

WE HAVE FOUND THE MESSIAH

THE FUTURE OF THE
ARCHDIOCESE
OF ST ANDREWS &
EDINBURGH

ARCHBISHOP
LEO CUSHLEY



ARCHDIOCESE OF
ST ANDREWS & EDINBURGH

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*The line drawing on the cover depicts St Andrew and St Cuthbert, the patrons of the
Archdiocese of St Andrews & Edinburgh*

The front cover image is a detail of *Christ Blessing* by El Greco
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I hope that all communities will devote the necessary effort to advancing along the path of a pastoral and missionary conversion which cannot leave things as they presently are.

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 25

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

First, a renewed word of thanks to all of you who have helped to make me feel at home in the communities which make up our widespread Archdiocese.

Nearly two years have passed since Pope Francis nominated me Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh and sent me to be your pastor. The mission given to me by the Holy Father was clear: to bring the joy of the Gospel to contemporary society and to help those entrusted to my pastoral care to do likewise.

Since then, I have been taking stock of our situation as a community and as a local church, and I believe the time has now come to address you regarding the next steps that I believe we ought to take as an Archdiocese.

I hope you will find what follows helpful as we open a new chapter in our spiritual journey together.

With every blessing,

+ hco

Pastoral Letter of Archbishop Leo Cushley
to the priests, religious and people of the
Archdiocese of St Andrews & Edinburgh

We have found the Messiah!

Christianity is primarily an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. It is in this experience that we discover our greatest happiness, deepest peace and ultimate purpose in life. So the first and most important step that each of us can make is to come closer to Jesus Christ in that personal encounter of faith.

Our own patron, St Andrew, gives us a brief but vivid example of the life changing nature of this encounter. On the banks of the River Jordan, his master, John the Baptist, points towards Jesus and proclaims 'Behold the Lamb of God'. Perhaps Andrew does not really understand what John means by this but, young and keen and prompt to obey, he approaches Jesus and asks the simplest of questions: 'Rabbi, where do you live?' Jesus, too, replies in the most natural way possible: 'Come and see'.

John
1:36

John
1:39

Andrew responded to that invitation, spending time in the company of Jesus, listening to him, the greatest of teachers, and beginning to love him as the truest of friends. Then the next day, when he met his brother Simon, the future St Peter, it was this experience that enabled him to say with such faith and enthusiasm: 'We have found the Messiah!'

In some way, Andrew, the first disciple, sets the example for us all. Our own response to God's call must also resemble the open-hearted willingness and joy of the youthful Andrew. Jesus has called us to be part of his life and mission through the Church. It is through the Church that we hear the Word of God, the authoritative teachings of Jesus that have been handed down from Andrew and the other apostles. It is through the Church that we receive Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, acclaiming him with the same words that Andrew heard on Jordan's bank: 'Behold the Lamb of God'. We too are being invited to come and know Jesus and to love him personally. We too are being offered the chance to spend time with him, to get to know him, to step away from the crowd and let him speak to us.

So before we can offer his saving message to others we must first know, embrace and love what we are to witness. The evangelisation of my family, community and country begins within my heart or it will not really begin at all.

The Church

CCC 760 We belong to the Church because we belong to Jesus Christ, and we can only belong fully to Jesus Christ by being members of his Church. The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us: 'God created the world for the sake of communion with his divine life, a communion brought about by the "convocation" [the gathering or calling together] of men in Christ, and this "convocation" is the Church. The Church is the goal of all things.'

So the Church has a mission that comes from the very foundations of creation. That mission is to announce to men and women of all times and places that God the Father is inviting them to share in the eternal life of the Blessed Trin-

ity – a life of ever greater holiness and joyful love – through his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit whom he sends into our hearts.

Alas, we also know that, from the beginning, God’s loving invitation has often been refused and his blessings rejected. The story of salvation has frequently been marked by human weakness and failure. Yet we are also assured that ‘where sin abounded, grace abounded all the more’. The Catechism reminds us that ‘God permitted such painful upheavals as the angels’ fall and man’s sin only as occasions and means for displaying all the power of his arm and the whole measure of the love he wanted to give the world.’

Romans
5:20

CCC 760

When God the Son became man and was himself despised and rejected, he accepted suffering with perfect obedience, humility and charity. Far from being the final defeat of his mission, though, this was his greatest triumph. He rose again from the dead and the Father ‘exalted him and bestowed on him the Name which is above every name’. This was the ultimate victory of sacrificial love which atones for all human sinfulness.

