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Official Journal of the Archdiocese of Glasgow

February 2026

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Papal medal for SCIAF volunteer

A CHARITY worker and former teacher has been recognised by Pope Leo for her dedication to SCIAF and the Catholic Church.

Cath McGrath became a volunteer for SCIAF 20 years ago, after retiring as a French and German teacher. Her dedication to the charity has now earned her the prestigious Benemerenti Medal from the Pope himself.

Cath said: "I was surprised and delighted to learn that I was to receive the Benemerenti Medal. When Mark from SCIAF told me I started to cry. I didn't feel worthy of it as I was doing something I loved."

"I was presented with it by Bishop McGhee, who put me at ease straight away, in St Mungo's Church in Glasgow. I was very nervous but managed not to cry in front of everyone!"

During her 20 years with SCIAF Cath's work has mainly been in schools, where she put her many years of teaching experience to good use, spreading the word about SCIAF's work



overseas as well as the causes and effects of poverty.

Cath said: "I've volunteered for SCIAF for 20 years after retiring from teaching. I was in charge of charities in my school and two former head teachers joined SCIAF when they retired and this planted the seed for me."

"I have always enjoyed visiting schools and speaking to the pupilsso different from my teaching days. It's been wonderful learning about all the projects SCIAF is involved in and then imparting this knowledge to the pupils."

SCIAF's Mark Booker said: "Cath is a lovely person with a genuine heart for serving others. Her compassion is

clear to see through her actions. Never asking for reward her dedication is fully deserving of this recognition."

Bishop Brian McGee presented Cath with her medal. He said: "Nothing is too much for Cath and she is driven by a genuine concern and compassion. Her passion for justice is motivated by her faith and she sees her volunteering as a response to God's calling to look out for the most vulnerable."

Humble

"She is very humble and the thought of any form of 'credit' for what she has done is something she would never ask for. We do, however, feel that the Benemerenti medal is fitting of Cath's dedication to her exceptional service that impacts the local and global."

"Cath's friendship is invaluable to SCIAF and the staff love it when Cath comes into the office. She has an approachable manner, is always encouraging and is a vital part of the schools' team in particular. She is well-liked and her commitment is inspirational."

Archbishop warns of excessive strain on priests

A STARK warning about the ever-growing demands placed on parish clergy has been issued by Archbishop Nolan.

In a recent message the Archbishop thanked them for their service and support but urged them to make necessary changes to manage their schedule and look after their health.

He said: "Unfortunately, clergy workload continues to increase. Last year six priests stepped down as parish priests, mainly due to age or illness. In 2026 I fully expect that number to be at least four."

"Immigration restrictions mean that we are not able to bring in sufficient priests from abroad as replacements."

"With clergy numbers reducing and clergy health deteriorating we need to be open and honest with people about the need to reduce the number of Masses celebrated, to merge parishes and to close churches."

"While it is admirable to see the dedication of priests who, when they take unwell, soldier on through illness, it is not a sensible nor a



BY RONNIE CONVERY

healthy option. Please take care of your health."

The Archbishop also suggested changes to parish life which are already underway which could lift some of the strain off priests' shoulders.

He said: "There are parts of the clergy workload that can be eased by sharing them with others. I am

grateful to Fr David Wallace for offering training to laity for conducting a Baptism Preparation Course."

"Also on offer is training to laity to conduct those parts of the funeral rites that don't require a priest. We should find suitable lay people who can be trained to carry out these ministries and so share the workload of priests."

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Pope's prayer intentions announced

POPE Leo XIV has released his prayer intentions for 2027. For each month of that year, the Pope is inviting Catholics to pray for a specific intention, touching on both global challenges and issues within the life of the Church.

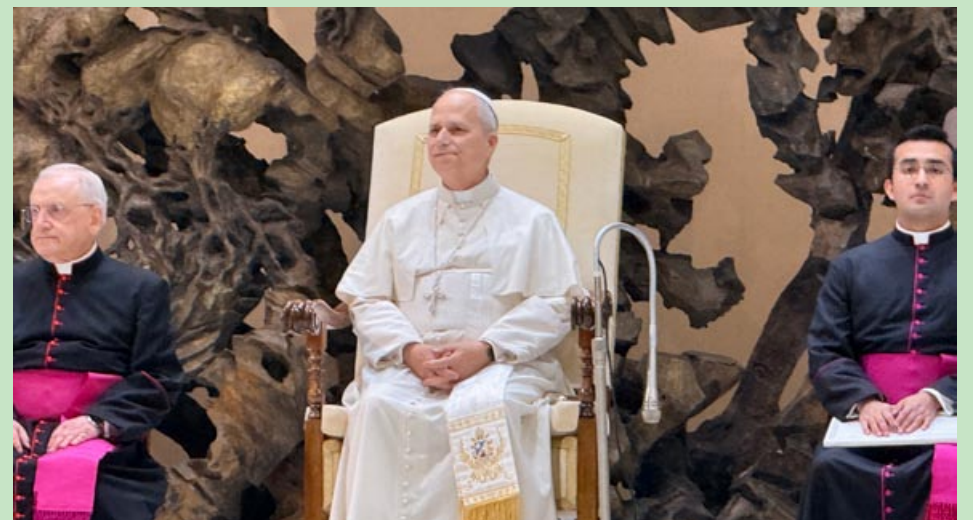
The 2027 prayer intentions are being entrusted to the 'Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network', which was received in audience by Pope Leo last month.

International Director of the Network, Fr Cristóbal Fones, said: "We live in a world which is running all the time, very fast." The job of the Prayer Network, he emphasised, is to speak to the need we all have for "deep connection with the Lord, with ourselves, with others."

The Pope's intentions for coming months are:

FEBRUARY

"That those who care for others might receive care. Let us pray that those who care for the holistic health of others might receive the



support they need, and that with patience, wisdom, and fortitude, they might open avenues of inner healing and hope."

MARCH

"That the dignity of human life might be respected. Let us pray that in a culture focused on productivity and instant results, we might be capable of discovering and appreciating the unique dignity of each person, both our own and

that of others."

APRIL

"That art might be a gift that humanises. Let us pray that art might be perceived as a true gift that humanises us, lifts up the spirit, and helps us contemplate God's beauty in creation."

MAY

"That there be job opportunities for everyone. Let us pray that technological development might open

dignified work opportunities, and that intergenerational collaboration might bring a future in which every person can put their talents at the service of the common good."

JUNE

"For the good use of artificial intelligence. Let us pray that artificial intelligence might always be developed to serve human dignity and that we might know how to use it wisely."

‘Even in moments of deep pain we are not alone’

Glasgow-based priest speaks after losing three brothers in fire tragedy in his native Nigeria

A GLASGOW priest whose three brothers died in a tower block blaze in his native Nigeria told mourners at their funeral: “It is still unbelievable, but I cannot question God.”

Father William Omatu, 44, assistant priest at St Helen's Langside, was preparing for Mass when he was given the devastating news that his brothers Stephen, 40, Casmir, 39 and Collins, 37 (right), were among eight victims who died after being trapped inside a 25-storey building in Lagos before it partially collapsed in a fire.

A fourth brother Camillus managed to escape.

As Father William, who arrived in the Archdiocese just over two years ago, prepared to fly home, shocked parishioners gathered at a Mass for the family celebrated by Archbishop Nolan who also announced a fund-raising appeal.

Within days £23,000 was donated for the much-loved

cleric with that figure expected to rise over the coming weeks.

Father Benneth Onyebuchukwu, parish priest at St Helen's, said: “The news received after the fire on Christmas Eve was truly devastating and heartbreaking.”

“Father William and his family are facing immense grief and sorrow and I ask people to please continue to keep him and his family in their prayers, as they begin to process and come to terms with this profound loss.”

Speaking at his brother's funeral, which took place in their home state of Anambra in south east Nigeria, about 350 miles from the capital Lagos, Father William who was one of the officiating priests said: “It is unbelievable that three of my young brothers, whom I was proud of, and who brought me joy whenever I saw them, are gone.”

BY BRIAN SWANSON

“It is like a dream – a nightmare.”

“But when I look at my family, I am strengthened, and when I see the love of our Church members, I am encouraged.”

“Keep praying for me. I am not strong; I am feeble. So I would ask you humbly to keep praying for me and all who died that day.”

It emerged that his businessmen brothers Stephen, 40, survived by his wife and three children, Casmir, 39, whose wife is pregnant and Collins, 37, who was single, perished when they tried to recover stock as fire swept through the tower block.

It is not yet known when Father William will return to the Archdiocese but in just two years he became a much loved figure particularly by parishioners at Our Lady of Lourdes, Cardonald and St Helen's, Langside, where he served as an assistant priest.

As news of the tragedy unfolded he received countless messages of support on social media both from parishioners who knew him well and others those who simply wanted to stand in faith with him.



Fr William's letter to parishioners

On behalf of the Omatu family, we wish to express our heartfelt gratitude to you all for your overwhelming kindness, generosity, and prayerful support following the tragic loss of our beloved brothers, Stephen, Casmir, and Collins.

At a time of profound shock and sorrow, your prayers, messages of condolence, and generous financial support have been a great source of comfort and strength to us. We have been deeply moved by the compassion and solidarity shown by the parish community of St Helen's, which has reminded us that even in moments of deep pain, we are not alone.

Your generosity has not only provided practical support but has also been a powerful sign of Christian love in action. We truly felt carried by your prayers and encouraged by your kindness during these very difficult days.

We are especially grateful for the pastoral care and leadership of Fr Benneth Onyebuchukwu, whose presence at the funeral Mass of our brothers in Ihiala, Anambra State, Nigeria, was a profound sign of solidarity and closeness.

We are also deeply thankful to the many parishioners who quietly and faithfully offered their support in so many ways. Your love has brought light into a dark moment of our lives.

Please be assured of our continued prayers for you and your families. May God, who is rich in mercy, reward you abundantly for your compassion, and may the souls of our dear brothers rest in the peace of Christ.

