

Dear Archbishop Cushley

43 Queen Margaret Close
Edinburgh EH10 7EE
friel@blueyonder.co.uk
10th June, 2015

I wrote to you in May regarding my frustrations about the lack of debate, particularly among the lay faithful, on your plans for the future of our Archdiocese.

You kindly responded, and in your letter of 15th May you said that you intend to visit all of the clusters in the Archdiocese and that you looked forward to meeting them. Whilst I will be pleased to do this, and I see the meetings in the clusters as an important step, in my view there is a more pressing requirement at present.

If our discussions are at cluster level, we run the risk of all our attention being focused on how change will be implemented at a local level and the impact that will have on our individual faith communities. It will not lead to a strong reflection on the nature of change and what our shared model for Church should be across the Archdiocese.

Recognising that the geographic spread of the Archdiocese makes it difficult to organise a single opportunity for discussion in one place, can I please ask that you hold a series of open meetings in each of the 6 deaneries listed at present on the Archdiocesan website. In these you would be able to share your vision for the Archdiocese and listen to what others may also have to say.

This can be the starting point for us all to work towards a shared view of what it will truly mean to live as a Catholic within a new structure of Archdiocese. This could lead to a vision which acknowledges the need for change, takes account of the number of priests and reflects the hopes and desires of those in our parishes.

I appreciate that this is a significant demand of your time, but major change initiatives more often fail than succeed. Success is significantly greater where a real attempt has been made at the outset to ensure that the vision is clear and that it is a shared vision rather than one imposed. Time spent at this stage on getting to a sustainable vision and engaging the Archdiocese in that, while it can still be shaped, will bear much fruit in years to come.

It is unfortunate that there seems to be no structure for such discussion and exchange of views in our Archdiocese at present, but I am sure there are many people across the Archdiocese who would be happy to assist you in this important matter. I know of many who faithfully served the Archdiocese in the past, through the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council. I would be pleased to support you in arranging these meetings, if that would help to bring this about.

Once again with my prayers, yours sincerely

Danny Friel