

# FLOURISH

Official Journal of the Archdiocese of Glasgow

July 2020

Picture by James Chapelard



## Preparing for Mass

**I**t is often said that the faith grows stronger in times of persecution. The recent history of the Church in former Communist countries suggests there is much truth in that.

And if we look further back the survival of the Catholic faith in our own land during the post-reformation persecution led ultimately to strength and new growth.

In the last four months

BY **RONNIE CONVERY**  
EDITOR

our generation has endured its own persecution. Not at the hands of a brutal regime or a merciless tyrant. But at the hands of an invisible, deadly virus which has succeeded in a way no bigot or despot ever has before... by depriving the Catholic people of the Eucharist.

Never, perhaps, has the definition of the Eucharist as “viaticum” – food for the journey – been more apt. We have been on a journey without food. We have been deprived of spiritual food for so long. Our souls are starving for bread. The Bread. The Bread of Life.

Thank God the resumption of public Masses is now on the horizon. In just a few weeks we will once more be able to gather round the al-

tar, to be present at Calvary on our doorstep, and to receive Jesus Christ – body, blood, soul and divinity. *Deo Gratias!*

As we emerge from this trial, we do so stronger.

Our sense of the things of God is more acute than before.

Our desire for the Eucharist is stronger than ever.

Our appreciation of the heroic work of our priests who have ministered crea-

tively and devotedly during the pandemic is greater than it may ever have been in our lifetime.

Our awareness of our parish community is solid, refreshed.

And so we face the future with great optimism.

This trial has shaken us out of our lethargy. It has wakened up our souls. In this edition of *Flourish* we have asked priests from different corners of the Arch-

diocese to reflect on what lessons can be learned and what positives we can take out of this period of lockdown. Read their insights on the centre pages.

“*Omnia in bonum*” said St Paul to the Christians of Rome 2000 years ago. “Everything works out for the good”.

It is a message we would do well to take to heart as we prepare to return to our beloved Mass.

# Bishops appeal for change in UK immigration plans



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**SCOTLAND'S Bishops** have launched a strong attack on the UK Government's proposed Immigration Bill and asked MPs to amend it.

The Bill recently introduced by Home Secretary Priti Patel will drastically impact the lives of EU citizens living in Scotland, most of whom are Catholic.

"We do not agree with the principle of making European citizens apply for their existing rights in the UK," the Bishops state. Despite this they point out that "the Church is working to raise awareness of the Settlement Scheme and help those who are at risk of losing their status."

BY RONNIE CONVERY

"However, no scheme will reach all European citizens in the UK. Even if a small proportion do not make an application by the June 2021 deadline, this could leave thousands of people without legal status. We encourage amendments to the bill that will create a meaningful safety-net including options to extend the deadline..."

In the joint letter with the Bishops of England and Wales, the Scottish Bishops also oppose the introduction of a minimum income threshold for families seeking to move to the UK to be reunited with loved ones.

"Some key workers who

have played a vital role during the Covid-19 pandemic are among those who cannot be reunited with their families because they do not meet the minimum income threshold. This separation not only has serious implications on family life, but also has a direct impact on the development and well-being of children who are isolated from their parents in another country."

The letter further criticises the bill insofar as it makes it harder for priests from Europe, Africa and Asia to work in Scottish parishes, and places undue obstacles in their path, such as language tests even though they have often been edu-

cated in English language seminaries.

Parishes will face huge bills to overcome new visa requirements if they want to host a foreign priest as typically happens in summer when clergy from overseas often provide cover in Scottish churches.

The Bishops also denounce the current practice of detaining people from overseas without limit of time if they fail the required immigration tests, which, they say "has devastating consequences for the well-being of vulnerable individuals who find themselves detained including some victims of torture, and survivors of trafficking..."

## Saint of the digital age

# Beatification for techno-teenager



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**A YOUNG boy born in Britain is to be beatified... Carlo Acutis, the computer genius with a love for the Eucharist, will be declared Blessed in Assisi in October.**

Announcing the date, Cardinal Angelo Becciu, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, said: "It is hoped that more people will be able to attend the ceremony at that time; among other things, it will take place just two days before the anniversary of his death, because he died on October 12, 2006. So, we agreed on this date. Hopefully, people can come, otherwise many will be able to follow the celebration via streaming," he said.

Carlo Acutis was born in London in 1991 to Italian parents. As a young boy, he moved with them to Milan, where he lived before succumbing to leukaemia at the age of 15. The computer genius will be beatified in Assisi, Perugia in October after a Brazilian boy was cured from a rare disease due to his intercession.

Cardinal Becciu described Carlo Acutis' exemplary faith as an example for young people, and for all people. "He was a little boy when he fell in love with the Eucharist, then he also turned his devotion to Our Lady."

Soon to be blessed:  
Carlo Acutis



The Cardinal went on to say that he used his talents to spread the faith. "He created a computer project on the themes of faith; he had a site on Eucharistic miracles. So, he lived his faith to the fullest".

Cardinal Becciu said the words of this young man are also striking. "He said, 'I want to offer all my sufferings for the Lord, for the Pope, and for the Church. I don't want to do purgatory; I want to go straight to Heaven'."

"At 15! A little boy who talks like that strikes us and I think it encourages everyone not to joke with our faith, but to take it seriously."

Carlo's mother Antonia Salzano said he was "consid-

ered a computer genius because he knew logarithms, he knew how to make programs and read university texts on these topics.

But what did he do? He didn't use these media to chat, have fun, or anything like that.

His zeal for the Lord and his love for the knowledge of Jesus prompted him to make use of his talents to create a website on Eucharistic miracles and an exhibit on the same subject that has travelled around the world".

She said that Carlo "knew that Jesus is really present in the Eucharist, but he realised that people need help to get closer to the Lord and especially to understand the importance of the sacraments".



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

The St Nicholas Care Fund has been providing grants to community groups, schools and churches that are providing support to children, families and communities most affected by the current lockdown. A further £7836 has been awarded to good causes in the month of June. There are no deadlines for applications so organisations seeking a grant can contact us or submit an application at any time.

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# Sr Margaret's poetry lifts lockdown blues

**A WELL-KENT member of Glasgow's "own" religious order has emerged as a social media star during the COVID lockdown with her unique delivery of "Poems from my Ironing Table".**

Sister Margaret McGrath, a Franciscan of the Immaculate Conception, ministers in St Joseph's Tollcross and St Joachim's Carmyle after a career in the Archdiocese which saw her serve as Vice Chancellor under the late Cardinal Winning.

Now Sister Margaret has used her passion for poetry to reach out to people during the pandemic, broadcasting her verse from the ironing table of her front room!

Sister Margaret told *Flourish*: "I have attended classes in creative writing for a while at Strathclyde University, and I think I caused a few raised eyebrows on one occasion when the tutor asked us one day where we produce our poetry.

"While some members of the class talked about going to their study, I confessed that I wrote at the ironing table. I just find it convenient! I can adjust the height

and lay out all my papers there. So it seemed a good idea to deliver the poetry on Facebook from the very ironing table on which it was written!"

Sister Mags, as she is known to her friends, confesses she is surprised at the success of the initiative. She said: "I didn't realise how much people would get out of the poems. I try to deliver them in a way that brings them alive. Even my closest family and friends have been complimentary.

"My hope is that the poems will touch people, either by cheering them up, or giving them food for thought. They range across a range of themes and styles. Hopefully something for everyone."

But while the Franciscan Sister continues to offer an ever-expanding range of verse, she is constantly asked to read again a poem which has become her "party piece" entitled "Last Tango in Den-nistoun".

You can hear all of Sister Margaret's Pandemic Poems by following her on Facebook – search for Margaret McGrath St Joachim's.



*Corona at  
EaStertime*

The crown of  
thorns is back in  
the cupboard

for another year.  
It may need  
restored

nail here, thorn  
there, bloodied  
like the moon's  
red

halo. All the  
while they  
thought He was  
dead.

The sun rose,  
and the Son rose  
from the rock

we sat in  
isolation taking  
stock

of vacant  
churches, empty  
shops, and  
tombs

keeping socially  
distanced in an  
upper room

afraid of death,  
but more afraid  
of life

and wondering  
all the while, was  
He right?

*Margaret McGrath  
(2020)*

# Vatican launches new guide for teaching the faith

**A NEW manual for teaching the faith has been published by the Vatican which brings the approach of the Church into the digital age.**

The updated Directory for Catechesis was released in the Vatican last month and proposes three major principles of action: Witnessing, Mercy and Dialogue.

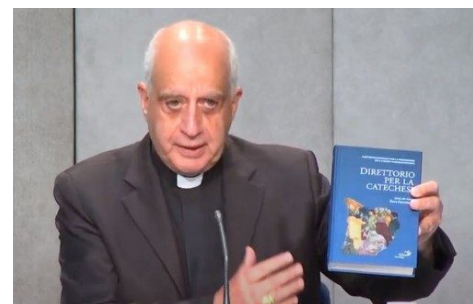
The first part focuses on the formation of catechists and points out that in order to be credible witnesses of the faith, catechists have to be "catechised before being catechists."

In its later chapters the Directory proposes the use of art through the contemplation of beauty as a means of connecting with God, and sacred music as a way of instilling the desire for God in the heart of people.

The role of the family also comes to the fore. There those being evangelised can live the faith in a simple and spontaneous way. In the face of new family models, Christians are called to accompany others with closeness, listening and understanding in order to restore hope and trust to all.

The Directory also highlights the importance of "welcoming and recognis-

Archbishop  
Fisichella  
launches the  
new guide at  
the Vatican



ing" the differently-abled. It stresses that they are witnesses to the essential truths of human life and are to be welcomed as a great gift.

The Directory calls for solidarity with migrants, who, far from their homeland, may experience a crisis of faith. Migrants are to be supported in the fight against prejudices and the serious dangers they may face, such as human trafficking.

It also calls for attention to be given to prisons describing them as an "authentic mission land". It proposes that for prisoners, catechesis should take the form of a "caring listening which shows the maternal face of the Church."

The third part, entitled "Catechesis in Particular Churches", is dedicated to catechesis in parishes, and other Church associations.

Parishes, it says, should provide creative catechesis adapted to people's lived experience. Catholic schools, should become "scholastic-communities" of faith with an educational project based on Gospel values.

The Directory proposes that catechesis should be directed towards educating people in the proper use of digital culture, which has both good and bad elements. Catechesis should also focus on helping young people distinguish truth and quality amid the "culture of the instantaneous."

Other themes highlighted by the Directory include the call to a "profound ecological conversion". Catechesis promotes this conversion through attention to the safeguarding of creation and the avoidance of consumerism.

## POEM OF THE MONTH

The author of this poem is unknown. It is a Mother's Prayer for her Soldier Son. All mothers might pray it as they identify with Our Lady's nervous concern for her Son as she gazes on His Holy Face.

As Thou didst walk in Galilee,  
 So loving Saviour, walk with him for me:  
 For since the years have passed and he has grown,  
 I cannot follow; he must walk alone.  
 Be Thou my feet that I have had to stay,  
 For Thou canst comrade him on every way.  
 Be Thou my voice, when sinful things allure,  
 Pleading with him to choose those that endure.  
 Be Thou my hand that would keep his in mine,  
 All, all things that a mother must resign.  
 When he was little I could walk with him and guide  
 But now, I pray Thee, Thou be at his side.  
 And as Thy Blessed Mother folded Thee,  
 So kind and loving Saviour, guard my son for me.

## PRAYER OF THE MONTH

Hail Holy Queen, Mother of mercy, hail our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us. And after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement O loving O sweet Virgin Mary.



