



...a 'just and lasting' peace.

The Archbishop in Jerusalem has addressed members of the Church of England's General Synod, describing the 'difficult and controversial' task of seeking peace and reconciliation in the Holy Land.

On the first day of its November 2023 group of sessions, Most Revd Hosam Naoum spoke to the Synod by video from Jerusalem, asking members of the Synod to hold both Palestinians and Israelis in their prayers following an 'eruption of violence' since the attacks of October 7.

He urged the global community to work towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict, a ceasefire for humanitarian corridors, and for the protection of civilians.

"I would like to thank Archbishop Justin for his presidential address and for his word of peace and reconciliation that continues to be a light to many places around the world, and we know that during war and during the time where we pursue peace," he said.

"Language of reconciliation ... can be difficult, and it can be controversial. But here in the Holy Land we need that language of peace and reconciliation more than ever.

"In a time of war, especially here in the Middle East and in The Holy Land, both Palestinians and Israelis are seeking a better future. But this doesn't mean that violence can be the only way, or even the way in which we strive for peace and reconciliation," he said.

Archbishop Hosam also called to mind conflicts in Sudan and Ukraine, and the 'day after the war' when we remember those who have been lost, with reference to the recent marking of Remembrance Sunday.

He called on the international community to work for a 'just and lasting' peace for Israeli and Palestinian people.

"The language of guns and the sounds of bullets were never the way forward where people would live together side by side," he said.

"If we are really concerned about the security for Israelis and the self determination of the Palestinian people for a free and enduring and durable state in the future, we need the efforts of everyone around the world, that we may focus on the day after the war, where peace - a just and lasting one - will be the only way forward for the end of the cycle of violence here in the Holy Land."

"As we continue to strive for peace and as we continue to spread the work of reconciliation, even though it falls on deaf ears at this time of war and violence and suffering, now we need to hold to what we believe in, because that is what God has called us for."

The Most Reverend Hosam Naoum is the 15th Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem, a role he has held since 2021. He was born in Haifa and grew up in Shefa'amr in Galilee.

The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem is home to about 7000 Anglicans worshiping within twenty-eight different congregations. It is also responsible

for more than thirty institutions, including hospitals, schools, clinics and rehabilitation centres. The Diocese is scattered across five separate countries or territories: Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and Israel.

The Church of England’s General Synod is meeting between 13-15 November 2023. Archbishop Hosam’s comments came as part of a shared presidential address delivered by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

Archbishop Hosam's full address to the General Synod follows:

Sisters and brothers in Christ, I bring you greetings from the name of our Lord Jesus Christ here, from Jerusalem in the City of peace, the city of the empty tomb.

I'm really grateful for Archbishop Justin and for Archbishop Steven, for their gracious invitation to join you, albeit virtually. But I'm also thankful to each and every member of the General Synod, both lay and ordained for welcoming me to be part of your deliberations.

I would like to thank Archbishop Justin for his presidential address and for his word of peace and reconciliation. That continues to be a light to many places around the world, and we know that, during war and during the time where we pursue peace.

Language of reconciliation, trying to speak a word that brings people together can be difficult, and it can be controversial. But I believe that here in the Holy Land we need that language of peace and reconciliation more than ever.

Especially since the 7th of October and the eruption of violence and war in and around Gaza. I would like to ask your prayers to continue to hold both Palestinians and Israelis in your prayers, and as we continue to seek peace in the midst of war.

I urge everyone to continue to work towards a peaceful resolution, a ceasefire for humanitarian corridors, and especially for those civilians - the protection of all civilians, especially in Gaza at this time. We know that violence can be indiscriminate in a sense that civilians or children and women and elderly people are killed in the process, and in the line of fire.

We ask that all people be considerate to what is taking place during these times of war and to be aware that people should not pay the price, especially those who are civilians.

We are always reminded and, especially as we celebrated last weekend, Remembrance Day and Remembrance Sunday, we are reminded: at the end of the day war will end. And what we will remember is all those who have lost their lives and also we will remember those who have fought for the freedom of people, their own nations around the world.

In a time of war, especially here in the Middle East and in The Holy Land, both Palestinians and Israelis are seeking a better future. But this doesn't mean that violence can be the only way, or even the way in which we strive for peace and reconciliation.

The language of guns and the sounds of bullets were never the way forward where people would live together side by side.

So if we are really concerned about the security for Israelis and the self determination of the Palestinian people for a free and enduring and durable state in the future, we need the efforts of everyone around the world, that we may focus on the day after the war, where peace - a just and lasting one - will be

the only way forward for the end of the cycle of violence here in the Holy Land.

Again, as we remember, many places around the world, whether it is Ukraine or Sudan or many other places where there is so much devastation, so much violence, and as we continue to care for the creation, our own mother planet Earth.

I urge each and every one of us, and especially those who are Christians around the world, to continue to care for our world, for our creation, and part of that are human beings whom God has grounded his creation with those and created in God's image.

So as we continue to strive for peace and as we continue to spread the work of reconciliation, even though it falls on deaf ears at this time of war and violence and suffering, now we need to hold to what we believe in, because that is what God has called us for. And as John has recorded, one of the most beautiful verses that Jesus has spoken to his people in John 10.10, "I came that they may have life and have it in abundance." So may the gift of life, light and peace prevail here in the Holy Land here in Jerusalem.

And from Jerusalem to the ends of the Earth, May God bless you all. And I wish you all the best as you continue in your deliberations at your General Synod, that Christ may increase in England and around the world. Amen.

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