



Edinburgh, 20 February 2018

My dear people,

As you know, I have spent much of the last two years looking into the question of our parish clusters, to see if there was a way to improve and renew the pastoral life of the diocese. Having listened to literally thousands of you at cluster meetings across the Diocese, having read the cluster reports that were sent to me, and having consulted our clergy in various forums, I now intend to draw this process of consultation to an end by proposing the merger of an important number of our parishes. My proposals will be made public shortly, after I have consulted the Council of Priests in early March.

I am well aware that this has not been an easy time for any of us. Guided, however, by a genuine desire to improve the Christian life and pastoral care of the Diocese with the human and priestly resources at our disposal, I hope to put before you a reasonable compromise of our needs and wishes in the near future.

In general terms, therefore, and to put some minds at ease, I write to you now to let you know that I am minded to merge a significant number of clusters, though by no means all, into single parishes, retaining however most of the church buildings already in use for as long as they are affordable, and indeed wished, by clergy and people alike. The time may well come in the future when not every church or chapel can expect Sunday Mass to be celebrated in it every week, but this is a separate question for us to answer in due course.

Let me also thank all of you again for sharing your thoughts, opinions and aspirations with me over these last years. It was a great pleasure to have the opportunity to meet with and get to know so many of you during this process. Having glimpsed something of your faith and of your commitment to the Church, I am very encouraged as we move forward towards a new stage in the life of this diocese. Please continue to keep me in your prayers, as I remember you in mine.

Sincerely in Christ,

*+ Leo Cushley*

+Leo Cushley  
Archbishop of St Andrews & Edinburgh