Art of the month

# Holidays may be on hold but we can be inspired by religious art at home

**M**ANY of us would, in previous circumstances, be flying, with joy and enthusiasm, to different and varied parts of the world this month or next. Maybe... we will not be doing so this year! We are forced to stay at home.

Here is a painting of a very different flight. A family forced from home and a journey to a different country.

It is an unfinished oil on canvas by the German painter, Philipp Otto Runge who died of tuberculosis in 1810 at the young age of 33, and, incredibly sadly, the day before his fourth child was born.

He was a great friend of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the writer, statesman and natural philosopher.

Goethe wrote something quite apposite for today's world. "One ought, every day at least, to hear a little song, read a good poem, see a fine picture, and, if it were possible, to speak a few reasonable words."

Our painting which is in the Art Gal-

BY MGR TOM MONAGHAN

lery in Hamburg is entitled, "Die Ruhe auf der Flucht" which can be translated as, Resting on the Flight. Some commentators, I think mistakenly, claim that it contains no deep symbolism or Christian iconography.

Surely, the things of this earth invariably point to the things of heaven. The white flowers above the head of Mary remind us, perhaps, that she is "the purest of creatures."

The donkey lies behind St Joseph eating thistle leaves which will become a symbol of the gall offered to Christ on the Cross.

The pyramid-shaped rock rising from the waters, remind us that the pyramids were a place of death, built to house the remains the mummified body of the Pharaoh.

St Joseph seems content as he has brought them to safety now that they

are on the cusp of entering the safety of Egypt. Nevertheless, they are like refugees arriving in a foreign land but with all the tensions that will bring. No wonder, then, that Mary, with her eyes fixed on the Baby, rubs her hands with anxiety, possibly remembering the Words of Simeon that her son will be, "...a sign which men will refuse to acknowledge..." and that her soul, "...shall have a sword to pierce it." (Lk. 2.34-35 Knox Version)

The Child, with arms outstretched, lying at the foot of the leafy canopy of the tree which gives it the impression of a cross, gazes towards the angels and to Heaven.

Innocence leading to Paradise. The angel on the top of the tree, plays the harp to welcome a new day and a new life. The other, almost disappearing into the trunk of the tree, presents the Child with a lily, a sign, not only of purity, but of resurrection. Adam and Eve rejected the Tree of Life. The Christ willingly accepts the Tree of the Cross.



**T**HOSE of a certain age grew up knowing there were two subjects you didn't discuss at the dinner table: Religion and politics. Both stir deep and often uncontrollable passions, a problem that gets even worse when you weave the two topics together.

Perhaps it shouldn't be surprising, then, that a surprise trip by Pope emeritus Benedict XVI to his native Bavaria to be with his dying brother, Monsignor Georg Ratzinger, seems to be stoking fevered political and religious imaginations.

Since the trip was announced, Benedict's first outside Italy since his resignation seven years ago, various versions of the following theories have bubbled up in the German and Italian press, as well as in on-line discussions:

- Benedict XVI will never return to Rome, because, like his namesake St. Benedict, he's disgusted by the corruption of the Eternal City and wishes to flee into a sort of 21st century hermitage.

- Benedict won't come back because he's unable to support the direction being set by Pope Francis, so declining to return after his brother's death is his final, albeit silent, form of protest. (This despite the fact that Benedict sought, and received, Francis's approval before undertaking the journey.)

- Benedict will stay in Germany in order to serve as a counterweight to the progressive line of the majority of the country's bishops, as they embark on a controversial two-year "synodal journey" featuring issues such as clerical celibacy, sexual morality and women in the Church. (That seems to be the most titillating prospect for the German press in particular.)

I'm undoubtedly skipping something, because, at a certain point, I just stopped paying attention. For the record, the Vatican has denied that Benedict won't be coming back, but as ever, that hasn't stopped anyone from gaming scenarios.

As it turns out, the speculation was short-lived since the Diocese of Regensburg announced today that Benedict XVI will return to Rome tomorrow morning.

It's tempting to dismiss such obviously premature scenarios as silly, except for two points.

First, we're talking about a 93-year-old man making perhaps the final trip of his life to be with the person to whom he's closest on this earth before he dies. It would be nice

## Emotional trip home for Pope Benedict as he visits his brother



BY **JOHN L ALLEN JR**  
EDITOR OF CRUX

if Benedict could do so without having to ponder the politics of the situation, and without feeling pressure to cut the trip short or do something else because of anxiety over popular reaction.

It's worth recalling that the three Ratzinger children – Georg, Joseph, and their sister Maria, who died in 1991 – were tight-knit growing up, in part because their father, a Bavarian policeman, took a series of increasingly lower-level positions throughout the 1930s in order to stay as far away as possible from the rising power of the National Socialists. The family relocated several times over just a few years, meaning the children repeatedly were uprooted from their friends and learned to fall back on one another.

So close were the two brothers that they obtained permission to be ordained together on the same day in 1951, and they celebrated their first public Masses back-to-back in the village of Hufschlag outside the city of Traunstein in Bavaria where the family had settled. (At the time, concelebration was still considered exceptional.)

Maria, their sister, never married and would later become a secretary and caretaker for the future Pope, living in his Rome apartment in the Piazza Leonina, following

through on a promise to their mother and father to take care of the brothers. She died in Bavaria in 1991, following a massive heart attack during a visit to their parents' tomb.

On that occasion, the future Benedict XVI wasn't able to get home in time, missing his sister's final hours. It's understandable, therefore, that he's especially motivated to be there for his brother.

Given all that, simple decency would seem to dictate restraint from making an already anguished situation worse by burdening it with conspiracy theories and political conjecture.

Second, all of this also helps explain why the emeritus pope hasn't been living in Regensburg with his brother all along.

When Benedict XVI retired in 2013, according to several senior churchmen who were close to the pope, his original hope was to return to Regensburg and resume a sort of private life. He had to be persuaded, according to those sources, to remain in the Vatican.

