

ARCHDIOCESE OF GLASGOW



**BISHOPS OF SCOTLAND
THIS MESSAGE WAS ISSUED BY ALL OF THE EIGHT DIOCESAN BISHOPS
OF THE SCOTTISH DIOCESES TO
PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON THE CHURCH'S POSITION AS REGARDS
THE PROPOSED REPEAL OF 'CLAUSE 28' OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1988**

PASTORAL MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP'S CONFERENCE OF SCOTLAND

We have followed with concern the current debate surrounding the proposed repeal of Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 which prevents the promotion of homosexuality.

The Catholic Church clearly teaches the inalienable dignity of every human person created in the image and likeness of God. Every human person has the right to be free from bigotry, intolerance and fear. Every human person has the right to live his or her life in peace, irrespective of race, religion, colour, gender or sexual orientation. We condemn unreservedly violence or bullying perpetrated for whatever reason.

Section 28 states:

"A local authority shall not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality. A local authority shall not promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship."

Those who wish to repeal section 28 advance three reasons. They say:

- ***It prevents teachers talking about homosexuality in class***
- ***It prevents the counselling of pupils confused about their own sexuality***
- ***It prevents proper measures against homophobic bullying.***

However it is our opinion that the reasons advanced do not justify the proposed repeal.

The Scottish Office circular No 9/1988 issued in conjunction with Section 28 on May 20 1988 contains the following official guidance:

"Sex education will continue to be an element of social and health education in schools. Section 28 does not affect the activities of teachers. It will not prevent the objective discussion of homosexuality in the classroom or the counselling of pupils concerned about their sexuality."

To take away a law which prohibits the promotion of homosexuality and replace it with "guidelines" risks leaving our children extremely vulnerable to the message that a homosexual lifestyle is an equally valid moral choice to marriage.

We ask all people of good will to pray for our legislators in their different tasks. We pray that we can build a Scotland of justice for all, free of bigotry and intolerance, but ever mindful of God's law and morality.

January 27th, 2000