

# A Declaration of Friendship between the Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church in Scotland

We, the undersigned, representing the Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church in Scotland, wish publicly to express our recognition of each other as Christians, and as children of God in Christ (Galatians 3: 25-28). We recognise each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, and we wish to express our friendship and respect for one another as fellow Christians, citizens and partners in announcing the kingdom of God in our land.

Since the World Missionary Conference (Edinburgh, 1910), and the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) much has been done ecumenically to repair what was broken and to restore mutual respect and friendship.

A great deal has been achieved spiritually, practically and affectively, through joint prayer among our parishes, various joint commissions, and the growing knowledge and appreciation of each other as Christian friends and fellow pilgrims.

## A SHARED FAITH

Progress has been made on that which we hold in common.

We believe in one God, the Creator; we believe in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, true God and true man, fully divine and fully human, who died in the flesh and rose to save us from sin and death; and we believe in the Holy Spirit. We believe in the Holy Trinity, one God in three persons. We believe that the Church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic; and we acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

We believe our faith to be rooted in that of the Apostles, Christ's first disciples, those who knew and followed our Lord in this life. We recognise and treasure the Sacred Scriptures, as God's revelation of His love for all humanity. We recognise and hold in common the great ecumenical councils of the first five Christian centuries.

## OUR COMMON HOME

We recognise, as our common heritage, the Gospel first brought to our shores so very long ago. We recall with gratitude to God the earliest missionaries, our forebears in the faith, who lived and preached the Christian faith to our land. We recall those from that time who led and formed the Church, nurturing a society inspired by Christian values, including St Ninian, St Columba and St Margaret.

## PAST DIVISIONS

We recognise the hurt and the harm that our forebears did to each other in times past, and we repent and ask forgiveness of one other. We also recognise that, even in more recent times, much could have been said between us more kindly, written more magnanimously, and done more charitably, to promote pardon and healing and friendship among Christians in our land.

## CHALLENGES WHICH REMAIN

There remain points at which we have not yet found a meeting place, and it is true that some questions still divide us.

Acknowledging what separates us still, we reaffirm that what we hold in common is often greater than what divides us. While recognising that unity does not mean uniformity, we commit ourselves to continuing our pilgrimage towards greater unity, as we believe that it is the Lord's will that we be one (John 17: 21). We trust that such developing unity in Christ is the Lord's work and the Spirit's doing.

## LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

We therefore pledge ourselves to live as sisters and brothers in Christ, in public and in private, in life and in mission; to pray with each other and for each other; to be good neighbours, both to each other and to all people among whom we live, of all faiths and none; and to work together for the common good of the nation, as it is given to us to see it.

May there be an ever more united Christian voice in the land, informed always by the charity and love of Christ and our call to participate in the mission of God. May we contribute to the good of society, while humbly learning from others and from our own mistakes. May our theological reflections and initiatives together thrive; and may our pilgrimage together in our dear land of Scotland bear much fruit to the good of all, and to the greater glory of God.