With sincere gratitude and prayers,
Fr William Omatu and family

Bookings open for annual Lourdes pilgrimage



BOOKINGS are now open for anyone wishing to join the Archdiocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes, taking place from 16th July to 23rd July 2026.

If you are interested in attending, or you have any questions or require further information, please contact the Pilgrimage Office at pilgrimage@rcag.org.uk.

Full details of travel options and hotels are online at joewalshstours.co.uk/tours/

[glasgow-pilgrimage-to-lourdes/](#)

The Glasgow Archdiocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes includes: Direct return flights from Glasgow to Lourdes; airport transfers and assistance between Lourdes Airport and your accommodation; seven nights' accommodation; Full Board and participation in all the spiritual and cultural events of the pilgrimage led by Archbishop Nolan, and the accompanying clergy.

Holy door closes... but not for long

JUST a few weeks after the end of the Holy Year when Pope Leo XIV closed the enormous bronze door of St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, first figures are emerging of the success of the 2025 Jubilee.

It is estimated that 33.5 million pilgrims passed through the Holy Door of St Peter's during the last 12 months seeking a plenary indulgence, not counting those who crossed through the Holy Doors of the other Roman Basilicas.

The pilgrims came from 185 countries. The entire world came to Rome, but Europe especially: 62% of the pilgrims came from European countries, with Italy ranking first in terms

BY RONNIE CONVERY

of number of participants. North America was the second continent most represented accounting for 17% of the pilgrims. The top five nations for pilgrim attendance were Italy, USA, Spain, Brazil and Poland.

The first Holy Door to be closed — and which will remain walled up until the next jubilee — was that of St Mary Major Basilica on Christmas Day.

Two days later, the closing ceremony at St John Lateran Basilica was presided over by the Cardinal Vicar of Rome, Baldassare Reina, and a day later the Holy Door of St Paul Outside the

Walls Basilica was closed by Cardinal Archpriest James Michael Harvey.

In Glasgow Archbishop Nolan celebrated a special Mass in St Andrew's Cathedral to mark the end of the Jubilee Year, after which the Jubilee Cross, which had been prominent in the sanctuary for the duration of the Holy Year, was removed.

But, as the old phrase goes, when one door closes another opens.

Reopened

And indeed the Holy Doors are slated to be reopened in 2033, when the Church celebrates the Extraordinary Holy Year of the Redemption — 2000 years since the death and resurrection of Jesus.



Sensory Masses open to all

IT is a Sunday afternoon and in St Andrew's Cathedral a small group of families and individuals are gathering, filling up the seats at the back.

There is someone there to welcome them and see that they have what they need. The priest arrives and sets up a simple altar before the font. The lights are dimmed, organ is silenced.

This is the monthly sensory Mass for people who are neuro diverse. That is, they are autistic or have a similar condition. For them, a parish Mass with music, singing, talking, smells and greater numbers of people can be physically painful.

Their families worry that their behaviour might disturb others and so they stay away and the place that they should occupy in the church is empty.

The sensory Mass is tailored to the needs of those parishioners.

People are welcome to call out or to move around if they need to and they are welcome to bring what

BY LISBETH RAESIDE
DIRECTOR OF SPRED

they need to feel at home in God's house.

Perhaps because a certain standard of participation is not imposed the sensory Mass is surprisingly quiet. Freed from the need to conform those present feel at home where they can praise God in their own way.

The sensory Mass is a work of the Archdiocesan Evangelisation initiative and a partnership between the Cathedral and SPRED. The cathedral administrator, Canon David Wallace and I had both been thinking about how better to serve parishioners with autism and similar needs.

Fr David had met a mum who had been unable to take her family to Mass and I was conscious of the difficulties faced by families whom she met through SPRED. Together we planned the sensory Mass which is now held every month in the Cathedral.

When I speak to fami-

lies about the sensory Mass they express a sense of relief that there is somewhere they can take their children where they will be accepted just as they are.

It's not just the children who benefit. The sensory Mass reaches whole families who otherwise would not be able to be at Mass.

Canon David said "Part of the work of evangelisation is recognising the needs of our communities and ensuring we leave no one behind. The sensory Mass creates a space to make sure families have a safe environment to come together to worship without fear of anxiety of children with additional support needs making noise or being distracted. It has created a beautiful little community of people who get together to celebrate securely."

■ For more information about the sensory Mass for you or someone you know please contact Lisbeth at the SPRED Centre 0141 770 5055 or email lisbeth.spred@btconnect.com



Picture: Imago Mundi

Flourish columnist John Allen dies

JOHN Allen, editor and founder of Crux, whose column 'Urbi et Orbi' was a favourite of Flourish readers, has died in Rome after a long illness.

The Vatican expert analysed and recounted the events of the last quarter century in the life of the Catholic Church.

He died after fighting cancer for four years, never giving up and continuing to work for as long as his strength allowed.

Many tributes have been paid to the American journalist whose fairness and love of the Church were greatly valued by colleagues and readers alike.

The Vatican's Editorial Director Andrea Tornielli said: "In every article, John combined rigour and careful attention to sources with interpretive frameworks, analysis, and context, and he insisted



BY RONNIE CONVERY

on using quotations 'on the record,' always accompanied by full names.

"Another defining feature of his work was that he never took anything for granted and therefore never wrote only for insiders: he knew how to speak to his audience—not composed solely of Catholics, nor only of believers.

"He had the joy of seeing elected as Successor of

Peter the first American in the history of the Catholic Church, whom he knew and spent time with as well, thanks also to Elise, a Vatican correspondent whom he married six years ago and the author of a biography of Leo XIV, and who cared for him during this difficult period of illness."

Unique

Flourish Editor Ronnie Convery said: "John was almost unique in offering insight into the workings of the Vatican. His articles were meticulously researched and free from gossip and polemics. He was the perfect antidote to the culture wars which have arisen in recent years over Church affairs. He will be greatly missed, especially by his family, but also by readers who appreciated his work around the world."

Pope announces Franciscan Jubilee



POPE Leo XIV has proclaimed a Franciscan Holy Year to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the saint's death.

And for the first time in history, later this month the mortal remains of Saint Francis will be placed on public display.

From 22 February to 22 March 2026, pilgrims from around the world will be able to venerate the remains at the Basilica of Saint Francis in Assisi (above), where he is buried.

BY **RONNIE CONVERY**

The unprecedented event forms part of the Jubilee celebrations honoring the saint whose witness of poverty, peace, fraternity, and love for creation continues to inspire millions.

With the approval of the Vatican, the remains will be moved from his tomb, located in the crypt of the Franciscan Basilica, and placed at the foot of the papal altar in the lower church to allow the faithful time for prayer

and reflection.

The initiative has achieved an extraordinary milestone already with 250,000 reservations from pilgrims from every corner of the world.

To mark the anniversary of St Francis, Pope Leo XIV also addressed a letter to the Franciscan order in which he emphasised that "in this era, marked by so many seemingly endless wars, by internal and social divisions that create distrust and fear, he continues to speak. Not because he offers technical

solutions, but because his life points to the authentic source of peace."

During the year, which will run until January 2027, a special indulgence will be available under the usual conditions by making a pilgrimage to any Franciscan church or place of worship dedicated to St Francis anywhere in the world.

■ **For details of the celebrations and how to visit the relics see <https://sanfrancescovive.org/en/home/>**

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Your cathedral needs you!



Choir opens doors to new voices

ST Andrew's Cathedral is looking for new members to join the Cathedral Choir.

With only a few weeks until the start of Lent, this is a great time to join as they embark on the rehearsal schedule for this term.

Music will include, Cantique de Jean Racine,

Faure, Allegri's Miserere, Mozart's Laudate Dominum and a range of hymns and liturgical music for Lent and Eastertide.

Vacancies

The choir has vacancies in all four sections and whilst previous choral experience is a bonus, it is not essential nor is the

ability to read music.

The principal attributes are that you can sing and can commit to rehearsals on a Thursday evening at 7pm and be available to sing at the 12.00 Mass on a Sunday.

■ **Interested?... please email desmclean1960@gmail.com for more info.**

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Stella Maris lifeline for Latvian sailor facing heart transplant far from home

A STELLA Maris chaplain has revealed how a heart transplant in Glasgow saved the life of a Latvian sailor who took seriously ill 2000 miles from home.

Deacon Joe O'Donnell, the charity's senior port chaplain for Scotland, was alerted when Renars Zalums, 44, was flown to hospital with severe chest pains after collapsing on board the Irish ferry at Cairnryan where he has worked for the past 14 years.

Now back home in Latvia with his wife and two young

BY BRIAN SWANSON children, having made a full recovery, Renars said: "Surgeons and Stella Maris gave me my life back – I cannot find the words to thank them enough."

The sailor spent six months in hospital with Deacon Joe and his colleague Robert King, the regional port chaplain for the Clyde, at his bedside every day, providing him with pastoral and practical support.

But it became clear only a transplant could save him and because they needed his

wife's Jelena's consent and her remote location made contact difficult, Deacon Joe stood in as next of kin ready to sign consent forms when a donor was found.

Remarkably one was found within just five days, giving Deacon Joe time to arrange for Jelena to fly over from Latvia to be with her husband in the hospital for several weeks, giving him much-needed family support at a time of uncertainty.

Renars was declared well enough to be reunited with

his family shortly before Christmas.

Although no decision has been taken yet he plans to return to his old job in Scotland later this year.

Deacon Joe said: "Being able to help Renars and family was one of the most gratifying things I have ever done as a Stella Maris chaplain, and I knew he is very grateful."

"But the real heroes are the staff at the Golden Jubilee and of course the donor – we will keep them all in our prayers."

Parliamentary praise for Fr John's big milestone – 40 years of priesthood

THERE was one surprise after another when Father John McGinley, parish priest of St Mary's, Duntocher, celebrated 40 years of priesthood with a Mass of Thanksgiving at the church where he was ordained.

