

# The New Dean, Canon Nicholas Papadopoulos -

## The Friends' ask a few questions

(Installation as Dean of Salisbury 9th September 2018)

*(seen here with Bishop Nicholas Holtam in Salisbury Cathedral on the occasion of his appointment)*



The Friends are absolutely delighted to welcome you into the fold of Salisbury Cathedral – the Friends are supporters and fans of this great building, and are very happy to contribute towards its preservation and enhancement and support its life, worship and ministry.

### **What are your thoughts on returning and adjusting to life in Salisbury?**

I'm aware that a lot has changed in the twelve years since I left. I used to spend a lot of Sunday afternoons with my children in Queen Elizabeth Gardens, and would often end up carrying my daughter (and her toy pram) home afterwards. She'll begin her A-Level courses when we return so I don't imagine those afternoons will be quite the same. I served then as Bishop David Stancliffe's Chaplain. When I return Bishop Nicholas will be in his eighth year, of course, and I will be in an entirely new role. So although there is much that is very familiar and very welcome – I love the Cathedral and love the Close – I am aware that there will be many differences, too.

### **What inspired you to change from law to Church?**

My degree was in History (my first passion, which I still read for pleasure). After completing it I studied for a Diploma in Law and was called to the Bar. I practised for seven years, defending and prosecuting cases across the south-east. But as my 30th birthday approached I found myself wondering whether I was using such gifts as I thought I might have in the best way that I possibly could. What I had discovered was that I was more interested in my clients' stories than in their cases – who they were, why they had got themselves into the mess they were in, what might make a real difference to them. Those questions just aren't a lawyer's questions. They are about the meaning of life, not about the weight of the evidence. Then one evening I was sitting in the parish church of St Thomas's Finsbury Park when I was quite sure I heard God telling me, gently, but firmly, to be a priest in the Church. That's how it all started – I went and spoke to my vicar, and the Church's discernment process got underway. I don't regret a



minute of my time at the Bar. It's where I met my wife Heather! It gave me an invaluable intellectual formation and some unforgettable experiences which I still draw upon.

***We are intrigued by your surname! Can you tell us about your ancestry, and your family?***

My father came to England from Cyprus in 1958 and brought his surname with him! 'Papadopulos' is Greek for 'the son of the priest'. My grandfather adopted it because his father was a priest of the Orthodox Church who served in the village of Neo Khorio in south-western Cyprus. Dad did not return to Cyprus to live – while at university in Birmingham he met my mother, an English girl from the Midlands. They married and settled in Kent, where my sister and I grew up and went to school. We have had many holidays in Greece and Cyprus over the years, and I have huge respect and affection for my family's Orthodox roots.

***What are your thoughts about your role as Dean of Salisbury, and what are your aspirations?***

I am absolutely thrilled to have been appointed. As I said when the announcement was made, if there was a Richter scale for jobs you dream of doing but don't believe you ever will, this would be off it - by a mile. Salisbury was served exceptionally well by its last Dean, June Osborne. The condition of the fabric, the thoroughness of the plans, and the quality of the team are all part of her legacy, and no incoming Dean could hope for a better one. Our staff and volunteers are the Cathedral's greatest asset, a huge repository of skill and wisdom motivated by devotion to the place. I have enjoyed meeting some of them already, but my absolute priority on arrival will be getting to know them.

***What is your favourite sport, and what team do you support?***

I'm afraid I'm not a very sporty person. Sorry - no sponsored Marathons or bike rides for the Cathedral's restoration! I enjoy the gym and long walks, but that's about it. The sole exception is that while I've been in Canterbury I've rediscovered a love of watching county cricket, and have seen a few games every season. It's usually Kent being put to the sword by whoever they are playing, but somehow that doesn't diminish the enjoyment. I'd like to learn to fish and to sail; I long to keep pigs; and I enjoy The Archers, Alan Bennett, and a pint of beer or a glass of Gewurztraminer. I imagine that some of those probably don't count as sports...

***How do you like to relax?***

Heather is a wonderful cook but I am let loose on the kitchen at weekends. The pattern seems to be that I'm given a gorgeous recipe book every Christmas and spend the year working my way through it – curry, Greek, and Middle Eastern dishes all feature in the repertoire. We have a well-stocked vegetable garden in Canterbury and I've discovered I can make jam and chutney too (rhubarb with ginger and apricot is my speciality). I enjoy the theatre and the cinema, and the occasional evening out with friends, and am refreshed by reading (novels, poetry, biography) - and by study, too.

***Are you a keen gardener?! We hold an annual open garden event to raise funds for the Friends and we are highly likely to try to persuade you to include the Deanery garden!***

I am sure we will be willing to open the Deanery garden – we have always opened our garden in Canterbury - but it will require some serious attention from someone whose gardening skills are far better developed than are mine!

### ***What are your tastes in music?***

They are eclectic. At St Peter's Eaton Square (where I was Vicar 2007-2013) we were fortunate in our superb professional choir, so I value the choral tradition and look forward to worshipping daily with the choir of Salisbury as I have with Canterbury. But at home or in the car I might listen to jazz (Sarah Vaughan is a favourite) or Bob Dylan. My pub quiz special subject would be the life and music of the Beatles (indeed it has been suggested that they are my real religion)...but I have a ticket to see the Rolling Stones in June and I'm looking forward to going!

### ***What will you miss most about Canterbury?***

The people – of course. We have had wonderful colleagues, wonderful neighbours and wonderful friends. And – the building. It has been the most

amazing privilege to pray and work here. But I am returning to Salisbury, to another beautiful building, and to another fantastic community. I am looking forward immensely to meeting you.

***As with the Friends of Canterbury, we have been around since the early 1930s – our members have many and varied connections with Salisbury Cathedral, and as a group of like-minded people who wish to preserve it for the future, how do you see our role in this future?***

Friends are among the Cathedral's most effective ambassadors. You are united by a love of the place. There is something about it that you prize: architecture, music, history, personal connection. This is emphatically good news, or 'gospel'. You are the best placed people to tell it. So that is what I encourage Friends to do. Go and tell, so that others may come and see!

