GUIDANCE ON TIME FOR REFLECTION - April 2005

1. Time for Reflection will normally be held in the Chamber of the Scottish Parliament as the first item of business each week (i.e. on Wednesdays at 2.30 pm) and recorded in the Official Report. Time for Reflection will last for a maximum of 4 minutes (up to 400 words at normal speaking speed). The Presiding Officer will invite contributors to lead Time for Reflection.

2. The content of time for reflection should adhere to the following guidelines:

   (a) it will be in public and should be led in the context of both Parliament and the Scottish people as a whole;

   (b) it should consist of either a short narrative relating to personal experience or current affairs and/or prayers/readings from appropriate texts;

   (c) it should normally reflect the practice of the faith community to which the time for reflection leader belongs (if any);

   (d) it will not make political points;

   (e) it will not denigrate another faith or those without a faith,

   (f) it will be consistent with the principle of equal opportunities for all and should not include remarks or comments which are discriminatory; and

   (g) the text should be submitted in advance to the Clerk and the content of the Time for Reflection should not deviate from the text provided.

3. Time for Reflection will be held in public, but Members and the public will not be encouraged to enter the Chamber during the duration of Time for Reflection.

4. The procedure will be as follows:

   (i) the person leading Time for Reflection will follow the Presiding Officer in to the Chamber (once the gavel has brought the Chamber to attention) and take the seat to the left of the Presiding Officer. Members stand as the Presiding Officer comes into the Chamber and sit once he/she is seated.

   (ii) the Presiding Officer will introduce Time for Reflection;

   (iii) on completion, a Clerk will escort the Time for Reflection leader out of the Chamber and the Presiding Officer will move on to the next item of business.

The Parliamentary Bureau