Philippians
2:9

The Eucharist

The Eucharist – Holy Mass – is the one, same sacrifice of Christ on Calvary by which ‘the whole of creation loved by God is presented to the Father through the death and the Resurrection of Christ’.

CCC 1359

This is why the Eucharist must always be at the very heart of the Church’s identity and mission. The Eucharist is ‘the source and summit of the Church’s life. The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the

CCC 1324
cf. *Lumen
Gentium* 11

whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch.’

A celebrated saying used often by Pope St John Paul II is, ‘The Eucharist makes the Church and the Church makes the Eucharist’. To this he would later add, ‘There can be no Eucharist without the priesthood, just as there can be no priesthood without the Eucharist’.

This explains why, in Catholic usage, the word ‘Church’ has always applied first and foremost to the People of God assembled for the divine liturgy.

CCC 752

‘She exists in local communities and is made real as a liturgical, above all a Eucharistic, assembly. She draws her life from the word and the Body of Christ and so herself becomes Christ’s Body.’

Thus we can say that the word ‘Church’ also denotes the local parishes and the diocese to which they belong and, of course, the universal Church that shares the faith of the Apostles and is in communion with the Pope. The Catechism emphasises that these three meanings of ‘Church’ – Eucharistic assembly, faith community, and global communion – are ‘inseparable’.

These are the truths of our Catholic faith upon which we must base our pastoral vision and strategy for the future of the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh. It is of crucial importance that we focus on these essentials of Christian life as we face together the realities of our present situation.

The Present

I have laid out the facts and figures of our current situation in a separate document already issued throughout the Archdiocese. To recap briefly, by 2020 the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh will only have about 33 diocesan priests

to celebrate the Eucharist. Yet we presently have 111 parishes. As for attendance, there are currently an estimated 28,000 people at Holy Mass every Sunday. This contrasts with a wider Catholic population of 113,000 baptised souls. These indicators give cause for concern. They also put strain on our financial sustainability. In the light of this, we have undoubtedly arrived at a turning point.

This is surely not a situation that we would wish for our Archdiocese. However, I believe that we would do well firstly to acknowledge its existence, and secondly to admit that it requires realistic assessment. There is already little doubt that change must come about for the greater good of us all. It is also true that some of those changes will be unpleasant for some.

Yet we should not be discouraged by this challenge. On the contrary, we read for example in the Old Testament that there were many times when the fortunes of God's People and of his Kingdom on Earth were brought very low. The prophets spoke frankly about the causes of this – unfaithfulness, lack of prayer, injustice, compromise with secular values, and indeed bad shepherds. However, at the same time the prophets also gave God's People another vision: it was one of hope, calling the people back to the Almighty with renewed humility and energy.

It was often only a remnant who answered that call, but their willingness to make sacrifices to rebuild God's kingdom was always rewarded with graces, blessings and the revival of Israel. With the psalmist we can pray with confidence: 'God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved'.

Psalm
80:20

Similarly, the Church of the New Testament is not immune from the same fluctuations in its well-being. As well as persecutions from powers outside the Church, there have been times of great scandal, confusion and division inside

the Church. Jesus promised that the 'gates of hell' – by which he means the powers of spiritual evil playing on fallen human weakness – will not prevail against his Church.

So whilst this is a time of sober realism, we must not submit to pessimism. Our Lord has promised to be with us until the end of time. When we contemplate our crucified and risen Saviour, we discover that out of sorrow, distress, and even failure, God can bring new and glorious things for those who trust in his goodness.

The Future

It is not enough for us simply to implement structural reorganisation with heavy hearts or dull pragmatism. We must set about rebuilding God's household with hope and with joy. We can use this time as an opportunity for spiritual renewal and refocusing our energies on a new evangelisation of our world.

Such renewal can only flow from deeper personal conversion borne of an increased knowledge and love of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Our new strategies and structures should aim to enable and promote this at every level.

We need to rediscover the early Church's vision of evangelical holiness, missionary fervour and commitment to practical charity. Like the Church of the first few centuries, we are called to be poorer but purer, to cope with fewer material resources but at the same time increase our spiritual resources. Pulling together into fewer but more concentrated parish centres will enable us to intensify our spiritual and evangelical activity.

