



*To the Catholics of Scotland*

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As you know, I had hoped to take part in the COP26 meeting in Glasgow and to spend some time, however briefly, with you. I regret that this did not prove possible. At the same time, I am pleased that today you are joining in prayer for my intentions and for the fruitful outcome of this gathering meant to address one of the great moral issues of our time: the preservation of God's creation, given to us as a garden to be cultivated and as a common home for our human family.

Let us implore God's gifts of wisdom and strength upon those charged with guiding the international community as they seek to meet this grave challenge with concrete decisions inspired by responsibility towards present and future generations. Time is running out; this occasion must not be wasted, lest we have to face God's judgement for our failure to be faithful stewards of the world he has entrusted to our care.

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica, which, as the Cathedral of the Bishop of Rome, symbolizes the Church's communion in faith and charity with the See of Peter. It is deeply moving to me that on this day I can express to you, and to all the Catholics of Scotland, my affection in the Lord and my encouragement to persevere in your proven fidelity to the Lord and

his Church. I greet each of you from my heart, and I assure you of my prayers for you and your families, for the young, the elderly, the sick and those who in any way are suffering the effects of the pandemic.

I ask you, in a particular way, to pray for me and for my brother Bishops on this feast of our fellowship in the service of the Gospel and the building up of the Church's unity. In these challenging times, may all Christ's followers in Scotland renew their commitment to be convincing witnesses to the joy of the Gospel and its power to bring light and hope to every effort to build a future of justice, fraternity and prosperity, both material and spiritual.

With these sentiments, dear brothers and sisters, I assure you once more of my prayers for you and your families, and for your parishes and communities. Commending all of you to the loving intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, I gladly impart my blessing as a pledge of abiding joy and peace in the Lord.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 9 November 2021

*Francis*