

**The 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Destruction of Würzburg  
A Short Reflection by the Bishop of Coventry,  
Christopher Cocksworth  
'70 years of reconciliation and peace after World War Two'  
at Station Two of the Pilgrimage of the Cross of Nails**

Lord Mayor, dear Friends, it is a great joy to bring you greetings from the Cathedral, the Diocese and the city of Coventry. And it is a great honour for me to take part in the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorations of the destruction of Würzburg.

To commemorate each other's dead together, to grieve together, to join together in the litany which we will say later, with its prayer, 'Father, forgive' – all of this is a sign of the remarkable reconciliation between our countries over the last 70 years.

'Peace is my gift to you', said Jesus. Peace is a gift. It is only real and lasting peace when it is based on reconciliation between peoples, so that enemies become friends. We must thank God that people began to walk the long road to reconciliation so soon after the war ended and that many courageous Christian people led the way.

Peace is a gift. Peace in Europe is a great gift. It is a gift to the peoples of Europe and it is a gift to the world. Our story – with all the lessons we have learnt – is a story to be told to the world today where civil wars rage between the people in Syria, Iraq and Nigeria. And, as the conflict in Ukraine reminds us, it is a story that we must keep telling to ourselves.

We have shown that peace is possible. We have shown that enemies can become friends. We have shown that life is better than death.