In part, the argument boiled down to simple logistics, since in the Vatican he'd already have security and support staff, whereas all that would have to be built from scratch in Regensburg. In part, however, the argument was also based on politics – by remaining in the Vatican, the theory held, Benedict would

be less of a distraction to his successor because no one would think he was setting up a rival papal court, and it would be harder for people to exploit him as an alternate source of authority.

As one cardinal put it to me at the time, "it'll be harder for people to get to him" behind the walls of the Vatican.

There may be some validity to those concerns, and experts on the papacy will have to sift through the experience under Francis and Benedict to assess the best future course.

In the meantime, however, the point is that Church politics and overactive imaginations arguably already have cost Benedict eight years he could have shared with his brother, in a far deeper way than talking on the phone and seeing one another a couple times a year. (Of course, Georg could have joined his brother in the Vatican's Mater Ecclesiae monastery, but that would have meant abandoning Bavaria.)

There's an irony somewhere in all this about it being precisely the people ostensibly most concerned about the independence of the papacy who, by chronically overinterpreting everything, end up pressuring popes and constraining their choices perhaps more than anybody else.

But for now, perhaps the most immediate take-away is that this would be a good time to take a step back, go silent except for prayer, and let this intimate human drama play out. Rest assured, once the Ratzinger brothers have said their final good-byes, there will be plenty of time to joust, if we must, over what it all meant.

■ **Follow John Allen on Twitter:**  
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# Open the doors and let's learn the lessons of lockdown

The closure of churches and the suspension of Masses has proved a traumatic shock to Catholics across the world. But during the enforced period of silence, good fruits have emerged. *Flourish* asked four Archdiocesan priests to reflect on their experiences of lockdown and point to the signs of hope

**So, I was asked completely out of the blue to write about trying to find the positives amongst "lockdown" and thereby to try to assign some meaning to it. Good try!**

Accepting the cliché of every cloud having a silver lining even in the midst of an indiscriminate virus we're all challenged to find the positives and what meaning if any can be taken from it.

The excellent book, "Man's Search for Meaning" by Viktor Frankl is always worth more than a second read. In it he's challenged to find meaning in the midst of extreme human suffering. That same challenge albeit of a very, very different nature is laid before us and meaning of one description or another has to be sought. It's been a time for reflection and prayer in which we can genuinely recognise that life's not about stockpiling toilet rolls or frozen food in the freezer barns. It is amongst many other things about people being in relationship with God and each other.

It's not the issue in itself but how we respond to it that matters most. NHS, and other front-line workers, food banks, the continued work of SSVF, and many other groups, how neighbours have reached out with generosity and community spirit to care for the most vulnerable. The goodness and outreach shown by our reac-



Fr Martin Kane  
*St Conval's and St James'*

tion tells us something about how we will always come together in a time of crisis in our shared humanity.

In times of crisis the prophets of old delivered the same message "Return to God". The pendulum still swings in the court of opinion in this blame game between human interference and the hand of God. Our first ancestors in the garden of Eden were told "don't touch that!" We did, but then again, we're only human! Work in the garden is incomplete and many are well occupied doing just that! The biblical/

poetical account of creation in Genesis indicated a limitation of choice and freedom for our own good and not licence to do as we please. And we should still be thankful for all we have, mindful of those who in other parts of the world who have far less but by the same token have more to lose. We're talking about lives, real lives, and opportunities.

Social distancing has in some ways brought families closer together. It has compelled us to abandon our hectic full throttle way of life and afforded us time to slow down our pace of

life and to reflect. An opportunity has been created for us to have a retreat experience of standing back and to examine life realistically on a number of levels.

Many have contacted parishes requesting baptism, marriage, other Sacraments and a real interest in God and matters of faith. Searches for prayer have apparently been awash on internet search engines.

Our God is a real God and not a virtual one and social media has brought live stream Masses into homes and helped to maintain prayer and connection which should continue when we reopen.

Our church doors have now reopened and when the dust finally settles will it be back to business as usual or do we put out into the deep, explore and find more positives in forging a new way ahead with an energised vision of discipleship and evangelisation? As a certainty we will all have been educated in the transmission of a virus but as people of hope our attention rightly alerts us to the transmission of faith.

Personally, one of the positives I take is hearing so many people expressing how their personal prayer life has deepened. Churches have reopened initially on the basis of personal prayer and that's a positive step forward and a good place to start. Keep positive!



**"MOTHER of God... be close to those who assist the sick night and day, and to priests, who in their pastoral concern and fidelity to the Gospel, are trying to help and support everyone."**

I suspect in scripting this line in his pandemic-time prayer to Our Lady, Pope Francis was not simply acknowledging the efforts of hard-working priests, but perhaps ever so gently goading those of us who might be backsliding.

Added on at the end of Vespers each evening, the prayer has become a useful prompt for examining how well I'm supporting other people. Fulfilment has come in doorstep and garden encounters while walking the parish from Westcliff to Westbridgend; praying at gravesides, other recent burials sadly apparent; at the shop getting the bread and milk (no papers!), or hanging out around the church – a visible presence within hard-pressed neighbourhoods.

The last public Mass in St Michael's was on 19th March, St Joseph's Day and the second anniversary of my ordination. Still a 'novice', lockdown in a strange way has allowed me to get to know parishioners better. While encounters are more sporadic, they've extended beyond the quick catch-up on church steps to something more meaningful.

There's no denying, these past three months have been a time of trial. Like a bolt from the blue, we've been forced to abandon routine, rewrite the script – or better, deepen our understanding of Scriptures



Fr Vincent Toal  
*St Michael's, Dumbarton*

which refute the oft-repeated claim that we are living in 'unprecedented' times.

In the earlier weeks of lockdown, social distancing and Hail Mary hand-washing, the Sunday readings seemed deliberately provocative – Jesus curing the blind man with spittle, the call to Lazarus to 'come out', the Risen Christ appearing to the disciples who are locked in through fear, and the constant refrain "Do not be afraid!". Great homily material, but alas no audience.

