

**50th Anniversary of Consecration of Guildford Cathedral: in the presence of HM the Queen and HRH the Duke of Edinburgh.
18 November 2011**

Owe no one anything, but to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. (Romans 13:8)

Let me come at St Paul somewhat obliquely.

A surprising fact I discovered quite accidentally about our Cathedral just four days ago. One of my sons was talking at a scientific workshop in Germany to the Head of Chemistry in the University of Durham. The great golden angel above us which can be seen glinting in the sunlight for miles around, was – my son was reliably informed – modelled on my son's colleague's Aunt Mollie.

Well, not exactly modelled, I presume: unless Aunt Mollie was 15 feet (4.6metres) high, weighed nearly a ton and had golden wings! But the sculptor Alan Collins who created the model for the Guildford Angel used Aunt Mollie as his model.

That's rather *homely*. The great Angel is one of the family; the phrase 'my sainted aunt' comes to mind. The Angel is a *friend*; as aunts should be.

That is what this Cathedral should be and *is*. If not an aunt, then certainly a *homely* place where *all* of us feel at home today – from the Supreme Governor of the Church of England to the youngest of our singing children. We are all *at* home. Welcome!

Many hundreds of you here today will have once bought a brick and signed it – including Your Majesty and Your Royal Highness. This is none other than the House of God and the gate of heaven. But it is *also your* home; the people of Surrey and North-East Hampshire. *Your house* and home all those who work with the community to support local charities and networks through the Community Foundation for Surrey and my own Foundation. At their stall see someone working with the Oakleaf Enterprise, Sue Kirk, who was a little school girl in 1961 waving her flag as the big car came past, carrying you Ma'am, to the consecration of this Cathedral those 50 years ago.

This Cathedral your house and home: Surrey Appropriate Adult Volunteers, going into custody suites at a moments notice 365 days a year working with the police and with young and vulnerable detainees.

This Cathedral your house and home: Street Angels and YMCA. No broken glass or under-dressed and alcohol fuelled young actually here today, but your ministry, including the hostel support for over 150 young people, signals that the Church welcomes them and cares for them too. Late on a Friday in Guildford town centre they may not actually look up to the Angel but they see in the Street Angel and the Y the love of Christ.

Your Cathedral and house and home too: all those in the prisons of the County – High Down and Down View on Epsom Downs, Coldingley and Send with the ministry of your Chaplains, this Diocese and the Mothers' Union.

Your house and home all the children of the schools, Church Schools, Community Schools and Independent Schools. You are singing in your house and home today: you are doing creative work in your house and home today. And there is a person in the congregation today, Frank Jupp, who sang in the choir 50 years ago *and* in the 1930s when the foundation stone was laid. So I invite *all* today's Choristers to come back in 50 years time.

And also our collaboration with Watts Gallery in art and the community projects – following the philanthropy of the artist Watts himself. Your house and home too.

And the University: you know the Cathedral is your house and home as well. And alongside the teaching and research of this great University our major joint project: *the multi-faith centre*. We can together show that 'faith' unites rather than divides communities.

All are welcome to this house and home. And that is why reflection on our first 50 years is important and why the work of the Patrons is essentially our future – if we are to continue such a ministry of welcome.

Having started with the homely Angel and Aunt Mollie let me repeat that sentence from our reading from St Paul:

Owe no one anything, but to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

May our Cathedral, for the next 50 years – and beyond – continue to embody the love of God and the love of neighbour as a welcoming house and home for *all*.