

**Joint letter from the:**

**ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY**

**ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER**

Mr Andrzej Duda  
President of the Republic of Poland  
c/o The Ambassador of the Republic of Poland  
47 Portland Place  
London  
W1B 1JH

21 September 2016

Dear President Duda

Thank you for the letters of 5<sup>th</sup> September drawing our attention to recent acts of violence and hostility towards Polish citizens in this country. We appreciate the concern you express and the appeal you make to each of us. We reply in this joint letter to make clear once again our shared commitment to tackling any signs of intolerance directed at migrants living in the United Kingdom. Above all, we remember in our prayers the family of Mr Arkadiusz Jóźwik who was killed on 27<sup>th</sup> August. We offer our prayers for the repose of his soul and we remember the two other Polish gentlemen attacked in Harlow shortly afterwards.

Every leader, civic or religious, in Britain and throughout Europe, has the moral duty to condemn racism and xenophobia. We will continue to oppose language or crimes motivated by antagonism or hatred towards the members of any community who have come to this country seeking stability and prosperity. Sadly, there have been an increasing number of incidents of violence or chauvinism towards Poles. Although 18 reported incidents are small in relation to the 831,000 registered Poles they are abhorrent and we condemn the actions of anyone who incites or commits offences on the basis of racial or religious identity. We are of one mind that it is a duty of a prosperous state, especially one which rejoices in a strong Christian tradition, to be welcoming towards those who are in need and those who are ready and willing to contribute to the well-being of the country to which they have come. We readily recognise that the many Poles who have come to this country, especially since 2004, contribute significantly to the vitality and health of our society, in the workplace and in our schools, just as we remember with gratitude the contribution made by those Poles who came to Britain during and in the aftermath of World War Two.

We are aware that you write to us as leaders of our Churches and so that you are well informed of the welcome and support offered by our traditions to those who have

come here from Poland. You will know that in England and Wales there are over 220 places in which Sunday Mass is celebrated in Polish, either in churches owned by the Polish Catholic Mission, local Catholic parishes or in Anglican churches, which have generously opened themselves for Catholic services. This cooperation is a strong and constant source of support for the Polish people who are settled here. Polish Catholic chaplains, meeting together recently, have reported that most Poles taking part in their religious community activities feel welcome and are not planning to leave the UK. Nor do they feel that the Polish community is targeted any more than other immigrants. Indeed, they report that after each incident of threat or violence, the local Polish community has been inundated with messages and acts of solidarity. We assure you that, along with other religious and civic leaders, we will seek to build on this foundation of good will and encourage greater cooperation and integration between all those living in the United Kingdom. Poles living in Britain are our friends and our neighbours. We value their presence and contribution, as we do of all those who have migrated to the United Kingdom.

There is no doubt that the global movement of people is one of the great challenges of our era. We are aware of the tensions that this challenge creates in many countries, including the United Kingdom and Poland. We remain convinced, as we know you do, that it is the duty of every government to play its part not only in welcoming those in need, but also in working to integrate those who, by bringing their skills to another country, contribute to its well-being. We hope that the recent United Nation's Summit on migration will result in greater cooperation between all states in this regard. Generosity, courage and recognition of the inalienable dignity of each person are the qualities needed by all leaders in the coming months and years. We thank you for your sentiments and offer our prayers for the strengthening of the bonds between our peoples.

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely

+ Justin Welby

The Most Reverend Justin Welby  
Archbishop of Canterbury

+ Vincent Nichols

✠ Cardinal Vincent Nichols  
Archbishop of Westminster