

Reflection from Sean for the Feast of the Dedication of the Cathedral

The Feast of the Dedication of our Cathedral in Leeds commemorates a great day in the life of the Catholic community in West Yorkshire, when after years of effort and struggle, Bishop Cowgill was at last able to consecrate the mother church of the Diocese in 1924. On the face of it, this might seem to be a peculiar feast to be celebrating in Halifax. Indeed, many of you might be asking the question, why should we celebrate the dedication of a church we don't really have much of a connection to?

The answer is that we do have a connection to St Anne's Cathedral in Leeds, because it is the mother church of our Diocese of Leeds. We here in St Columba's and St Malachy's Halifax are part of a bigger picture. We form the local church of the Diocese of Leeds with our own Bishop at the helm, just as our local church forms a small part of the great church of God spread throughout the world.

The Cathedral is also the seat of the Bishops of Leeds. *Cathedral* comes from the Latin word *Cathedra*, meaning seat. The building houses the throne, or chair, symbolic of the Bishop's teaching authority. This is a reminder to us that Bishop Stock is the chief shepherd of the diocese, and as successor to the Apostles is, in a particular way, entrusted with the task of teaching and preaching.

For us, nevertheless, a Church building is more than just bricks and mortar, however splendid. It is, like the house of Zacchaeus in today's gospel, the place where Jesus Christ has made his home. Consequently, it is the place where we go to worship him, chiefly in the sacrifice of the Mass. It is the place of refuge for the wearied and the place where sinners are reconciled to God.

The second reading of today's feast, from the First Letter of St Peter is a reminder to us that the Church of God is more than just our church buildings; more even than our cathedral church building. The Church of God is built up of living stones. Those living stones are you and me, the members of the church, *a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God. Pt*

The Cathedral church of our Diocese is a great witness to the faith of the Catholic community in this part of the world, but the greatest witness to our Catholic faith will always be in the way each and every one of us lives it in our daily lives.