Words of Welcome

Given by Canon Professor Simon Oliver, Van Mildert Professor of Divinity and Canon of Durham Cathedral

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Simon Oliver and I am Professor of Divinity in Durham University and Residentiary Canon of Durham Cathedral. On behalf of the Dean, Andrew Tremlett, and my colleagues on the Cathedral Chapter, I am delighted to welcome you to this Mass of Thanksgiving on the tenth anniversary of the Centre for Catholic Studies. We extend a particular welcome to Bishop Séamus and Fr. Adrian Dixon, this evening's preacher.

The University was founded in 1832 by William van Mildert, the Bishop of Durham, and the Chapter of Durham Cathedral. The Cathedral and University retain a strong working partnership today. It is therefore fitting that the University's Centre for Catholic Studies should hold its tenth anniversary Mass in the Cathedral.

This evening is also of great ecumenical significance. We pray between the shrines of St. Cuthbert, hermit and Bishop of Lindisfarne, and St. Bede, the only native English doctor of the Church. Their lives pre-date any division in the western Church by eight hundred years. We join our prayers with theirs in thanksgiving for the Centre for Catholic Studies and our shared Christian heritage, and in intercession for the unity and peace of the Church of Jesus Christ. We welcome you.