

Knights of Saint Columba

Accrington Council 188

Bulletin No.2- F41

Source Christian Institute

The Roman Catholic Church in Scotland has expressed concern that its views on marriage could soon be treated as a hate crime.

Leaders are worried that a “climate of heightened sensitivity” means its stance on marriage or human sexuality might be considered “an attempt to stir up hatred”.

The warning was made in a submission to the Scottish Government’s consultation on hate crime, following a review last year by Lord Bracadale.

Disagreement not hate

The Church welcomed the proposed protection for freedom of expression in Lord Bracadale’s review, but is concerned that the definition of ‘hate’ was becoming “contentious and open to misuse”.

“Care must be taken to allow room for debate and a robust exchange of views, ensuring that ‘hate’ doesn’t include the kind of ordinary discourse where people reasonably hold divergent views”, the submission states.

It adds: “The fundamental right to freedom of expression, and the right of an individual to hold and express opinions, even if they are considered by some to be controversial or unwelcome must be upheld.”

Protect free speech

Catholic Parliamentary Office Director Anthony Horan warned that suppressing free speech would create further division and “foster grievances” across society.

“In a climate of heightened sensitivity there is a very real danger that expressing or even holding individual or collective opinions or beliefs will become a hate crime”, he said.

“We must guard against this and ensure freedom of expression, thought, conscience and religion are protected.”

’Bigots’

The Scottish Government has been heavily criticised over its £300,000 ‘Dear bigots’ campaign, which appeared to brand all religious people as ‘hateful’.

Current and former cabinet secretaries in Scotland expressed concern that the campaign particularly targeted Christians.

Communities Secretary Aileen Campbell recently confirmed that there are no plans to use the controversial posters again.

Bernard Holden MBE JP

If you do not wish to receive these bulletins please let me know by email

<http://ksc188.weebly.com/publications.html>

Please feel free forward to others you feel may be interested in the contents of this bulletin..