Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby’s visit to St Albans Diocese in June will take place from Thursday 18th to Saturday 20th. It is one of a series of pastoral visits that serving Archbishops make to dioceses in their Provinces during their ministry. With 42 dioceses in the Church of England, there is unlikely to be a second Archiepiscopal visit for some years, so take advantage of the opportunity to hear him.

Archbishop Justin has generously expressed his wish that the visit should support and further the ministry of the diocese its vision.

So it will come as now surprise that one of the strong flavours of the visit is making new disciples.

The visit will start in Luton and touch Watford, Bedford and Stevenage among other places, before ending up in St Albans, for the Alban Pilgrimage.

This will be a very remarkable occasion as it will also mark the 900th anniversary of the present abbey building’s foundation in 1115, when Ralph D’Escures sat on the throne of St Augustine. Archbishop D’Escures was trained at the Abbey in Bec, Normandy and was translated from the See of Rochester. The French connection was strong. Paul de Caen was Abbot of St Albans when work on the new building started and Geoffrey Brito, the Archbishop of Rouen, one of the churchmen who had been involved in the Norman Conquest, came to the consecration of the building along with Ralph d’Escures, on Holy Innocents Day, 28 December, 1115.

The Alban Pilgrimage’s distinguished guests this year on 20th June will be Archbishop Justin and Mgr Jean-Charles Descubes, the present Archbishop of Rouen, recreating the occasion 900 years previously.

More details of the Archbishop’s programme and the Alban Pilgrimage will appear nearer the time of the visit.