

**The Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam
The Bishop of Salisbury**

27th May 2017

As the Islamic season of Ramadan begins, I send my warm greetings to the Muslim communities in the Diocese of Salisbury

This year Ramadan begins in the aftermath of the most terrible atrocity that this country has seen for many years, an atrocity carried out by individuals who claim to be acting in the name of Islam, a claim that Muslim organisations and individuals in this country have utterly rejected. Amongst those who have fully condemned the atrocity and have made clear their rejection of the perpetrators and their profound sympathy for the victims and their families, is the Muslim Association of Salisbury in a joint statement with myself.

Muslims understand that Ramadan is a time not just for abstaining from food and drink, but a time for prayer and generous good deeds, for compassion and hospitality. These are values that Christians and other people of faith share and which form a deep basis for mutual respect and friendship.

During this time of Ramadan may I urge Muslim friends to extend their Iftar hospitality as widely as possible; and may I urge Christian people to accept such hospitality and to reach out in friendship to Muslim neighbours in our streets, towns and villages. It is by meeting, talking and eating together that we recognise each other as human beings created by God and loved by God.

As we meet and share time and food together we come to know each other more and are more able to reject together the voices and actions of those who seek to divide us.

I pray in the name of Jesus that through this time of Ramadan we shall come to know each other better and so work together for a more just and peaceful society here and across the world

Yours sincerely



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