

Enthronement of the Bishop of Norwich (The Right
Rev. Launcelot Fleming) at Norwich Cathedral
on Thursday, January 28th 1960

PRESS ARRANGEMENTS

Representatives of the press should come at 1.10 p.m. to The Chapter Clerk's Office which is close to the South door of the Cathedral. Canon R. A. Edwards, The Vice Dean, will be present, and will be prepared to give any help he can and to answer any questions the representatives may wish to put to him.

Reporters

Reporters must have tickets: they will all be accommodated in a gallery above the choir in the South side. There is a satisfactory general view of the processions and the ceremony, with the exception of the Greetings from the Civil Authorities, which takes place West of the great screen, the 'Pulpitum'. Although during the delivery of his sermon the Bishop will not be directly visible from the gallery, the script of the sermon will be available, and all that takes place in the Nave will be audible over the public address system.

Once the reporters are in their place it will not be possible for them to leave until the conclusion of the ceremony, which should be about 3.45 p.m.

No photographs may be taken from this gallery.

Photographers

Photographers must have tickets: they will all be accommodated on the screen, from which photographs may be taken East and West.

No 'flashes' may be used. The Cathedral will be lit for television. It is emphasized that a telephoto lens is advisable because of the great length of the Cathedral.

Accommodation on the screen is not as easy or comfortable as the Chapter might wish, but it is the best that can be contrived, and the Chapter relies on the photographers to co-operate in ensuring the dignity of the proceedings. Silence is essential.

(Outside the West Door photographers and reporters will be asked to take up reserved positions arranged by the police. Tickets are necessary.)

Special interest in the ceremony lies in the use of the Ancient Throne (see separate note), and that the Bishop can be photographed on it (1) during the actual enthronement by the Archdeacon of Canterbury, (2) at the close of the ceremony when he gives his Blessing from it.

It is pointed out that while Princess Margaret is quite willing to be photographed at the West door (when she is leaving will probably be the best opportunity) or in the procession (when she is coming in photographers on the screen will get this facing West, and when she is leaving, facing East), yet she does not wish to be photographed directly during the ceremony.

General

Admission to the Cathedral is only by the South door. The special press tickets must be produced.

It has been arranged that a room in the School (adjoining the West door) shall be available for the use of the outside photographers while they are waiting to be able to photograph the Princess, and other processions, leaving the Cathedral.

The Dean and Chapter (The Rev. The Vice Dean, 52 The Close, Norwich, NOR 16P) would appreciate copies of any photographs that may be taken.

PRINCESS MARGARET

The Princess will arrive at the West Door of the Cathedral at 2.20 p.m. She will be received by the Dean (the Very Rev. Norman Hook) and Chapter and by the High Steward of the Cathedral (Sir Edmund Bacon) - who is also Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk - and conducted to her seat in the Sanctuary.

This seat, known as 'The Maximilian Chair', was made in 1512 for the Emperor Maximilian II, and was later used by the Cardinal Archbishop of Bavaria. It is a remarkable chair, heavily ornamented with engraved ivory panels of French work with, additionally, what is possibly some Indian influence.

After the ceremony Princess Margaret will be conducted in the same way to the West Door.

She has no further engagement in the city.

It is emphasized that her visit is a private one.

THE CEREMONY

The ceremony is the Enthronement of the Bishop of the Diocese in which he is enthroned in his chair ('cathedra') as the lawful Bishop.

He knocks on the West door, and the Dean (the Very Rev. Norman Hook) asks to see the 'Mandate' (the authority for the Enthronement) from the Archbishop of Canterbury.

He is then conducted up the Nave, under the Screen, to the space under the Tower where he takes the Oath of Allegiance, and the oath to observe the Cathedral Statutes and preserve its liberties. This latter oath is taken because the Cathedral does not belong to the Bishop: even though it may be popularly referred to as 'his cathedral', but to the Chapter. These oaths are taken on a MS copy of the New Testament, date about 1300, carried in the procession by the senior Chorister. The former oath is administered by the Chancellor of the Diocese (the Worshipful J. H. Ellison) and the latter by the Chapter Clerk (Sir Ronald Keefe).

He is then conducted to the Ancient Throne where the Archdeacon of Canterbury (the Ven. A. Sergent) reads the Mandate and then Enthrones him.

After prayers, said by the Dean, he is conducted to his seat in the Choir, where the clergy are presented to him by the Ven. Robert Meiklejohn, and the Lay Readers by the High Sheriff of Norfolk (Mr. R. G. Gurney).

He is then conducted to his seat in the Nave where the Free Church Ministers are presented to him by the Chairman of the Free Church Council, and the Civic Authorities by the Lord Mayor of Norwich (Mr. Michael Bulman).

He then preaches from the Nave pulpit.

He is then conducted back to the Ancient Throne where he gives his Blessing to the congregation.

The Ceremony is preceded and followed by various processions which are listed in the Order.

The Norwich Episcopal Throne

This is situated in the apse behind the High Altar. It is unique because (1) though this was the original position of such thrones, there is now no other left North of the Alps; and (2) it is very much older than the Cathedral, probably dating from the time when the Bishop in East Anglia had his Cathedral at Dunwich, whence it was moved to Elmham and then to Thetford, before being moved to Norwich by the builder of the Cathedral, Bishop Herbert de Losinga, in 1094. The archaeological adviser (Mr. A. B. Whittingham) to the Dean and Chapter suggests that the throne was probably first damaged in the Danish invasions of the 9th Century, and it was certainly badly damaged by the great fire in the Cathedral in 1272. Whether it was disused then is not known. It was possibly further damaged by the Puritans, who were billeted in the Cathedral in 1643, and it was later walled up. It was uncovered at the 19th Century restoration, and in 1924 a flight of wooden steps was placed, so that it could be used on ceremonial occasions. It has certainly not been used for the Enthronement of a Bishop for 400 years until the present occasion.

Episcopal thrones were put in this position when Christian churches were first built. They were basilicas, and the throne was placed behind the main altar facing the people, thus symbolizing the authority of the Bishop and his relation as 'shepherd', chief pastor, of his people. The position may be derived from the position of the judge in the Roman Law Courts, or, more probably, from the position of the Ruler in the Jewish synagogues, the 'Seat of Moses' referred to in the Gospels.

CIVIC RECEPTION

A Reception is being held by the Lord Mayor after the ceremony at the Castle Museum. Press arrangements are limited and are being coordinated by the Lord Mayor's Secretary.

NOT TO BE RELEASED IN PRINT UNTIL THE CONCLUSION OF THE SERVICE.

In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men.

An Enthronement Service is, as you will understand, a humbling and moving occasion for the Bishop concerned. And I am all the more grateful for the presence and prayers of so many: the clergy and lay representatives from the parishes of this large and scattered Diocese - the leaders of the interests and working life of this city and county - representatives from the Diocese of Portsmouth which I have just left - those who share some of the interests with which I have been connected - friends and family. And I feel, as all of us do, especially happy and honoured that Princess Margaret should have wished to come to this act of worship.

We are joined, too, by the thoughts of many others who cannot be here. Including many who, thanks to television, can share in a more personal way with what is happening here within the Cathedral.

And this Service is impressive to look at - its pageantry and setting, its beauty of sight and sound, its historical interest as a ceremony, enhanced by the use of the ancient Saxon throne behind the altar.

But some may think all this is dated, a relic from the past, out-moded by the thought and life of our modern society.

I am sure that those people who think in this way are wrong. I am sure that the Faith which gives meaning to this Service is as true and relevant, as essential to the lives of each and everyone of us, as applicable to the society institutions of present times, and as vital for human destiny, as it has been in days gone by.

That is not to say that as one looks back over the thousand or more years since the first bishop was enthroned on this ancient throne, one can pretend that the witness of the Christian Church in this land has been consistent. There were periods of lethargy, periods of corruption, periods of humbug, periods when the Church didn't seem to care about men's conditions but was hard and cold, and periods when its interpretation of the all embracing love of God had by some strange inversion led people to close

their minds, and so made them narrow and forbidding. And these faults are not only a feature of the past. There are grave weaknesses in the life and witness of the Church today, which we need to take seriously to heart.

But there is so much to be said on the other side. Think, for instance, of this superb Cathedral, and of many of the East Anglian churches, not only as works of inspired creative art but what they signify as to the place and value given to the worship of Almighty God - a moving testimony to the Godliness of our forbears. Nor can I believe that the Church could have ridden out the storms it has ridden out unless the hand of the Lord had been upon it. And it is not just the bare fact of survival which is impressive, for right through its history, even in its darkest days, there were shafts of light shining out through the darkness of corruption and the dullness of inertia.

It was and it is today the witness of sheer goodness and singleness of heart in men and women, and the infection of their faith and courage which most convincingly endorses the claim that here in this Christian Faith is the truth which meets man's deepest needs, and justifies the saying: "In Him was life and the life was the light of men".

No one is more aware, and I say this as one who has been trained in the discipline of Science, that there is much that needs to be interpreted afresh as to the terms in which Christian truth needs to be presented, but the manner by which alone it can come to be accepted remains essentially the same;

"You see yonder Wicket-gate?" The man said "No".

Then said the other "Do you see yonder Shining Light?"

He said, "I think I do".

Then said Evangelist, "Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto, so shalt thou see the Gate; at which, when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do."

It is like the look-out at Sea. It may take a little time before his eyes are adjusted and he is able to see the light breaking through, but then as he approaches it becomes bright and clear.

One of the peculiarities of light is that it appears to shine more brightly when it is shining in darkness. A fact illustrated supremely by our Lord Himself, for it was when there was darkness over all the land that the glory of God's love shone out most clearly:

"And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me".

As generations of humble men have followed the Light and have discovered that, whatever conditions may be, it is a light which prevails so, today, the light still shines, a light that lighteth every man coming into the world.

That is why the faith upon which this Service depends for its meaning, though rooted in the past, has meaning for us today; for it is concerned with Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, that, walking in His light, God may be enthroned in our hearts, to Whom be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end, Amen.