



Michael Clarke with the five wounds for Chichester

## Suffering symbols for a cathedral

**YESTERDAY** in Chichester, West Sussex, Michael Clark's *Five Wounds* became the first conceptual work of art — "more an idea than a painting" — to be put on permanent display in an English cathedral. It is unlikely that many visitors will notice it; but that, apparently, is not the point. The point is that it is *there*.

The work consists of five tiny paintings of the wounds of Christ, dotted around the cathedral to form the points of a pentagon: the Foot wounds on either side of the west door, the Hand wounds in the north and south transepts, and the side wound in the High Altar's sanctuary. For reasons not entirely clear to me, each of the paintings is precisely 2.236 inches square (Mr Clark points out that 2.236 is the square root of

five, as if that explains all).

Mr David Coke, curator of Chichester's Pallant House Gallery which introduced Clark to the cathedral, tells me: "When you go into the church, it's not whether you notice it that matters — that's almost incidental. It is the fact that it's there. It turns the church into something else almost."

The artist himself, whose recent work is now on display at the Rebecca Hossack Gallery in London's Piccadilly, is scarcely more enlightening. "It signifies something to do with the dead Christ in 1994," he tells me. "It's a piece that I hope people will start to think more about perhaps when they are not there, as opposed to when they are there, so it's more in the mind."