



Andrew O'Brien

Archbishop arrives in South Sudan for ‘historic’ peace pilgrimage with Pope and Moderator

“When I remember the commitments that were made by you in 2019 I am grieved. I am sad that we still hear of such tragedy. We hoped and prayed for more. We expected more. You promised more.”

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has pleaded with leaders in South Sudan to find a lasting peace and said he had hoped for more progress on the commitments that they made at the Vatican in 2019.

Archbishop Welby is with Pope Francis and the Moderator of the Church of Scotland in Juba for an unprecedented joint visit to South Sudan.

The joint visit by leaders of Roman Catholic, Anglican and Reformed traditions is the first trip of its kind in Christian history.

The Archbishop and the Moderator, the Rt Rev Dr Iain Greenshields, met the Pope at Juba International Airport this afternoon when the papal plane arrived from DRC at 3pm local time.

Archbishop Justin Welby and the Moderator boarded the papal plane shortly after it landed to greet the Pope onboard.

The Pope was then welcomed by the President of South Sudan and a guard of honour, as well as representatives from the South Sudan Council of Churches.

This afternoon the three Christian leaders met with the President and Vice-Presidents of the Republic of South Sudan and in the evening addressed a gathering of authorities, civil society leaders and diplomats in the garden of the Presidential Palace.

In that gathering the Archbishop of Canterbury said: “In 2019 Pope Francis knelt to kiss the feet of each politician. Five years later, we come to you in this way again: on our knees, to wash feet, to listen, to serve, to pray with you.

“But we come to listen to the young people, which is 70% of South Sudan. Without listening to their voice, there will be no peace and reconciliation. And we come to honour the women who have known such terrible suffering.

“And we thank you for your presence in this gathering. We pray that that may show that you have not given up hope. Yet forgive me my dear sisters and brothers and leaders of this country, but I must say that places far and near, and so many of the citizens of this wonderful country, are becoming tired that more has not changed.

“That tiredness is seen in the faces of the people of South Sudan.

“When I remember the commitments that were made by you in 2019 I am grieved. I am sad that we still hear of such tragedy. We hoped and prayed for more. We expected more. You promised more. We cannot pick and choose parts of a peace agreement. Every part must be done by every person and that costs much. But the answer to peace and reconciliation is not in visits like this. But it is in your hands. For the heroic and brave and courageous people of South Sudan who fought for so long for their freedom and won it are surely the people who have the courage to struggle for peace and reconciliation. It is within your reach. It is close to you. You can take it with the help of God.

“The people of South Sudan are loved by God. Your stories, your suffering, is known by God. Your prayers are heard by God. Together in this visit, we will pray for peace.”

Tomorrow morning the Archbishop will lead an Anglican service of worship at All Saints Cathedral in Juba. The joint programme will then resume in the afternoon when the Pope, Archbishop and Moderator will meet with people displaced by war and hear testimony from children living in displacement camps because of the conflict.

Tomorrow evening the Archbishop will join the Pope and Moderator at an open-air Ecumenical Prayer for Peace vigil with over 50,000 people expected to attend. The Archbishop, Pope and Moderator will each address the crowds at the event.

Notes:

1. Photos available to download [here](#).
2. Other photos and video are available from news agencies covering the visit as well as from the Vatican Press Office.

4 min read

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