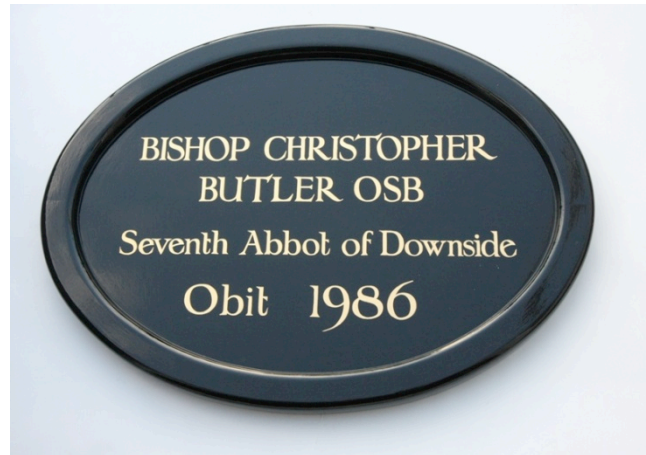


Bishop Christopher Butler (1902-1986)

7th Abbot of Downside

Bishop Butler was described in a national newspaper as one of the best loved priests in the country. He was born in Reading in 1902, a member of the Butler family of wine merchants. At School his formidable intellectual gifts brought him a White Scholarship at St John's College, Oxford and he proceeded to a triple first in Classical Mods, Greats, and Theology.



His career was a blend of the academic and pastoral. He had been a tutor at Keble and classics master at Brighton College before becoming Head Master of Downside School. At Keble he had converted from Anglicanism. He was ordained a priest of the Roman Catholic Church in 1933 and was eventually auxiliary Bishop to Cardinal Heenan of Westminster.

In 1946 he was elected Abbot of Downside and served in that post for 20 years. He became Abbot-President of the English Benedictine Congregation in 1961 and played a significant part in the Second Vatican Council where he was a major force on its theology commission.

A bibliography of his writings runs to some 337 titles. He played a pivotal part in ecumenical affairs and was a frequent guest on BBC programmes. For work as observer at the Commission of Church and State, and on the Anglican/ Roman Catholic International Commission he twice received the Cross of St Augustine from the Archbishop of Canterbury.