



Richard Chartres outside St Paul's in 2008 with Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair

Albans and later at Lambeth Palace. In this rôle he wrote the controversial sermon that Runcie delivered at the service to mark the end of the Falklands conflict, riling some Tories with its compassion for the Argentine dead. Chartres has no regrets. It was, he insists, "deeply patriotic". Indeed, Margaret Thatcher's hostility was one of "life's little myths"; she had, in fact, come down the aisle after the service to say "Well done" to Runcie, in her breathless way. It was her husband, Denis, who was furious.

Chartres had warm words for Mrs Thatcher. At one dinner she turned to him and, with a firm grip on his arm, insisted: "Bishop, don't touch the duck. It's far too fatty and rich." He also

acknowledged her foresight in wanting a funeral and not a memorial service. The latter would have been divisive; a funeral, though not a state occasion, allowed the Queen to attend.

He has had much to do with the royal family. He is, after all, the Dean of the Chapel Royal, a position he will continue to hold until a successor as bishop is found — a process that may, to his bewilderment, take a year or more (among those rumoured to be in the running for the post are the Right Rev Adrian Newman, Bishop of Stepney, and the Right Rev Dr Christopher Cocksworth, Bishop of Coventry).

In 1997 he was one of the executors of the will of Diana, Princess of Wales, and

delivered an address to her memorial service in 2007. He confirmed the Duke of Cambridge, and preached the sermon at his wedding. He is also a close friend of the Prince of Wales, with whom he was at Trinity College, Cambridge (Chartres was one year senior).

Both are strong environmentalists. Chartres was chairman of the Church of England's Shrink the Footprint campaign from 2006 to 2015 and gave up flying for a year to show his commitment. He and Prince Charles have a keen interest in Islam and interfaith links — Chartres was co-chairman with Ali Gomaa, the former Grand Mufti of Egypt, of the World Economic Forum's Islam and the West initiative, and founded St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, devoted to interfaith peacemaking, in the small rebuilt medieval London church blown up by an IRA bomb in 1993.

Chartres insists his almost theatrically Trollopiian image is not "calculated". "Do I prefer the language of the *King James Bible* and the *Book of Common Prayer*? Yes. Am I the president of the Trollope Society? Yes. Do I have the traditions of the church at heart? Yes." However, as he argued, yesterday's avant-garde is today's busted flush. "I was before even the avant-garde." He was told as a young man that he had no future in the modern church because of his old-fashioned views.

Beneath the carapace of conservatism, Chartres has often been radical. He has scythed through the bureaucracy of church regulations. He is bored by the minutiae of synod discussions. He is a passionate defender of church schools, but is ready to experiment. Indeed, his last official function was to open a French-English bilingual school in Harrow last week, the first in the diocese, which was actually trilingual because most children did not have either language as their mother tongue.

He is passionately interested in Orthodoxy and has been the Church of England's link to the Orthodox churches, introducing the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church to the Queen during his recent visit.

In his valedictory sermon, Chartres revealed that his own vocation had come partly from the example of his brother, who had severe learning difficulties, "but a genius for love". Living with diversity allowed people to be transformed, he told the congregation. "What the church has to offer is not an ideology or a mere critique, but a community in which the Spirit of Jesus Christ dwells. In a marketplace of strident salesmen of warring ideologies we seek not to add to the din, but to build relationships that endure and give meaning to life".