

Message from Archbishop Rowan Williams

VII International Liturgical Conference

CHURCH AND CITY

Monastery of Bose

National Office for the Church's Cultural Heritage of the Italian Bishops' Conference

MESSAGE FROM ROWAN WILLIAMS, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

Reverend Father Prior and all in the Monastery of Bose
together with all your guests participating in the
Seventh International Liturgical Conference,
Church and City, 4-6 June 2009

I am delighted to be able to send my greetings for the colloquium at Bose on Church and City. Our culture is currently in great confusion about what we hope for and what we trust in, especially in regard to how we organise our common life on a foundation of equity and respect.

Yet the Christian faith has always presented itself as a vision for 'civic' life in the broadest sense, as a form of citizenship, *politeia*. Our spaces for worship are places where the image of a new society is brought to light, in the Eucharist and in the other acts of the people of God gathered for confession, thanksgiving and adoration. In so many of our European cities today, our great cathedrals and other churches have become deeply attractive to many because they speak of the possibility of inhabiting a larger, more generous and more patient atmosphere than most people are used to; and in the deprivation and hopelessness of so many urban landscapes, the Church of God is the most effective witness to liberation and the enlargement of human experience, the most effective agency in stirring communities towards change.

With all this in mind, the present colloquium could hardly be more timely. I wish you every blessing in your work and prayer together. May this meeting help to give new vitality to our hope that we may see, through our worship and witness within the testing circumstances of our society, signs of the City of God, the New Jerusalem, descending from heaven as a bride adorned for her husband.

4 June 2009

Lambeth Palace, London