

# FLOURISH

Official Journal of the Archdiocese of Glasgow

December 2020

## Let the light shine again

Dear brothers and sisters,

**D**UE to the Covid-19 pandemic, this is possibly the strangest Christmas message I have ever addressed to you.

Even with a loosening of restrictions, it seems unlikely that we will be able to enjoy a Christmas with anything like our normal family and social contacts.

Ongoing restrictions on public worship will mean that many who would like to come to Mass in person at Christmas will not be able to join with others in church to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

There has been promising news too. A vaccine against the Covid-19 virus has been approved and manufactured. People are already being vaccinated. The prediction is that it will take some months for everyone to receive the vaccine. We may dare now to see beyond this pandemic, but we are told that we still need to be very cautious about the vi-



rus and careful to observe the restrictions that will most likely be with us for some time yet.

Over the centuries, Christians have sometimes had to celebrate Christmas in conditions that were not at all optimal: in persecution, in war, in epidemic, in poverty, in misery and in conditions

of desperate need. Our current situation of the Covid-19 pandemic with its attendant restrictions on our personal freedoms may not in fact be unprecedented.

Nonetheless, for all our sakes and for the sake of the children, I desperately hope and pray that we will find ways to celebrate Christ-

mas in accordance with the limitations of our situation. Who knows? Perhaps a simpler Christmas may be a more prayerful, peaceful and holy Christmas.

Perhaps it will be a Christmas with fewer opportunities for distractions, which will allow us to come closer to the real mystery of Christmas and the real reason for the joy and happiness of this season, namely that Christ the Saviour is born of Mary.

Perhaps at last we will we sense more acutely our real need for a Saviour, and we will find once again in Jesus, the Emmanuel, God-with-us, true friendship with God and with our fellow human beings.

Whatever our circumstances when Christmas Day comes round, we are called to open our hearts again to Jesus and to allow him to fill us with peace, with wonder and with joy.

Let me wish you all a blessed and joyful Christmas.

Yours devotedly in Christ,  
+Philip Tartaglia

*Archbishop of Glasgow*

Light shines in darkness...



Bishops' pastoral letter  
page 15



## New year, new start for Scots College Rome

**P**LANs have been announced to relocate the Pontifical Scots College to the centre of Rome.

The Scottish Bishops have undertaken a detailed review of Seminary Provision in recent months. A significant consideration in the review has been the affordability of upgrading

the existing Pontifical Scots College in Rome to the standards required.

The Bishops have accepted that the costs of this work are beyond the resources of the Conference.

Considering the building's distance from the centre of Rome, they have concluded that the sale of

the building on the Via Cassia and relocation to a more central location is the best option for the formation needs of the community and for future provision.

Alternative suitable and affordable premises are being considered as a matter of priority.

Subject to permission

from the Holy See, it is expected that the existing building will be put on the market early in 2021. This will only be the fourth occasion in its history that the community of the Pontifical Scots College has relocated, since it was founded more than 400 years ago.



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# University's new Ogilvie art

**I**N 1967 Glasgow dockworker John Fagan, a parishioner of Blessed John Ogilvie parish in Easterhouse, went into a coma after developing a large stomach tumour and the entire congregation prayed to their parish patron for a for a miracle.

Doctors told his family to expect the worst.

But he recovered and after years of investigation by the Vatican, a miracle was formally recognised and John Ogilvie was canonised a saint on 17 October 1976 by St Paul VI.

Now a striking new image of Ogilvie, depicting Scotland's only post-Reformation saint as a teenager, has gone on display in Glasgow University.

And artist Anne Devine did not have to look far for inspiration – her studio in the Gallowgate is just yards from Glasgow Cross where the future saint was hanged on March 10, 1615 at the age of 36.

Anne, a graduate of Glasgow School of Art, who was commissioned by the St Andrew's Foundation for Catholic Education to produce the work, said: "I was very familiar with the story of John Ogilvie from school, I remember the Ogilvie walks that used to take place

BY BRIAN SWANSON

on his Feast Day which, by coincidence, is very close to my birthday. And of course every day I walk past the spot where he was martyred although it's a bit disappointing that there is no plaque to commemorate what happened."

The one metre square painting, entitled, 'The Contemplation of St John Ogilvie' will be displayed in the Ogilvie Room in Glasgow University's St Andrew's building. It was the subject of an online talk last month as part of Catholic Education week in which Anne discussed the background to her work.

She said: "This is a portrait of the young John Ogilvie, aged about 17 just before he converted to Catholicism looking outward with a detached, serene emptiness from a cosmic ferment of Light, Dark, Love, Bread and Blood, which are a symbolic synthesis of the times in which he lived and evocations of the Holy Spirit at work both within him and in the post-Reformation society, to which he belonged, in Europe and Scotland."

"Celestial winds move in a circular fashion from the heart of the painting as though God's hand was forming the outward events and shifting shapes and forms and substances, transforming the dark into light, blood into fire, wheat into bread."

"In his stillness he emerges from the rhetoric, argument, strife and controversy of his time to stand alone with God to follow his spiritual path of self-discovery and knowledge of God's will in service of others – set apart from the world of intrigue, circumstance, time and history and human cruelty to contemplate the immeasurable."



## Catholic population continues to grow

**ASIA and Africa continue to generate more Catholic priests while Europe continues to struggle with vocations, according to the latest data released by the Vatican.**

The number of priests worldwide fell to 414,065, with Europe registering the largest decline, followed by the Americas, according to figures released by the Annuario Pontificio 2020, the Vatican yearbook.

Europe posted a seven percent slide in just one year in the number of priests.

However, Africa recorded a 14.3 percent increase and Asia an 11 percent rise during the previous five years. The numbers in North and South America remain stationary, the yearbook data shows.

Though there was a 0.3 percent rise during the 2013-18 period in the number of priests worldwide, the Vatican report said the numbers "appear rather disappointing overall."

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The number of young men attending major seminaries rose to 115,880.

Fides, the news service managed by Pontifical Mission Societies, said the number of Catholics worldwide rose by almost 16 million in a year to 1.33 billion. As a result, there are an average of 3,200 Catholics per priest.

Across the globe the number of Catholics grew by more than 15 million taking the overall number of Catholics to over 1.3 billion. This growth in the number of baptised Catholics was present across all continents, with a rise of 94,000 in Europe, 9.2 million in Africa, 4.5 million in the Americas, 1.8 million in Asia and 177,000 in Oceania.

As the global population is also on the rise, the percentage of Catholics in the world population, however, remained unchanged at 17.73 percent.

## New Chair for St Aloysius

**ST Aloysius' College has a new chair of governors – and for the first time in the college's 161-year history it's a woman.**

The college was the preserve of boys only until 1981 when girls were admitted for the first time.

Dr Isabelle Cullen has been a Glasgow GP in the west end for 30 years, taking over her parents' practice when they retired. She is also Associate Director for Greater Glasgow and Clyde Out of Hours.

Her appointment comes after several years as a board member.

Speaking to *Flourish* Dr

Cullen said: "The board has had a good female representation in the last few years and I am very pleased to be the first woman to chair the board of governors. It is important for young women to see women in key positions, especially since women have always featured so strongly in education."

Already the chair of the Bursary Committee, Dr Cullen is keen to continue developing and promoting the financial assistance to families who could benefit from the full and partial bursaries available.

"Applications this year have been particularly high



because of the pandemic. In a normal year we are able to offer assistance to between 50 and 60 pupils and many of these are awarded full fee remission. In total this comes to around £550,000 in total."



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# Adoption society's crib goes virtual

**ST Andrew's Cathedral Choir and St Margaret's Children and Family Care Society have got together to create a 'Virtual Crib' this Advent, as the charity fears it could lose up to £100,000 in donations made to its annual Crib Appeal collection boxes in churches.**

The Virtual Crib hosted on the St Margaret's website will be in place until the Feast of the Epiphany on 6 January. It is a peaceful, animated crib scene accompanied by a full Christmas Carol concert from the St Andrew's Cathedral Choir.

Viewers will also hear a specially recorded version of 'Oh Holy Night' sung by St Andrew's Cathedral Choir Director and St Margaret's Origins Worker, Maria Madden. Visitors to the St Margaret's Virtual Crib can also read quotes from some of the families who have been supported by the charity this year and can donate via their website.

Head of Services at St Margaret's Children and Family Care Society Paula Harkins said: "Our hope is that our Virtual Crib will bring a little joy and festive spirit especially after this

BY **RONNIE CONVERY** challenging year to those in the Catholic community who aren't able to attend their local Church as often as they would like during Advent.

Visit the St Margaret's Virtual Crib to make donations online at [www.stmargaretsadoption.org.uk](http://www.stmargaretsadoption.org.uk)

Meanwhile, schoolchildren at Notre Dame Primary School in Glasgow, Notre Dame High School in Greenock, Trinity High School in Renfrew as well as pupils from St Aloysius College were among the first to step up to take part in the 'Walk 1,000 Steps With St Margaret's' challenge last month.

St Margaret's Children and Family Care Society in Glasgow launched the challenge on the Feast of St Margaret, as the adoption society is set to miss out on up to £100,000 in donations due to the ongoing restrictions on congregations due to Covid19.

For the past 65 years, St Margaret's, which serves the whole of Scotland, has relied on donations made by the Catholic commu-

nity to its Christmas 'Crib Collection' boxes placed in churches throughout Advent. This year with congregation sizes limited, due to Coronavirus restrictions, the charity is finding new ways to raise vital funds.

Head of Services at St Margaret's Children and Family Care Society, Paula Harkins, said: "We're grateful to all the schools who have already signed up to take part in our Walk 1,000 Steps with St Margaret's challenge.

"To fund our services, we have relied on the kindness of parishioners making generous donations to our Christmas Crib Collection. This year as congregation numbers are down due to COVID restrictions – our main source of funding will be hugely affected. So we're calling on as many schools as possible to take up our challenge and also asking anyone who might have donated to our Christmas Crib Collection to consider donating to us online this year.

"The pandemic has forced some of our fellow adoption agencies and charities to pause their services, so we're even more determined to



Notre Dame Primary 3 pupils from left to right: A-J, Madison, Philip, Lara and Nathan

continue to be there for our adopted children and families. Luckily we were able to adapt quickly and move all our support online, and the changes we've made have allowed us to offer more support and reach further than ever before."

All donations made to St Margaret's Children and Family Care Society fund its Extended Post Adoption Support Services (EPASS). These services are available

to adopted children who have experienced trauma and neglect and adoptive families from anywhere in Scotland from all faiths.

Standard post adoption support lasts one year, whereas St Margaret's offers its EPASS services for life to those who need it.

The Walk 1,000 Steps With St Margaret's challenge runs until the end of the school term and schoolchildren will complete the challenge

within playgrounds across the country.

Any school interested in taking part in the Walk 1,000 Steps with St Margaret's challenge can call 0141 332 8371 or email [info@st-margaretsadoption.org.uk](mailto:info@st-margaretsadoption.org.uk) for more information.

