Scotland's Catholic Bishops Challenge Scottish Government Over Conscience Rights

The Bishops' Conference of Scotland has expressed deep concern over the Scottish Government's response to proposed amendments to the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill.
The amendments, tabled by John Mason MSP and Paul O'Kane MSP, seek to introduce provisions allowing organisations—including hospices, care homes, and faith-based institutions—to exercise conscientious objection.

In its response to these reasonable amendments, the Scottish Government stated that "it is not clear how an institution might demonstrate what their 'conscience' position is."

The Bishops' Conference strongly disagrees with this position, noting that every organisation has guiding values that shape its mission and practice.

For many faith-based organisations, including Catholic hospices and care homes, these values are fundamentally incompatible with the introduction of assisted suicide.
The Bishops' Conference maintains that no organisation should be compelled by the State to participate in the deliberate ending of life when doing so would violate its ethical or religious principles.

The Bishops' Conference urges the Scottish Government and MSPs to recognise and respect institutional conscience rights, ensuring that organisations are not forced into actions that contradict their foundational values.

Bishop John Keenan,

President of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland