



## Address of the Most Revd and Right Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury

---



Educated at Eton College and Trinity College, Cambridge, Archbishop Justin Welby worked in the oil industry for 11 years. In 1989, after sensing a call from God, he trained for ordination and took a theology degree in which he focused on ethics, particularly in business. As a deacon he spent 15 years serving Coventry Diocese. In 2002 he was made a Canon of Coventry Cathedral, where he ran the reconciliation work based there. On 8 December 2007 he was installed as Dean of Liverpool. On 4 February 2013 Justin Welby became the 105th Archbishop of the See of Canterbury. He was enthroned at Canterbury Cathedral on 21 March 2013. He is married and has two sons and three daughters.

### CEREMONY FOR THE SIGNING OF THE JOINT DECLARATION OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS AGAINST SLAVERY

Casina Pio IV, Tuesday, 2 December 2014

At a time when faiths are seen wrongly as a cause of conflict is a sign of real hope that today global faith leaders have together committed themselves publicly to the battle to end modern slavery. We live in a world where over 30 million people are oppressed in some form of slavery – trafficking, forced labour and prostitution, the trade in human organs and many more outrages. The suffering is unimaginable. The challenge is acute and growing, facilitated by a globalised economy that is too easily without moral or conscience.

We gather to affirm a deep shared commitment for the liberation of those humiliated, abused and enslaved by their fellow-human beings. It is a challenge which must be undertaken in global partnership with others.

For Christians, commitment grows out of two fundamental convictions. First, God has made humanity in the divine image. No-one should be enslaved or denied the dignity of sharing actively and freely in the common life in which liberty is a part of creation.

The second conviction goes even further. Christians believe that the divine life was lived fully and uniquely in the flesh and blood of a human being, Jesus Christ, born through the willing co-operation of his mother Mary. And so we are bound to see every human being as part of the divine plan. This means that no human body can, in any circumstance, be simply an object to be traded, trafficked or enslaved. In Christ we find our liberation restored. God treated humanity with such loving respect by choosing to take human form among us – so we must share that love and respect for all human beings.

The evils we seek to combat will not yield without struggle. The complex global environment is why we need the strongest possible collaboration between national governments everywhere, with the business sector, police forces, civil society, faith communities and all those who long to see all humanity live in freedom.

There are already close and trusting relationships between us as faith leaders. Our task now is to make those relationships work effectively for the well-being of all people. The Anglican Communion has given a high priority to this task, and I want to affirm my own personal commitment to it.

But what can we do? We can make sure that every worshipping community, of every faith, knows about modern slavery and is ready to work to prevent and put an end to these abuses. We can look to our own actions and choices as consumers and users of financial services whose managers can put great pressure on companies in which they invest. We can make sure that those who have been enslaved and trafficked are supported, respected and welcomed into community. We can continue to press governments to implement more effective laws to root out these evils. In the United Kingdom the Modern Slavery Bill is currently going through Parliament and is a very good model. We can work with the business sector across the globe to ensure robust systems for slave-free supply chains. And we can reinforce the ties of friendship and trust among ourselves, and with all those who profess faith and those who do not, who share our commitment to end slavery.

As we make this solemn commitment today, my prayer is that we shall by God's grace play a key role in ending the inhuman practice of modern slavery – a practice that disfigures our world and obscures the image of God in men, women and children. We have the will, we have the common purpose, it can be done; may God bless our action together.