While our church was ill-equipped for livestreaming liturgies, parishioners are appreciative of the opportunities afforded by others to participate at Mass – even if some 'styles' are jarring or streams jamming! Plaudits are due, but I wouldn't get carried away expecting viewing hits to match Mass statistics. I hope the person who said she enjoyed following Mass with a glass of wine was only joking!

But is the glass at least half full? I was optimistic that the

pandemic might trigger a sea change, jolt us out of complacency and galvanise a true community spirit, recapture a shared missionary impetus.

There have been many admirable endeavours – fresh ideas and inspiring acts from younger generations, as well as well-established services and outreach from the St Vincent de Paul, Food For Thought and various social care networks.

Within our own community, St Michael's Primary, above all, has been a vital point of contact with families and young people, not only providing learning tools but making critical health and wellbeing interventions – and all under the radar.

As parish priest, I've not only missed the regular encounters with children and young people, but have become more concerned at the need to improve the channels of communication with our homes and families. Placing the onus for sacramental catechesis and faith formation on schools is not sufficient. The tools are

there, we've just got to be more confident and adventurous in using them.

If "returning to normal" means going back to the way we've always done things, then keep it! Where it is necessary, we should grasp the opportunities to drive home change, to rethink and refresh our pastoral vision.

While acts of altruism and the courage and commitment shown, above all, by the caring professions are rightly applauded, Catholics need to resume their place in the public square – not as lifeless statues, however! For too long, the slavish pursuit of profit, consumer culture and adherence to market-driven dogmas have gone unchallenged with devastating consequences for family and community life.

In his evocative Urbi et Orbi address in an empty, rain-swept St Peter's Square, Pope Francis reminded that "faith begins when we recognise our need or salvation".

On an uplifting note, he added: "How many people every day are exercising patience and offering hope, taking care to sow not panic but a shared responsibility."

"How many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday gestures, how to face up to and navigate a crisis by adjusting their routines, lifting their gaze and fostering prayer. How many are praying, offering and interceding for the good of all."

"Prayer and quiet service: these are our victorious weapons."

*"But Mousie, thou art no thy lane, In proving foresight may be vain: The best-laid schemes o' Mice an' Men, Gang aft' agley, An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain, For promis'd joy!"*

*(Robert Burns, To a mouse.)*

**I WONDER how many souls have reflected on these familiar words during the recent lockdown.**

Since 19th March our churches have been silent, without sacrament and congregation. Bereft of the community which gives it life.

There we were in the middle of Lent; parishes engaged in First Confessions, looking forward to

Easter and First Communion. Parish Priests meeting with engaged couples in preparation for their weddings. Diaries booked up for baptisms. And suddenly, like the emergency stop in the driving test, all came to a shuddering halt. It was an unusual situation for a parish priest. Daily routine curtailed. Contact with the parish community physically denied. What to do???

There is no doubt that we were all feeling the pain of separation and of concern for all who might be struggling with close confinement. To have a garden to sit in was a blessing so many were denied. But, as



Fr Michael Woodford  
*St Gabriel's*

Last May, after a slow decline, my mother died aged 93. Now that she had gone to join my father who died in 2012, my brother and I realised we were orphans. While I am glad that I had the privilege of celebrating my mother's funeral mass, nonetheless I freely admit the physical and emotional toll the previous eight months had taken out of me. Furthermore, in October I fell victim to shingles from my scalp to my neck. Not pleasant.

This time without routine could have been very empty. But I took the opportunity to delve into my mother's memorabilia: photos, remembrance cards, numerous rosary beads, newspaper articles, prayer books from the early 20th century. What a treasure trove there was!

I decided then to undertake a project. With the help of computer scanner and printer I determined to use the available quiet space to create a photo album of these memories.

It would not have been possible in normal times, the parish being so busy. But I am glad to say that I have now completed a first volume in memory of my parents.

I haven't forgotten my prayers or the celebration of the Mass, but without this personal time I don't believe I could have completed this project and found the healing and restoration it brought. Every cloud has a silver lining!



Canon Anthony Gallagher  
*St Catherine's*

**In the wake of great events there is usually talk of a legacy: what will remain after the event has passed?**

The past three months have been unique in that they have affected every person in society, no one has been spared from disruption, fear and difficulty.

As Catholics we have felt desolation most acutely in our separation from the sacraments, this will be a painful memory for all of us. However, as believers in Christ and His promises we are called to be a people of true hope. What then will be the positive memories and legacies of this negative reality?

As people we have experienced growth; I would suggest that there has been a growth in all of our lives in the past months (perhaps also in our waistlines). This growth has been of both a spiritual and collective nature.

Firstly, we have been made aware of what truly matters. As we have been denied

many of the superficial and unnecessary parts of daily life, we have come to realise what truly counts.

There has been a realignment, in many of our lives, of that which we truly need. Who has not reassessed their possessions, their spending and their priorities as we have spent endless days at home? We have also sought to put things in order: gardens, cupboards and driveways have never looked smarter.

Secondly, we have been given the grace to pray, to deepen our knowledge, and grow in our love of God. Many of us have had the opportunity to be present in beautiful churches and listen to inspiring and uplifting sermons with the help of technology. Experiences that six months ago, we would have deemed highly unlikely.

We have also been graced with time to deepen our relationship with the Lord in acknowledging our separation from him; we never want another Easter without the

grace of the sacraments and so our appreciation and love of them is all the stronger and more fervent.

Thirdly, we have experienced a deeper union with our families, our communities and those who have helped us. The ties that bind have become a cause of celebration and gratitude. For just as many had grown disillusioned with a colder and more impersonal world, we have had our hearts renewed with a deeper and more genuine civic spirit.

For those with a theological eye, they will note that in traditional theology there is a threefold process of God coming to live in us. The process of catharsis, illumination and unity brings us to a deeper share in God's life.

