



20th July 2023

Dear brothers and sisters,

It's a pleasure and privilege to send you these few words, now that it's known I'm to be your next Diocesan Bishop. What I want to do is to give you a flavour of what I pray for in all that lies ahead – and I do so by giving you the 'edited highlights' of what I said when I was interviewed to be your Bishop.

*'And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.'* (1 Cor 13:13)

It is on these three, above all else – on faith, on hope, and on love – that I want my ministry, and our life together in the Diocese of Winchester, to be based.

I want to lead us in a renewed dependency, trust and faith in our God. In line of sight above my desk I have a little piece of paper stuck on the wall that says this, 'Don't feel totally, personally, irrevocably responsible for everything. That's my job. Love, God.' I know that I cannot do my job – or at least not with any fruitfulness – unless I depend wholly on our God. And as for me so for us all. We must be people of faith, and trust, and prayer above all else.

And so to hope. I want to lead us onwards into a fresh delight, joy and hope in our identity as a Church. We should be – and we must be – a truly hopeful people, simply because Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. I delight and rejoice in the Church of God: I have an evangelical heart for the gospel and a Catholic heart for the Church, and I love to lead it onwards in hope.

And finally, of course, to love. Love must be the hallmark of all we do, for without it we are worth nothing. The task of the Church in every time and in every place is to give living expression to the love of God in Jesus Christ in that particular time and in that particular place. That is of course the calling of every Christian community, every parish church, but it is also the calling of a Diocese, and of a Diocesan Bishop in particular. And it's my great joy to be called to come and lead you in that great work of love.

Yours in Christ,

**Philip Mounstephen**

**Bishop Designate of Winchester**