Over 200 parishioners, fellow priests, family and friends joined him in St Stephen's Dalmeir for the Mass which Archbishop Nolan concelebrated.

And afterwards he was delighted to discover that not only had his family arranged a framed Papal blessing to be presented to him, but that West Dunbartonshire Labour MP Douglas McAllister had submitted an Early Day motion to the Westminster Parliament praising his achievements.

It stated that "This House congratulates Father John McGinley on the occasion of the Ordination Jubilee marking the 40th anniversary of his ordination... commends his work over these years across a number of parishes in the Archdiocese of Glasgow... acknowledges and thanks him for his outstanding service to the church and community; and wishes Father John McGinley every success as he continues to serve for many more years to come."

And at the end the evening guests showed their appre-



ciation to a much-loved parish priest by raising £1500 for St Margaret's Hospice, Clydebank.

"I always make a point of coming back to St Stephen's at significant anniversaries, so it was wonderful to be among friends again for my 40th anniversary," said Fr John.

"It was lovely to be sur-

BY BRIAN SWANSON

rounded by the Archbishop, priests and by family and friends spanning the many decades of parishes where I have served, including my present parishioners.

"I was especially touched to receive a Papal blessing from Pope Leo, and com-

mendations of congratulations from our local MP and MSP.

"Many thanks to all who raised money for St Margaret's Hospice."

"The last 40 years have been a great experience of priestly life with greater challenges today than in the past. It has truly been a life worth living."

St Aloysius' to host Australian athletes for Games

A GLASGOW Catholic school is to play a leading role in this summer's Commonwealth Games to be held in the city in late July.

In the lead-up to – and during – the Games, the Australian Commonwealth Games Team will be using St Aloysius' College as their training base.

College Principal, Séamus Scorgie and Head of PE and Sport, Susan McGrenaghan, recently met with senior representa-

tives from Commonwealth Games Australia to confirm the exciting partnership scheduled for the summer.

This agreement reflects the quality of St Aloysius' facilities and the strength of the relationships they continue to build on an international stage.

It will also offer a unique opportunity for pupils to watch elite athletes train and to engage directly with members of the Australian team.

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Former Glasgow student's dying wish to become a monk fulfilled

Abbot flies in from Italy to receive Aidan's final vows

A FORMER student of Glasgow University, whose formation took place in the Catholic Chaplaincy has had his dying wish to become a monk fulfilled.

Aidan Cook had first tried his vocation with the Benedictine monks of Norcia in Italy but found himself unable to continue at the time. He went to Pluscarden, near Elgin in 2018 to try his vocation there. Although this also was not to be his path, he remained thereafter in close touch with the Pluscarden community and was a regular guest.

Aidan then spent time living as a single lay man at his home at Crieff in Perthshire. After a cancer diagnosis, he went through chemotherapy, which at first seemed successful. But then the cancer became very aggressive and widespread, and he was advised that further treatment was pointless.

Vows

On Tuesday 4th November last year, at Aidan's request, Abbot Benedict Nivakoff and Br Peter travelled from Norcia in Italy to receive his solemn vows as a Benedictine monk. He managed to go home to nearby Crieff for the ceremony, although by then he could not stand without assistance.

He took the name he had had while at Norcia, Brother John. His life as a monk was



BY RONNIE CONVERY

to last just three weeks.

During that time, several Pluscarden monks travelled to see him, and to offer Mass at his bedside. They recalled that this was "an edifying and beautiful experience, because Br John/Aidan was found to be completely happy, and at peace: strong in faith and hope; quite without fear, and without sadness or anger; deeply grateful for the love and support of his family and friends, for the wonderful medical care he received, and for the sacramental and pastoral ministrations of the Church."

He died on Tuesday 25th November 2025, aged just 38.

He asked to be buried

at Pluscarden, and for his friends from the Confraternity of St. Benedict to be allowed to serve the liturgy. That request being granted, he had a full monastic funeral.

Knowledge that he would be buried in the monastery grounds gave Aidan great consolation in his final days. As he said: "I will be laid to rest in a place I love, where I have found peace, and where I will be surrounded by the prayers of the brethren."

The abbey church was packed for the funeral, with large numbers of young families with small children being present. The nine servers were all former members with Aidan of Glasgow University's Catholic Society, from Turnbull Hall.



Saint Andrew's Metropolitan Cathedral, Glasgow

Saint Patrick's Day Mass



Saturday 14th March 2026 · 10am

Celebrant: Archbishop William Nolan

Please come early. You will be greeted by an Irish piper, followed by traditional music from St. James the Great Céili Band. Cantor for the Mass is Clare O'Neill.

Cross at centre of Winter Olympics



THIS month's Winter Olympics in Milan and Cortina in northern Italy will be accompanied by the presence of a special Cross for athletes and spectators.

The Olympic Cross was welcomed into the Basilica of San Babila in the heart of Milan during Mass on January 29.

The Cross is made of 15 pieces of wood from different parts of the world—including the Holy Land, China, Russia, and Africa—and assembled into a single wooden symbol.

This choice is no coincidence: the fifteen pieces recall the international nature of Olympic sport, making the Cross a symbol not only of unity, but of universal diversity and brotherhood.

The Cross was created by artist Jon Cornwall for the 2012 Olympic Games; since then, it has been present at every edition of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, both summer and winter. In 2013, it was blessed by Pope Francis during World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro.

Honours where honours are due



Flourish focus on two Glasgow Catholics who were recently honoured by the King for their selfless commitment

BY BRIAN SWANSON



Laurence's care for the underdog

A DEVOUT Catholic who put his faith into action for the past 35 years as a volunteer with the Legion of Mary Wayside Club in Glasgow has been awarded an MBE in the Honours List for services to the community.

Lawrence McGarry, 62, a parishioner of St Ninian's and the Holy Family Kirkintilloch, is one of a dedicated team of volunteers at the charity's Midland Street premises who offer food, faith and friendship to the lonely, the marginalised and the displaced.

Lawrence, a plant manager with a large construction company, said: "I have to be honest and say I've never been a fan of the honours system but while it may be my name on the citation I accepted this award on be-

half of so many people who have shaped, supported, and inspired me throughout my life.

"I hope this recognition brings greater awareness to the vital work carried out at the Wayside 365 days a year.

"Ours is a work that continues without mainstream funding or employed staff.

We are sustained only by the generosity, compassion and voluntary spirit of those who give their time to help their fellow citizens.

Volunteers

"This honour is shared with all the incredible people I have had the privilege of knowing through the club: our service users, our dedicated volunteers, and my fellow members of the Legion of Mary in the Glasgow area who run the club

with unwavering commitment.

"My belief in God and the practice of my Catholic faith have always been central to my life, and it was this faith that first led me to the Wayside Club and I will be forever grateful for that for that calling."

Founded in Dublin in 1921 by Frank Duff, a Catholic lawman who dedicated his life to caring for the poor, the Legion of Mary now has 200 centres worldwide and have been a presence in Glasgow for almost a century.

■ **To learn more about the Wayside Club, how to donate, or become a volunteer, email waysideglasgow@gmail.com or search Wayside Club Glasgow in your browser.**

Lady Rita's a champion of justice

A TRAILBLAZING female Catholic judge who was dismissed by male colleagues at the start of her legal career as 'a wee lassie' has been made Commander of the British Empire in the Honours List for services to law, charity and education in Scotland.

She told *Flourish*: "I am overwhelmed and humbled by the reaction to this reward and the congratulations I have received from many people really is quite incredible.

"When I first saw the envelope from the Palace, I was convinced it was a scam but once I realised it was genuine, I burst into tears thinking that my parents would be so proud."

Lady Rae, 75, was inspired to become a lawyer by her maternal grandfather, a

noted advocate and anti-fascist from Naples who devoted his life to opposing Mussolini before the Second World War.

Although she never met her grandfather, his inspiration propelled her to the heights of the Scottish legal profession and to this day his 1899 law degree from the University of Naples sits alongside her own on the wall of her study.

Partner

After graduating with a law degree from Edinburgh University in 1972 she joined Ross Harper and Murphy, then one of Scotland's largest legal firms, and by the age of 26 had become a partner and was running its criminal department.

She was called to the bar in 1982, one of just 13 female

advocates in Scotland at the time, appointed sheriff in 1997 and a judge of the Supreme Courts in 2014.

In 2019 she was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Laws from the University of Glasgow in recognition of her contribution to Scots law and retired from the bench a year later.

In 2021 she was appointed the first working female rector in the history of Glasgow University.

Lady Rita has a lengthy record of service to the Church. A former Director of *Flourish*, she was appointed the first Chair of the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency in 2021, a position she still holds.

She is also Vice Chair of St Margaret's Children and Family Care Society based in Glasgow.

Final curtain falls on Fernhill School

A MUCH-LOVED school founded by the Sisters of Notre Dame back in the 1950s is to close its doors for the last time later this year.

Fernhill School traces its roots back to 1953 when it was established in the Fernhill area of Rutherglen by the Sisters.

In 1971, the original primary school was announced for closure. In response, a committee of parents formed to keep the school open. As a result of that effort, the present Fernhill School opened in August

BY RONNIE CONVERY

1972 as an independent Catholic day school.

Now Scotland's only other independent Catholic fee-paying school has stepped in with an initiative aimed at offering continuity to pupils and their families.

A joint statement from both schools said: "Fernhill School's Trustees and St Aloysius' College, Glasgow have been in confidential discussions to secure the best possible outcome for pupils, families, and staff in the Fernhill community, and to protect the wider fu-

ture of independent Catholic education in Scotland and the Fernhill legacy.

"Subject to completion of the necessary statutory and regulatory steps and in a spirit of care and responsibility, the Trustees have agreed with St Aloysius' College a structured pathway to ensure certainty and stability.

"Both communities are committed to honouring Fernhill's heritage in a visible and lasting way, including the preservation of Fernhill's traditions and appropriate recognition of its

history and achievements within the life of St Aloysius' College."

Professor David Hillier, Chair of St Aloysius' governing body said: "This is a genuinely hopeful and forward-looking moment. By working together, we can build a strong, thriving community, while protecting what matters most: excellent schooling, outstanding pastoral care, a clear sense of faith and belonging, while honouring Fernhill's traditions, history and achievements in a visible, lasting way."



Angela's Jubilee legacy at Castlemilk



Pictures by Paul McSherry

THE Jubilee Year may have ended with the Pope closing the Holy Door in Rome, but at one Glasgow secondary school its message will be remembered in a special way.

A beautiful Jubilee Cross of Hope, made up of more than 600 small wooden blocks, was blessed by Archbishop Nolan at a special

Mass in the joint campus of St Margaret Mary's and St Oswald's in Castlemilk.

Each block was designed by a pupil or member of the school community and lovingly fitted together to build the huge two-metre-high cross.

On the building blocks pupils wrote or designed something or some person

who was a source of hope to them – the theme of the Jubilee.

The top word to appear on the blocks was 'family' followed by 'mum'.

Archbishop Nolan signed his own block which was inserted into the cross just before it was blessed.

In his sermon he paid tribute to the pupils and staff



for the initiative and urged them always to cultivate the virtue of hope, encouraging them to seek out moments of silence every day when they could be alone with God and find new hope in their daily lives.

The idea for the Jubilee Cross of Hope came from the school's Head of Science, Mrs Angela Deighan

who retired at Christmas.

To mark her many years of service at the school and her commitment to countless school projects in her own time the Archbishop presented a very surprised Mrs Deighan with the Diocesan medal.

She said: "I was overwhelmed when the Archbishop presented me with

the medal. I only found out shortly before and so I was so glad that my dad and my daughter were able to come along to the Mass and share the moment.

"It is such a privilege to work with so many wonderful young people and colleagues and I will miss them greatly when I retire."

St Al's announces wider access plan



ST Aloysius' College has introduced a new scholarship programme which will broaden access for new students.

The 'Ignatian Academic Excellence Scholarship' is aimed at pupils who show both intellectual ability and strong character values such as integrity, compassion, and purpose.

Reduction

With a reduction of up to 50 per cent of annual fees for successful applicants, the scholarship will offer new opportunities to families who could not otherwise afford the fees. The scholar-

ship is open to S1 and S2 applicants and it runs up to S6.

The initiative is in addition to the existing Bursary Fund which offers a number of places with varying degrees of financial assistance.

The current academic year at St Aloysius' has seen the appointment of a new head, Séamus Scorgie, an Australian with strong Scottish links, having spent part of his childhood here.

Mr Scorgie was previously Acting Principal of De La Salle College in Melbourne and was educated by the Jesuits at Xavier College also in the city.

"The Ignatian Academic

Excellence Scholarships are designed to broaden access to a St Aloysius' education for students who have the academic ability and motivation to thrive here. Grounded in our Jesuit tradition, they recognise intellectual promise and a genuine commitment to learning, and they support young people who will both benefit from and enrich the life of the College," said Mr Scorgie.

The first intake of scholarship pupils will take place in August 2026 with applications for the 2027 intake opening towards the end of the year.

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Bringing hope to troubled youth

FLOURISH special report

THE fruit of decades of the Church's care for young people facing difficult circumstances, St Mary's Kenmure is a secure residential care centre in Bishopbriggs for children sentenced by the Courts and referred from Children's Hearings.

As part of CORA Foundation – a body of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland – the centre provides a vital lifeline to vulnerable children, some of whom have committed serious crimes, when they have hit rock bottom.

The centre's highly trained and professional staff ensure the facility is safe and secure, but also provides a strong focus on the development and wellbeing of those in its care.

Homing a maximum of 24 children at any one time, the staff of St Mary's – including teachers, therapists, care staff and other specialists – provide secure care 24 hours a day.

The centre's Director, John Ryan (right), joined St Mary's Kenmure 18 months ago and following a poor report by the Care Inspectorate in the first three months of his time, the centre's dedicated team has been making consistent improvements since. John has worked in social care with children for four decades



and believes St Mary's Kenmure is a special place.

"Something special happens behind these walls – our young people, their families, our staff and community come together to be part of stories of hope", says John.

Liberty

"Depriving a child of their liberty is one of the most serious decisions society can make, and it is vital that any service providing care for these young people does so with compassion, expertise, and purpose.

"I've been privileged to see first-hand the lifeline that St Mary's Kenmure provides for children and their families, especially at a time that they need it most."

Many of the children



and their families are from very disadvantaged backgrounds, their lives often blighted by poverty, alcohol, drugs, trauma and poor

mental health.

As well as providing secure care, there's a deeper level to the centre's work which people might not see

or appreciate. St Mary's counsellors and psychologists work to help the children understand much more about themselves, what they have done, and why they are living in the centre.

Even though most children only stay at the centre for three to twelve months, the aim is to help them progress mentally and emotionally. This is a vital part of the lifeline St Mary's offers as it helps the children develop sufficiently so they can ideally be moved to a more open residential environment, and gain the skills they need to cope with life after care.

As well as looking at the deep emotional issues affecting those who are sent to St Mary's, the centre provides practical support through education. There's a school onsite, with classes covering the full Scottish curriculum so the children can gain qualifications and learn new skills to help them lead more responsible and productive lives when they leave.

"We have school open days twice a year," shares John, "and it's amazing to see the children's parents sitting in the audience bursting with pride when their child's

name is called out inviting them up to receive an award for their academic achievements. Such happy milestones are often a first for many of our children and their families.

"What also impresses me is the commitment of our staff who work with the children. As well as looking after them professionally, they care deeply for them as children, when many others might have already given up.

"Think about that – giving up on children at a time when they need the most love and understanding. It should never happen."

The mission of the Church – to forgive those who have trespassed and care for the vulnerable – is at the core of St Mary's Kenmure work.

"Our values are at the heart of what we do – providing a nurturing experience, stability and connection," concludes John. "It really is a place where real people are doing real things that build warm, loving and compassionate relationships which we all know we all need to life well and thrive."

■ **For more information visit www.stmaryskenmure.org.uk**

Timeline: two centuries of Church care

St Mary's Kenmure has its roots in the mid-19th-century Catholic charitable and educational work in Glasgow.

During the 1830s, in the aftermath of a cholera epidemic, the Sisters of Mercy founded an orphan home in the city's east end to care for destitute Catholic children and provide religious instruction, reflecting the Church's response to urban poverty and the rapidly growing Irish Catholic population in Glasgow at that time.

By the late 1800s this institution expanded into a Certified Industrial School at Abercromby Street, offering training and care for children committed by the courts alongside orphans – part of a wider network of Catholic industrial and reform schools supported

by the Archdiocese of Glasgow.

As overcrowding and urban conditions worsened, a new site was acquired on the Kenmure Estate in Bishopbriggs at the turn of the 20th century, and in 1905 the boys' school moved there.

In 1916, at the invitation of Archbishop Maguire of Glasgow (right), the De La Salle Brothers assumed responsibility for the school's administration, embedding it more deeply within Catholic educational mission in Scotland.

Over the following decades the institution evolved in response to social reforms, eventually becoming known simply as St Mary's Kenmure, continuing its legacy of providing care and education into the modern era.



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‘Hearing from parents who have lost a child to conflict and still find a way to forgive, offers a powerful witness to the possibility of peace and reconciliation.. Few experiences are more devastating. When such a mother or father pleads for an end to violence the world must listen and act’



Searching for hope amid the trauma

Archbishop's visit to the Holy Land – where horror and hope co-exist

ARCHBISHOP Nolan has spoken of his emotional return to the Holy Land following the ceasefire at the end of last year.

Glasgow's Catholic leader was part of a delegation of bishops from round the world who took part in a fact finding and solidarity mission last month, visiting communities living with the tensions and hardships of the ongoing tensions in the area.

The theme for the visit, inspired by the Church's recent Jubilee Year, was: 'A Land of Promise: Encounter and Dialogue with People of Hope'.

The Archbishop said: "What inspires me whenever I come are the people that I meet who are so engaged in justice and peace and who continually point out the humanity in the

other side and seek justice. Not only are they brave, they're persistent, and they keep at it, year in and year out. So that really inspires me."

Reflecting on some of the changes that he has seen in his visits to the Holy Land over the past decade, Archbishop Nolan noted the undeniable worsening of the political situation.

Pain

"The situation always get worse. We're now in a situation where after years of conflict and because of the recent wars, everyone is traumatised – so traumatised that they feel their own pain, but they're not able to even see the pain in the other side.

"We'll never make any peace or progress with peace until people start to

other side and seek justice.

WORDS **RONNIE CONVERY**
PICTURES **MAZUR/CBCEW.ORG.UK**

appreciate that the other side is hurting as well and recognise the humanity of the other side.

"Over these years the international community has been promoting a two-state solution. But now it's pretty obvious that the Israeli Government doesn't want a two state solution so that leaves us in a big dilemma. If there is no two-state solution what is the solution?"

"The basic underlying problem is the occupation. The Palestinians are living under military occupation. Unless we recognize that there are two peoples – Israeli and Palestinians – who both have the right to live in this land, then peace is still a long way off."

The Archbishop paid

tribute to religious sisters working in the traumatised territories. "They are doing so much work in caring for people. Providing care and education, looking after disabled people – working quietly in the background for the wider community."

But he urged people never to give up hope.

"I was very encouraged by our meeting with the Patriarch, Cardinal Pizzaballa and his predecessor. They expressed great hope and reminded us that we have to put our trust in God. Despite the difficulties the Church presence is everywhere. The Church is a great instrument here in bringing communities together.

"There is hope because

people want peace – no matter what side they are on. But until they start trusting each other and recognising each other's humanity there will be no peace."

Archbishop Nolan was joined by colleagues from England and Wales, Italy, Germany, the Nordic countries, Ireland, France, the United States, Scotland, Canada, and Spain and representatives of Catholic organisations including Justice & Peace Scotland's Anne-Marie Clements.

Their busy programme included a visit to the Comboni Sisters to see their work among Bedouin communities; a meeting with the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem and an online meeting with Fr Gabriel Romanelli, who visited Glasgow – the parish priest

serving the small Catholic community in Gaza.

Further meetings took place with Rabbis for Human Rights, the John Paul II Foundation, which focuses on human and community advancement, the Ephpheta Paul VI Institute in Bethlehem, which provides rehabilitation and education for deaf children, and the Taybeh Elderly Home.

The delegation also met a joint Israeli-Palestinian organisation of more than 800 bereaved families, all of whom have lost an immediate family member to the ongoing conflict.

The bishops celebrated Mass with the parishioners of Christ the Redeemer in Taybeh, spending the day in the village to listen, to share life, and to hear directly of the challenges faced by its people.



Patriarch's plea: Let pilgrims return to the land of Jesus

PILGRIMS should feel safe returning to the Holy Land, according to Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem.

"The Holy Land is the fifth Gospel. I also like to call it a kind of eighth sacrament, because it allows you to experience an encounter with Jesus, physically, that you can touch," said the cardinal.

While the Church leader acknowledged that a pilgrimage to the Holy Land is absolutely not required for one to be a "good Christian," he said a person who visits the Holy Land will see their faith become "stronger and more concrete."

"I encourage everyone to come to the Holy Land, to have this wonderful experience of encounter with Jesus Christ and his humanity," he said.

These pilgrimages, Car-

dinal Pizzaballa added, are "absolutely safe" now that the ceasefire is in effect and major conflicts have ended.

Since the start of the Gaza War on October 7, 2023, the pilgrimage industry in the Holy Land has largely collapsed, to the detriment of both the Israeli and Palestinian economies.

In 2024, the Israeli Ministry of Tourism reported the foreign tourism sector lost 4.7 billion dollars since the previous year.

Archbishop Nolan backed the Patriarch in his call for a return to pilgrimages.

He said: "It is safe to come to the Holy Land now. Come as a pilgrim also because this is where we Christians come from! This is where the Church began. The land of Jesus is our land, so come and visit it."

'The Holy Land cries out for our prayers'

Final declaration of international bishops' delegation

OUR pilgrimage was to a Land where people are suffering trauma. We began with a visit to Bedouin communities living on the margins of society in the Occupied West Bank.

They shared their experiences of a life on the periphery, being observed but often not encountered, their movement heavily restricted by rapidly expanding settlements encircling them on the surrounding hills.

We heard stories about Israeli settler attacks and their continual violence and intimidation, theft of livestock and demolition of property, leaving many unable to sleep at night for fear of further violence.

Struggles

When we asked them who sees their struggles and their cry to live in peace with their neighbours, they replied: "Nobody sees us."

Our journey continued with Mass in the only completely Christian town in Palestine. They, too, told us of their suffering: endless

attacks from extremist settlers, uprooting of their olive trees, the seizure of their land and intimidatory acts that make their daily life unbearable, driving many into mass emigration.

In the twelve months since our last visit, the Land of Promise is being diminished and challenged. Gaza remains a catastrophic humanitarian crisis. The people of the West Bank we encountered are demoralised and fearful.

The courageous Israeli voices which speak out for human and civil rights are increasingly threatened; advocating for marginalised voices is a costly solidarity. We fear that soon, they too will be silenced.

As Christians, it is our calling and duty to give a voice to the voiceless, and to bear witness to their dignity, so that the world may know their suffering and be moved to advocate for justice and compassion.

The settlements in the West Bank, illegal under international law, continue to



expand by commandeering the land of others. The universality of human rights applies to all without exception. Instead, it is relentlessly replaced by a system where dignity and protection depend on one's civil status.

We affirm Israel's right to exist and for Israelis to live in peace and security; equally, we call for these same rights to be upheld for all those rooted in this land. We hope that efforts for peace will prevail over violence, and that there will be no more acts of terrorism and war. We also urge our governments to exert pressure on Israel to uphold the rules-based international order and to revive meaningful negotiations toward

a two-state solution for the benefit and security of all.

We were deeply moved by the faith and steadfastness of local Christians and also by people of other faiths who work to sustain the hope of their communities. They remind us that it is our shared vocation to be "salt of the earth" and "light of the world" and to strive for peaceful coexistence and security across the Holy Land.

We also witnessed the courage of those Jewish and

Palestinian voices who, despite immense challenges and their own trauma, continue to advocate for justice, dialogue and reconciliation.

Hearing from parents who have lost a child to conflict and can still find a way to forgive, offers a powerful witness to the possibility of peace and reconciliation. Few experiences are more devastating. When such a mother or father pleads for an end to violence, the world must listen – and act.

Suffering

The people of the Holy Land cry out for our help and prayers; they long for an end to their suffering. Stand with them. Recognise their plea for dignity. Help foster genuine dialogue between communities. Heed the call of Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, to come on pilgrimage as a sign of our love, support and solidarity with them.

As we leave this Land, we do so with our hearts full of compassion for those who are suffering and inspired by those who, by their pursuit of justice, keep the hope of peace alive.

Our Lady Queen of Palestine and of all the Holy Land, pray for us.



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Uni's anniversary year recalls Papal foundation

ARCHBISHOP Nolan presided at a special Mass in Glasgow University's Memorial Chapel at the opening of a special year of celebrations at the west end campus.

This year marks the Uni's 575th anniversary and a series of special events are planned recalling its origins.

The University of Glasgow was founded by Papal Bull in January 1451, following a petition to the Pope by King James II of Scotland.

William Turnbull, Bishop of Glasgow, was instrumental in securing this foundation and played a central role in establishing the University's early governance and purpose.

Modelled on the University of Bologna, the university originally provided learning

in 'theology, canon and civil law, arts, and other lawful faculties.'

Over time, the University expanded in scope and provision, relocating from its original site on the High Street to Gilmorehill in 1870.



Lent in the Cathedral

WEDNESDAY 18th February is Ash Wednesday and marks the start of Lent and St Andrew's Cathedral is offering resources to live the season well.

Masses will be celebrated at 8am, 1pm and 5.15pm with distribution of Ashes on Ash Wednesday. Stations of the Cross will take place shortly after 1pm Mass on the Fridays of Lent.

During Lent, there will be the opportunity to join faith sharing groups at the Cathedral, giving those taking part space to reflect on Lent gospel readings. Groups will run on Mondays and Tuesdays at 1.45pm and Tuesdays at 6pm.

Sign-up sheets are available in the Cathedral porch and can be returned to the Sacristy and the first group meetings will take place on 16th and 17th February.

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Spotlight on Catholic Education

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Talented fundraisers show the way

PUPILS from St Peter's Primary in Dumbar-ton have been learning to care for people around the world, thanks to a dedicated programme run by SCIAF.

The 'Talented Fundraisers' project by the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund is all about giving young people the opportunity to use their creativity to raise awareness and funds for the work of SCIAF around the world.

Through this, the pupils of St Peter's managed to turn just £60 into an amazing



total of £500 by using their entrepreneurial skills!

SCIAF provided the tools and training they needed to set up a small business in their community, helping

people to work their way out of poverty.

By trusting the students with an initial loan, they can take control of the project and learn through doing. All the money is then returned to SCIAF to support their work.

The pupils recently visited the SCIAF office. SCIAF's Jenna Fulton said: "It was wonderful to welcome the children of St Peter's Primary. I'm sure everyone who came along will attest to how fantastic the kids were."

"We gave them £60 as an investment in their fund-raising in August and

through their enterprise initiatives, with the help of our outstanding volunteer Michael Rainey, they managed to raise £500!"

Teacher Andrew McFall was delighted his class got involved. He said: "The SCIAF Young Fundraisers project was, for me, a truly profound teaching moment. It was remarkable to see the pupils' transition from learning about our faith to truly living it out."

"Our P7 class didn't just raise money; they internalised the lesson of the Parable of the Talents, applying their own God-given skills for a greater purpose."

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At St Aloysius' College, it is not only our pupils who belong - the whole family becomes part of a welcoming and supportive community.

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Twitter: @OLOLPrimaryWDC

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Tel: 0141 634 5219
Fax: 0141 634 9750
Head Teacher:
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Pope Francis speaking to the Congregation for Catholic Education, February 2014

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POPE'S MESSAGE FOR THE



WORLD DAY OF THE SICK

'Let us always be good Samaritans'

DEAR brothers and sisters,

I would recommend reflecting once again on the figure of the Good Samaritan, for he is always relevant and essential for rediscovering the beauty of charity and the social dimension of compassion. This reflection further directs our attention towards the needy and all those who suffer, especially the sick.

We live immersed in a culture of speed, immediacy and haste – a 'throwaway' culture marked by indifference that prevents us from pausing along the way and drawing near to acknowledge the needs and suffering that surround us.

In the parable, when the Samaritan saw the wounded man, he did not "pass by." Instead, he looked upon him with an open and attentive gaze – the very gaze of Jesus – which led him to act with human and compassionate closeness...

Love is not passive; it goes out to meet the other. Being a neighbour is not determined by physical or social proximity, but by the decision to love. This is why Christians become neighbours to those who suffer, following the example of Christ, the true divine Samaritan who drew near to a wounded humanity.

These are not mere gestures of philanthropy, but signs through which we perceive that personal participation in another's suffering involves the gift of oneself. It means going beyond the simple satisfaction of needs, so that our very person becomes part of the gift... Saint Francis expressed this beautifully when, speaking of his encounter with lepers, he said:



Picture: Imago Mundi

"The Lord himself led me among them."

The gift of encounter flows from our union with Jesus Christ. We recognise him as the Good Samaritan who has brought us eternal salvation, and we make him present whenever we reach out to a wounded brother or sister...

In my experience as a missionary and bishop in Peru, I have personally witnessed many who show mercy and compassion in the spirit of the Samaritan and the innkeeper. Family members, neighbors, health-care workers, those engaged in pastoral care for the sick, and many others stop along the way to draw near, heal,



support and accompany those in need.

By offering what they have, they give compassion a social dimension. This experience, occurring within a network of relationships, transcends mere individual commitment.

"To be one in the One" means truly recognising that we are members of a single Body that brings the Lord's compassion to the suffering of all people, each according to our own vocation.

In the double commandment, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as

yourself" we recognise the primacy of love for God and its direct consequences for every dimension of human love and relationship.

Although the object of this love differs – God, neighbour and oneself – and can be understood as distinct expressions of love, they remain fundamentally inseparable... To serve one's neighbour is to love God through deeds.

This perspective also allows us to grasp the true meaning of loving ourselves. It means setting aside any attempt to base our self-esteem or sense of dignity on worldly stereotypes – such as success, career, status or family background – and recovering our proper place before God and neighbour. Benedict XVI observed, "as a spiritual being, the human creature is defined through interpersonal relations."

"The more authentically he or she lives these relations, the more his or her own personal identity matures. It is not by isolation that man establishes his worth, but by placing himself in relation with others and with God."

Dear brothers and sisters, the true remedy for humanity's wounds is a style of life based on fraternal love, which has its root in love of God. I genuinely hope that our Christian lifestyle will always reflect this fraternal, "Samaritan" spirit – one that is welcoming, courageous, committed and supportive, rooted in our union with God and our faith in Jesus Christ. Enkindled by this divine love, we will surely be able to give of ourselves for the good of all who suffer, especially our brothers and sisters who are sick, elderly or afflicted.

LEO PP. XIV

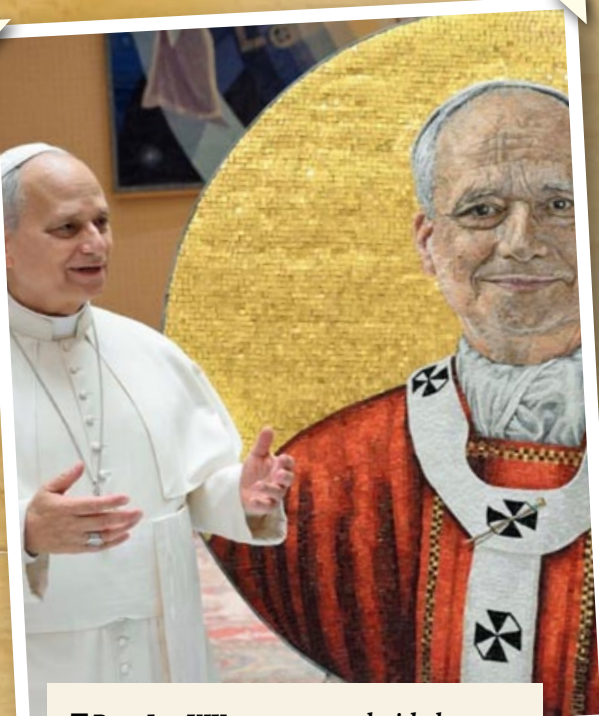
Pope's prayer for those who are ill

Let us raise our prayers to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Health of the Sick. Let us seek her intercession with this ancient prayer, that has been invoked in families for those living with illness and pain:

Sweet Mother, do not part from me.
Turn not your eyes away from me.
Walk with me at every moment
and never leave me alone.
You who always protect me as a true Mother,
obtain for me the blessing of the Father,
Son and Holy Spirit.

PHOTOS OF FAITH

A new monthly round-up in pictures of what's happening in the Catholic world



■ Pope Leo XIV was presented with the round mosaic bearing his official portrait — the 267th papal image to take its place in Rome's Basilica of St Paul's Outside the Walls. The papal mosaics of the basilica form a unique visual history of the Church, with portraits of every Pope from St Peter to the present day lining the upper walls of the nave. The mosaic, which was installed at the end of the right nave of the basilica, is made up of more than 15,000 tiles, including some dating back to the 1800s.



■ Bishop Ronald Hicks, recently named as the new Archbishop of New York, presided over a Mass of Thanksgiving and farewell as he left the Diocese of Joliet. "Thank you for what you do, thank you for who you are, and thank you for all we have shared together. Today my heart overflows with gratitude," Hicks said during his homily. The installation of the new Archbishop of New York is scheduled for early February.



■ Pope Leo revived another great tradition of the Papacy with the blessing of lambs on the Feast of St Agnes. The lambs are cared for by the nuns of Santa Cecilia in Rome and their wool is used to make the palliums (the white woollen collar decorated with black crosses) for new archbishops, presented every year on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul.



■ Cardinal Parolin presided over Mass in the Holy Family Co-Cathedral in Kuwait to mark the 65th anniversary of its consecration and later presided at ceremonies to the elevation of the Church of Our Lady of Arabia to the status of a Minor Basilica. He conveyed the Pope's spiritual closeness to the Catholic community in Kuwait and to all Christians of the region and noted "the deep devotion that Christians living in these lands profess for the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Lord." He described Kuwait as "an authentic meeting place of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, a safe harbour, and a place of peace and harmony."



■ The Holy Door of the Papal Basilica of Saint Mary Major was solemnly walled up, completing the rite that concludes the Jubilee of Hope. As has been done for centuries, the signs of memory were placed within the wall: the parchment record, the medals of the pontificate, the commemorative Jubilee medal of the Basilica, and the key of the Holy Door, together with the bricks bearing in Latin the names of Pope Francis and the Archpriest, Cardinal Rolandas Makrickas (in photo placing the brick in the wall covering the door).



S I S A O

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How would you answer the biggest question of all: 'Does God exist?'

RECENTLY I was listening to a religious talk show on the radio when a caller asked: How do we know that God exists? A good question.

The radio host answered by saying that we know it through faith. That's not a bad answer, except what needs to be teased out is how we know through faith.

First, what does it mean to know something? If we believe that to know something means to be able to somehow picture it, understand it, then this side of eternity, we can never know God. Why?

Because God is beyond our imagination. God is infinite and the infinite can never be captured in a concept. Try imagining the highest number to which it is possible to count. God's nature and existence can never be conceptualized or imagined. But it can be known.

This knowing is in our gut, something felt as a moral imperative, a nudge, a call, a voice which tells us what we must do to stay true.

The revealed truths about God in scripture, in Christian tradition, and in the witness of the lives of mar-



Scribblings of the spirit

Flourish's regular columnist, Fr Ronald Rolheiser offers practical insights each month into improving our spiritual lives

tyrs and saints, simply give expression to something we already know, as the mystics put it, in a dark way.

So, how might we prove the existence of God?

I wrote my doctoral thesis on exactly that question. In that thesis, I take up the classical proofs for the existence of God. For example, Thomas Aquinas tried to prove God's existence in five separate arguments.

Here's one of those arguments: Imagine walking down a road and seeing a stone and asking yourself, how did it get there? Given the brute reality of a stone, you can simply answer, it's always been there.

However, imagine walking down a road and seeing a clock still keeping time. Can you still say, it's always been there? No, it can't always

have been there because it has an intelligent design that someone must have built into it and it is ticking away the hours, which means it cannot have been there forever.

Aquinas then asks us to apply this to our own existence and to the universe. Creation has an incredibly intelligent design and, as we know from contemporary physics, has not always existed. Something or someone with intelligence has given us and the universe a historical beginning and an intelligent design. Who?

How much weight does an argument like this carry? There was once a famous debate on BBC radio between Frederick Copleston, a renowned Christian philosopher, and Bertrand Russell, a brilliant agnostic thinker.



After all the give and take in their debate, they agreed, as atheist and believer, on this one thing: If the world makes sense then God exists. As an atheist, Russell agreed to that, but then went on to say that ultimately the world doesn't make sense.

Most thinking atheists accept that the world doesn't make sense; but then, like Albert Camus, struggle with the question, how can it not make sense? If there isn't a God, how can we ground rationality and morality?

At the end of my thesis,

I concluded that existence of God cannot be proven through a rational argument, a logical syllogism, or a mathematical equation.

However, God is not found at the end of an argument. God's existence, life, and love are known (they are experienced) inside a certain way of living.

Simply put, if we live in a certain way, in the way all religions worthy of the name invite us to live, namely, with compassion and selflessness, then we will know God's existence by participation in God's very life – and whether or not we have an imaginative sense of God's existence is of no importance.

Why do I believe in God? Not because I'm particularly persuaded by proofs. I find proofs intellectually intriguing but existentially less persuasive.

I believe in God because I sense God's presence at a gut level, as a silent voice, as a call, an invitation, a moral imperative which, whenever listened to and obeyed, brings community, love, peace, and purpose.

That's the real proof for the existence of God.

When 'walking the walk' leads to the Cathedral

You know me by now, I suspect. I talk a good game. Talk the talk, I can do. Walk the walk, somewhat less so.

In this very column three years ago I committed to celebrating my 60th birthday by attending Mass in 60 churches throughout the year.

I was going to prioritise the Glasgow churches I'd never been in and the ones which were likely to close due to parish amalgamations. I hoped to learn some of their history along the way. I didn't make my target, not even halfway, but, hey, who's making the rules? Who says there's a time limit?

I did have a highlight last year on a Saturday overnight to Aberdeen when Himself and I attended Vigil Mass in St. Mary's Cathedral. We didn't know beforehand that it was the Mass for the Spanish-speaking community.

Participating in Mass alongside a multi-generational community of vari-



Mary's musings

Flourish columnist Mary McGinty's monthly musings on faith and family

ous nationalities with plenty of students and young people bringing their own energy and vitality was a joyous experience.

