

LAUNCH OF THE SCOTTISH-ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

DYNAMIC EARTH, HOLYROOD ROAD, EDINBURGH

THURSDAY 26 JUNE 2008

WORDS FROM CARDINAL O'BRIEN

It is indeed a pleasure being here for the launch of the Scottish-Islamic Foundation.

One might almost be tempted to ask why has this not happened already in Scotland, when there are so many effective links between Christians and Muslims here and throughout the world.

Speaking of my own particular religion, there was a meeting just one week ago in mid-June in the Vatican of the Islamic-Catholic Liaison Committee. The theme of this meeting was: "Christians and Muslims as witnesses of the God of Justice, of Peace and of Compassion in a world suffering from violence". We are told that the topic was treated from a religious point of view according to the teaching of the two great religious traditions – and five final points were presented as being agreed by both sides. Of particular pleasure was the fact that the participants were received in audience by Pope Benedict XVI, who indicated that he "encouraged them to continue their endeavours for the promotion of justice and peace".

This is what I see will follow on from the Scottish-Islamic Foundation.

As is said by Osama Saeed, the Chief Executive of the new Foundation "we believe that it is possible to be progressive in the Islamic faith without having to discard our essential teachings" and he indicated that our aims are rooted firmly within the Islamic tradition: "Freedom; Respect; Education; Families; and Justice".

I would suggest that all peoples of goodwill would agree to these aims and hopefully will continue to share in discussion on them and on the ways in which they can be practically implemented here in Scotland.

I renew my congratulations to you all on the launch of the Scottish-Islamic Foundation and I promise you my every help and support.