

10 September 2015

The Rt Hon David Cameron MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister

RESPONDING TO THE MIGRANT AND REFUGEE CRISIS

I write on behalf of the community of the Scottish Episcopal Church. We wish to express to you our distress at the continuing plight of the large numbers of refugees and migrants who are attempting to make their way into and across Europe in search of safety, new homes and a better life.

We welcome your announcement that the UK will take in 20,000 people over the next five years. But we would venture to suggest that this response is less generous than the situation demands. Indeed it seems paltry in the context of the possibility that Germany may be prepared to take in 500,000 each year for the next few years.

We are aware that issues of migration and immigration are complex and emotive. However, in our Church communities, we find that attitudes to these same issues are characterised by a humanitarian generosity. Indeed members of our congregations are telling their clergy that they are prepared personally to offer sanctuary and shelter to those in need.

You have said that Britain is a country with a moral conscience. We welcome that statement. But we see our faith as challenging us to go further. We believe that we should express friendship and welcome to the stranger. In recent history - particularly following the two world wars of the twentieth century - very large numbers of people migrated to find new lives in new places. Few would now venture to suggest that such movements were unnecessary or that they did not enrich the lives of the receiving communities.

We believe that this is another such moment. We call on you and your government to find a response of warmth and generosity to the plight of these vulnerable and helpless people.

Yours sincerely

The Most Revd David Chillingworth
Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church
Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane