



## BISHOP OF PORTSMOUTH

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Bishop John Arnold,  
Wardley Hall  
Worsley Road  
Manchester  
M28 2ND

Dear Bishop John,

As someone born in Altrincham, who nevertheless thinks of Manchester as his home city, I want to express to you and your people my heartfelt sympathy and prayers, in light of the suicide bombing last night at the Manchester Arena.

Today I have offered Mass for the repose of the victims, for the recovery of the injured, for all families and friends affected by this atrocity and also for the forgiveness of those who perpetrated it. Please pass on sympathy and prayers from all the clergy and faithful here in the Diocese of Portsmouth to the clergy and faithful of your Diocese of Salford, and through you to the whole community of Manchester.

We include in our prayers the police and emergency service workers, who are doing a magnificent job at this troubled time, and the local, civic and religious leaders of the city to whom many will be looking for a word of consolation, guidance and encouragement.

I have often passed through Manchester Victoria station and I know well the Arena and its popularity as a gathering place for entertainment and events. It is dreadful to think of the needless suffering and panic that has now been caused. I pray for an end to terrorism, and to the mindless and evil violence that arises from extremism and fundamentalism. Yet as ever we rely on the Lord Jesus, Whose Heart is "full of goodness and love" (*Litany of the Sacred Heart*). So let us pray, hope and work for a new-found trust and collaboration among all the members of the local community, confident in a happy outcome.

Please accept my fraternal prayers and support. May God bless you in all your good work for the Lord and His Church.

In Corde Iesu

+Philip

Bishop of Portsmouth