Individual donations can be made at [stmargaretsadoption.org.uk](http://stmargaretsadoption.org.uk) and cheques can be posted to St Margaret's, 26 Newton Place, Glasgow G3 7PY.

## Stella Maris: to Glasgow from Lima with love

**THE captain of a cruise ship, stranded with his vessel on the Clyde by global Covid restrictions for the past six months, has finally made it home to Peru for Christmas – and he is eternally grateful to the devoted care of seafarers' charity Stella Maris for their care during his Scottish exile.**

Speaking from his home in Lima, Captain Gianmario Sanguinetti said: "I've seen what Stella Maris does at different ports all over the world. But it's not until you receive their help that you fully appreciate how much practical and spiritual help they give to seafarers."

Captain Sanguinetti's ship, *Azamara Journey* and its sister vessels *Azamara Pursuit* and *Azamara Quest*, owned by a subsidiary of Royal Caribbean Cruises, have been berthed at the King George V Dock at Shieldhall since July.

The cruise ships, which carry 700 passengers and 400 crew, are likely to remain in Glasgow until at least March of next year.

Captain Sanguinetti, who is in his early fifties, said: "One of the first people I met

BY **EUAN MCARTHUR** was Deacon Joe O'Donnell the chaplain for Stella Maris and we have become very good friends – we will be friends for life I think.

"He was an inspiration by faithfully coming to visit the ship. He has helped other crew members as well which has been very nice.

"Even when Joe wasn't permitted to come on the ship more recently due to restrictions, he was always in touch – just asking if we were OK and if we were in need of anything."

During his enforced exile the Peruvian captain was joined by his wife Marianna, a normal privilege for senior officers during long periods away from home, but tighter Covid restrictions both here and in Peru meant she could neither return home nor remain on the ship.

But a novel solution for the couple's dilemma was soon found.

Deacon Joe, Senior Area Port Chaplain for Scotland and Northern Ireland, who is based at St Mungo's, Townhead said: "Before they married Gianmario and Marian-



na first met when they both worked on another cruise ship so the solution was obvious – sign Marianna up as a crew member so she could stay on board!

"There's a skeleton crew of around 70, almost all Filipinos, who have to remain on

board to keep the ship ticking over and we will be looking after them as long as they need us.

"They are all very devoted to their faith and have been so good to us when it comes to organising Masses – as you can imagine there's a very high level of precautions taken on board both at Mass and of course at all other times."

Regular Masses on board have been celebrated by Father Antony Connelly, Deacon Joe's colleague from

St Mungo's and plans for Christmas Masses on the *Azamara Journey*, with strict social distancing in place, are underway.

Meanwhile Captain Sanguinetti says he will have nothing but happy memories of Stella Maris, founded in Glasgow in 1920 and now a global charity looking after the needs of seafarers in more than 300 ports in 50 countries.

He said: "I'll always be grateful for the help Joe gave to us. He took us to a local park one day and my wife and I were able to enjoy some quality time together. It was the little things that which made all the difference.

"I would say Glasgow is the friendliest city I've ever been to. I come from a small town in Italy called Chiavari – near Genoa – where there is a real sense of community. I would say Glasgow and the Stella Maris team in this city are exactly the same – God bless them all."

**■ Euan McArthur is development officer for Stella Maris. For more details visit [www.stellamaris.org.uk](http://www.stellamaris.org.uk)**

■ The teenage daughter of a Filipino crewman stranded on the *Azamara Journey* had a life saving heart operation paid for by Stella Maris after an intervention by Stella Maris chaplain Deacon Joe.

He got in touch with his colleagues in the Philippines after hearing that the crewman, known as Jolly, had been saving for more than two years to raise money for his daughter's operation.

Deacon Joe said: "He was very worried about her and especially the cost so I got in touch with my counterparts in the Philippines and it was decided that Stella Maris should pay for the operation.

"Between us we also arranged for Jolly to return home on compassionate grounds and he is with her now and everything is going well."



# Ninian icon

**A NEW icon of St Ninian, believed to be the only one of the saint in the world, has been installed in the oratory of St Ninian's High School, Giffnock.**

Head teacher John Docherty said: "We have wanted to honour our saint in a practical way for some time and now with this magnificent icon we feel that we have done that."

Created by Ukrainian-born Dr Irina Bradley, one of the country's leading iconographers (who counts Prince Charles among her clients), it was unveiled at a Mass of thanksgiving at the school on the saint's Feast Day.

The search to find an iconographer willing to take on the commission began almost two years when Allison Angelini, Senior Business Support Assistant at the school, was given the task of tracking one down.

She said: "I soon found out that it was not as straightforward as I thought and for a while I kept hitting dead ends. Eventually I found a nun in England who herself created icons, who suggested Dr Bradley and she emailed her on my behalf

BY BRIAN SWANSON

asking if she would get in touch."

Dr Bradley, who is based in Buckinghamshire, said: "Last year I was commissioned to paint a statue of Our Lady of Walsingham and I went on a pilgrimage there before commencing my work. I also picked up some holy water with the intention to mix my pigments with it. Just as I was about to leave the place, I checked my email and there was a message asking me to contact St Ninian's school in Glasgow with a view of commissioning an icon of Saint Ninian – I cannot believe that was just a coincidence."

After travelling to St Ninian's she agreed to accept the commission following discussions with the head teacher and senior staff.

Then in February she took an 800-mile round trip from her home in England to St Ninian's Cave in Whithorn, Newton Stewart as a pilgrimage and to be inspired by Scotland's first Christian saint.

Dr Bradley said: "It was an amazing and deeply spiritual experience, something I will treasure for the rest of

my life. Walking the same path the saint most certainly walked, seeing his cave and saying my prayers there was very special.

"What was extraordinary is that I felt some incredible stillness standing by the cave despite the roaring sea. From that moment St Ninian has become my companion. He helped me to get through the depressing period of the lockdown. As I was working on the icon I would put the liturgy on my iPad, so the prayers permeated the air.

"An icon is 'created by prayer for prayer'."

The icon was to have been dedicated at a school Mass in Whithorn in June but that had to be cancelled because of Covid restrictions.

The commission was paid for by donations by parents and others who specifically asked that their gifts be used for the oratory.

Mr Docherty said: "We hope to make images of our icon as gifts to pupils as they leave school or to present to visitors. There are many other ideas to explore but above all above all we want St Ninian to be an inspiration for generations to come."



## Canon Rowan's bequest

Picture by Paul McSherry



**ST Brigid's church in Toryglen has been given a Christmas surprise from beyond the grave in the will of a much-loved priest who served the parish for decades.**

Canon Nicholas Rowan, who died at St Joseph's Robroyston last year aged 97, and who had been assistant priest at St Brigid's for 24 years, left funds to pay for a long-planned project in the church.

His gift allowed work to begin to move the church's pipe organ, which was donated to the parish some years ago, from the ground level to the choir loft, where it was always intended to be situated.

BY BRIAN SWANSON

Parish priest Fr Gerry Byrne said "He was a lovely man – and I had no idea that he had left money to have the organ moved to the choir loft. It was quite a surprise.

"In his homily at the funeral Mass here in St Brigid's Archbishop Tartaglia said that Canon Rowan's name was golden in this part of the world and that was just how it was."

Over the last few days Fr Byrne, helped by volunteers, has built a platform for the organ in the choir loft awaiting the arrival of professionals to provide the final installation.



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# Lebanon saint will have shrine in Scotland

**G**LASGOW'S Arab Christian community, whose Masses are hosted by St Patrick's, Anderston, have given prayerful thanks after a statue of their revered Lebanese saint was installed at Scotland's National Shrine at Carfin.

Although little known in this country, Saint Charbel Makhoul, who lived most of his life as a humble hermit, has a devoted following in Lebanon where several miracles have been attributed to him and over the years millions of pilgrims have visited his shrine.

Fittingly, the Carfin Mass held to mark the statue's installation, and to remember the many victims of the Beirut harbour explosion in August, was held just weeks before the 122nd anniversary of the saint's death on Christmas Eve, 1898.

And for one Lebanese woman taking part in the Mass, celebrated in limited numbers and with strict social distancing, the event was the culmination of a personal three-year campaign to share her beloved St Charbel with the faithful of her adopted country.

In an exclusive interview with *Flourish*, Glasgow-based jewellery designer Feriale Nasr Zaarour revealed that when she first visited the National Shrine she felt inspired to have a statue of Saint Charbel included among the many other saints commemorated there.

She said: "I am related to St Charbel by blood and I lived in his village Bekaakafra for a long time. I have personally witnessed numerous miraculous healings. I feel that I have a special bond with St Charbel because he is my intercessor and the patron of so many in Lebanon."

"In October 2017, I had the chance to visit Carfin Grotto for the first time. When I first

BY **BRIAN SWANSON** set foot there, I was stunned by the serenity and beauty of the place. It reminded of my home in Lebanon, with the holy mountains and shrines. I was deeply fascinated and overwhelmed with joy. Heading into the reliquary, I was delighted to see all the relics of the saints. However, I immediately knew that I had to get our Lebanese Saint into the reliquary as well!"

She added: "I spoke to the then-guardian of the shrine, Father Francis McGachey, who, as it turns out, was extremely interested in welcoming a statue of the Lebanese saint into the reliquary. I was elated. My journey had started that evening as I made it my mission to bring a statue of Charbel all the way from Lebanon to Scotland."

At the time Feriale was taking a jewellery-making course and began first to donate and then sell crystal rosary beads at Catholic churches in the Archdiocese.

She said: "I would always offer 20 percent of however much money I made selling rosaries to the church which I had been selling in, but most parishes refused to take the money; this really helped me out in terms of paying for the travel expenses for the statue – which were not cheap by any means."

"Although I was working hard to meet my goals, what really kept me going was the help that I got from our blessed priests and their generous parishioners who overwhelmed me with their generosity and prayers."

"When the statue finally arrived at Glasgow, I was fortunate enough to keep it in my home until we were able to decide on when and

Feriale and her saint  
Picture: Paul McSherry



how we were going to put it in Carfin. But after the Beirut explosion on the 4th of August, I knew that the statue needed to be in Carfin, now more than ever."

"I contacted our Lebanese priest and was relieved when I got his consent to add the great St Charbel Zaarour Makhoul's statue in Carfin, in memory of all the victims of the horrible blast."

"May he keep on healing through the power of God, and may anyone who reaches out to him find peace and blessings."

## St Joseph year proclaimed by Pope

**P**OPE Francis has made a surprise announcement proclaiming the next year as a special Jubilee Year of St Joseph.

The Holy Father made his announcement to mark the 150th anniversary of the saint's proclamation as patron of the Universal Church.

The year begins Dec 8, 2020, and concludes on Dec 8, 2021.

The decree announcing the new Jubilee said that Francis had established a Year of St Joseph so that "every member of the faithful, following his example, may strengthen their life of faith daily in the complete fulfilment of God's will."

The Holy Father has also granted special indulgences to mark the year.

In addition the Pope has written a special letter to the whole Church entitled *Patris Corde* ("With a father's heart") on the saint. "St Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation."