Before Mass the priest even came to introduce himself to the band of Glaswegians who were in town for a bit of business the next day.

Pilgrimage

My pilgrimage was more of less shelved until I got an unexpected boost last Autumn when God in His infinite goodness sent me a companion. A pal who is the fount of all knowledge on architecture and planning, and loves a church visit, has buddied up with me.

Together we are traversing the city once a week.

She points out interesting architectural detail and often stunning stained glass windows, which, in all honesty have passed me by, and I see the built environment of Catholic Glasgow anew. Naturally, we adjourn afterwards for coffee and a natter.

Morning Mass numbers being in the main limited to the retired, and parents or grandparents with a tot in tow, the interloper doesn't go unnoticed.

Glasgow being the friendly city it is, more often than not someone has passed the time of day with me.

I've often found myself approached with a friendly "nice to see a new face" and a conversation has begun.

People have been kind

enough to tell me they read this column and to say how much Flourish means to them. One lady I chatted with told me she couldn't remember the last time she had attended Mass anywhere except her parish.

She isn't on any kind of social media so for her Flourish is her window on the wider world of the archdiocese.

Next up is the mother church. 210 years on from its opening which took place almost 25 years after the inception of the parish, St Andrew's Cathedral has had a remarkable historical journey.

Built in 1816 more than a decade before Catholic emancipation, the original design was scaled down with no steeple or bell tower given the restrictions on the prominence of Catholic worship of the time.

Against a backdrop of anti-Catholic sentiment many times the bricks laid by day were knocked down at night.

Along the way, St An-

drew's Church was elevated to cathedral status after the restoration of the hierarchy. 1947, saw the regaining of the archdiocese's metropolitan status and St. Andrew's becoming a metropolitan cathedral.

Then Archbishop Mario Conti led the renovation of the cathedral in 2009 which realised the original architect's vision.

In the closest co-operation the archdiocese and the city council worked together as the area surrounding what became the piazza was repurposed. Ahead of the planting of the olive tree in the centre of the Italian Garden it was looked after in Bellahouston Park for a year.

With his great knowledge in church history and architecture Archbishop Mario masterminded the project which resulted in a cathedral befitting of the city and the faith of its people.

As me and my pal continue our mosey around the churches it'll be hard to top St Andrew's Cathedral.

ART OF THE MONTH

The spiritual life begins with fidelity and trust in God

LUIGI Morgari's "The Flight into Egypt" offers a tender vision of the Holy Family moving quietly through the night and into the dawn at a moment of profound uncertainty.

BY MGR TOM MONAGHAN

The scene is suffused with a gentle, soft and almost prayerful light. Mary holds the sleeping Child close to her heart; Joseph walks ahead with quiet determination; the humble donkey bears them patiently along the path.

The family is on the move, guided only by trust in God who called them forth. Joseph leads the donkey steadily forward, pushing back the encroaching darkness just enough for the next step to be seen.

It is a powerful image for the early part of the year. We stand, as they did, on the threshold of the unknown. Like the Holy Fam-

ily, we often find ourselves travelling into the unfamiliar. The road ahead may hold new joys, new burdens, unexpected turns we never anticipated. We may feel the weight of responsibilities or the uncertainty of decisions that must be made.

Morgari's painting gently reminds us that the spiritual life does not begin with certainty; it begins with fidelity. The light in the scene is not the bright blaze of full understanding — it is a calm glow that makes the next step possible.

That is the lesson the Holy Family offers us: God gives what we need for the moment we are in. Joseph's steadfastness does not come from knowing the en-

tire journey, but from trusting the One who speaks in the quiet of the heart.

Mary's courage is not the absence of fear, but the willingness to carry God's presence into every circumstance.

The sleeping Christ Child reveals the deepest truth of all — that when God is near, even the most difficult road becomes a place of peace.

Morgari's depiction invites us to pray for those same graces: Joseph's humble obedience, Mary's serene courage, and the peace of Christ resting within us. If we carry that gentle light — God's word, God's grace, God's companionship — we need not fear the journey ahead.

God who guided the Holy Family guides us still. And step by step, under His steady light, He will lead us safely home.



PRAYER

OF THE MONTH

Lord Jesus,

as I look ahead, grant
me Joseph's obedience,
Mary's quiet courage,
and Your own peace
resting within me.

Lead me safely
through every shadow,
until all my paths are
brought to the shelter
of Your Father's love.

Amen.

We must not resort to violence against violence

WHEN friends come under threat, it's time to offer solidarity and protection.

That's how I've been feeling about President Trump's unprecedented actions against his near neighbours since the start of the year — and of course, in response to the continued picking away at Palestine's human rights.

But 'support and protection' doesn't mean reacting violently. As Pope Leo said when all of this began, "The good of the beloved Venezuelan people must prevail over every other consideration and lead us to undertake paths of justice and peace, safeguarding the country's sovereignty, ensuring the rule of law enshrined in the Constitution."

He called for "respecting the human and civil rights of each person" and of working to build together a "serene future of collabora-



Marian Pallister

The chair of Pax Christi Scotland focuses on the issues of the day



tion, stability, and concord, with special attention to the poorest who suffer because of the difficult economic situation".

Because at the end of the

day, it is the poorest who suffer in any situation of conflict.

When I visited refugee camps in the Far East at the start of the 1980s, the poorest hadn't only suffered most as their country was torn apart by conflict — in the camps they were at the bottom of the pile when it came to assistance.

Our friend Prud in the Democratic Republic of Congo, who has written blogs and articles for Pax Christi Scotland (see our website: www.paxchristiscotland.org), has reported that the conflict in his country leaves the poorest women and

children most vulnerable to the despicable actions of marauding militia.

Organisations such as Pax Christi Scotland, Justice & Peace Scotland and SCIAF aim to be the voice of the voiceless, because when world order fails, political leaders seem too keen to hang onto their own dignity and power rather than speak out and negotiate for those whose lives are being dismantled piece by piece.

Justice

We must all speak out — organisations like ours and individuals — to let our elected leaders know that we seek peace for all, that justice can only be achieved if we build bridges rather than blow them up.

Catholic Social Teaching talks of the option for the poor, which of course originated in South America. It reminds us, as Jesus himself said so clearly, that God's love puts the poorest

and most vulnerable first. Oppressors don't get a look in.

The Church also says that every person is made in the image and likeness of God, regardless of religion, culture, nationality, orientation or economic standing.

These principles are at the heart of the Catholic Institute for Nonviolence, a project of Pax Christi International's Catholic Nonviolence Initiative. It does what it says on the tin, and it is working (as we are) to build those bridges to peace.

Nonviolence doesn't mean we stand meekly by. It means using dialogue and demonstration to bring change, to bring peace — the peace of Christ, Pax Christi.

Let's work together to build those bridges and make the bullies of this world understand that solidarity is bigger than any old power grab.

With the arrival of Lent it's time to let the scriptures transform us

As I sat down to write these reflections, I was aware that, with no Flourish in January, my last notes on the Sunday readings were all about Advent and Christmas.

Now – all of a sudden it seems – we'll be talking this month about Lent already!

Still, some of the themes that came up listening to Matthew's Gospel in Advent and Christmas will continue to sound for us over these weeks too.

Light in darkness, justice and righteousness, sin and salvation: these and more remain themes Matthew is concerned about and will echo through what we hear over the coming weeks as they have done over the Advent and Christmas seasons.

Fifth Sunday, Year A

A couple of weeks ago, Matthew used the image of light to refer to the arrival of Jesus in his mission, quoting Isaiah's promise that light would dawn for people in darkness. Now, Jesus uses that same image about his followers, whose good works will be like a lamp shining



Fr Tom Kilbride

Parish Priest of Christ the King, Glasgow

for the house, also borrowing from the image of Isaiah (First Reading) who speaks of the light shining when people care for the poor and needy.

There, it is God's glory shining through his people, so Jesus reminds his followers that their light too is really the light of God shining through them.

When we act for others out of love, it is the light of God's glory, not of ourselves, that is being revealed. Paul had to learn that lesson too, but he is clear in writing to the Corinthians that everything he does and says is to show God's power, not his own brilliance!

Sixth Sunday, Year A

With Lent approaching, last week reminded us of the need to act out of jus-

tice and charity for the poor. This week, in another way, gives us some food for thought about what our Lenten repentance might be about, as Jesus calls us to a righteousness that goes beyond merely keeping rules!

It is challenging to hear these "Antitheses", or contrasts, that Jesus sets up for us. The Commandments are only the starting point: we have to go beyond them. The Law is there to help show the way, but not to limit our virtue.

More importantly, Jesus is presented as the authority who gives the true meaning of the Law and the Prophets. The First Reading speaks of a "wisdom" that comes from God to help us act according to our faith, while Paul (Second Reading) points us to the Holy Spirit as the power which helps us see beyond the surface of things, to grasp what God is revealing to us and asking of us.

First Sunday of Lent, Year A

We enter into the sombre atmosphere of Lent, hearing, as we always do, about Jesus's 40 days in the desert. Jesus faces the wiles of Satan and prevails, unlike our first parents who gave in to the serpent's seductive words (First Reading). Sin is overcome by Jesus, who responds to the devil's temptations with God's



Fra Angelico (1395–1455),
Transfiguration

word (note how the serpent manipulated Eve by misquoting God's words).

We begin our own forty days of fasting, prayer and charity leading to our renewal of baptism, the moment in which each of us was freed from the original sin of Adam. Jesus showed the way by defeating the devil in the desert. His obedience to the Father, shown on the Cross, freed us from death which was the consequence of sin, Paul says (Second Reading), and opened the way to eternal life for us in his resurrection, the celebration of which is the goal of our Lenten journey.

Second Sunday of Lent, Year A

Matthew sprinkles the story of Jesus' Transfiguration – which we always hear this Sunday – with

a few important details. We heard a few weeks ago about Jesus going up a mountain, when he taught the disciples in the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount. He was on a mountain again last week defeating the devil who offered him the nations and their glory. But it will be the risen Jesus on a mountain at the end of the Gospel who will reveal his authority as he sends out the apostles to make disciples of all the nations.

