



THE ARCHBISHOP
OF YORK

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, has spoken during tributes to Sir David Amess in the House of Lords. His speech follows in full.

My Lords, on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishops of the Church of England and, I'm sure all Christian people and all people of goodwill, I'm here to offer David Amess' family and the constituents of Southend West my condolences and the assurance of the prayers of the church. I am very grateful for all that has been said thus far and certainly we wish to associate ourselves on these benches with those comments.

As was said, I considered Sir David Amess a friend. Leigh On-Sea is my home town. Southend, now the city of Southend is where I grew up. This appalling murder happened in streets I know well, just around the corner from where my mum lives. It was characteristic of David, whom I got to know during my time as Bishop of Chelmsford that when I was appointed he was one of the first people to congratulate me. When I was translated to York it was the same. He thought this was another way of putting Southend on the map. A boy who went to a secondary modern school in Southend was now the 98th Archbishop of York. He was so pleased. Last time I saw him he said could he have his photograph taken with me. I reckon now that Southend has been declared a city today, forget about a statue of Vera Lynn at Dover, we're going to put a statue of David Amess at the end of Southend Pier.

He was, and I know this from the work I did with him, a deeply deeply committed constituency MP and he exemplified what that means. He knew the people he served and in the constituency he was completely colour blind to political difference. He just served the people that he'd been elected to serve.

But I do want to say this -

Hate cannot win.

It may score many points.

It may land many punches.

But it can't win.

Because trusting no one, hate just ends up with endless divisions and suspicions and in the end, it just consumes itself. Sorry, I am going to go into sermon mode just for a moment, sisters and brothers.

Love is always stronger. It's always more tenacious. Its patient endurance draws us together.

And by love, I don't just mean warm feelings of well-disposed goodwill, but that deeply committed determination to get up each morning and live what you believe in, put the needs of others before yourself, recognise our common humanity - that's where the word kindness comes from, it is linked to the word kin, it means we belong to each other, we serve the common good, we know that our best interests are absolutely interwoven with the interests of others. And they lead to those things, those values, that vision which is worth living for.

Now, this love, is what we see, on these benches, in Jesus Christ. It was that love and that faith in Christ within the community of the church which was the source and sustenance of David Amess's vision and values. It was this that enabled him to reach across party political divides, get on well with everyone, and exhibit a good-humoured generosity and a kindness that is, sadly, sadly, often woefully lacking in public and political discourse today.

My Lords, these same values, this same vision are held in our democracy. They require us to listen and to love one another, especially those with whom we differ and disagree, and to attend to each other's needs and serve the common good.

They call us to speak kindly of each other, to think well of each other and to act generously. And it is because Sir David Amess so exemplified those things, regardless of what his politics happened to be, he exemplified these things and that's the reason that we are so easily able to come together to remember him, esteem his contribution to public life, mourn his death, but not be defeated by the hatred that killed him.

Could I conclude with some words I wrote in a newspaper yesterday about his faith: David Amess didn't actually wear his faith on his sleeve. He wore it in his heart and that is the best place for faith. When you wear it in your heart, it shapes everything.

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