Pope Francis has promoted devotion to St Joseph throughout his pontificate.

### Personal

He was installed as Bishop of Rome March 19, 2013, the Solemnity of St Joseph, and dedicated the homily at his inauguration Mass to the

saint. That same year he decreed that St Joseph's name be inserted into Eucharistic Prayers II, III, and IV.

In 2015 he told journalists: "I would also like to tell you something very personal. I have great love for St Joseph, because he is a man of silence and strength."

"On my table I have an image of St Joseph sleeping. Even when he is asleep, he is taking care of the Church! Yes! We know that he can do that. So when I have a problem, a difficulty, I write a little note and I put it underneath St Joseph, so that he can dream about it! In other words I tell him: pray for this problem!"

**S**ISTER Julia McLoughlin SND has died. Her funeral took place at the Immaculate Conception Church in Maryhill on Wednesday 2nd December, which would have been her 90th birthday!

She was in religious life for 73 years (one of the longest serving in the whole country).

After Charlotte St she entered the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception and trained as a teacher with the Notre Dame Sisters at Dowanhill.

She left for the mission to Nigeria where she remained for 20 years teaching and working in parishes. She discerned a call to transfer her Vows to the Sisters of Notre Dame and completed further study in business and administration. This led to service at the Generalate of the Order in Rome and also in administration at St Buenos in N. Wales. She was also on the administrative staff at Scotus College in Bearsden.

After teaching in various schools in Dumbarton and Glasgow, Sister Julia pioneered Industrial chaplaincy as one of the first women appointed in a post created by the Church of England. She worked as chaplain to a power station in England and also with the early construction workers on the Channel Tunnel.

Two years in Berkeley, California gave her a chance to study spirituality and she was also involved in forming and leading women's groups.

She was a well-known figure around the Archdiocese – she attended countless talks, lectures and seminars and had a deeply enquiring mind and spirit. In later life she became a well known and much loved parishioner at the Immaculate Conception and continued to minister in the discreet ways as she reached out to parishioners. Her last illness was short and until it struck she remained alert and active.

May Julia rejoice now forever with St Julie in the presence of the Good God!

*Requiescat in pace.*



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# Winning lecture on St Thérèse

**L**IVING a quiet and hidden life in the Lisieux Carmel, dying from tuberculosis at the young age of 24, and leaving behind no systematic body of theological writings, it may initially seem surprising that St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face was declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Saint John Paul II on October 19, 1997.

This surprise becomes even greater when we remember that she is the only saint John Paul II declared a Doctor of the Church during his lengthy pontificate.

It is incumbent upon us to know why she is the doctor of our times.

Thérèse wrote no theological treatises and her spiritual writings, collected letters and poetry reveal a style deeply personal and poetic... distinct from most of the other Church doctors (although echoes of Augustine and her special patroness, St Teresa of Avila, occasionally crop up in her autobiography, *Story of a Soul*). However, what Pope Emeritus Benedict has said about the Doctors of the Church helps us understand why Thérèse is the saint and

**This year's Cardinal Winning lecture will be remembered as the first to be delivered virtually. Given by Dr Rebekah Lamb (below) from the University of St Andrews, the title of the lecture was: Thérèse of Lisieux: A Doctor of the Church for Our Times. A summary of the memorable lecture has been provided for Flourish readers here – it makes fascinating and inspiring reading**

teacher for our times: "The declaration that a saint is a Doctor of the Universal Church implies the recognition of a charism of wisdom bestowed by the Holy Spirit for the good of the Church."

What is the particular charism of Thérèse? Surely it is her ability to manifest, to teach divine mercy in our difficult times.

Born in 1873, Thérèse lived on the brink of emerging modernity – which John Paul II, in his 1979 visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau, called our "difficult century."

Characterised by a growing sense of alienation, anxiety, power politics, and a burgeoning secularisation (which, as Cardinal Henri DeLubac put it, was fuelled by "the drama of atheist humanism"), our modern



age has caused many of our contemporary wounds.

In Thérèse, Providence has shown us that the particular strains of our time require a different kind of Doctor: someone who has endured the difficulties of our age and knows how to call the higher science of divine love, of divine mercy into our present conditions.

From her childhood,

Thérèse felt called, with a missionary heart, to suffer the drama of her age, so as to bring the light of Christ to those who suffered.

She personally bore many of the wounds so characteristic of our times – including bouts of burdensome anxiety; the loss of her mother to cancer; panic attacks and neuroses; profound social misunderstanding (even from members of her own religious community); tuberculosis, and a dark night of the soul which plunged her into a depressive abyss which, she believed, helped her empathise with the existential plight of those who do not believe in God.

However, unlike Nietzsche, Feuerbach, Marx, and the other, leading atheist humanists of the late 19th century, Thérèse found the presence of God not only in her sufferings but through them.

It is the witness of her life which John Paul II (no stranger to the horrors of modernity) offers to us as a model of hope and friendship with God in our times.

As Alfred Barrett SJ, comments, in his sonnet on Thérèse, she witnesses by



embracing her everyday crosses; in her "lowliness and love and anguish" we find her "blind" with "the beauty of a stark Gethsemane."

As many of us know, her inspiration does not end with her written insights and the witness of her short life.

It is remarkable how many stories, gathered from around the world, testify to Thérèse's spiritual friendship, which only increased

following her death. As just one example, many of us had the privilege to venerate her relics when they were brought to Scotland in late August and September of last year. The stories of hope and healing that emerged from that visit alone show that she continues to intercede on behalf of those whom God has especially given to her.

## Canon Gerry's cookbook is a perfect gift

**A** COVID collaboration between an inspirational charity and a cooking Canon is proving a recipe for success.

In *Feasting with FireCloud and the Cooking Canon*, Canon Gerry Tartaglia, parish priest of St Margaret's and Our Holy Redeemer's, Clydebank and seven FireCloud volunteers share some of their favourite recipes. For added flavour the Canon has included some of his top tips and wine suggestions with volunteers providing their musical inspirations while preparing their dishes.

The project began early in lockdown following the interest in Canon Tartaglia's cooking videos on the parish Facebook page. Proceeds will be split between FireCloud and the two parishes.

Canon Tartaglia told *Flourish*: "To begin with I was unsure how to live-stream Mass and not convinced we would have great numbers but once I started I was amazed at the numbers tuning in. Then it was about thinking of ways to keep people involved and it took off when a someone suggested doing a cookery video which then grew into a cookery book."

Although most of his recipes feature pasta Canon



Canon Gerry in the kitchen

Tartaglia points out that while growing up 'pasta' was a word that was never used.

"Among Italian immigrants of a certain generation macaroni would be the term used. My dad had stomach problems and couldn't eat rich or spicy food so we would have it with a simple tomato sauce flavoured with rump steak or meatballs."

"That's not to say we didn't have Scottish staples like mince and potatoes, and on a Friday night it was always toasted cheese. My own favourite from the book is Bucatini all'Amatriciana which is Cucina Romana. In

BY MARY MCGINTY

Rome many of the restaurants are reflective of the regions the owners come from. This dish made in a proper Roman kitchen is really something."

Sales of the cookery book will provide funds for FireCloud which "operates on a shoestring budget with a swashbuckling attitude and a song in our hearts."

The organisation which started in 2007 was granted charity status three years ago. Its mission is to employ every imaginable means to live lives of faith, purpose

and joy, inspiring others to use their God-given talents to animate the world with hope.

Suzanne Bunniss, founder and director said: "Volunteers have been asking us for years to produce a cookery book to raise funds and it's never been the right time until now. Apart from occasional grants such as from the St Nicholas Care Fund we are entirely self-funding which we do through raffles, quiz nights and our Christmas Crafts."

"Because of Covid our Nativity has to be a virtual event which is a huge loss of revenue. It will take place

on December 20 as it would have done under normal circumstances but we will miss out on door funds so we hope the cookery book help will provide some revenue."

**■ Book is available from: St Margaret's and Our Holy Redeemer parishes and [www.fire-cloud.org](http://www.fire-cloud.org)**

## Ozanam Centre

**■ The Ozanam Centre in the Briggait have asked us to point out that due to the pandemic no hot meals are currently being served and that it remains closed apart from Thursday evening when male clothing and toiletries are distributed under strict Covid guidelines.**

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# Charities' Christmas challenge

**C**HRISTMAS comes but once a year – and it brings prime fundraising opportunities for charities to raise much-needed funds. But not this year as Covid restrictions prevent most events from going ahead.

The good news is that charities and organisations throughout the archdiocese having been coming up with inventive ways to maintain their services and keep funds flowing in, despite the severe curtailment of activities. Digital technology has proved vital in their efforts.

In Clydebank, at St Margaret of Scotland Hospice, Christmas is a hectic fundraising season. From the Light up a Light service which takes place on the first Sunday of Advent to the Christmas Bus doing its rounds in Glasgow and Dunbartonshire, and Christmas Day itself, it is a month of fundraising which is essential to the provision of care.

This year the bus had to be cancelled and the LUAL service, which still took place, had to be streamed via Facebook and YouTube.

"This Christmas will be like no other because we have to be compliant with all the regulations. We had to pre-record LUAL and for the

BY MARY  
MCGINTY

first time in the many years I have been here there will be no Christmas morning Mass, said Sister Rita.

"It will be a challenging time for patients and their families. The usual Christmas dinner which families attend cannot take place but, as always, we will make it as pleasant as we can for the patients."

The homeless will be cared for at the Wayside Club as they have been throughout the pandemic with soup and sandwiches being given out at the door. The combination of regulations and the lack of volunteers will prevent any the usual Christmas events from taking place.

Pat Kearns, a member of the Legion of Mary Praesidium, said: "We would normally be open on Christmas Day and then on the 27th we would have a big Christmas Dinner for around 120 people. On Hogmanay we would have a party with musicians and see the bells in. We simply don't have the resources to meet the standards required of us."

Meanwhile Catholic schools are proving themselves adroit in their fundraising efforts. In their

Picture by Paul McSherry



charity engagement at Notre Dame High School, Dowanhill, the girls have ploughed on with admirable spirit, adapting as necessary to comply with Covid regulations.

Head Teacher, Rosie Martin, said: "It's a case of being creative and resourceful. The 6th years would normally go out for an evening

on the St Margaret's Hospice Christmas Bus and that's not been possible but we still have plenty going on. We're keeping going with the Hats and Scarves Appeal for the homeless and collecting toiletries for the SVDP. We just have to be mindful of how we do it and quarantining the items for 72 hours."