Our experience of lockdown seems to have followed that same pattern. May we who have walked this path in the past months now celebrate our growth with the sacraments, God life given to us.

# Fertility Care outreach

Some of Fertility Care Scotland's teachers at their AGM



**L**OCKDOWN has brought difficulties for families but also many blessings. People have found time to take a break from the hustle and bustle of daily life.

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Many have also used this time to learn about their fertility. Millions of women around the world use the Billings Ovulation Method®

BY **LUCILLE MCQUADE**  
CHAIRPERSON, FERTILITY CARE SCOTLAND

to either achieve or avoid pregnancy and to monitor and safeguard their reproductive health.

Our clinics are temporarily on hold, however our Teachers are waiting at the end of a phone and with the use of Fertility Pinpoint, the online charting software, written and developed by Billings Life in Australia and used by thousands around the

world, we can help women and couples find out about their fertility. The feedback we have received on our remote teaching is very positive and one delighted client achieved a much-wanted pregnancy. Our service is free, however donations are very welcome.

■ If you would like to get in touch with a Billings Teacher, contact Fertility Care Scotland on 0141 221 0858, or email [info@fertilitycare.org.uk](mailto:info@fertilitycare.org.uk)

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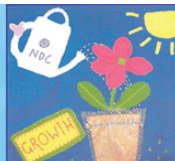
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The Notre Dame Centre is a registered charity which operates as a Company Limited by Guarantee with a Board of Directors.

Originally founded in 1931 in response to the demands of parents, educators and other professionals to address the complex needs of children and young people (pre-school to adolescent) experiencing emotional and psychological distress. We are based in the North of Glasgow and provide services to education, social work and NHS boards across Scotland.

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

Charity No. SC. 002851

**T**HE Notre Dame Centre is a registered charity which was established in 1931 by The Sisters of Notre Dame.

The Centre offers assessment and therapeutic support to children, young people and their families, who are experiencing emotional

and psychological distress due to trauma, abuse, loss or neglect. Based in North Glasgow, the service provides City wide support and accepts referrals from Education, Social Work and NHS CAMHS teams, as well as Kinship Care Support Groups. We provide a com-

bined model of support to both the child or young person and their parent or carer on a weekly basis. The staff team comprises The Head of Centre, Psychologists, Play and Art Therapists, Family Therapist, Social Workers and Admin support.

## Please help Mungo Foundation care

**A**CROSS our outreach, care at home, and care home services, our staff have been doing a fantastic job in very difficult circumstances.

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munities in new ways: helping to deliver thousands of free meals to those who are shielding / elderly; making countless care packages for people who are isolated and sending gifts to vulnerable children.

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In times of crisis communities come together to support the most vulnerable.

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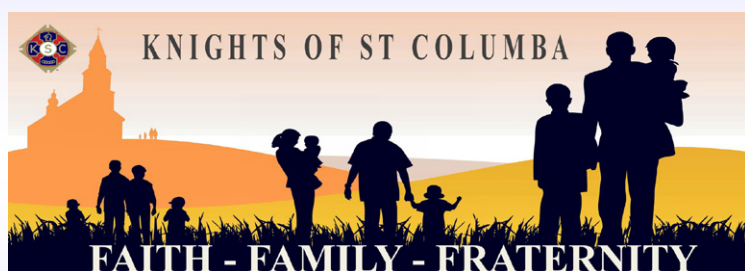
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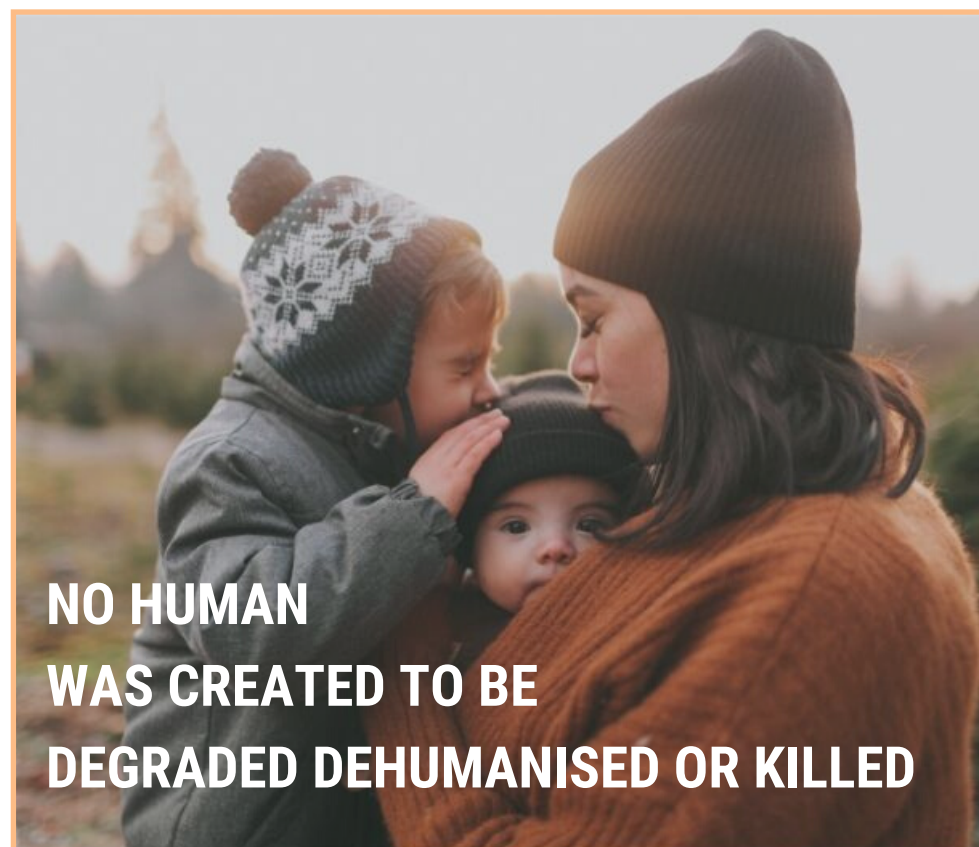

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Our membership cuts across people from different walks of life, who by dedication, share in the principles of Charity, Unity and Fraternity.

