

A Declaration of Friendship

also known as

The Saint Ninian Declaration

Between the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Bishops' Conference of Scotland

1. The College of Bishops and the General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Conference of Bishops of the Catholic Church in Scotland, understanding that we, and the members of the Churches we represent, are among the heirs to the long Christian tradition in our land, wish to declare our friendship in Jesus Christ for each other and, by doing so, while acknowledging the reality of our impaired communion, to encourage amity, respect and charity among those who belong to our churches.
2. We treasure the Christian heritage of Scotland and look with respect and affection to all those who came before us, those who brought the Christian faith to our land and those who have lived their faith sincerely, helping to build a Christian culture, even in our own times.
3. We regret that the relationship between our churches and their members has not always been a happy one, even including violence done in the name of religion; but we also see that there has been friendship and cooperation in the past. We are grateful to God that the members of our churches today have grown in this respect and friendship, and that they come together more and more to pray, to worship, and in some places to share the use of our church buildings.
4. We have a common concern for the welfare of our fellow citizens, and of the whole human family, for peace, justice and well-being and for their faith and trust in God. We welcome the joint work that is already happening in these areas, not only through our two churches working together but also in our work with other ecumenical partners.
5. We believe in God, the Father, Creator of all things; in Jesus Christ, the incarnate and eternal Word of God, who lived and died in the flesh, and who rose in the flesh for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life. We believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church; and we confess one baptism in the holy and undivided Trinity for the forgiveness of sins.
6. We celebrate our deep roots in Christian tradition and we share a respect for the authority of the first four Ecumenical Councils, including their statements that Jesus Christ is fully divine and fully human, and we hold Mary, Mother of Jesus, in special esteem.
7. We believe in the divine inspiration and authority of the Sacred Scriptures. We have a shared sensibility for the Western liturgical tradition from which our worship derives, and for the liturgical year and its times and seasons. We hold to the three-fold ordained ministry, and within both our

churches, wherever possible, we encourage co-operation between those exercising lay and ordained ministries.

8. We cherish and respect the memory of the saints, those holy men and women of the universal Church and of our own land, who have inspired us by their example of faith and their love of neighbour. We affirm the influence of Andrew, Ninian, Columba, and Margaret for our churches and in our ecumenical relationships.
9. We acknowledge the importance of the Sacraments in the life of the Church, of sacred space and of pilgrimage. Although we have not come as yet to a common understanding of all the Sacraments, we believe the Eucharist and Baptism to be central to the life of the Church, and we continue to dialogue about their importance, meaning and efficacy for the people of God.
10. We celebrate the joint statements between the Holy See and the Anglican Communion, and we acknowledge and commend the common statements achieved through the work of the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) and of the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM). We recognise that ARCIC has done much work to clarify areas of theological agreement and continues to address the outstanding differences between us. We join in IARCCUM's prayer, "That our ministry alongside one another as Catholics and Anglicans will be for the world a foretaste of the reconciling of all Christians in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ."¹
11. We have learned from experience that when we come together as friends in Christ, we are enriched and our witness is more effective. We therefore encourage and will seek to enable growing friendship, and common action and witness in public life and service to our communities.
12. We recognise that the world is beset by many challenges, all of which have a spiritual dimension. Among these, with Catholics and Anglicans across the world, we commit ourselves to care for our common home, which is 'under threat and at risk of collapse' (Lambeth Conference 2022, Lambeth Call 2 *The Environment and Sustainable Development*, §2.3) and 'near the breaking point' (Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Laudate Deum*, §2).
13. We give thanks for those shared expressions which are already being lived out in Scotland, such as joint worship and the relationships between Bishops, while realising that others require development. We commit ourselves to deepening our relationship in all these ways, including re-establishing the Scottish Anglican -Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission (Scottish ARC) to oversee and to encourage our partnership.

¹ We recognise that IARCCUM in 2006 called for Anglicans and Roman Catholics to engage together in visible expressions of our shared faith, including:

- joint public worship and prayer;
- joint preparation for baptism and confirmation;
- co-operation in both lay and ordained ministry, including shared training of lay ministers, establishment of relationships amongst bishops, deepening of relationships between religious orders, and shared pastoral and spiritual care;
- engagement in joint study of our faith;
- offering shared witness to the world, seeking together – and with other ecumenical partners – to establish social justice, to care for the environment, to contribute to public life, and (when appropriate) to model repentance and reconciliation;
- the establishment of national Anglican-Roman Catholic Commissions (ARCs).

14. Finally, with one voice, as we seek to journey as one people in Christ, and to offer an ever more authentic witness to the risen Lord, we reaffirm our belief that the Lord Jesus died and rose again to draw together the scattered children of God (cf. John 11:51), that he calls us to one and the same life of hope (cf. Ephesians 4:4-6), and that he alone is our great high priest (cf. Hebrews 4:14).

For the Scottish Episcopal Church:

For the Bishops' Conference of Scotland:

The Most Reverend Mark Strange
Bishop of Moray, Ross and Caithness
Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church

The Most Reverend Leo Cushley
Archbishop and Metropolitan of St Andrews
and Edinburgh

St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh and St Mary's Catholic Cathedral, Edinburgh

16 September 2025