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**2**  **Blessing of the Crib**

**GEORGE SQUARE GLASGOW**  
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[GLASGOWCHURCHES.ORG.UK](http://GLASGOWCHURCHES.ORG.UK)

**Blessing**

**3** 

Thank you to all who have supported **St Margaret of Scotland Hospice** throughout the year. We wish you a very happy, healthy and peaceful Christmas and blessings in the New Year.  
*Sister Rita, Board of Directors and all at St Margaret of Scotland Hospice*

**Caring**

**4**  **missio** Scotland

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**Peace**

**5**  **the wayside club centre**

32 Midland Street  
Glasgow G1 4PR  
Email: [waysideglasgow@gmail.com](mailto:waysideglasgow@gmail.com)  
Open every evening from 7.30pm and Saturdays 1–4pm  
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**7**  **Kidney Kids Scotland**

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office@kidneykids.org.uk  
01324 555843

**Charity**


**8**  **SCIAF**  
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Caritas Scotland

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Glasgow G3 6BE  
[www.sciaf.org.uk](http://www.sciaf.org.uk)  
sciaf@sciaf.org.uk  
Charity Number SC012302

Give the gift of happiness this Christmas

Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund  
SCIAF is the official overseas aid and development charity of the Catholic Church in Scotland and a proud member of Caritas Internationalis.

**Giving**

**9**  **Society of St. Vincent de Paul Scotland**

Glasgow Archdiocesan Council  
Wish all our members, benefactors and all whom we serve  
A Holy & Joyous Christmas

**Compassion**

**10**  **University of Glasgow School of Education**

We would like to wish everyone a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas and Joy in the New Year  
[www.glasgow.ac.uk/education](http://www.glasgow.ac.uk/education)

**Wisdom**

**11**  **St. Andrew's Hospice**  
Henderson Street,  
Airdrie, Lanarkshire  
ML6 6DJ  
tel no. 01236 766951

We provide specialist palliative care for people in Lanarkshire living with life limiting illnesses

[www.st-andrews-hospice.com](http://www.st-andrews-hospice.com)  
Scottish Charity no. SC010159

**Comforting**

**12**  **CAROLS FOR PEACE**


Streamed on Sunday 13th December with messages from Church Leaders and the Lord Provost.  
[glasgowchurches.org.uk](http://glasgowchurches.org.uk)

**Praising**

**13**  **St Nicholas Care Fund**  
A charity of the Archdiocese of Glasgow

**Caring Sunday, 13 December**  
Giving thanks to all who have donated to us throughout 2020, helping us to reach many projects supporting those in greatest need.  
[pct@rcag.org.uk](mailto:pct@rcag.org.uk) · 0141 226 5898 · Scottish Charity SC029832

**Rejoicing**

**14**  **themungo foundation**

Thank you to everyone who has helped us to support over 1,000 vulnerable people across Scotland in 2020.

Life | Justice | Community

Helping those in our care to live the life they choose. Donate at:  
[www.themungofoundation.org.uk](http://www.themungofoundation.org.uk)  
Scottish Charity No. SC033078

**Empathy**

**15**  **BEATSON cancer CHARITY**

**Beatson Santa Dash**  
Take part between December 12–13. Run, walk or cycle 5k close to home. Receive a Santa hat, pin badge and certificate.  
[www.beatsoncancercharity.org](http://www.beatsoncancercharity.org)

**Support**

**16**  **Knights of St Columba**

The Knights of St Columba wish you and your family a Holy and Happy Christmas

Knights of St Columba Head Office  
75 Hillington Road South · Glasgow  
G52 2AE · Scotland  
T: +44 (0) 141 883 5700

**Unity**

**17**  **St Ninian's High School**

The pupils and staff of St Ninian's High School wish everyone a Happy and Holy Christmas.

Bellfield Road  
Kirkintilloch G66 1DT  
Telephone: 0141 955 2386  
[www.st-ninians.e-dunbarton.sch.uk](http://www.st-ninians.e-dunbarton.sch.uk)

**Education**

**18**  **Catholic Charismatic Renewal Archdiocese of Glasgow**

1 Thess 5:16–18. Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Prayer Groups meet throughout Glasgow.  
For more info call 0744 8786569  
Email [glasgow.service.team@gmail.com](mailto:glasgow.service.team@gmail.com)  
**Wishing you all a happy and holy Christmas.**

**Faith**

**19**  **Craig Lodge Family House of Prayer**

T: 01838 200216  
[www.craiglodge.org](http://www.craiglodge.org)

**Prayer**

**20**  **St Margaret's Children and Family Care Society**

We urgently need your help.  
At St Margaret's we could lose up to £100k in donations to our Crib Collection boxes this Christmas as congregation sizes remain restricted. Donations fund our Extended Post Adoption Support Services (EPASS) – available to any adopted child and adoptive families anywhere in Scotland.  
Visit our "Virtual Crib" to donate this Christmas at [stmargaretsadoptionsociety.org.uk](http://stmargaretsadoptionsociety.org.uk)  
Scottish Charity Reg SC028551

**Belonging**

May the Baby Jesus watch over you and fill your hearts with peace, hope and love

**21**  **The Notre Dame Centre**  
Providing support for children, young people and their families

Wishing you and your family a very Happy Christmas


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T: 0141 339 2366 · E: [info@notredamecentre.org.uk](mailto:info@notredamecentre.org.uk)  
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**Nurturing**

**22**  **CARFIN GROTTTO Bethlehem Shrine**

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Email: [info@carfingrotto.org](mailto:info@carfingrotto.org)

**Believing**

**23**  **SPUC Scotland**

Every child deserves a magical Christmas. SPUC Scotland is working hard to ensure every child has a future! Please consider supporting our mission this Christmas time.  
SPUC Scotland wish you all a very Merry Christmas!

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Fertility Care Scotland charity no. SC022875

**Life**

Wishing you a peaceful Advent and a very happy Christmas



# St Nicholas Care Fund: your help is needed 'more than ever before'

## Archbishop's appeal 2020



### My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Every year I write to you at this time to ask you to remember those less fortunate and to give what you can to the St Nicholas Care Fund on Caring Sunday. This year my appeal to you is particularly urgent.

Never in the Fund's history has it been as necessary as it is now.

The St Nicholas Care Fund was set up by the then-Archbishop Winning in 1992 to provide grant support to disadvantaged people in Glasgow and it relies upon you, the good people of the parishes of the Archdiocese to contribute what you can so that we can offer this assistance to people facing hardship.

The Fund offers small grants to parishes, schools and community groups who work to improve the lives of people who find themselves in need.

2020 has been an extraordinary year with Covid 19 having a significant impact on all our lives and livelihoods.

Those in greatest need in Glasgow have turned to the St Nicholas Care Fund for assistance; parishes and schools have organised foodbanks and provided hot meals to families who had none; local communities have come together to support and offer companionship to the lonely and the isolated; and voluntary organisations have gone out on the streets to support and offer practical help to people without a permanent home.

The St Nicholas Care Fund, like many others, has had to adapt to the new normal and no offers support on-line, providing a safe and swift response to anyone requesting a grant.

So this year once again I ask you to dig deep and give what you can either through your parish or through our website – donations can be made here [www.rcag.org.uk](http://www.rcag.org.uk)

Your generosity will make a significant difference to people's lives and help communities to survive, recover and rebuild as Covid 19 recedes and we adjust to a life in a post-Covid world.

On behalf of all whose lives are touched, and brightened, and eased by your kindness ... I say simply, "thank you".

Yours devotedly  
+ Philip



## Grants awarded in 2020

Beatroute Arts	£2345
Lourdes Theatre Group	£3000
1st Auchinairn Rainbows	£338
St. Vincent's Primary School	£1000
Twechar Senior Citizens Social Club	£ 800
The Children's Wood	£3100
Maryhill Activity Directory	£2000
St. Vincent's Hospice Ltd.	£10,000
St. Lucy's Youth Zone	£2500
St. Margaret's and Our	
Holy Redeemer's Youth Project	£3000
Whiteinch Transformations	£4650
Cumbernauld Together	£5000
St. Andrew's Parish Soup Run	£5000
St. Mary's Primary School, Duntocher	£500
Springburn Churches Foodbank	£5000
St. Brigid's Parish Church	£3000
St. Gregory's Parish Church	£5000
St Paul's Primary School	£1000
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth Cares	£1500
Heart of Scotstoun	£1800
Lourdes Secondary School	£2760
St. Mungo's Primary School	£400
The Halliday Foundation	£1864
Silver Birch Ltd.	£5000
Alive and Kicking	£1092
Diaspora African Women's Network	£4880
St. Rose of Lima Primary School	£2000
St. Blanes Primary School	£700
The Louise Project, Govanhill	£2625
Friends for All	£4600
Govan Comm Project	£4970

## THE late Cardinal Winning was a man of his time and a man of action.

In 1992, the 500th anniversary of the Archdiocese of Glasgow, and moved by seeing the poverty affecting so many families, he established the Pastoral Care Trust – now the St Nicholas Care Fund – to make their lives easier through the generosity of the faithful.

### Quickly

"Times may have changed" said fund co-ordinator Sheena Kenny, "but the need has not. We had to very quickly find ways of making sure that those who depend on us do not miss out."

"Like many other organisations, when lockdown happened back in March we were unprepared for the impact this would have on our communities but we responded very quickly.

"We dropped our quarterly deadlines for applications and respond now to each grant application as soon as it is received – our Trustees carry out assessments by telephone and we use bank transfers so projects can have access to their grant as soon as possible."

Since March we have distributed £108,423 to 32 projects that have offered support to people in the greatest need in our communities.

"We gave grants to schools, churches and community

BY BRIAN SWANSON

organisations so that they could prepare and deliver hot meals, food and fuel vouchers, and offer friendship and support to all those around them and in need.

"Communities have shown their resilience by working together to address need where is apparent – people without homes or seeking refuge and asylum have not been forgotten."

Last year parishioners raised the magnificent total of just over £57,000 mostly through the annual Caring Sunday collection in December.

### Resilience

And although the method of raising money will be different this year, Sheena and her colleagues are confident that parishioners will respond with their customary generosity.

Sheena said: "We ask that one-off donations or regular direct debits be made on-line by going to [www.rcag.org.uk](http://www.rcag.org.uk) and clicking on the donate page or via the secure Donate facility on our Facebook page.

"Your generous donations will make it possible for us to continue to offer grants where they are most needed and to support people and communities recover and rebuild as restrictions are lifted and we adjust to a life in a post Covid 19 world."



Young people enjoying summer camp part funded by the Trust



## Christmas tales for young and old alike from the Archbishop of Milan

# Banishing our fears ... the lessons of Bethlehem



This Advent once more *Flourish* offers readers a series of three delightful festive stories for children – even adult children! – from the pen of Archbishop Mario Delpini of Milan. Archbishop Delpini is a friend of Scotland, having holidayed here often, and is much-loved for the gentle wisdom of his tales. This year he tells the stories of the children of a village called Bethlehem ... Joshua, Giovanna and Maddalena.

*Translations by Ronnie Convery*

### Joshua's story

**THE solitary man lived in the old house at the edge of the village. He always dressed in black, he didn't speak with anyone and no one spoke to him.**

People said he was a bad man. For that reason Joshua tried never to go down the street where he lived. Instead he took the long way round, to avoid getting close to the house where the man lived. His parents used to say to him: "Remember don't go near the house of the bad man. People say terrible things about him. Even his wife left him he's so bad!"

