

Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and Tsunami Memorial Service 15 March 2014

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

I am very grateful and moved to be able to send greetings through Bishop Michael Ipgrave to Bishop John Kato, Bishop of Tohoku and you all as you commemorate the great earthquake and tsunami of 11th March 2011.

I am very aware of how devastating the impact of these events has been on so many people's lives. I was privileged to meet with Bishop John and representatives of the Diocese of Tohoku when I visited Tokyo in October last year together with my wife Caroline. We were deeply moved by the stories told with great pain and dignity by members of the congregation of Shinchi church of how the tsunami had struck their village and members of their community had been swept away; and by the accounts of the priest responsible for the church and kindergarten in Koriyama, just 43km from the Fukushima nuclear reactor, of people queuing outside for water for five hours amid the contaminated air and dust.

We continue to hold in our prayers all those still living as evacuees and those uncertain as to what the future will hold. We hold before God all those who lost loved ones and commend those who died to the mercy and compassion of God.

I also give thanks to God for the way in which all the dioceses of Nippon Sei Ko Kai have responded together to the needs of those affected and for the readiness of the wider church to work together with you as part of the one Body of Christ. The response "Let us walk together" is an inspiration to us all of the witness of God's Church in action. I pray that God will continue to bless you and encourage you as you discover the Gospel being lived anew amongst your people.

With gratitude for our fellowship in the Gospel.

The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby
Archbishop of Canterbury