

## **NEW BISHOP ANNOUNCED FOR TRURO**



Downing Street announced this morning (Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2008) that the Rt Revd Tim Thornton, 51, at present Bishop of Sherborne, in Dorset is to be the 15<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Truro. He succeeds Bishop Bill Ind, who retired in April of this year.

Tim Thornton was born in 1957 and educated at Devonport High School for Boys. He took an Honours Degree in Theology at Southampton University and trained for the priesthood at St Stephen's House, Oxford. He was ordained Deacon in Wakefield Cathedral in 1980 and priested the following year. He served his first curacy at Todmorden, in Wakefield Diocese, and in 1982 was appointed priest-in-charge of St Peter, Walsden, in the same Diocese. For two years from 1985–87 he was appointed Chaplain

to the Colleges in Cardiff, in the Diocese of Llandaff. Working within the Church in Wales developed for him new insights into the way in which the Church works.

### **MINISTRY IN WAKEFIELD**

In 1987, David Hope, the then Bishop of Wakefield, appointed Tim Thornton as his Chaplain, a post he held until 1991. In 1988 he was appointed Diocesan Director of Ordinands in Wakefield, becoming responsible for the discernment of vocations to the priesthood, and managing a process to care for individuals as they tested their calling.

### **CHAPLAIN TO BISHOP DAVID HOPE**

In 1991, David Hope became Bishop of London, and Tim Thornton went with him as his Chaplain. Given the considerable national responsibilities of the Bishop of London, this period substantially increased Tim Thornton's understanding of the way in which the Church of England works at different levels. He was also increasingly involved, both at Wakefield and in London with the media, and the whole world of communications, which he much enjoyed. From 1991–98 he was Honorary Assistant Priest at St Mary with St George, Cranley Gardens, and from 1991-98 was Deputy Priest in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen.

In 1994, Tim Thornton, who had by this time built up considerable experience in the training of ordinands, was appointed the first Principal of the North Thames Ministerial Training Course, where, he says, he had to work very hard to reconcile different traditions in the Church of England to create a new syllabus for the formation for ordained ministry. During this period, in addition to teaching, he completed his Masters Degree in Ecclesiastical History.

### **VICAR OF ST MARY ABBOTS, KENSINGTON**

In 1998 Tim was appointed Vicar of St Mary Abbots, Kensington, a significant London parish with three churches, he was also Chairman of the Camden Charities, a very large parochial trust which had over two million pounds to apportion annually. During this time he was involved in chairing public meetings relating to the Notting Hill Carnival. In his three years at St Mary Abbots, Tim says that he learnt the

importance of the need to set a vision, to consult carefully, and to be clear about his priorities and to communicate them with all concerned.

### **APPOINTED BISHOP OF SHERBORNE**

In 2001, Tim Thornton was asked by the Bishop of Salisbury to become Bishop of Sherborne, which meant in particular to take the initiative in providing a focus for the life of the Church in the county of Dorset. His considerable and varied experience of both urban and rural ministry stood him in good stead in a county which includes the rural villages of Dorset – in one of which, Iwerne Minster, he and his family currently live – and the large and diverse urban setting of Poole, with a growing University, a port and a significant commercial base. The Bishop served on the Board of Bournemouth University. He also played a decisive part in the development of *Dorcas* the ecumenical social responsibility team in Dorset. In 2007 he was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant, and he is Patron of the Children's Hospice in Poole. He has initiated meetings with the Chief Executives and Leaders of the unitary authority and county bodies represented in Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole and is widely known and liked throughout the county. He is presently a governor of four significant schools in Dorset in both the maintained and independent sectors.

### **LINKS WITH THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE SUDAN**

The Bishop has chaired and re-energised the Link which the Diocese of Salisbury has had for 35 years with the Episcopal Church of the Sudan, a country which for all those years has faced civil war and all its consequences. The Bishop says that it has been very important for his development to see first hand the priorities and issues facing the Church in Africa, and he warmly welcomes Truro Diocese's rapidly deepening links with the Diocese of Umzimvubu.

### **A GIFTED COMMUNICATOR**

Bishop Tim is described by colleagues as a natural, gifted communicator, passionately interested in people. In 2005 Bishop Tim was responsible for organising the 1300<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations for the first Bishop of Sherborne, Aldhelm. He pioneered a Pilgrimage, which took a week, walking from Sherborne to St Aldhelm's Head taking part in events 'beyond the walls of the church' and in the communities through which they passed. As a result of that pilgrimage, Bishop Tim now leads a week long pilgrimage/mission each year in a part of the episcopal area. Taking a team with him, involving local people, they knock on doors, taking part in local community events, raising the profile of the church and allowing others to raise questions or concerns. These create much natural enthusiasm, and the Bishop has been excited by the ecumenical walks which have taken place in recent years in Cornwall, involving the Bishop and the Chair of Methodist District.

Bishop Tim has played a key role in leading and developing strategic change in the Diocese of Salisbury. He was fully involved in a campaign to raise financial awareness across the Diocese, and he sees marked similarities in the changes which the Diocese of Truro has brought about since 2001 and the kind of initiatives which he has been involved in leading in the diocese of Salisbury.

## VISION FOR CHURCHES TO GROW

Bishop Tim is very much looking forward to coming to Cornwall. "I have been a tremendous admirer of Bishop Bill for a long time," he says, "and like him I am optimistic about the future of the Church; I have been and remain a strong advocate for Anglican values and beliefs." The Bishop, who is well known for having a quick sense of humour and for being very approachable, says that, over the next ten years he plans to see churches growing, discovering where God is at work in their communities and taking risks to try new ways of creating community. "I believe significant priority must be given to nurturing disciples and to emphasis that we are only fully the people God wants us to be in relationship to others." he says "It is crucial for us to help people live out their faith 'seven whole days, not one in seven'" Above all the Church must be a prophetic voice in society, prepared to speak out and to stand alongside the weak and the marginalised.

The Bishop of Salisbury, the Rt Revd David Stancliffe says "Bishop Tim has won the hearts and minds of the diocese of Salisbury, and not just Dorset – by his vitality, imagination and sense of engagement. The Bishop has been lively, unstuffy and focussed on what really matters – what God is doing here and in the Sudan to give people life."



The Bishop is married to Siân, who is a Headteacher; they have two adult children, Benedict and Alice. The Bishop, who lists Rugby Union, cricket and reading church history and novels as his hobbies, plans to complete a number of important existing engagements in Dorset before moving to Lis Escop, the Bishop's house at Feock at the end of the year. A service to welcome the new Bishop will take place in Truro Cathedral on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2009.