But Joshua, when he was out with his friends, liked to go exploring. Although they never got too close, they sometimes spied on the man. Looking at him he didn't seem very bad. He brought out food for his dog; he cut wood and sat on the bench outside his front door. He never said a word (not that he had anyone to speak to); he never sang and he was always dressed in black. He seemed more sad than bad. But who knows what went on inside the house, it was always dark...

Once however, while the group of friends were playing with their kites it so happened that the string of Joshua's kite broke and the kite landed close to the home of the man. It was the nicest kite that Joshua had ever had. "What will I do now?" he asked himself. He tried to persuade among his friends: "Will we all go together to get my kite?"

"Are you mad? Don't you realise that that is the house of the bad man?"

"Yes of course I know that!" replied Joshua.

However, after much uncertainty he decided to risk it. He approached the house without being noticed, hop-

ing to be able to get his kite while the man was distracted. But as soon as he put a foot inside the garden the old man spotted him. Joshua froze, paralysed with fear.

But to his great surprise the man spoke to him just like any other human being. "Come in and get it. Oh your kite's torn. Let's see if we can fix it".

And so it was, that working together to repair the kite, the two almost became friends.

Before heading home with his kite now as good as new Joshua couldn't help but ask: "Aren't you supposed to be a bad person?"

The man replied: "Once I made a mistake and for that I was condemned. But one night I received a visit from some angels who told me a 'Saviour is born for us' and so it was that I changed my life and I learnt the prayer which says 'forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.' We can pray it together if you want."

From that day onwards when Joshua broke something he always asked the help of the man dressed in black to repair it, and he was no longer afraid, because he knew the man was not so bad after all. And he also learned ... to pray.

### Giovanna's story

**GIOVANNA'S house was the nicest house in the village. Giovanna lacked nothing, but she was always afraid, often sad and sometimes a little bit angry.**

She was afraid when her mum and dad argued. The fact is, that they were always arguing. One word out of place was enough to set off a tempest of harsh words, agonising silences and the



banging of doors.

Her mum and dad loved Giovanna very much. Maybe they didn't realise how much their fights caused her to be afraid, or maybe they couldn't eliminate that

bad spirit which had entered their lives. Gathered round the dinner table there was never a happy atmosphere...

Giovanna was afraid. She was afraid that one day, af-

ter slamming the door on his way out, dad would never come back.

When Giovanna went to bed after the traditional evening argument, unknown to her parents, she

cried under the covers and prayed: "Please Lord let them love each other, please Lord don't let them split up."

Often she would fall asleep crying and praying.

One night, someone banged at the door. It was really late and it wakened Giovanna up. Dad went down to open the door. There at the entrance were two travellers – a man and a

woman. They had come like so many for the census and the woman was expecting a baby. They were looking for a roof over their heads, for some form of shelter.

Giovanna's Dad thought for a moment then said: "If you want there's an old stable behind the house, you can have that..." The couple settled down there as best they could and silence was restored to the house.

In the middle of the night Giovanna wakened up again. This time there was a light, there was singing and the sound of celebrations. She looked out and saw there were angels singing: "Peace on earth to men of goodwill."

Giovanna, looking out the window, saw mum and dad, listening to that song. They drew close to each other and gave each other a hug, as if to express some kind of mutual forgiveness or pardon.

The little girl went back to sleep and from that night on was never afraid again (largely because mum and dad tried not to argue).

What a night that was! The night that the angels of peace visited the earth.

### Maddalena's story

**DAD worked all day. Usually he would go out in the morning when Maddalena was still asleep. Normally when the sun goes down, work in the fields stops, but Maddalena's dad never stopped working. Very often evening fell and he still hadn't returned home.**

Mum would set the table, prepare the dinner but dad wouldn't be back. Mum didn't seem to get

too annoyed, even if sometimes she let out a sigh or two.

Maddalena, though, used to worry and fret: "Has something happened to dad?" she would wonder.

She sought reassurance from her mum but her mother's words were always vague: "He probably met some friends. He probably went to the blacksmiths to get a tool repaired. Maybe he had to talk to the boss about the harvest next week. Don't worry, he'll be back soon."

But sometimes dad arrived really late and those hours of waiting were, for Maddalena, a real torture. She never mentioned it to her mum because she wanted to seem grown-up, but every step that she heard on the street outside, promising relief to her anxiety, often brought disappointment. Why wasn't Dad back yet?

Maddalena loved playing with her friends in the village. They played together for hours without noticing time passing, running around, arguing sometimes, challenging each other.

Afterwards she would come home feeling hot and tired but happy. Normally her mum welcomed her with a smile and a jug of fresh water with mint and lemon.

But one day Maddalena came home and mum wasn't there.

She called out to her but there was no reply, she went looking for her and couldn't find her; she wasn't in the kitchen or in the garden.

"Where can she be?" Maddalena started to feel scared... could something have happened?

She imagined the most terrible things and became

very anxious indeed.

The reality was, though, that every evening dad did come back after a hard day at work; and her mum did come home after going a message or stopping to chat with her friends.

The trouble was that Maddalena would get so anxious; she was always afraid that something terrible might happen, that there were dangers lying in wait for her loved ones, that some terrible thing might happen to her family, that someone might do them harm...

One night after more long hours of waiting and worrying, dad came home looking all flustered but very excited.

"Come on Sara, come on Maddalena – a baby has been born in the old stable!"

All three went down to see, feeling both curious and a little afraid, but the night was suddenly filled with light, and when they got close they found a baby in the manger.

Mary the mother and Joseph her spouse welcomed them with a respectful silence and a blessed smile, which seemed to say, "here is the child who has come to do the Father's will."

All of a sudden Maddalena understood ... if God himself had chosen a dark night among poor people to give joy to humanity with the birth of his son as a baby, then surely her fears of "what might happen" could be conquered.

She began to understand that every new situation should not be seen as a threat, but as an opportunity to welcome the visit of God.

She also began to pray: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done..."



# Voices from Bethlehem

Advent is a time for waiting and reflecting; a time for preparing for the coming of Jesus at Christmas; a time for looking back and looking forward. This year *Flourish* asked four students from Glasgow's twin city of Bethlehem to offer their "voices" of what Advent and Christmas means to them this year. Here they are ...Voices from Bethlehem – voices of hope, love, unity and family.

## The voice of hope

**CHRISTMAS is the time of hope to people all over the world.**

I, Natalia Ghattas, a citizen of Bethlehem from the Holy Land, would love to share with you how we celebrate Christmas. We now begin our preparations through Advent and wait for the coming of Jesus. It is a time of preparation... and waiting... and hoping...

In Bethlehem, hope is at the centre of our Christmas. As the holiday approaches, people intensify their prayers for peace, not only for our lands, but also for all people around the world especially during these hard times of the pandemic.

When December approaches, the city is transformed. The streets are decorated with coloured lights that shine through the night as hope that shines through the darkest times. The huge deco-



Natalia Ghattas

rated Christmas tree takes centre stage in Nativity Square where a Christmas market full of Christmas decorations, embroidery, clothing, and traditional and exotic food are sold. On that day, there are also bands, and soloists performing Christmas songs to add to the joyful spirit!

The most eagerly-awaited day is December 24 when at least 10 scout

groups from all over Palestine march around the city adding to the Christmas joy.

We wait for Christmas Day, when everyone gathers with their family to exchange gifts, and to eat lunch and reminisce. To me, Christmas always gives me hope because it is the time where we all come together as the big family that we are.

This Christmas, we may not gather as is the case every year but we will continue to be hopeful while virtually together. I am really hoping for everyone to be safe from the virus and from any other misfortune that may happen. We are a family and one is not alone even when physically separated!

Hope keeps us alive together, so keep on hoping!! After Advent, have a very nice day and Merry Christmas!

## The voice of the family

**I**n the hillside city of Bethlehem lies the Church of Nativity, marking the birthplace of Jesus. It is the focus of millions of Christians around the world who flock to celebrate in the city.

For me, it has a special meaning all year but especially around Christmas time. Having lived in Canada for a few years with my parents, away from the extended family, celebrating Christmas was not the same. Christmas celebrations in Bethlehem always means family gatherings. Together we put up the Christmas tree, decorate the house and prepare special Christmas sweets made from semolina flour and filled with dates.

On December 24, families gather to watch the traditional entry procession of the Latin Patriarch

of Jerusalem with scout groups marching to the tunes of traditional Christmas songs. Every Christmas, my family and relatives meet up for prayer and celebration, in an atmosphere of peace, love and joy far from the stresses of school and work.

Christmas is a season of giving; it is about sharing and being there for others; it's about spending quality time with family, friends and loved ones while talking, laughing and singing Christmas carols.

On Christmas day, after attending church, the tradition in Bethlehem is to visit elderly relatives, grandparents, aunts and uncles, to exchange gifts and homemade sweets. As the day comes to an end, my family cramps up in



Jocelyne-Marie Lama

the cosy decorated living room with warm drinks, food, sweets and chat as we reflect upon the special day we had.

This Christmas won't be the same as usual, but I hope that the year 2021 will be free of COVID-19 and Christians from all over the world will come back to celebrate Christmas with us.

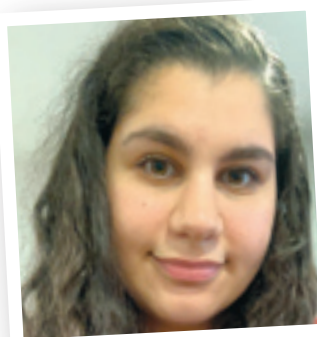
## The voice of unity

**L**et me take you on a small ride in my hometown. Well, around a month before Christmas, all the streets are decorated with beautiful lights and each of the districts in Palestine begin preparing a Christmas tree decorated with bright wondrous ornaments.

Each week a tree from a district will be lit. Christians and Muslims unite as one, as well as all pilgrims from different backgrounds. All are there united watching the tree light up the whole area; they watch it light up as a promise of abundant joy and of a bright future. We unite as one in celebrations, in happiness, in love, in respect, and in equality.

This whole month is just full of uplifting celebrations, from attending Masses to parades, to tree lightings, to family gatherings, to cosy winter nights beside the fireplace while your parents tell you stories and jokes, to playing games, singing hymns and dancing till you can't feel the smile on your face any longer.

I have not mentioned



Taleen Rahil

above the most important part: the birth of Jesus Christ. I have come to highly value the notion of spiritually preparing for Christ's birth in my heart. This level of pure and intense spiritual feelings is not merely reached through other preparations such as celebrations and decorations, but through meditation, contemplation, confession and repentance. The theme of unity cannot be but brought up once again.

How can it possibly be that Jesus' birthplace, the most sacred most holy place on earth, at least for us Christians, is the centre of an ongoing conflict?

I understand that most

of the time when someone mentions anything about Bethlehem, it gets automatically associated with the occupation and the conflict. However, there is more to us than this conflict.

If people look beyond their differences, they would realise that they are rather more similar than different. As Palestinians, we try as much as possible to situate ourselves, mentally and spiritually, as far as possible from the whole notion of the conflict. Our daily lives are mostly focused on taking what we have left and turning it into valuable treasures.

