

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York made this joint statement today on the recent events surrounding the nomination of Bishop Philip North as Bishop of Sheffield.

"The recent events surrounding the nomination of Bishop Philip North as Bishop of Sheffield, including his withdrawal from the process, have understandably raised great concern amongst many in the Church of England. The status of the House of Bishops Declaration of June 2014 has been questioned by some and its meaning has also been challenged.

"We have therefore written to Sir Philip Mawer, the Independent Reviewer under the Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests, (Resolution of Disputes Procedure Regulations) 2014, to address the concerns that have arisen in the Church following these recent events. We attach our letter to Sir Philip, in which we reaffirm clearly our commitment, and the commitment of the House of Bishops, to its Declaration, to the principles contained in it, and to the overriding principle of mutual flourishing.

"Finally, in this period of Lent, as part of our preparation for the glorious celebration of the extraordinary grace of God in the events of Holy Week and Easter, we call on all those in the Church to pray openly for the flourishing of those with whom they disagree, to demonstrate the mutual love which we are called to share and to proclaim confidently in word and deed that in Christ we find our true identities, and the overcoming of those things which in ourselves we find so divisive."

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