

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, met with the Primate of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan, Archbishop Justin Badi, at Lambeth Palace on Friday 30 December. Archbishop Justin Welby also sent this message to the South Sudan Council of Churches strategy meeting in Kenya.



Read Archbishop Justin's message:

"I pray continually for South Sudan and for the strength of the Church as you lead efforts for peace. I can only begin to understand the burdens you carry and the challenges you face from my own time in South Sudan. Our Lord Jesus Christ showed us the power of God amidst this kind of darkness. He showed us that sacrifice, truth and humility can be transformative; that divides can be crossed; and that we can show love where we see only hate. I pray that would strengthen you in your discussions during this strategy meeting and in your ministries beyond. I also pray it would strengthen your hope. When I visited South Sudan, I saw amidst the violence that you have a great country with beautiful land and some of the most generous, resilient and joyful people I have ever known.

"In a meeting with Pope Francis only two weeks ago, we made clear our desire to visit South Sudan again. We will do this when it serves the people and the Church of South Sudan and not to reward political game-playing. In recent weeks, as I became increasingly concerned about the formation of the government, I made personal calls to the principals and regional leaders to encourage them to pursue a spirit of unity. I pray for you as you accompany and pray with the political leaders in the search for enduring peace. I will continue to work directly and through my team in service of your ministry.

"I remember back to the Vatican Retreat and to the remarkable way in which God brought together not only the political leaders, but also churches which have historically been divided. Together, we must work and pray for the Pope's commission to become reality - for leaders at all levels to stand united before their people and for their power to be used as a blessing.

"I will pray for your ongoing discussions and reflections. May there be clarity in your priorities and selfless collaboration in your action. And may you know, above all, the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding."

