

# REMARKS AT DINNER IN HONOR OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY HOSTED BY THE R. REV. SUHEIL DAWANI.

Saint George's Cathedral – Jerusalem, 26 June 2013.

*Your Grace, dear Archbishop Justin,*

*Your Grace, dear Bishop Suheil,*

*Mr Dean, dear Father Hosam,*

*Your Eminences,*

*Your Graces,*

*Reverend Fathers,*

*Distinguished Guests from the wider community of Jerusalem,  
Esteemed Members of the Diplomatic Service,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Once again we are delighted to be enjoying the hospitality of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and Saint George's Cathedral, and we wish to thank you, dear Bishop Suheil and you, dear father Hosam, for the gracious welcome that you always extend to us here. The close and warm relationship that exists between the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Episcopal Diocese and the Cathedral is a long-standing one, and we give thanks to God for the ministry that you exercise on behalf not only of your local community, but also on behalf of the

Anglican Communion.

Your Grace. Archbishop Justin, you have seen today some of the fullness of the life of the Christian community here in Jerusalem. Indeed our gathering this afternoon of the Heads of Churches at the Patriarchate, and our gathering this evening, are visible signs of an important truth about the life of Jerusalem, which is our common home, and which is a beacon of light and hope to the world.

By virtue of its secular and religious history, and by virtue of its spiritual significance, Jerusalem is unique among the cities of the world. Here God has made his presence among his people known in a special and particular way, and Jerusalem is a living witness to this eternal reality. In this holy city, heaven and earth have been joined, and sacred history is made visible to the eye of faith.

So it is that Jerusalem can be the exclusive possession of no single individual or group, whether secular or religious. The true nature of Jerusalem is one of unity in diversity, and essential to Jerusalem is our cultural, religious, ethnic, and linguistic richness. Clearly we, to whom the Joy and the burden of the leadership of the Churches has been entrusted, understand that a strong, vibrant and healthy Christian community is indispensable to the true life of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem without such Christian community – a community that is itself, as we see here this evening, a remarkably diverse one – is not conceivable, and we know that you, dear Archbishop Justin, know that, and will make the well-being of the Christian community in this city and in the Holy Land a priority of your own primatial ministry. For Jerusalem is also your home.

Our region continues to face unprecedented and serious challenges and changes. You have just come from Egypt and Jordan, where we know that you have learnt a great deal about

the current life of the region. For generations. Jews, Christians, Muslims, Druze, and people of other faiths have lived side by side here. Sometimes relationships have been closer; sometimes they have been more distant. But the peoples of this region share both a common history as well as a common destiny. We must find new ways of genuine co-existence and mutual respect and understanding for there to be the chance of proper justice and lasting peace.

We have no real choice. Any alternative to the truly diverse character of Jerusalem is diminishment, and this is not an option for us as Christians. Security, the protection of human rights, freedom of worship, and the possibilities for self-determination must be guaranteed for all. In the task of ensuring that Jerusalem lives its full identity, and fulfills its ancient destiny, no group, and in particular the Christian community, is dispensable.

As we seek to be faithful to our calling as the Christian community of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, and as the Churches seek to find better ways of working together in this spiritual cause, we ask for your prayers, dear Archbishop Justin, as well as your partnership. We are confident that, by God's grace, Jerusalem will be maintained as a city that gathers all God's children without distinction into her wide embrace. For there is room here for all.

Thank you.

His Beatitude

**THEOPHILOS III,**

Patriarch of Jerusalem.