We value life even with the smallest hope left. We give even if we have nothing. We focus on how we will move on, progress, and grow. As a student, my main concern is how I can use my education to bring the change I want and to defeat obstacles in order to achieve success in all areas of life. We repay hate with love. We do not seek revenge; instead, we forgive.

This is what my faith taught me. We leave everything to God...

## The voice of love

**B**ETHLEHEM is a city of love and kindness.

Everyone knows that Bethlehem is the city where Jesus was born – and it is considered a privilege for us who were born here, and now live here, to speak to you at this special time. At Christmas, everyone in Bethlehem comes together and leaves all hardships and sadness behind focusing on being one and showing kindness to one another making Christmas heart-warming and full of love.

The period of preparation, of Advent, is coming to an end. Our hearts are opening and our thoughts are turning to how we can help others.

The love people share for each other in Bethlehem is different from other places; people here are more attached to each other and more involved in each

other's lives than is commonly understood. It is a small town and the culture is of close families and especially among the Christian community.

Yet, when people think of Bethlehem, they usually think of war; people's perception of Bethlehem is contradictory as the media often portrays it as a battleground. They think of it as a place of fear when in reality it is the city of peace and love.

The people of Bethlehem celebrate Christmas with the utmost joy and happiness; decorating trees, singing Christmas carols and going to church to honour the birth of Jesus Christ. To give up one's very self, to think only of others, how to bring the greatest happiness to others and to share love with others, that is the true



Tuleen Asmari

meaning of Christmas.

People assume that exchanging gifts and putting Christmas trees up is what Christmas is all about, but the truth is, Christmas is about giving and loving one another and that is certainly seen among the people of Bethlehem, the city of love.



# Views from the pews

Lay Catholics reflect on the challenges and opportunities of living the faith today



Carlyn Hill

**A**s Advent progresses and our thoughts turn to Christmas, it is no surprise that this year we will all be searching for ways to make the season relevant and meaningful while perhaps still struggling to actually enter a Church.

Those of us who are lucky enough to have access to computers, tablets etc can of course follow our parishes and other religious sites for ways to help prepare for the coming of Christ.

And, by using social media wisely, we can easily spread the four themes of Advent – Hope, Peace, Love and Joy – to others far beyond our immediate circle of friends and family.

Each year many of us search such sites as Vatican News which posts Advent reflections helping us reflect on the reading of Mass for each Sunday during Advent and this year such sites will be all the more important for us.

The internet is a treasure chest of information and a quick Google check of the word ‘Advent’ not only gives a definition of what the word means and the dates of the season, but also handy hints on Advent activities for children, although it does seem that the secular notion of Advent has more to do with chocolate than the coming of Christ!

Apparently if you ask Alexa how to celebrate Advent it will help you count down the days until Christmas with an Advent calendar! Each day, starting on December 1, Alexa will open a box on the advent calendar to allow you hear a cheery surprise! I can’t wait!

This Advent and Christmas will be naturally different for everyone however the true meaning of Christmas remains the same. We may not be able to be physically with our friends and family this year and our turkeys undoubtedly will be smaller in size but we still have the opportunity to rejoice in the birth of Christ and to make sure Christmas remains joyful and special.

If Covid has taught us anything, it surely is that the most important things in life are not material but in the relationships we have with those around us and, of course, as Christians, with Christ.



The Church and its people, has a wonderful opportunity this year to make sure that the Christian message of love and hope is spread in our local communities ensuring that no-one is left alone, feeling lost or in despair.

Many of our Churches have been a great source of peace and constancy throughout this current situation. It has been uplifting to see our parishes slowly coming to life again with many joining their communities virtually as well as in person.

A quick trawl through the internet gives the reader access to parish newsletters, virtual celebrations and other experiences we would not have even considered this time last year and the Church has quickly learned to adapt to this new digital age.

However it is also important to remember that the heart of the Church is its people and so it is even more important for Church groups to be creative and flexible in trying to keep in touch with parishioners, particularly those who cannot yet visit the building and may not be digitally adept.

Despite the challenges we face during this pandemic, let us remain optimistic, cheerful and celebrate God’s love for the world through the birth of the Christ child: Jesus.

Carlyn Hill is a retired primary head teacher. Glasgow teacher with a special interest in religious education.



Gavin Carr

**A**s Christians we are, or at least should be, intimately familiar with Our Saviour’s commands to love the Lord, love our enemies and to do unto others.... These commands are usually within easy reach if asked to summarise Christ’s teachings.

But one which isn’t always at the forefront of our mind is the command to “go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation” – in other words, to evangelise.

Yet, ever since Christ sent the Apostles out to proclaim the Good News, the Church has understood evangelisation to be at the heart of its existence.

While the message – that Jesus is Christ, Son of God, and the fulfilment of God’s promise of salvation – never changes, what does change is the culture in which the message is proclaimed.

Today we find ourselves in a society that prizes individual expression above everything else. Individualism is so ingrained in our culture that it is taken for granted that it is a force for good, an objective truth, the pursuit of which will somehow set us free.

So, what is the problem with individualism? Well, on the surface nothing at all; however, a growing number are becoming aware that an obsession

with individual expression can resemble a totalitarianism that the previous century has taught us to be wary of.

It is perhaps most noticeable in the world of social media where those who express views different from the currently accepted “norms” can be quickly and brutally suppressed by others. There is even a term for it: “cancel culture”.

But the major problem with an obsession with individualism is that it narrows our potential and blinds us to other ways of viewing the world, views which can be beneficial.

One such view is the Christian one where each of us, although separate beings, together form the Body of the Church and where we are joined in the sacrament of Baptism and Holy Communion.

The ideas of forming a community, giving yourself up to God and even of loving one another become impossible when the selfish needs of the individual come first. How can there be community, love, and the myriad joys which they bring when the number one priority is our own needs?

It is in this culture that we must continue our mission of evangelisation.

Evangelism must be done in humility and with the recognition that it does not have a monopoly on truth or goodness. If the Church believes, as it does, that Christ constituted it as a storehouse of those truths, to guard them and hand them on, it also recognises that it has not yet come to the fullness of understanding the richness that Christ entrusted to it.

That is why we are adopting an approach of dialogue and story as central to the work of proclaiming the faith. Each of us has our own story, our own journey of faith, but towards a single destination.

By sharing these stories, and with God’s grace to guide us, we can together grow in understanding of the riches that have been entrusted to us and share these blessings with others.

With this in mind we have established a New Evangelisation ‘Faith Living’ initiative in the Archdiocese of Glasgow, under the spiritual direction of Fr Gerard Canon Conroy.

Please get in touch if you would like to get involved with this initiative. We can be contacted via Facebook or Twitter: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/825044751633479> / @FaithLiving1

Gavin Carr is a parishioner of St Patrick’s Dumbarton who is involved in the New Evangelisation Project of the Archdiocese. If you have ideas for future Views from the Pews let us know. Drop a line to [Ronnie.Convery@rcag.org.uk](mailto:Ronnie.Convery@rcag.org.uk)



# 'Light shines in darkness'

( JOHN 1:5 )



Picture: Imago Mundi

**As Christmas approaches, we, the Bishops of Scotland, wish to share with you some reflections on our present situation and offer reasons for hope, as we live through these difficult times.**

Firstly, we affirm the centrality of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father who became incarnate of the Holy Spirit and was born of the Virgin Mary. He is our Hope, our Salvation, our Guide...

On 27th March 2020, Pope Francis led an emotional Extraordinary *Urbi et Orbi* in a wet and empty St Peter's Square, as Covid-19 swept the world... Likening the world's experience of the Pandemic to the apostles' fear of being drowned in their storm-tossed boat, he said the virus has "exposed our vulnerability". We were "feeling powerful and able to do everything". Comforting ourselves with "false certainties" meant we had forgotten our endemic fragility. Now a great fear was washing over us, like the waves over the apostles. While their fear like ours is natural, we are not alone. Jesus is with us in our boat.

The Pope reminded us that God turns all things to good. As disciples living through this Pandemic, even though we are naturally anxious and unsure, we know that God is with us...

We have well-founded reasons for hoping that the Pandemic has led society to a rediscovery of the dignity of every human person, especially the most vulnerable, along with a new appreciation of the goodness manifested by so many... In Scotland we were asked to stay at home to save the lives of the elderly and those with underlying health conditions while countless fellow citizens served on the frontline and in key services, putting their lives at risk, all for the sake of vulnerable strangers.

That genuine concern for the vulnerable was obvious and beautiful. Society willingly came to a consensus about protecting the vulnerable, at great personal cost to many, revealing how sacrificial love can shine out from human hearts.

The Covid-19 crisis now offers us a unique opportunity to rebuild society by fostering these values...

Previously, contemporary attitudes had begun to regard the more vulnerable in society as less meriting of life as if some parts of our human family (could) be readily sacrificed for the sake of others ... We became used to a culture in which persons are no longer seen as a paramount value to be cared for and respected, especially when they are poor and disabled; 'not yet useful', like the unborn, or 'no longer needed', like the elderly. This crisis has retaught us the dignity of

every human person and, on this rediscovered principle, our society can be rebuilt.

Scotland's response to the Pandemic has seen a willingness to sacrifice even for the stranger. Self-sacrifice is at the root of the Gospel and is integral to Catholic Social Teaching...

Cannot the love and compassion we have shown amid so much suffering and death in recent months now become a way of life, rather than an exception? Cannot the Christian message of love of neighbour now become the vital principle of our culture?

The Church assisted local communities across Scotland in supporting the weak and the poor, the lonely and the anxious, and accompanying the dying and bereaved. With the resumption of public worship our people were again able to feel part of active communities, while prayer in common helped others to cope with their mental anguish.

Faith inspired and mobilised people to do good and comforted many. There has been a growing awareness of the social harm caused when public worship and pastoral ministry are not available. The importance of bringing much needed love, hope and comfort and the social capital delivered by a vibrant faith commitment is now more widely recognised.

With the arrival of a vaccine and other developments, it is now possible to see beyond the pandemic. Yet its effects will be deep

and long-lasting. There is more hardship to come. For example, we have yet to see the worst ravages of unemployment or the damage done to the mental health of many...

The Church has always adopted a holistic approach to care of the sick, providing medical as well as pastoral and spiritual care to the weak. Today, it is the State who provides excellent medical care while the Church and other faiths provide spiritual and pastoral care. Chaplains ministering to the seriously sick and dying in hospitals ensure that the spiritual and pastoral needs of patients, their families and staff are met. Therefore, chaplains ought always to have access to those seeking their care.

The public outcry at reports that suggested our Care Sector, especially our care homes, was at risk, manifested a new sense of appreciation of our elderly brothers and sisters and a determination to ensure adequate support for the elderly at home or in residential care. This bore welcome witness to a keen social conscience that valued our senior citizens. We hope that parity of esteem for the Care Sector and the NHS would be a lasting positive legacy of this crisis.

Similarly, we need to have satisfactory protocols for treating or withholding treatment from patients, especially where resources are strained...

