



The Cross of Nails was presented to Archbishop Justin during Eucharist in Lambeth Palace Chapel by the Dean of Coventry, the Very Revd John Witcombe, and the Canon for Reconciliation at Coventry Cathedral, Canon Sarah Hills.

The Community of the Cross of Nails, an international network in 35 countries, arose out of the vision of the former Provost of Coventry Cathedral, Richard Howard, who made a commitment to forgiveness and reconciliation following the destruction of the cathedral in 1940.

Speaking at the start of the service, Archbishop Justin said: “Today is a very special day as we receive here at Lambeth the privilege of becoming the 200th member of Coventry Cathedral’s Community of the Cross of Nails. There are communities all over the world.

“While I was Canon for Reconciliation at Coventry Cathedral, I presented them in places like Bujumbura in Burundi, where they remain a centre of inspiration for the Anglicans there in seeking to build peace. To this day that cross remains within the sound of gunfire. It’s a reminder that this symbol is not one of ivory tower isolation, but it is something that speaks into the very heart of the wars and the torture and the terror that so fill our world.”

In his homily, the Archbishop said: “True forgiveness of our enemies, true evidence of our own forgiveness, is so rare, so almost unknown amongst the Christian community, as well as elsewhere, that when we see it we call people saints. It is almost unmistakable when you meet it. . .

“When we talk about reconciliation, we do not, of course, talk about unanimity – we’re not talking about everyone agreeing with each other on everything. . . But reconciliation, as is often said at Coventry, is the transformation of destructive conflict into non-destructive difference.”

Such transformation involved “a whole society becoming something completely different. . . because it handles disagreement with passionate love and not power seeking.”

The Archbishop concluded: “The church is doing what it is called to do when to be someone who forgives and knows forgiveness is no longer a mark of sainthood but a mark of normality within our lives.”



2 min read

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