

NEW BISHOP ANNOUNCED

Pope Francis has appointed as the new Bishop of Plymouth, Monsignor Mark O'Toole, until now Rector of Allen Hall Seminary in London.

Mgr O'Toole's episcopal ordination will take place at 2pm on Tuesday 28 January 2014 at the Cathedral Church of St Mary and St Boniface in Plymouth. He will succeed Bishop Christopher Budd, who has been bishop of Plymouth since 1986.

Mgr O'Toole said:



"I am deeply humbled that the Holy Father, Pope Francis, has appointed me the new Bishop of Plymouth. Recognising that I am a sinner who experiences the love and mercy of the Lord Jesus, I embrace with my whole self this deeper call to service in His Church. I know that the example and witness of Pope Francis will

continue to inspire and shape my ministry as Shepherd to all in the Diocese, especially to serve the poor, the weak, and those who feel alienated from God, as I work alongside fellow-Christians.

“This part of the country is known for its outstanding natural beauty, and this is mirrored in the gracious welcome shown to the newcomer by its people. I look forward very much to putting down firm roots in the Diocese and making my home in Plymouth. I know I can count on the prayer, co-operation and support of the people, the religious and especially the priests of the Diocese who are renowned for their quiet heroism, fidelity and dedication. You will all show me what it means to be your Bishop. I am grateful, too, that Bishop Christopher will be nearby so that I can draw on his wisdom and experience.

“My own priestly heart has been formed in the Diocese of Westminster and I have been richly blessed by the faith and witness of many – bishops, priests, seminarians, religious, and lay men and women. I look especially to the outstanding leadership of my three Archbishops - Cardinal Basil Hume OSB, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor and Archbishop Vincent Nichols. Each of them has taught me so much. I am deeply grateful for the friendship and love of so many in the Diocese and I ask their continued prayer. I will miss especially everyone at Allen Hall. I have seen how essential the vocation of the priest is for our Church and our society. I hope I can continue to make its promotion a priority in this new mission.

“I entrust the whole Diocese of Plymouth, and myself, into the loving care of Mary, our Mother, as we set out on this journey together, seeking also the intercession of St Boniface and our diocesan saints, especially St Cuthbert Mayne.”

Bishop Christopher said:

"I am delighted to welcome Mgr Mark O'Toole as my successor as Catholic Bishop of Plymouth and I am grateful to Pope Francis for sending him to us. He is coming to a lovely community of Priests, deacons and Religious and people of God who make up the Diocese. I know he will receive a warm and loving welcome. May the Lord bless his Ministry among us."

The Most Reverend Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster, said:

"'It is in giving that we receive.' These words come to mind as we, in the Diocese of Westminster, welcome the news that Mgr Mark O'Toole is to be the next Bishop of Plymouth in succession to Bishop Christopher Budd.

"Mgr Mark has fulfilled many roles in our Diocese, best known as Rector of our Seminary, Allen Hall, and as Secretary to Cardinal Cormac for six years. He is a dedicated, gifted and experienced priest who will become an excellent Bishop of Plymouth and a valued member of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

"We shall miss him but always hold him in our prayers especially as he prepares to take up this new mission, given by the Lord. He will go to Plymouth fully supported by the love and esteem of everyone in this Diocese."

Plymouth Diocese consists of the counties of Cornwall, Devon and Dorset (west of the original county border) and the Isles of Scilly. The patron of the Diocese is St Boniface. Since its establishment in 1850 there have been eight Bishops in the Diocese. Msgr O'Toole will become the ninth Bishop of Plymouth.

MGR MARK O'TOOLE – Biography

22 June 1963 Born in London, the youngest son of Marcus and Maura O'Toole who originally came from the Irish-speaking community of Connemara,

Galway, Ireland. Attended St Ignatius Primary School, Stamford Hill and St Thomas More Secondary school in Wood Green. Left school with four 'A' levels in 1981.

1984 Graduated with a B.Sc. in Geography from the University of Leicester

1984-89 Studied for the Priesthood at Allen Hall Seminary, graduating with a Bachelor of Divinity in Theology.

