



Fr. John-Francis Friendship

The Spiritual Association of the Compassionate Hearts of Jesus and Mary

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The Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
LONDON, SW1A 2AA

cc. The Home Secretary

Advent Sunday 2017

Dear Prime Minister,

I read with a deep sense of shame, disgust and anger of the suicide three months ago of Marcin Gwozdziński, a Polish detainee at Harmondsworth Detention Centre. The report, in *The Guardian*, carried this harrowing account of the event:

"He was crying, begging for help from the guards, telling them to call an ambulance, that his mental health was an emergency," said another detainee, ... "They told him he would get no help and to stop calling for an ambulance. He broke down like a baby. Still they did nothing."

Marcin was described as a devout Catholic but, nonetheless, was later found hanging.

I doubt whether you will read this letter but I would ask whoever does to plead with the government to show compassion to those held in custody. I fear, as many do, that this is yet another example – and a tragic one – of the way our country is hardening its heart following Brexit. I understand that Mrs. May, like myself, is an Anglican and the appalling situation that detainee's face is contrary both to our Faith and that notion of civilised behaviour the government often says it supports.

Many are deeply angered by what is happening in Britain and would join with me, I am sure, in begging the government to show more compassion both to those held in custody and those who face an uncertain future. I understand that we are the only country in Europe with no time limit on immigration detention despite a campaign by MP's and others to impose a 28 day limit and only then as an "absolute last resort". These deaths leave those responsible – and, by implication, all of us in the UK – with blood on our hands, blood which, like the blood of Abel, cries out for justice.

As we approach Christmass, please have the courage to make a stand for humanity.

Yours faithfully,