If you would like to donate to KSC please contact our head office in Glasgow.

## Help save the unborn

**D**URING the past few months, the world has battled to save and protect human life.

Despite this urge to defend lives, fresh advances have been made by the pro-abortion lobby to further radicalise abortion law to make killing babies easier.

Donations from our supporters are vital in allowing us to continue our work in protecting mothers and their children from the horror of abortion. We need your help, please consider making a donation to SPUC Scotland today.

## SSVP Conferences step up services during emergency

**S**INCE the lockdown started our Parish Conference has been kept busy. A poster was put on the door of the church with the SSVP mobile number and since then we have received many calls for help.

Visits have been made to the doorways of houses to deliver food and responded to requests for electricity by topping up electricity keys and handing them back in outdoor areas.

Telephone calls/text messages were made on a weekly basis to elderly parishioners and vulnerable families to check on their welfare

and to arrange delivery of hot meals every Wednesday courtesy of 1051 GWR restaurant on Great Western Road.

The Conference has dealt with calls from those suffering from mental health problems exacerbated by the Covid pandemic.

We have been blessed with generous donations to our conference.

We have established a WhatsApp group for the Conference which has allowed us to maintain contact with each other and continue our Conference meeting and spiritual reflections.

# Let Saint Matthew's Gospel call you to a greater knowledge of Jesus



Canon  
Robert  
Hill

**AT last we settle down to a continuous series of Gospel texts for the Sundays of the month ahead.**

For the first time since the Sunday before Lent began we have, with the exception of the first Sunday of the month, we will read gospel passages which not only succeed each other in the order they appear in Matthew's gospel, but which run from week to week without any omissions, unless short versions of the gospels are read – perish the thought! The location of these passages is significant, as is their number. They are from the third of the five discourses in the gospel of Matthew, presented as Jesus fulfilling the five books of Moses in the Old Testament – the first five books of the Bible itself, so number three sits right in the middle of the series. While we're 'doing numbers', there are seven parables in this section; another symbolic number denoting completion, perfection. It's hard to avoid the conclusion that these parables are, as set out by Matthew, central to the mission of Jesus.

Caravaggio, *The Calling of Saint Matthew* (1599–1600).



5  
JUL

Sunday 14 Year A.  
**Matthew 11:25–30**

Before we settle down to the series of parables, we have another famous text from Matthew's gospel; a short passage which is itself made up of two ideas. The first part is deeply theological to an extent that is not normally found in the synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke: in fact, it sounds more like a passage from the Gospel of John. Hence the title often given to this text and its equivalent in Luke: the Johannine 'Logion', or 'saying'. It explores the relationship between Jesus and God the Father. It begins with Jesus blessing (thanking?) the God he calls Father, Lord of heaven and earth for revealing the mysteries of God's kingdom – not to the learned and the influential, but to mere children. In an unusually well-developed theology for gospels other than John, Jesus says that God has revealed these mysteries, not to the great, the good or the powerful, but to mere children. The Pharisees would not like that! Next comes the statement which declares the equality of God the Father, and Jesus, God the Son. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one

knows the Father, except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. So, he declares that he and his Father are equal. This deals with the majesty of God, but it also leads to one of the most tender passages in this gospel: "Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light." In other words, the infinite majesty and power of God is expressed in rest, safety – security within the care of none other than God!

12  
JUL

Sunday 15 Year A.  
**Matthew 13:1–23**

The third of the five 'sermons' or 'discourses' in Matthew begins this weekend. This one consists entirely of parables, and each of these has something to do with the kingdom of God.

The first, and longest, is the parable of the sower, the only one to be found in Matthew, Mark and Luke. The parable of the mustard seed is found elsewhere, but with a different context and in-

terpretation from Matthew.

The parable itself is quite straightforward – the disciples' failure to understand notwithstanding! Reception of the word of God, like the germination of seed, depends very much on the conditions of reception. Just as seed will not germinate in poor soil; neither will the Word of God take root in a person who is not open to its reception.

Good soil allows a small seed to develop into a large plant which will give rise to more seeds, and more germination.

We can see how the image can help us reflect on our own response to the word of God. Like seed in soil, the word must be received in a fertile environment.

If that happens, and the seed germinate to give rise to young shoots and then mature plants, these will in turn release even more seed for germination.

The farmer will work to improve the yield of his crop; how do we work to improve the yield of our reception of the Word of God, and its subsequent transmission as we go about our work of witnessing to Jesus in the lives we live?

19  
JUL

Sunday 15 Year A.  
**Matthew 13:24–43**

The parables in Matthew chapter 13 may seem deceptively straightforward and easy to apply – so why then do we struggle to put them into practice? Perhaps it's their very simplicity which makes them so challenging. Three parables are up for consideration today. At first sight, they all seem deceptively simple, but there is a sting in the tail in each case. The first, about a man who sows good seed, but finds his crop seriously damaged by crops from the seed of a plant that initially looks like good wheat, but turns out to be a malicious weed. Should the weed be pulled out immediately? This sounds like a plan, but the darnel looks very like the wheat in the early stages of the growth of the crop, and to pull it up may do even more damage to the wheat harvest. Better to leave it until the harvest and a proper separation can take place. Good people often desire to eradicate all evil, but in its destruction, good can be damaged as well. Better, then, says Jesus, to leave the judgement of what (or who!) is good or bad to God.