Today's "high mountain" offers a glimpse of the authority and glory which is already his and will be revealed after the resurrection. The Father, who pointed him out as his Son at the Jordan, now calls the disciples to listen to him. They, for their part, "fall on their faces", as they will before the risen Jesus on that mountain

in the future.

Matthew also speaks about "light" and "the sun" to describe Jesus' appearance. We have heard Matthew use the image of light to describe Jesus coming among his people a few weeks ago, while Jesus also used it to describe God's glory shining through his followers when they live in righteousness. If we truly "listen to him", his light will shine through us, transforming the world around us and bringing others to know the good news he brings.

As we move further into Lent and springtime, and the days get longer, our Sunday readings remind us that the true light shines from Jesus, and that his light can both grow within us and shine out from us if we listen to his word and live by it.

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In loving memory of our dear brother and father who died 17/2/95. In our hearts and minds, Vince. Rest in eternal peace. Leo, Paul, Angela, Teresa, Marie Adele

Father Tommy's life of joy and faith

If ever anyone wanted to know the impact of a priest on the communities he served, they need look no further than the outpouring of appreciation and sorrow which followed the death of Fr Tommy Hendry.

Fr Tommy – or Canon Tommy to give him his proper title – died just before Christmas, but well into the new year messages continued to be left on the Archdiocesan social media feeds, testifying to his impact on those with whom he had come into contact in his long life.

His CV sketches out the bare facts of a life well lived, but it is the testimonies of people which give colour to that portrait.

Born in Glasgow in April 1940, the Second World War was the background to his childhood. His early schooling was at Hamilton Park Primary Glasgow (1945–1948) and later at St Aloysius' College (1948–1959).

From 1959–1966 he trained for the priesthood at St Peter's College Cardross – a period of great upheaval as the insights and changes of Vatican II began to filter down to the local Church.



Picture by Paul McSherry

He was ordained a priest in June 1966 and began a life of service spent almost exclusively in the north and west of the city (apart from a five year posting to Cumbernauld).

From 1966–1980 he was Assistant Priest at St Gregory's in the Wyndford, a growing community of faith which produced many vocations, and from 1973 onwards combined his parish role with that of Chaplain to Notre Dame High School and Chaplain to the Sisters

of Notre Dame in Dowanhill.

In 1980 he was surprised to find himself named as Assistant Chaplain at Glasgow University, working with the then Father (later Monsignor) Michael Conway. They formed a great team though they couldn't have been more different. Fr Tommy was short and stout while Fr Michael was tall and thin. And whereas Fr Michael was given to sometimes complex theological speculations, Fr Tommy's

sermons were ever practical, and often funny. What they shared was a commitment to the students and a desire to provide a welcoming and non-judgemental experience to all who crossed the threshold of Turnbull Hall.

In 1985 he was named Assistant Priest at Sacred Heart Cumbernauld and in 1990 Parish Priest of St Teresa's Possilpark. It was to be his final appointment, and one he loved and made his own.

In 2018 he was installed to the Chapter of Canons by Archbishop Tartaglia and he stayed in post despite serious health problems until his retirement in 2024.

Every pew was packed and it was standing room only in the overflow congregation in the church hall at the funeral, which, as Archbishop Nolan noted in his homily, was a testament to the great affection in which he was held.

The Archbishop said: "The rules for saying a funeral Mass say it must not be a eulogy but if you want a eulogy for Tommy go to social media and you will find hundreds of tributes coming from people who have been touched by

him, helped by him, moved and supported by him, and you can see the humanity of Tommy has been a great instrument during his priesthood bringing people along the road to Christ.

"And it is our affection for Tommy that brings us here today today. Fr Tommy was a happy priest who always showed great humanity and

was a great conveyor of the word of God."

A religious sister who cared for him at St Joseph's confided: "He was cheery to the very end – he died with a smile of his face".

A long time friend of Fr Tommy put it best: "He was one of us – he was tailor-made for Possilpark."

Requiescat in pace.

Fond memories abound of Jesuit Father Simon Bishop's Glasgow years

THERE WAS MUCH SORROW in Glasgow when news broke of the death of Fr Simon Bishop SJ, who died on the evening of Sunday 4 January 2026.

He was 58 years old and in the 33rd year of his religious life.

Fr Simon was a familiar face in the Archdiocese in the mid-2000s when he was based at St Aloysius in Garnethill and served as chaplain to the College there.

He was born in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, on 28 March 1967, then spent several happy early years in Fiji before the family returned to Britain.

He was educated at Stonyhurst College from 1975 to 1985, where qualities that would remain with him throughout his life were already apparent. One Jesuit who was starting to teach there recalls encountering him as a schoolboy serving at the altar: "There was this little carrot-head waiting for me with a welcoming smile. He knew exactly what to do and did it with

grace and dignity."

He went on to study Theology at Cambridge University then trained as a social worker at the University of York. He entered the Jesuit novitiate in Birmingham in September 1993, on the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows.

From the very beginning of his Jesuit life, his qualities were apparent to those around him. A fellow novice recalls that "from the first day of the novitiate" Simon was unselfish, focused on others, and genuinely interested in them. In 2003 he was ordained priest at Sacred Heart, Wimbledon and a year later came to Glasgow as Chaplain to St Aloysius' College, Glasgow.

Focus

In Glasgow, his focus on other people and their needs became especially visible. One Jesuit recalls walking with him from the Jesuit house, which was then in Woodside Place, to the College, a walk of about half a mile, and observing how Simon



greeted, by name, everyone they encountered:

"He knew the name of every person he saw on that journey and greeted them all by name, every coffee-seller, every beggar, every person walking their dog, and certainly every pupil and every member of staff. He had an incredible ability to befriend, but he could do it because he was genuinely interested in every person he met."

Later in his life he served in Australia, then at Oxford University and later in Birmingham.

It was during his time

as Novice Master there Fr Simon's illness first emerged. In a recent interview he reflected on his life and ministry: "Recently I have needed to go to hospital for various treatments and, lying on an operating table or in surgery or follow-up treatment with a necessity for all sorts of other treatments, in the quiet there, I have found myself saying that simple prayer: There is nowhere else that I would rather be. Somehow the Lord is asking me to be with Him here in this place at this time."

"If we really believe that—that somehow we are this place where the Lord can be, and the Lord is also at home in you, in me, in those we meet, in our world—how could we destroy our world? How could we do or say something harmful to another person?"

Fr Simon Bishop SJ was, as one Jesuit wrote, "a wonderful Companion in the Lord, and an example to us all."

Requiescat in pace.

Your gift of water is a life-changer

In Scotland we are blessed with some of the finest drinking water in the world.

We bathe in it, use it for cooking, and drink as much as we want, whenever we want. We take it for granted that it will always be there.

Water is life. Yet, for far too many in this day and age, it is dangerously scarce.

I saw the reality for myself when I visited Tigray in Ethiopia. Not only is the area recovering from bloody conflict, it's also engulfed by drought. In Tigray, I met Hirit and her family.

Finding water was a daily struggle.

In Ethiopia, many women, girls and boys walk for hours every day under the scorching sun. Nearly half the population (43%) don't have access to an improved water source. Given the backdrop of simmering tensions, they even risk their safety in search of water. At times of crisis, many today are still forced

Ben Wilson

Public Engagement Director, SCIAF

to drink unclean water, making them and their families sick, because there just aren't any alternative sources for them to access.

"All of our time was spent fetching water", she told me. "It used to be very scary – there were attacks by soldiers. One of my brothers was beaten and now lives with injuries to his head."

Despite decades of progress in Ethiopia, the recent war has torn families apart, extreme weather is destroying landscapes and livelihoods, and now international aid cuts risk further decimating vital services.

For Hirit, these combined challenges made accessing water, the most basic hu-



Across Ethiopia and beyond, UK government aid has helped provide clean water and support communities in building a future of hope. But with new cuts to the aid budget, this vital progress is at risk of being undone. Families living in the world's poorest communities are once again facing thirst, hunger, and uncertainty.

man need, a terrifying tight-rope walk. Every morning, she would trek five miles just to find clean drinking

water, which she'd carry on her back every day for her family.

However, thanks to peo-

ple like you, SCIAF's partners have been busy delivering life-changing water work in Hirit's community, digging wells and installing pumps.

I walked with Hirit to the new community tap – only 20 minutes away. Hirit's family offered us the warmest hospitality, welcoming us into their home and introducing us to their culture.

Unwashed

Hirit said: "This tap has resolved so many problems, especially for girls like me. We used to go to school with dirty clothes and bags, and unwashed hair. But now we can stay clean."

"With water nearby, we have more time and can focus on our education. I want to pursue a career in business when I'm older."

Hirit and her family use the new tap all the time. There's also a pond nearby, so their fields are now green and full of maize, fruits and vegetables, and

their livestock are plump and healthy.

For them, clean, safe water has helped unlock a happy, healthy and hopeful future. Today, from Scotland to Ethiopia, you can help that hope flow further, to other communities in need.

Improved access to water is just one of the ways SCIAF helps people lift themselves out of poverty.

We work in many of the world's poorest countries to tackle both its causes and consequences. We work with people in the hardest circumstances, so they can overcome their daily struggles and the injustice that makes and keeps them poor.

This Lent, please put your faith into action and use your WEE BOX to make a BIG CHANGE. Your support can show young people around the world, like Hirit, that a better world is possible – one where they can survive, thrive and flourish.

BRING HOPE TO THE WORLD AND WATER TO THE THIRSTY



£40 could help people access clean water for drinking



£120 could provide tools, training and livestock



£1,200 could bring water to a village



New water pump, Ethiopia

DONATE TODAY TO PROVIDE LIFE ESSENTIALS

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