

We have a new friend bishop



His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols was the principal celebrant at the Episcopal Ordination of Fr Alan Williams as seventh Bishop of Brentwood at the Cathedral Church of St Mary and St Helen on 1 July 2014.

Bishop Alan Williams

In his homily, Cardinal Vincent thanked Bishop Thomas McMahon for his 34 years of service leading the Diocese.

The Cardinal then welcomed Fr Alan Williams saying, "you know you are supported by the love and the prayers of all of us here today, and by so, so many more."

He then reflected on the solemn occasion of the ordination saying:

"For we are about to ask of the Lord a gift that will change us all because it will make you a bishop, a father to this diocesan family, a brother to us bishops, a sign and voice of the truth of our faith in the public arenas of our society."

Referring to the mandate that was read out, the Cardinal said:

"We felt great joy because we gladly believe that it expresses the will of the Lord. It is he who sends us a new shepherd, a new pastor. He does so by working, as he promised, through the Church, through the thoughts and words and actions of us poor servants of his.

"Here is the mandate for our new bishop: challenging, exciting, invigorating. It is expressed powerfully in the words of Isaiah that we have heard: 'I have appointed you as prophet to the nations...Do not be afraid! There, I am putting my words into your mouth!'

"These words of Isaiah point us towards the true task of our ministry. We are summoned to be witnesses to the Word of Life, witnesses to the Risen Lord."

Cardinal Vincent also recalled the words of Pope Francis which he addressed to the Congregation of Bishops in February on the role of the bishop:

"The first work of the bishop is prayer. His first enthusiasm is for prayer. He is to pray boldly, arguing with God for the sake of his people.

"Then, secondly, he is to stay close to the people, in his heart and in how he spends his days. In a bishop, said Pope Francis, there can be 'no psychology of princes'. He is always to be a servant.

"Indeed, these are the very words of the Gospel we have heard. We are to have nothing in common with great men who make their authority felt. We are not to be served but to serve; we are not to be first, but a slave and most of all a servant, a slave, of the Word of God. That is the third priority of the bishop.'

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