

Latest Phase in Diocesan Structures Consultation

At the request of the Holy See, we the Bishops of Scotland have been considering how our diocesan structures can best serve our shared mission in the years ahead.

This is not simply a question of boundaries, administrative adjustments or the sharing of resources more effectively. Primarily it is about how we can better proclaim the Gospel, support our clergy, religious and lay people, and strengthen our parishes and communities for evangelisation.

As part of this discernment, and informed by the diocesan feedback summaries, we considered a range of possible configurations.

The following options are now being presented for further reflection and consultation across all our eight dioceses:

1. Argyll & the Isles and Paisley merge
2. Argyll & the Isles and Glasgow merge
3. Paisley and Galloway merge
4. Galloway and Motherwell merge
5. St. Andrews & Edinburgh and Dunkeld merge
6. Motherwell, Paisley and Galloway merge
7. Maintain the current diocesan structures but with greater sharing and collaboration

These are possibilities for further discernment, not decisions or an agreed map for the future.

As your bishops, we recognise that dioceses are communities of faith with their own histories, relationships and traditions. Any change must therefore be approached with prayer, sensitivity and care for the people and communities involved.

Synodal discernment also asks each of us to look beyond our own self-interests and to consider what will best serve the Catholic Church in Scotland as a whole.

Everyone in every parish is encouraged to make their voice heard when opportunities for consultation are announced locally by their diocesan bishop.

Information packs will be made available in each diocese to support this next phase. These will provide an opportunity to learn more about each of Scotland's eight dioceses, including important statistics and demographic information, so that the consultation can be informed by a fuller picture of Catholic life across the country. The fruits of the consultation will help us to formulate a concrete proposal to the Holy See.

For completeness, the following options were considered but will **not** be taken forward:

1. Split Aberdeen at the Great Glen. Argyll and the Isles to merge with the territory north of the Great Glen and Dunkeld to merge with the territory south of the Great Glen.
2. Dunkeld and Aberdeen merge

3. Argyll & the Isles and Aberdeen merge
4. Argyll & the Isles and Dunkeld merge
5. Glasgow, Motherwell and Paisley merge
6. Glasgow and Paisley merge
7. St. Andrews & Edinburgh and Galloway merge
8. Glasgow, Paisley and Argyll and the Isles merge

Finally, we encourage everyone to actively engage in this process, and to keep this central question at the heart of our prayer and reflection:

How can we best equip the Catholic Church in Scotland for mission, evangelisation and the service of God's people?

With every blessing,

+ Leo Cushley

Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh

+ William Nolan

Archbishop of Glasgow

+ Joseph Toal

Bishop of Motherwell

+ Hugh Gilbert OSB

Bishop of Aberdeen

+ John Keenan

Bishop of Paisley

+ Brian McGee

Bishop of Argyll and the Isles

+ Francis Dougan

Bishop of Galloway

+ Andrew McKenzie

Bishop of Dunkeld