The lockdown forced a revaluation of some low paid and undervalued jobs, where care

workers, shop assistants, delivery drivers and others were hailed as key workers. This should not be forgotten and we trust that society will reassess what is a just remuneration for these key jobs.

We are saddened that many have lost their jobs, or face financial uncertainty, with many businesses struggling to exist. We hope that, as the Pandemic subsides, those positive developments acknowledged above will continue to underpin decision-making, especially for the poor, the unemployed and the marginalised...

The Pandemic has challenged this way of living. It has allowed space for cherishing family time and the environment of friendships and nature. The post-Pandemic recovery offers hope for a flourishing of more natural and humane lifestyles.

We gladly welcome the news of the approval of the first vaccines for the UK and we hope this will allow an early immunisation programme to protect our population and offer the prospect of some return to normal life.

We reassure our Catholic population that, in accordance with longstanding guidance from the Pontifical Academy for Life, it is ethical to take any of the C19 vaccines purchased by the UK at the present time, either because foetal cell lines have not been used in their development or because their sourcing is sufficiently remote.

While we affirm the ethical acceptability of taking these vaccines, we do not support bio-technological processes that develop products from abortion or research using these cell-lines. We hope that those with objections to such vaccines can be respected and offered alternatives ...

We urge governments to work to ensure C19 vaccines are made available equitably across the world, according to human need and not economic status.

The Pandemic has brought home to us the personal responsibility we all have to bear and lighten the burdens of our brothers and sisters. We hope that the Pandemic will have made us all more attentive to the suffering that routinely exists in our midst.

As Christians we are preparing to celebrate Christmas. This feast points us to the "great hope" which delivers us from the compulsion to be self-sufficient and the anguish that can follow when we fail. This hope is a person, whose hand is always stretched out towards us. It is Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God with us...

Let us not be afraid. The Lord is with us and can calm every storm and bring light to the darkness.

**+BISHOP HUGH GILBERT  
+ARCHBISHOP PHILIP TARTAGLIA  
+ARCHBISHOP LEO CUSHLEY  
+BISHOP JOSEPH TOAL**

**+BISHOP STEPHEN ROBSON  
+BISHOP JOHN KEENAN  
+BISHOP WILLIAM NOLAN  
+BISHOP BRIAN MCGEE**



# Promises promises! Advent readings are full of God's promises and good news



Fr Tom Kilbride

**AFTER a long and difficult year, we find ourselves, at long last, in the final month of 2020. I'm sure many of us will say "Good riddance!" when Hogmanay finally comes!**

It has been a year when many words and phrases we hardly knew before have become commonplace: "Covid", "lockdown", "social distancing", "working remotely", "streaming" and "Zooming" among others! Most of us will no doubt be hoping that 2021 will prove better than 2020!

In the Church's liturgy, of course, we have already moved on to new things: as we journey through the Advent season, we have already begun a new year, a new cycle in our readings for Mass.

We have begun "Year B" in the Lectionary – guided each Sunday for the next 12 months by the Gospel of Mark.

St Mark's Gospel will focus our attention on what it means to be disciples of Jesus and on how the Cross casts its long shadow over his ministry. It will show us that even if the Son of Man had to journey to the Cross, it was to be his path to glory and life – and that it is the same for those who follow him ... us!

That's not such a bad thing to remember as we look ahead, beyond Covid-19 and the restrictions and hardships of 2020: if we are faithful to Christ, if we take up the cross, he will bring us to a share in glory. His way will lead to better things.

The irony, however, is that for the next month or so we will hardly hear anything from the Gospel of Mark. We have passages on the



Lorenzo Lotto, *Madonna and Child with Saint Catherine and Saint James*, c. 1527

first two Sundays of Advent: the very end of Jesus's ministry before the Last Supper, and then from the very beginning of the his Gospel with the preaching of John the Baptist. But for the rest of Advent – and in fact right through Christmas – we hear much more from the three other Gospels, getting back to Mark again only at the very end of the Christmas season, on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

On Christmas Day itself, we hear from Matthew (Vigil Mass), Luke (Night and Dawn Masses) and John (Day Mass). Nothing from Mark's Gospel. Presumably, this is because it doesn't tell us any of the stories about Jesus's birth or early life. Sure, it tells us his mother's name was Mary and his father a carpenter and that he grew up in Nazareth but very little else. We have to look elsewhere for the familiar stories of Bethlehem, of a census, of angels and shepherds (Luke) or a star, Wise Men, and Herod (Matthew).

Instead, Mark dives straight into the action with ministry of John, the Baptism of Jesus and then Jesus' public ministry. That means that for the next few Sundays and feasts, since it doesn't have the birth or childhood stories of Jesus, Mark's Gospel acts as a kind of "bookend" for the Advent and Christmas cy-

cle this year. John the Baptist comes (2nd Sunday of Advent) promising the one who would come after him, "one more powerful than me" and, at the end of the season, we will hear those words over again, and then hear them fulfilled when Jesus comes and is baptized (Feast of the Baptism). In between those "bookends" are stories of promises made – to the people as a whole (Advent), to Mary (4th Sunday), to shepherds (Midnight Mass) and Simeon (Holy Family) – and of those promises kept (on Christmas Day and the Sundays thereafter). So, rather than two separate seasons, Advent and Christmas form one cycle reflecting on promise and fulfilment, on trust in promises made and celebration of promises kept.

That's probably what Advent is all about in fact. When we hear the readings from the prophets, especially those First Readings from Isaiah which make up the majority of the daily readings and some of the Sundays in the season, we are hearing a constant message of hope, a promise of better days to come.

The season of Advent is not just a pointer towards Christmas but a time for reminding ourselves of the hope we have for the future, based on the promises of God. That's also one reason

why we always begin Advent looking beyond the event of the first Christmas to the final coming of Jesus at the end of time: our faith is also a hope that God has us in his care into the future.

The prophet Isaiah constantly reminds his people of the great things God has done for them in their history – the freedom from slavery in Egypt prime among them – and, from that consoling memory, holds out a word of hope that God has good things yet in store for them. God has saved them before: he can do it again!

In a sense, our season of hope and promise is likewise built on the certain knowledge of the love God has shown in the past. It is not just a time of vague optimism or a time for wearing rose-tinted spectacles. Rather, God made promises, and he kept them.

Our celebration of Christmas, therefore, isn't just a reminder that God did something wonderful 2000 years ago. Rather, it speaks to us of what God has done for us in Jesus: he came to be with us and is with us still, leading us ever forward in grace and love. It is a reminder that when God makes promises, he always keeps them ...

That will happen in a number of ways over the next few weeks.

Firstly, if we look at our Advent readings (especially the weekday ones), we hear a lot from the Old Testament prophets. Theirs is a word of promise to a suffering people. Many of the prophecies

## Fr Tom will be our new guide to the scriptures

Fr Tom Kilbride, Rector of the Royal Scots College, will be *Flourish's* newest writer with a monthly column on the scriptures. Fr Tom is a native of St Matthew's, Bishopbriggs, where he was ordained in 1996, after seminary formation at Chesters College and Glasgow University and then the Pontifical Scots College in Rome. After a year at St Roch's in Royston, he returned to Rome to complete his studies in Scripture at the Pontifical Biblical Institute. He was then an assistant priest in St Andrew's Cathedral and Our Lady of Lourdes in Cardonald, before becoming Parish Priest of Our Lady of Good Counsel in Dennistoun in 2008. Having served also as Director of the Archdiocese's Religious Education Department, he has been Rector of the Royal Scots College in Salamanca since 2014, running the "propaedeutic course" or first stage of formation for priesthood.

of Isaiah, for example, come from a time when the Hebrew people were suffering, either in exile in Babylon, far from home, or afraid of it happening. They were afraid of loss or suffering the grief it had caused. They were in the thick of difficult times. Into those hard times, Isaiah comes with a word of hope and a promise that God will see his people through them to better days to come.

Then, when we reach the Christmas season, we hear each day from the First Letter of St John: "Something... that we have heard, and that we have seen with our own eyes". We hear each day from someone who saw it

for himself! In other words, until Christmas, our focus is on the promises God makes to us; after Christmas, our focus is on the promises God has kept – especially the Greatest Promise, of the Saviour, "God-With-Us".

Our Advent hope becomes our Christmas faith, and we celebrate both. In other words, our readings tell us, keep faith and hold firm, because better days are coming: we have his word for it!

Perhaps this message of the Advent and Christmas readings is one we need to hear again, especially among the stresses, anxieties and isolations of 2020!

## McFarlane



### 4th anniversary

Remembering with love always

**RACHEL MCFARLANE** (Quigley) a beloved wife of Hugh, loving mother to Gail, mother in law to John and proud Gran to Kieran and Rachel. Died on the 8th of December 2016 aged 82. Our lady of Lourdes pray for her. She will live in our hearts forever.

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### POEM OF THE MONTH

This is an excerpt, with some adaptation, from “Lord, I have time” by l’Abbé Michel Quoist published in 1954 in his book *Prayers of Life* which he wrote as young priest. It brought him huge success and 2,500,000 copies of the book have been sold throughout the world.

Men were walking and running.  
Everything was rushing, cars, lorries, the street, the whole town.

Men were rushing not to waste time. They were rushing after time. To catch up with time,  
to gain time.

The student... hasn’t time

The young married man... hasn’t time.

The grandparents... haven’t time.

The ill... haven’t time

So all men run after time, Lord. They pass through life running – hurried, jostled, overburdened, frantic and they never get there.

They haven’t time.

Lord, I have time,  
I have plenty of time,  
All the time that you give me.

### PRAYER OF THE MONTH

Let us Pray:

Come, Lord Jesus, come soon. In this time of your coming, support and console us who trust in your love. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



Robert Campin, *The Nativity*, about 1430. Image credit: Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0

Art of the month

# Take the time to be still

**WE are blessed if we manage to get to the beginning of October without the television and the commercials getting us in a frenzy about Christmas.**

BY MGR TOM MONAGHAN

Woe, betide you if you have not posted your cards by the middle of November... or earlier, if they have to go to Italy or America.

If you have not bought in food and wine by the beginning of December and have not all your Christmas presents bought and wrapped, then Christmas is going to be a disaster. You have run out of time. All is ruined.

At least it is if you live your life from too human a point of view.

The truth is that there is always enough time to do what God wants you to do as long as you put yourself completely into each moment that he offers you.

The Netherlandish painter Robert Campin, completed “The Nativity” about 1430 when he was 55 years old.

It is now housed in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Dijon, France.

There is a lot going on in the work. Apart from the Holy Family, there are five others plus four angels and four message-carrying ribbons. The animals seem to have caused some damage to the walls of the poor and humble stable, while in the background we can see the wealth and riches of the city and the lake.

Mary seems to be scarcely more than a girl and the little scrawny baby looks newly born, gasping for his first breaths. Having been a scrawny baby myself, I love this Child... my twin, born first, got all the good stuff!

The shepherds peer through the top half of the split door with wonder and awe just as we do when we see a mum with her new-born baby.

Joseph genuflects before the Child,

holding a lighted candle. The God-child has come into the world.

