



In the wake of the shooting in New Zealand, the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke at an interfaith gathering at Regent’s Park Mosque in London.

Much of what I was going to say has already been said. The killings in New Zealand are monstrous. The response of New Zealand, all its people, with Muslims in the forefront, is beautiful and inspiring. What they say to each other we say to you. Those who attack Muslims in THIS country or elsewhere attack every human being. You are not “the other”, you are us. Those who act out of hate for Muslims act out of hate for all here.

Those who acted or supported the actions in New Zealand attack all of us.

For British Muslims who are feeling under threat, we are with you. Hatred of Muslims denies and blasphemes Christ. Those who co-opt Christian language and history for hatred commit blasphemy.

We will work with Bishops in the Church of England to see how we can be more effective in visible signs of togetherness.

We educate one million children in Church of England schools and have 8000 clergy. We will renew what we do in our Near Neighbours scheme.

We will work with bishops to see how we can be more effective in dioceses.

I commit myself to listening more and putting this higher up the agenda in my own actions and words.

The event in New Zealand is a wake-up call to renew civilised discourse in public life and on social media. I know that my good friend Cardinal Vincent Nichols, who is unfortunately unable to be with us today, is one with me when I say that faith and obedience to God are part of the solution to the challenges of extremism and it is working with faith communities that we will tackle this problem. It’s shown by the fact that people from so many faiths are standing together here in solidarity. The attacker wanted to create a war against Islam; he generated human unity.

Jesus taught his followers to be peacemakers, “for they will be called children of God.” Making peace is an action, it doesn’t just happen. It requires us to be curious, to listen, to move across differences of culture, ethnicity, religion and politics in love. Hate crimes against those who are different have no place before God.

We stand together for you are us, and we are you, together in the hands of the creator and judge of every person. May God protect and strengthen you.

3 min read

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