been waking up to the fact that we're each endowed, by virtue of our baptism, with unique charisms to contribute not just to the building up of the Church – but to its mission.

I find the first reading from the prophet Ezekiel a wonderful expression of this truth.

Because the temple of which Ezekiel prophesies is, of course, nothing less than the Body of Christ; and these waters the *living* waters which Jesus promised would flow out of Him into us.

God promises through the prophet Ezekiel, that “where the river goes ... there will grow all kinds of trees for food ...their fruit will be for food.”

We're being told that ours it is to feed others – to feed others with nothing less than Christ Himself.

Incorporated into Him through baptism, ours it is to call others into relationship with Him.

9. I find in this Gospel account a marvellous illustration – explicitation - of what is given implicitly by Ezekiel.

Ezekiel describes the mission of those through whom the waters of this Temple flow.

John is telling us it's a mission of catching and feeding.

The followers of Jesus are urged to do something they wouldn't have done without Christ's urging.

They find themselves helping Peter to draw in a miraculous trawl.

They're rewarded for the trust they place in the one who stands on the shore and calls out to them.

He is, of course, the same one as John, John the Baptist, recognised just three years earlier to be the Lamb of God.

10. It was in the Lamb of God that our Martyr-patron St Cuthbert Mayne also placed his trust – to the point of laying down his life in witness to the one he loved and worshipped beyond all others.

Fr Mayne heard the call the Lamb makes to Peter to feed the lambs; to feed the sheep; to look after the sheep.

It was on account of his courage, and the courage of countless other priests and laypeople, that the Church endured in these parts.

To us now the same Lamb of God calls out from the shore to put out into the deep; to trust in His call; and organise ourselves to feed and nurture those who seek relationship with Him; and to hope in the harvest.



11. Trust and hope are mysteriously close.

Which is why I chose for my motto: “In te Domine speramus”; “In you, O Lord, we hope.”

It derives from the 31st psalm.

It’s a phrase that is translated ‘trust’ as often as it’s translated ‘hope –’ as in the ‘Te Deum’, that wonderful prayer of praise so often to be found on the lips of martyrs at the moment of sentencing, with its climax, “In you, O Lord, we place our trust”; “In te Domine speramus”.

I think the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* captures this best when it chooses to say, “Hope is placing our trust in Christ’s promises and relying not on our own strength but on the grace of the Holy Spirit.” (#1817)

12. We will find ourselves knocking this evening on the door of Advent; standing on the threshold of a new chapter in the life of the Diocese; and approaching the climax of what has been a wonderful Jubilee Year of Hope. The time is fast approaching now for us to look beyond this Advent to the Advent of an even greater Jubilee – because in eight years’ time, we shall celebrate the Great Jubilee of 2033.

13. Then we shall be celebrating a quite extraordinary anniversary: nothing less than the 2000th anniversary of our Redemption; 2000 years since the Last Supper, since Christ’s suffering, dying and rising, his Ascension, the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost, and his giving of the Great Commission.

I pray this Great Jubilee be an incentive to us in this diocese to respond wholeheartedly, these next eight years and beyond, to the mission with which we’ve been charged – to draw others into relationship with Our Lord Jesus Christ.

And I look forward, with a deep joy in my heart, to walking that journey with you.

Bishop Nicholas Hudson.