Mary, in virginal-white also kneels before her child, adoring her Son and Lord.

The baby lies on the earth of God's creation radiant with beams of gold but not yet wrapped in his swaddling clothes.

The woman showing her healed hand which had been burned and withered is thought to be Salome, the midwife's friend. The ribbon reads, “*Tangue puerum et sanabaris*” (touch the child and you shall be healed). The animals are facing away still to provide a manger and thus fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah, “The ox knows its owner, and the ass its master's crib.”

For a moment, time stands still. God took flesh and became man. Mary and Joseph know. The angels know. Even the animals know.

Do I?

# Rosary kids’ Christmas card outreach to Nazareth House

**CARING pupils from Our Lady of the Rosary, Cardonald, are making Christmas that bit brighter for their neighbours at nearby Nazareth House by sending them personalised cards and letters.**

Each child from Primary 5A, Primary 6A and Primary

BY BRIAN SWANSON

6B were provided with a list of first names and encouraged to send letters and handmade Christmas cards to ‘their’ resident many of whom are unable to receive visitors due to Covid restrictions.

The initiative is just one

of several Christmas charity projects being carried out at the school in the run up to the holidays.

Primary 6A have been making Countdown Clocks to help everyone count down the days until Christmas. They have been learning

about how SCIAF is working to support people during the pandemic and are sending the money they raise from the sale of the clocks to the charity.

Primary 4B are making Rudolph Baubles, Snowman Marshmallows, Festive

Movie Night Treat Bags and Santa's Hot Chocolate to raise money for the St Nicholas Care Fund.

Father David Wallace, parish priest of Our Lady of Lourdes and chaplain to the school said: “It's so heart-warming to see the different

and creative ways our young people are reaching out to those in need at such a challenging time Our schools are doing such an incredible job to make the best of an awful situation and we should all be very proud of the great efforts they're making.”



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# Reeta's generosity is recognised near and far

**ONE** of Glasgow's oldest and best known businesses has been revealed as the modest donors behind regular donations of communion dresses to families throughout the Archdiocese... and as far away as Africa.

For the past five years Reeta Fashions in the Gallowgate have quietly gifted around 250 First Communion dresses and accessories to parishes, many of whom then pass them on to deserving parishes not only in the Archdiocese but throughout Scotland and Africa.

First Communion throughout Scotland were paused because churches were closed due to Covid restrictions but in autumn they started to take place again although in much smaller groups and spread over a number of weeks.

Details of the company's generosity became public after a parishioner posted details on social media.

The Facebook post reads: "The dresses donated are

BY BRIAN SWANSON

all new and because of Reeta Fashions' generosity we have been able to help children all over Scotland and as far afield as Africa.

"Complimentary teddy bears were also given with the dresses to ensure no little girl feels left out because when a parent buys a dress from Reeta Fashions their child is always given a complimentary teddy.

"We are so very grateful to Reeta Fashions for their continued generosity and would like to thank Stewart Lang and all the staff at for their continued support. There kindness is overwhelming and I can speak for every parent/child when I say a huge thanks to Stewart and his team. They are in our thoughts and prayers."

Stewart, whose grandmother Reeta, founded the business 70 years ago in Maryhill and now co-owns it with his wife Sharan said: "We were approached by

a parishioner a few years ago asking if we would like to donate dresses and we were delighted to help. We get new stock all the time so rather than give it to charity shops we thought it was a great idea.

"It's also brilliant to know that the dresses will be used in other parishes as well and a great feeling to know that a communion dress donated from Glasgow will be worn by a little girl in Africa on her special day."

[www.franciscanvocations.org.uk](http://www.franciscanvocations.org.uk)

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News and views for FLOURISH:  
[flourish@rcag.org.uk](mailto:flourish@rcag.org.uk)

## Santa dash for Beatson

**WITH** a small donation you can buy and dedicate a Beatson Bauble and share positive thoughts this December.

Whether it's to remember a loved one, celebrate a life or the end of treatment, you can help us to say thanks and give hope. Beatson Cancer Charity is asking everyone who has been touched in some way by the care and support provided by the Beatson West of Scotland Cancer Centre to get involved.

A Beatson Bauble is available with a donation or by attending one of the charity's events from [www.beatsoncancercharity.org/bauble](http://www.beatsoncancercharity.org/bauble). A spokesperson for the Beatson said: "This year has been very difficult for many, but Christmas is a time when people rally together. It's a lovely way to support such a fantastic charity which means a lot to local people."

Meanwhile the Beatson Santa Dash is still able to be held. You can take part between December 12-13. Run, walk or cycle 5k close to home. Receive a Santa hat, pin badge and certificate. Full info from: [www.beatsoncancercharity.org](http://www.beatsoncancercharity.org)



**BEATSON CANCER CHARITY**

**Beatson Bauble Appeal**

Thank someone  
Dedicate and hang a bauble this year and let's help more cancer patients and their families across the West of Scotland and beyond.

Say thank you to someone special at:  
[beatsoncancercharity.org/bauble](http://beatsoncancercharity.org/bauble)

*We're with you*

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Thanks to  
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**I'M sure many people will know that popular children's song – accompanied by actions – head shoulders knees and toes (knees and toes), eyes, and ears, and mouth, and nose, head, shoulders, knees and toes (knees and toes).**

I was thinking that *Father Frank's Log* has been a bit like that at times. I've written about my feet, my back, my eyes, my ears, and even my prostate. Old age, as they say, doesn't come on its own!

This time it's my teeth that are the topic. On one of the very first days of lockdown, way back in March, I was heading out to the car to come into the church when, suddenly and unexpectedly, I could feel in my mouth, that a big chunk of filling had come out of one of my molars.

Normally, I would have called my dentist right away to have it seen to, but, with lockdown underway, that wasn't an option. So, for the past seven months I have been trying to nurse this tooth along, conscious of the big gaping hole that I could excavate with my tongue, very conscious of occasional pain and tenderness, and wondering what damage was being done.

Then, just last Thursday, I had a text from my dentist, informing me that dental examinations were resuming this week, and so I took the earliest appointment available. Unfortunately, the damage was done, and the tooth was beyond redemption.

# Advent lesson: don't delay putting things right in life



## Fr Frank's log

Fr Frank Keevins CP is Parish Priest of St Mungo's Townhead

I'm sure there is a moral lesson in there about decay, and postponing for too long those things in our lives that should have been put right much sooner but, in this instance, Covid-19 and lockdown had made that impossible.

Root canal treatment was ruled out; there wasn't enough tooth left to rebuild; leaving it and doing nothing would be too big a risk, and so, reluctantly, my dentist recommended extraction, and that's what will happen in a couple of weeks from now.

As Oor Wullie or the Broons would have said, "Help ma boab!". It's a long time since I had a tooth out and I'm not looking forward to it. Memories of the Broons extracting aching teeth by tying one end of a piece of string around the tooth, and the other end to a door handle, then slamming the door shut, crossed my mind as an option.

Needless to say, I have had

offers from Father Gareth, Father Antony and others, to get the pliers out and do a homer but, wisely I think, I have declined all such offers.

The last time I remember getting a tooth out was when I was still working in Olivetti in the early 1970s. The tooth had an abscess, very painful, so I phoned my dentist. However, no appointment was available for a couple of weeks and I was advised to make my way to the Dental Hospital and School in Sauchiehall Street.

My boss at the time told me to get going, and I vaguely remember filling in forms and waiting in a queue until I was eventually taken. Once again, extraction was the only option. I'm not too sure who actually carried out the surgery, but I do remember a number of students gathered around and observing.

It was a great relief to get that tooth out, but after-

wards I contracted an infection that required remedial treatment and antibiotics, with the pain for a time even worse than the toothache. So, as you can imagine, I am a little bit anxious. However, I have great trust in my dentist, and I'm sure all will be well. I will just need to learn to chew on the other side of my mouth.

Last month I received delegation from the Archbishop to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation on the children from St Mungo's and St Stephen's who were scheduled to receive the Sacrament last March, and who have now moved on to various secondary schools. For the same length of time that I had to wait to get my tooth examined, they have had to wait for their Confirmation.

Despite the Coronavirus restrictions again making the celebration very different from what would have expected and hoped for, at the end of the day, these young people will have received the fullness of the Holy Spirit for the living of their Christian lives, and it will be a privilege for me to confer that upon them.

As always, protect yourselves, protect your loved ones, protect others, and protect Christ in your lives.

## JERICHO †

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If you have good reason to believe God may be calling you to be a monk, write to:

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Scottish Charity No SC022611

# Government's cut in aid to the poorest is a scandal

**THE world continues to be ravaged by the coronavirus, climate change, hunger and extreme poverty and all of this prompts us to think deeply on who is our neighbour. And while I believe charity begins at home, it doesn't stop at our shores.**

Last month, the UK government announced a U-turn on a Conservative manifesto pledge to protect UK Aid spending, reneging on its legal obligation to spend 0.7% of the UK gross national income (GNI) on poorer countries.

The news comes soon after a recent warning from the World Bank that extreme poverty will rise in 2020 for the first time since 1998, with the coronavirus expected to push a further 115 million people into that category, undoing decades of progress to reduce poverty and hunger in some of the world's poorest coun-



## Alistair Dutton

Chief Executive, SCIAF

tries.

The government made its decision before a much-awaited Integrated Review is complete which was unduly hasty, and lacked due process, or proper consideration of our duty to poorer nations.

This abdication of our responsibilities undermines our reputation as a country that has been at the forefront of international aid and foreign affairs.

UK aid has been a lifeline for communities we work with who are blighted by war, hunger and climate change, and has been a source of stability for peo-

ple experiencing unimaginable levels of poverty.

Their lives have been made much worse by the onset of one of the biggest pandemics in history and we know the decision to cut yet more aid will push people already living on a knife edge further into hardship.

Every crisis hits the world's poorest people hardest.

This is not the time to turn our backs on extremely vulnerable nations. We can and must work as part of a global world community to tackle the hugely damaging effects of the major crises we are facing.



The Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, wants us to believe that slashing aid is necessary due to the cost of the pandemic. This is simply not true. This week the UK government has already announced plans to increase the defence budget by £16.5 billion, dwarfing the £4 bil-

lion savings by abandoning 0.7 per cent of UK's GNI commitment to international aid.

Were the defence budget only increased by £12.5 billion – an eye-watering sum in any year – this latest cut could have been avoided.

So don't be taken in by the

Chancellor's claim that we can't justify the aid budget. We can. But we're choosing not to.

As the host of COP26 and the G7 next year, the UK should have presented itself as a strong global leader, committed to tackling climate change, poverty eradication, disease and conflict. Instead, it's made the decision to abandon its aid commitment despite knowing that no one is safe from climate change, future pandemics and global instability unless we are all safe. This is short-sighted and hugely damaging.

I urge the UK government to rethink its decision to let down some of the most vulnerable people at this critical time. We have the tools to see past our shores and work for the common good and to face the global crises we are seeing as one human family.



# We believe in **giving back** to our local communities.

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