

# ARCHDIOCESE OF GLASGOW

---



## NUCLEAR WEAPONS LETTER FROM CARDINAL T. J. WINNING TO THE RT. HON GEOFF HOON, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE,

Dear Mr Hoon,

We write to you to bring to your attention the opposition of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland to the continued presence of nuclear weapons in our country.

You may be aware that protests will take place at the Faslane nuclear base on February 12. These protests will involve a wide range of individuals in Scotland who, for moral, economic, political or other reasons oppose the presence of weapons of mass destruction at Faslane.

The Catholic Church in Scotland will not be formally represented at these protests, not because we support nuclear weapons, but because we have reservations about the effectiveness of civil disobedience of this type.

While fully recognising the right to legitimate self-defence, the Bishops of Scotland declared back in 1982 that, "if it is immoral to use nuclear weapons it is also immoral to threaten their use." Ironically, such was also the view of the Labour Party at the time. Although politicians may have revised their opinions on the issue over the last 20 years, the Church has not.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: "Every act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God and man, which merits firm and unequivocal condemnation."

It adds: " A danger of modern warfare is that it provides the opportunity to those who possess modern scientific weapons especially atomic, biological, or chemical weapons - to commit such crimes..."

*Over-armament multiplies reasons for conflict and increases the danger of escalation. "*  
*(Catechism of the Catholic Church 2314-2315)*

I would ask you to note the very grave concerns of vast swathes of public opinion in Scotland and to bear such concerns in mind in the formulation of defence policy for the up-coming manifesto.

With every good wish