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THE BISHOP OF COVENTRY

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By email only

26th October 2020

His Excellency Andreas Michaelis
German Ambassador to the Court of St. James
Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany
23 Belgrave Square
London SW1X 8PZ

Your Excellency,

I have just heard of the sudden and tragic death of Herr Thomas Oppermann.

As you know, I had the great pleasure of meeting Thomas Oppermann when he visited Coventry last month. I was extremely honoured that Herr Oppermann chose to meet me during his busy schedule in the UK, and it was a real joy to show him around Coventry Cathedral.

Herr Oppermann's visit has remained on my mind. His profound reaction to Coventry's story was deeply moving, and his reflections on the particular challenges facing politicians in both our countries and across Europe and the world today were serious and wise. However, it was his reflections on his own journey through political life and the impact of those on his personal consciousness and, thereby, on his spiritual life and relationship with Christian Faith that had the deepest effect on me.

Through these conversations I felt that I had met a person of great integrity who, though moving towards retirement from public political life, had much more to give to his country. I am so sorry that Germany has been deprived of the gift of Thomas Oppermann in the decades ahead; and I am even more sorry for his dear family whose sense of loss will be very great.

Herr Oppermann and I spoke about the important role that Coventry's deep relationship with several German and other European cities – including through the Community of the Cross of Nails – in the future relationship between the UK, Germany and all the Member States of the EU following the UK's withdrawal from the EU. His visit to Coventry last month will be a further motivation for me, the Cathedral and, I am sure many others in Coventry, to commit to that work with both energy and affection.

I would be grateful if you were able to pass on my condolences to the President of the Bundestag and to the family of Herr Thomas Oppermann.

With my kind regards

Yours most sincerely

+ Christopher