



Neil Turner

The Archbishop of Canterbury and Mrs Caroline Welby have taken part in celebrations for the 200th Anniversary of the Diocese of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, with a 3-day visit to Jamaica (18-21 July).

Hosted in the capital Kingston by The Most Rev. Dr. Archbishop Howard Gregory, Archbishop of the West Indies and Bishop of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, the visit was an opportunity to hear more about the work of the Diocese as it celebrates this milestone, with the theme 'Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: Celebrating Service, Guarding Justice, Affirming Hope'.

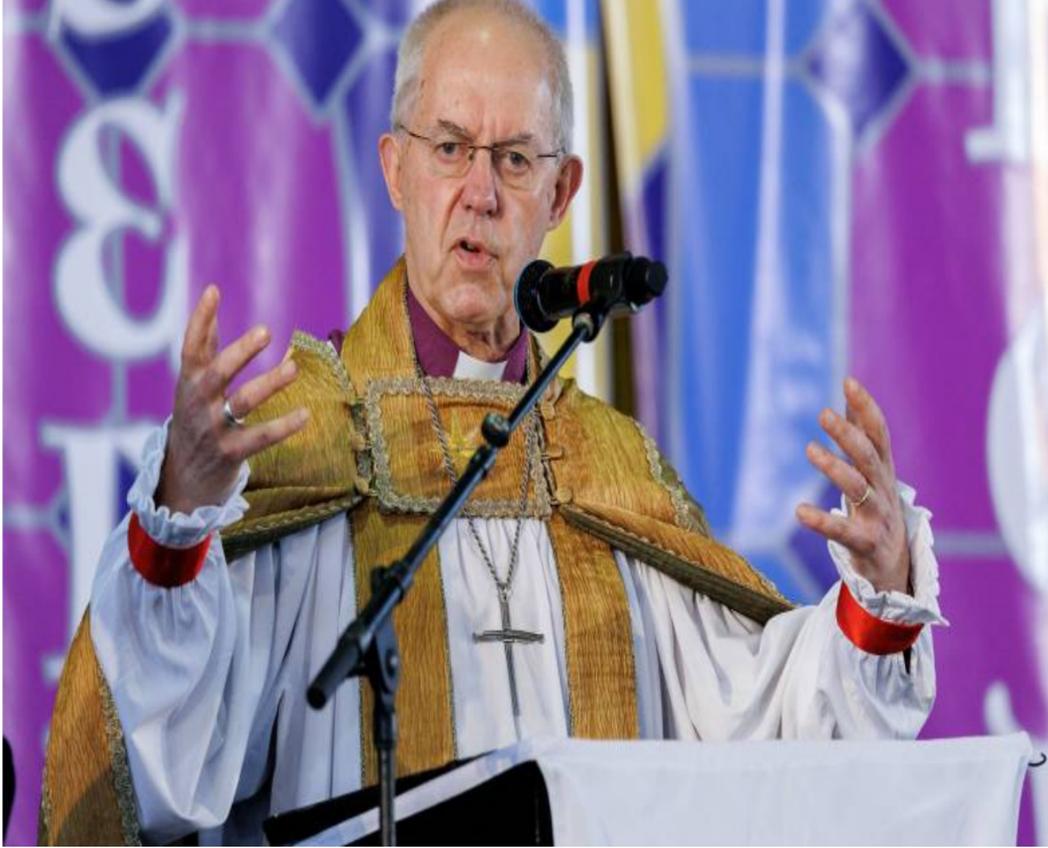


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The visit came two weeks after Hurricane Beryl had hit the Caribbean, destroying homes and infrastructure on the island, as well as cutting off electricity and water supplies for many Jamaicans. The Archbishop met with the Prime Minister Andrew Holness and the Governor-General Patrick Allen, where he heard about relief efforts taking place in southern coastal areas affected.

Witnessing first-hand the pastoral and practical support offered by the Diocese, Mr and Mrs Welby visited the Church Teachers' College in Mandeville, meeting staff and students training to be future educators. Visiting classrooms, the music centre, chapel and library, they heard more about the work being done to improve education, as well as hearing about the provision being offered to those children with special needs.

Towards the end of the visit, the Archbishop took part in a Q&A with students where he was asked about his own faith, and how he upheld it in the face of deadly events such as Hurricane Beryl.



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With the Diocese focused on renewal and transformation, much of the celebrations centred on the work being done to reach different communities. However, it was also important to acknowledge that the Anglican church was first established and controlled by the local governing class of planters and owners of enslaved people. To this end, Archbishop Welby took part in a panel discussion at the University of the West Indies on the legacy of enslavement and reparatory justice. Fellow panelists included Professor Verene Shepherd, Vice Chair of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Former ICJ Judge Patrick Robinson and the historian, Professor Patrick Bryan. Following the decision by the Church Commissioners to establish a Healing, Justice and Repair Fund, the Archbishop was invited to discuss its possible impact, in the wider context of the future of the Diocese. In a Q&A session afterwards, the Archbishop was asked about the scope and ambition of the Fund. Later that day, he was presented with an honorary degree from the University of the West Indies for his contribution to reparatory justice. During the ceremony, Dr Peter Blake said: "In his pursuit of justice and reconciliation, the Archbishop has blazed his own trail by positioning himself on the platform of social justice."

Alongside the Archbishop's activities, Mrs Welby spent a morning with wives of clergy in Jamaica, hearing about their contribution to the ministry of the church, as well as the Mother's Union and the Women's Auxiliary and their work to help the poorest in the community.



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The event culminated with a Commemorative Eucharist Service at the National Arena in Kingston, featuring singers from the Jamaica National Chorale and steel drummers. Gospel readings were read in both Jamaican Patois and English, and read by parishioners from Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, of all ages and backgrounds. Attended by Archbishop Kenneth Richards from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Kingston, it was also a celebration of the strong ecumenical relationships fostered by the Diocese. The Archbishop of Canterbury delivered the sermon,



the need for repentance and reconciliation. Read the sermon in full

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Reflecting on the visit, the Archbishop said: "It has been a joy to spend time in Jamaica, to celebrate such an important milestone with the Diocese. Everywhere we went, we could see the Holy Spirit at work on this island - with Anglicans living out Jesus' word in every corner of the country. From bringing aid and comfort to those affected by Hurricane Beryl to training the next generation of teachers, the church sits right at the heart of Jamaican life.

"I said before I came that I had much to learn, and I have done just that - benefitting from the wisdom, insight and experience of those who live, work and study in Jamaica. As a church we should not shy away from conversations that reveal difficult parts of our history, and I thank those who took the time to challenge and educate me while I have been here.

"Thank you to Archbishop Gregory and his team for their generous hospitality. I pray for them on this significant anniversary, thanking God for the past 200 years and praying for the next 200, as they work towards renewal and transformation."

4 min read

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