

The Diocese of Peterborough.  
At Peterborough Cathedral, Sunday 28 June 2009

## **Archbishop of Canterbury addresses audiences in Peterborough on faith, society and human nature**

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, joined in the Pentecost celebrations in Peterborough on Sunday (28 June).

At a private lunch with civic and church leaders, and representatives of the business, education, and other faith communities in the city, he outlined his views on faith and society and the need for agreed values.

“The question about the values of society is very urgent,” he said. “We don’t know where the goalposts are.

“Society takes for granted the model that society runs on a set of universal rational principles. ‘Eccentric views’ – religious views – have to be contained in private.”

He questioned this model and said there should be a place for people of faith to bring to the table their arguments about what human beings are like and what they are for. This would lead to an enhanced view of human dignity within society as a whole, he claimed.

Dr Williams picked up the theme of “what humans are like” in his sermon at Evensong in the Cathedral which was packed with about 1000 people.

Focusing on Peter’s healing of Tabitha in the *Acts of the Apostles* who then “showed her to be alive”, the Archbishop spoke of the ministry of the apostles and of the church today as being a matter not only of words but also of giving life – a resurrection ministry.

Referring back to Peter’s own experience of reinstatement after the resurrection of Jesus, Dr Williams said that “for Peter, the resurrection wasn’t a matter of something happening to someone else, but to him.

“We too can be set back on our feet” by the risen Christ, he said. But with that promise comes also the request of Jesus to Peter, and to ourselves, to “look honestly at his failures. There is a love that enables him to see himself honestly but without despair.

“We can never be strong unless we face our own weakness.”

Dr Williams concluded by telling the congregation that our calling “is to be a truthful church and a hopeful church that confronts the weakness of humanity and which shows and says that the love of God still works and still labours for humanity, which God still trusts and promises his love and mercy.”