

The Bishop's House, 23 Davenport Road, Coventry CV5 6PW

THE BISHOP OF COVENTRY

The Right Reverend Dr Christopher Cocksworth

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By email only

25th November 2019

Father Theodoros Polyviou
The Greek Orthodox Church of the Holy Transfiguration
Westwood Heath Road
Coventry, CV4 8GP

My Dear Father Theodoros,

On behalf of Bishop John and myself, I write to express our deep condolences to you and to all the faithful following the death of HE Gregorios who, as Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain, for thirty years so faithfully served not only the Greek Orthodox community of this land but all those who confess the name of Christ.

I first met His Eminence twenty-five years ago, and I have had the joy of spending time with him since then in a number of settings. The Archbishop was unfailingly kind to me and I counted him one of my spiritual fathers. I was so glad to have had the privilege of attending the liturgy and joining in the other celebrations in your parish to mark His Eminence's thirty-year anniversary as Archbishop. I was very sorry to hear that he had become ill over recent months and was most probably in the latter stages of his life on earth. I wrote to him to express my affection for and thanks to him, and to assure him of our prayers in the Diocese of Coventry. It was a comfort to me to hear that my letter had been read to him.

Great Britain has lost one of its finest spiritual leaders and I imagine that the grief of the Greek Orthodox community will be large and long. Even though, as the funeral service of the Church of England puts it, 'In the midst of life we are in death', let us nonetheless rejoice together in HE Gregorios' faithful witness unto death, and in the promise of glorious resurrection – 'the sure and certain hope of eternal life', as the Church of England's liturgy also puts it – made by our Lord and Saviour who is, indeed, the Resurrection and the Life.

Even though we are soon to move into Advent, and even though your hearts will be heavy with grief, Bishop John and I send you the Easter Greeting that our liturgy has learnt from yours:
'Alleluia, Christ is risen; He is risen indeed, alleluia!'

With our deep sympathy to you and the whole community, and our love in our Jesus Christ who has conquered death.

As ever, yours,

+ Christopher

Cc His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain
 The Right Reverend John Stroyan
 Mr Alex Panteli