

# **Anti-fascist Church, Paradijsskerk Rotterdam**

**11 oktober 2025**

Goede morgen iedereen en welkom in de Paradijsskerk in Rotterdam.

I will continue in English because many of the speakers and guests may not be as comfortable in Dutch but also because I want to welcome everyone to this place. I heard about today's booking after my holiday. My first reaction was, am I certain that I want this to happen in one of my churches? Therefore, Jeanne and I sat down for coffee. Obviously, I said yes.

I said yes because the Old Catholic church is a welcoming and inclusive church. Everyone who crosses that threshold is welcome. In that respect we are already anti-fascist, because the fascist is not welcoming. Fascists are about themselves and their own agendas. We, as a church, are not about ourselves, and all of us here today cannot be, we are all about the other. We are about the excluded, we are about the desperate, we are about the unloved, we are about the deprived.

These past several weeks have been momentous. May we be seeing peace in Gaza? An end to the

nihilism in that part of the world. We here in the Paradijskerk have been praying to the divine for it, as all of you of faith have been doing and those of you without faith you too have been doing something similar.

Great people have been speaking out these past several weeks.

Let me say that Jesus was an exile; he was forced to migrate. Pope Leo XIV spoke out about migrants and their treatment. In the migrant we see not only the other, but we also see ourselves. How would we feel if treated with indifference, or hated simply because we don't belong. Last Sunday Pope Leo exhorted migrants, "You are always welcome".

This week I watched the late Jane Goodall's message which she recorded six months ago. She was a primatologist and an environmentalist from the 60's until her death . I recommend it, because she speaks not only to every one of us here today, but she speaks to all the people who you will be speaking about today. Jane Goodall said, "...each and every one of you has a role to play." You here know your role, otherwise you would not have agreed to speak today. You know you have a voice, you want the injustice and the inhumanity to stop

and you want the world to be a different place, the better place it certainly must become.

Jane Goodall also speaks to the whole world community, and her words are applicable to the migrant, and victims of war and famine, when she said “...your life matters, and you are here for a reason”, she was right, every individual has a role to play. Even those who perished was here for a reason.

She reflected that the world today is very dark. I quote “... there still is hope. Don’t lose hope...” because if you do “...you become apathetic and do nothing.”

The late Archbishop Desmond Tutu said: “As much as the world has an instinct for evil and is a breeding ground for genocide, holocaust, slavery, racism, war, oppression and injustice, the world has an even greater instinct for goodness, rebirth, mercy, beauty, truth, freedom and love.

I urge you to speak truth to power, but also demonstrate that everyone on this earth is here for a reason, and everyone on earth belongs; with the right to live in freedom, hope and love.