

15th Anniversary of the Lancaster House Treaties
Franco-British Conference in London, November 1, 2025

**Address by William Kenney
Archbishop Emeritus of Birmingham¹**



¹ Born in 1946, William Kenney studied sociology and psychology at the universities of Växjö and Gothenburg. He served as a pastor and academic sociologist within the Catholic Church in Sweden before pursuing doctoral studies at the London School of Economics. He then taught the sociology of religion and was director of studies in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Gothenburg. From 1982 to 1984, he was a general councilor of the Congregation of the Passionists, residing in Rome.

Bishop Kenney was ordained a bishop in 1987 and appointed auxiliary bishop and vicar general of the Diocese of Stockholm. One of his main concerns was the development of the diocese's Caritas organization. He also served three terms on the Legal Affairs Commission of Caritas Internationalis, headquartered in the Vatican. In 1988, Bishop Kenney received an honorary doctorate in philosophy from the University of Gothenburg for his work promoting access to university for students from immigrant backgrounds. In addition to his duties as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Birmingham, he gives numerous lectures, both in Sweden and abroad, on social issues, ecumenism, and interreligious dialogue.

He is also internationally recognized as a leader of spiritual retreats, particularly for religious. As member of the International Affairs Department of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, he is co-author of the document "Called to be Peacemakers," published in May 2024.

Pending a more complete text from Bishop Kenney, here is a very brief summary of his remarks:

- The world is becoming increasingly dangerous.
The risks are increasing due to the growing opacity surrounding nuclear weapons.
We no longer know exactly what constitutes a nuclear weapon, whether it is tactical or strategic in nature, what the nature of the delivery systems is, etc.
This opacity increases uncertainty and, with it, insecurity.
- The Catholic Church has always opposed nuclear weapons. Certainly, Pope John Paul II seemed, in a paragraph quoted in truncated form, to accept the logic of deterrence, but he immediately reiterated the imperative need not to accept the nuclear status quo (see his address to the United Nations General Assembly in 1982).
- The document "Called to be Peacemakers" aims to be both realistic and optimistic. Like William Kenney himself (one of its authors), the document asserts that a long-term ambition (global and total nuclear disarmament) must be combined with a policy of small steps.
First, existing treaties, and above all the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), must be respected.
Second, France and the United Kingdom must accede to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), and, pending this, send observers to the meetings of States Parties, as Germany has done.

