

Your Grace
Monsignor Timothy

I am honoured to be invited to contribute to the annual civic Mass at the outstanding St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham – the first Catholic Cathedral in England erected after the Reformation.

Birmingham has long been home to people of many different faiths; from as early as 1730, the special manufacturing industries that were springing up all over the City attracted its first Jewish settlers.

Modern-day Birmingham's cultural diversity is reflected in that wide variety of religious beliefs of its citizens. In the 2011 Census, 74.1% of residents identified themselves as belonging to a particular faith.

As Lord Mayor of this great city, I was very pleased to be part of the launch of Interfaith Week earlier this month. I am incredibly proud of the work undertaken by our faith communities, especially in working together to improve interfaith relationships and ensure tolerance and respect for all. This is important because often prejudice, discrimination and hatred stem from ignorance and fear.

Working together in this way sustains communities, especially during times of trial.

Amid the fear and confusion of this dreadful pandemic, we have seen those in leadership roles taking measures to protect their citizens; first responders and key workers keeping cities functioning during lockdown; ordinary people raising money, caring for the vulnerable, making personal protective equipment; making videos, singing songs from windows, carrying out random acts of kindness. We have realised the importance of relationships, and it will be especially important that those enhanced relationships continue when this crisis ends.

Today I will join you in praying for all people of this great city; and for its leaders, the strength to serve others well.

Lord Mayor of Birmingham
Councillor Mohammed Azim