The reduced number of parish centres need to become powerhouses of devotion, catechesis, care and outreach. By better deploying our priestly resources we will also ensure

that parish life remains firmly rooted in the Eucharist and the sacraments. Although this may involve greater commitment on a practical level for many of us, our combined communities should also increase our sense of mutual support and shared mission for clergy and laity together. We ought to be able to offer richer communal prayer, more frequently available confession, regular Eucharistic adoration, and more focused and better funded pastoral resources of all kinds which would enable the parish to take a lead in local charitable activity.

This will be supported by sound and structured catechesis at all levels, so that all of us can understand what we do as well as doing what we proclaim. For just as the faith we announce to the world must be brought to life in a personal relationship with the Lord, so too the encounter of faith must be nourished by instruction and insight, so that you ‘may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.’

Ephesians
3:18

This is most especially true for our young. They are called on to bear witness to the faith in an increasingly post-Christian culture and to make Christ known again to a sceptical world. St Peter not only reminded us that we must ‘revere Christ as Lord’ in our hearts, but we must ‘always be prepared to make a defence to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence.’ Our young people should be adequately equipped for this task.

1 Peter 3:15

We need holy people who build holy families. The family is the bedrock of the parish. It is the ‘domestic church’. Our new parishes should be communities that support and promote an authentically Catholic vision of marriage and the family as part of a coherent ‘Gospel of Life’ which values and

defends human dignity from conception to natural death. We must offer better support to those who are trying to live these truths, often against the tide of cultural opinion and social pressure. This includes those most affected by family breakdown and those who struggle to be faithful to the Church's teachings on sexual ethics. Meanwhile, many young families will undoubtedly welcome the mutual reinforcement that will come from being part of larger parish communities alongside other Catholic parents.

It is from these renewed sources of grace and growth that new vocations to the priesthood and religious orders will come, as potential candidates are drawn into a more vibrant community of spiritual, pastoral and evangelical life. The experience in other parts of the world is clear. Wherever the Catholic faith is proposed, explained and lived with clarity and compassion, priestly and religious vocations surely follow. Despite modern cynicism, many young men and women still yearn to give their lives to the pursuit of the highest ideals. There is no more daring, beautiful or noble adventure than giving your life wholly to Jesus Christ and following him wherever he calls to bring the Good News.

The Saints

For encouragement in all of this important and challenging work, we can look at the example of our own St Margaret of Scotland. A queen, a wife, a mother to eight children; she not only brought up a Christian family and found time to look after the poorest and weakest in Edinburgh and Dunfermline, she also devoted enormous energy to the renewal of the entire Church in Scotland. Margaret was tireless in her efforts to spread the Gospel in very difficult times and trying circumstances. It is over 900 years since her death and yet

her life still provides great inspiration to Catholics in contemporary Scotland.

We can also find more recent motivation in the 20th century life of Venerable Margaret Sinclair. She was a very ordinary young woman, struggling against poverty in St Patrick's parish in Edinburgh's Cowgate. She was a hard-working, modern woman who at the same time became completely dedicated to the love of Christ.

The renewal of the Church in our Archdiocese will be based upon the inherited wisdom, joy and tenacity of the all the saints who have gone before us.

‘Thus says the Lord: “Stand at the crossroads and look, and ask for the ancient paths where the good way lies, and walk in it, and find rest for your souls”.’

Jeremiah
6: 16

In all that must be done and achieved, I appeal to your generosity and good will as God's People. ‘Do all things without murmuring and arguing, so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine in the world like stars.’

Philippians
2: 14-15

Finally, I ask you to join me in putting all our hopes and plans in the hands of Our Blessed Lady, Mother of the Church. May her intercession obtain for all of us the graces we need to fulfil our vocations and work together for the renewal of God's household.

May God bless all of you abundantly!

+ hco

Lent 2015



ST ANDREW & ST CUTHBERT
Patrons of the Archdiocese of
St Andrews & Edinburgh
Pray for us



We Have Found the Messiah is a pastoral letter issued during Lent 2015 by Archbishop Leo Cushley of St Andrews & Edinburgh.

He seeks to respond to the mission entrusted to him by Pope Francis: to bring the joy of the Gospel to contemporary society. Despite inheriting a reduced number of priests and practising Catholics, Archbishop Cushley proposes that a renewal of the Church is possible but only if Catholic communities are gathered closely around Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. This requires a realistic assessment of the resources presently available to the Church at a local level.