

# The Bishop's House, 23 Davenport Road, Coventry CV5 6PW

THE BISHOP OF COVENTRY  
The Right Reverend Dr Christopher Cocksworth

telephone: (024) 7667 2244  
bishop@bishop-coventry.org

18<sup>th</sup> January 2019

**To all Licensed Ministers and to Headteachers  
cc: To Churchwardens**

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I am writing to you as the 2019 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins (18–25 January). You will see from the accompanying letter (issued yesterday) that Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) have called for National Days of Prayer for the 'national political situation in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland'. The CTBI Statement says, rightly, that this 'is a time that requires particular prayers for discernment and wisdom, as well as a time for deep listening to God's call to live together in peace and justice'.

Bishop John and I commend this call for prayer to the Whole Diocese and we ask you – and we know this is already deeply in your hearts – to pray fervently for our nation. If you have opportunities over this coming week to do so with our brothers and sisters in other Churches, then so much the better. The nation needs the prayer of all the Churches, of all Christian people, of all those from any Faith who pray.

**Before the 2015 General Election, the Bishops wrote a Pastoral Letter, called *Who is my Neighbour?* That is the question before us in these days of great political uncertainty – to identify, consider and love our neighbours, all of our neighbours. As we seek to do that in prayer, as in other ways, I encourage you, therefore, to pray not only for our British neighbours but also for our European neighbours and for our world neighbours.**

**On every side of the debate, attention has been on what is best for us, for our nation. In prayer especially but also in every way of acting, we are called to put that which is good for our neighbour at the centre of our hearts. St Paul summarises the radical Christian ethic when he says, 'Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interest of others' (Philippians 2.3). It is the challenge of the Church in our times to show how our debates and decisions could be transformed by that reorientation towards what is good for others. For Jesus tells us that we are to love our neighbours *as we love ourselves*, and that is how we show our love for God (Mark 12.28-31).**

We have created a dedicated area on the website for people to post resources for services and prayers for unity and reconciliation, wisdom and discernment. So please add your resources to that and make use of those provided by others.

With my prayers  
As ever, yours,

+ Christopher