



There is no Place for Racism

A Pastoral Message on the Dignity of Every Person

To the clergy, consecrated men and women, and lay faithful of the Archdiocese of Southwark.

Five years ago, I wrote to every parish and school with a message that remains essential to our identity as followers of the Lord Jesus: *there is no place for racism*. Today, I reaffirm that conviction and invite everyone in our Archdiocese to renew their commitment to building communities where every person is welcomed, valued, and loved.

As Christians, at the heart of our faith stands the unshakeable truth that every human being is created in the image and likeness of God.¹ This is why the dignity of every person is not something that can be earned or bestowed, but is inherent in the very fact of being human. Each of us is created by God and loved by God – without exception. Jesus teaches clearly that to be his disciples, we need to love the stranger, include the marginalised, and break down the barriers of division.² His command is that *we should love one another as he has loved us*, and this must shape our pastoral practice in the service of the common good.³

To love as Christ loves is to welcome without prejudice, to listen with compassion, and to ensure that all who enter our churches and schools find a place of safety, respect, and belonging. This is true, not least, for people who are refugees seeking sanctuary from situations of war, oppression, and tyranny. As Jesus himself teaches us, “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me.”⁴ This is why, in justice, we must treat every person with respect and love.

Our Archdiocese is blessed with extraordinary diversity. The people in our parishes and schools reflect a rich tapestry of cultures, languages, and histories. Honouring this diversity is a beautiful gift that strengthens our witness to the Gospel and enriches our shared life of faith.

In continuing to be a welcoming Church, we reject all forms of racism. This means creating communities where every person feels safe, valued, and heard. It means seeking to foster a culture of encounter and friendship where differences become opportunities for mutual understanding and growth.

I ask everyone in our Archdiocese to reflect the boundless love of Christ, and to renew their commitment to genuine welcome, and to opening their minds and hearts in service to people who are vulnerable, whatever their circumstances. The measure of the love we show to the person in need is the measure of the love we show to Christ.

May our Archdiocese continue to be a beacon of unity sustained by Christ’s commandment: to “love one another just as I have loved you” (John 13:34).

✠ John Wilson
Archbishop of Southwark

*Given at Southwark
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¹ cf. Genesis 1:27.

² cf. Luke 10:25-37; Luke 17:11-19; Luke 14:15-24.

³ cf. John 13:34-35.

⁴ Matthew 25:40.