1989-90 Pastoral work as a deacon in St Joan of Arc Parish, Highbury

9 June 1990 Ordained priest of the Diocese of Westminster by Cardinal Basil Hume

1990-92 M. Phil in Theology at the University of Oxford. Wrote a thesis on the relationship between Divine and Human freedom, supervised by the Lady Margaret Professor, Dr Rowan Williams.

1992-97 Assistant priest in St Mary Magdalene parish, Willesden Green; part-time lecturer in Catechesis.

1997-2002 Member of Staff at Allen Hall Seminary – Lecturer in Theology and Formation Adviser to seminarians. Sacred License in Theology from Pontifical University, Leuven granted in 2000.

1999-2002 Dean of Studies, Allen Hall Seminary

2002-2008 Private Secretary to Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor, Archbishop of Westminster

Sept. 2008
Seminary

Appointed Rector, Allen Hall

BISHOP MARK O'TOOLE ORDINATION SPEECH

ADDRESS AT THE END OF EPISCOPAL ORDINATION

Thank you, your Excellency, for your kind words, for being here today, and for your goodness to me over these months. Through you, I express my fidelity to His Holiness, Pope Francis, Successor of St Peter. I pray that I be given the grace to mirror something of Pope Francis' open heart in Shepherding this beautiful Diocese of Plymouth.

There is much that fills my heart today. Overwhelmingly, there is a sense of immense gratitude to God for his faithfulness. I know that I am a sinner, yet I experience the love and mercy of Jesus in this deeper call to service in His Church.

I pray that I be a worthy successor to Bishop Christopher. We all thank you, Bishop Christopher, for your whole-hearted dedication to the diocese over the past twenty-eight years. We pray for God's blessing on this next stage of your ministry.

Especially on this first occasion of speaking as your Bishop in this Cathedral I warmly greet the family of the Diocese - laymen and women, religious, seminarians, deacons, and priests. Thank you for the kind and hospitable welcome that you have already shown me. To all the priests of the diocese, I want to say how

much I look forward to meeting you personally and getting to know you; know that you always have my support. The fact that I am your bishop will not prevent us, I hope, from being brothers. I know I will need that, particularly as I make my home among you. Thank you for the gift of this beautiful crozier, this pastoral staff. It is a reminder to us that at the heart of our vocation is the service of God's people. That means, as Pope Francis has reminded us, that we have "the smell of the sheep".

It is a great joy to have our diocesan seminarians with us; you are a sign of hope and of the generosity of our young people. I am convinced that there are many more, who with the right encouragement, can be helped to make life commitments in the Church whether that be to marriage, religious life, the permanent diaconate, or the priesthood. Let us all continue to pray and work in promoting these vocations.

In our Catholic understanding a Bishop is sent to a diocese. I am aware that I come to you as someone who, like Solomon, feels he does not know how to go out or come in. I definitely do not know the road to Penzance or to Poole! I have been asked to step out into something new. This new call that I experience in my life is a reminder of the kind of stepping out that we, as the whole Church, need to do in order that Jesus be better known and loved.

From the age of 17, Jesus has exerted an attraction over my heart; no other can match the magnetic pull of His love, or the peace that His friendship brings. We believe that each person is made for such experience, for each of us is a beloved child of the Father, and called to be with Him forever. We put our belief in Jesus, and our love of Him, at the service of those most in need in our society - the poor, the sick, the vulnerable, those who feel alienated from God.

We need to reach out to those who have turned away from the practise of the faith, many of whom are in our own families and parish communities. How can we walk with them in a way that will help them to see once more the beauty of following Jesus? Especially, we are called to step out from the doors of the Church to those who do not know God or who have never known the power of Jesus' love. There are many in our society who search for truth, beauty and goodness, who need to know the touch of God's mercy and the love of Jesus.

This is our mission, and it's task, Jesus entrusts to us all. I know that there is much that I need to become familiar with in the diocese, many to listen to, and alot to learn. There is much I do not know. But one thing I do know. From all eternity, in the boundless mystery of His merciful love, God has destined Mark O'Toole to be Bishop of Plymouth. He has prepared me for you, and He has prepared you for me. So let us begin to walk together.

And as we begin this path we seek the loving intercession of Our Blessed Lady and our Diocesan patrons.

Our Lady, star of the Sea.....Pray for us
St Boniface...Pray for Us
St Cuthbert Mayne...Pray for us

Thank you and God Bless you all.