

Edinburgh, 26 August 2014

To the clergy and people of the Archdiocese of St Andrews & Edinburgh

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

On the occasion of the referendum on Scottish independence, I have been approached several times now by some who would like to know where Scots Catholics, or where I personally, may stand on the matter. To those of you who wish a word from me in this regard, I would say the following.

Like everyone else, Catholics are a part of the world. Urged by the love of Christ, we are called to be citizens who contribute positively to the common good and who strive always to consider others and their good before our own. We are called to promote peace, integral human development and authentic human rights, and to have a special care for the poorest and the weakest in society.

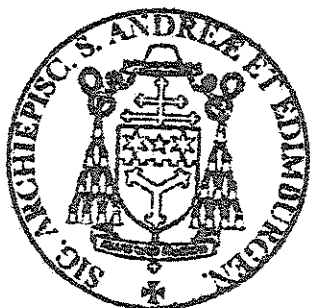
We are also concerned for the rights of all people to freedom of conscience and to the right to believe and to practise their faith. These freedoms are as important as they are fragile, as has been proven all too often, to the dismay and death of many millions. These freedoms are absolutely essential to a modern democratic society and we should always be vigilant of attempts to limit them.

Since all of us are made in the image and likeness of God, no matter our race, our beliefs or the way we live, we also have a concern for moral values based upon our common humanity.

The promotion, therefore, of laws which allow us to believe, teach and live our faith and morals is and will always be of concern to us, whether at the Scottish, UK or European levels. So I encourage you, in the light of Catholic social teaching, carefully to consider the issues, and to do your civic duty on the day itself.

No matter the result of the Referendum, I would hope that all Catholics will continue to engage positively in public discourse, and ensure that the Christian message and its values will be better expressed and understood, to the benefit of the whole community. By doing so, our beloved land will be a more just, peaceful and prosperous place for all its citizens.

With my prayerful good wishes to you all, I willingly invoke God's blessings upon you.



+ Leo Cushley

✠ Leo Cushley
Archbishop of St Andrews & Edinburgh