After all, none of us can claim to be entirely good all the time! Parables three and four, about mustard seed and yeast, are usually interpreted as stories about the wonder of small seeds and little yeast bringing about much growth; but in the ancient world, yeast was avoided whenever possible because if introduced into bread, the leavened bread went mouldy very quickly. The mustard seed, far from being lauded, was the bane of farmers' lives, because it spread so quickly and was difficult to eradicate and it also destroyed other crops; but how do followers of Jesus resemble yeast and mustard seeds? Perhaps we too need to have nuisance value, challenging those who see importance only in power and wealth, as we bear witness to the only really important kingdom and its values – the kingdom of God.

26  
JUL

Sunday 16 Year A.  
**Matthew 13:44–52**

Parables are designed to provoke profound questions within us – not to provide quick and easy answers! This idea should be kept in mind throughout

this sermon, consisting of 7 parables. Today's gospel gives us the final three. The first two are deceptively simple, and they both pose unstated questions. The first is this: what would a man who discovered a huge treasure hidden in a field do about it? This man is quite clear in his actions – he sells everything he has and buys the field, treasure and all. In the world of these parables, anything contained in a field that has been purchased belongs to the new owner. No thought is given to the previous owner. He may be dead, he may have forgotten the treasure was there. None of this matters. The focus of the story is on the buyer and his determination to own the treasure, so he takes a huge risk, selling all he owns to raise the money. We have to hope that he doesn't have a wife and family to support! He will stop at nothing to ensure he gets to own that field and its treasure. The merchant who sees a pearl of great value sells everything he has to gain this pearl. In the time of Jesus pearls were the most precious commodity around. Again the focus is on the determination of the merchant.

A different type of determination is illustrated in the final parable – the dragnet. We have already heard of the disciples casting their nets in the lake – a rather inactive way of fishing – waiting for fish to get caught in a net thrown into the water. Dragnet fishing is a different matter. The fishermen/sailors need to move the boat as quickly as they can unless there is a wind to fill the sails of the boat. Either way, they are in for a lot of hard work!

The dragnet parable is like the wheat and the darnel. It is not the task of disciples to judge between good or bad, whether this has to do with wheat or fish. This is not to say that disciples are inactive. They are to use all their efforts to gather people into the kingdom of God, just like the fishermen trying to gather all sorts of fish into the net. Disciples are sent to go and invite everyone into the kingdom of God, but they must not differentiate between people. That job will be carried out at the end by God and God's angels. Judgement of others is not our concern, but hard work for the kingdom: that is our concern!

# Time for compassion for asylum seekers

The recent tragic incident in Glasgow City Centre has turned the spotlight on the harsh conditions suffered by asylum seekers. In this article the plight of those detained in detention centres is highlighted as the Church continues to campaign for more humane treatment for refugees and those seeking asylum

**UNDER Scottish law, few crimes are subject to 'indeterminate sentences' – sentences that do not have a set end point. The serious crimes that attract such sentences include murder and repeated rape.**

Current immigration laws, however, allow an innocent person denied the right to asylum to be detained without time limits. And so people who in their own countries have experienced poverty, the effects of climate change, conflict, even torture, may be locked away for an indeterminate time in a converted prison in rural Lanarkshire, surrounded by barbed wire and entered only with maximum security checks.

Immigration laws are determined by the West-

BY **MARIAN PALLISTER**  
VICE-CHAIR, JUSTICE & PEACE  
SCOTLAND

minster government, and this month, Bishop William Nolan, Bishop President of Justice and Peace Scotland and lead Bishop for migrants and refugees for the Bishops' Conference of Scotland, and Bishop Paul McAleenan, his counterpart in England and Wales, sought amendments to the immigration bill currently before parliament.

The Bishops' joint statement said: "The UK remains the only European country without a time limit on detention."

Justice and Peace Scotland has for many years been part of protests against Home Office policies at the

Scottish removal centre for asylum seekers at Dungavel in Lanarkshire – a centre which Bishop Nolan has described as "a blot on the Scottish landscape and a blot on Scottish society".

Bishop Nolan has spoken at Dungavel, decrying the injustice of the system, which he said was an example of the "hostile policy towards migrants".

## Hostile

Frances Gallagher, Justice and Peace Campaigns manager, and Margaret Donnelly, a Justice and Peace Commissioner who has protested at Dungavel for almost two decades, met with the Dungavel centre manager to discuss the situation there.

Frances said that although the security process felt hos-



tile, she and Margaret were able to negotiate some concessions, such as visits from a Catholic chaplain.

She said, "We would never agree that immigration detention is the correct way to treat those seeking sanctuary in Scotland. But until there is a change in the law and community alternatives to imprisonment for asylum seekers are adopted, then we must work together to ensure the best conditions for

those who have committed no crime yet are detained in prison."

One man who was detained in Dungavel said he had never been in prison before and that the experience "weakened me physically and mentally" – highlighting the Bishops' statement that detention without time limits has "devastating consequences for the wellbeing of vulnerable individuals who find themselves detained,

including some victims of torture, survivors of trafficking and people fleeing religious persecution."

Margaret Donnelly, veteran Dungavel protester, was saddened during her most recent visit to the removal centre to see detainees' artwork and learn about their baking skills. "Our thought was that this talent should not be in a detention centre but rather be free to be explored in the community."

**RECENTLY I had to conduct a funeral at the Linn Crematorium and since I wasn't too sure of the way, I Googled an AA route plan and left early to give myself time to get lost, and then to find my way again, as I often do.**

I suppose I should get myself a satnav but, as I have said before, I am a bit of a Luddite and prefer to take my chances.

I always think getting lost and finding the way again is a good metaphor for life. Despite the fact that part of the route suggested by the AA was now a new road layout, which confused me for a little while, I arrived at the Linn about 50 minutes too early.

A few weeks ago I arrived early at St Conval's cemetery in Barrhead for a burial and unexpectedly came upon the grave of my godmother, so this time I was a man on a mission.

The last time I was in the Linn was when I travelled home from Dublin in 2012 to conduct a service for my niece's stillborn child. She now has two lovely boys but at the time she and her husband had been longing for a child and they were distraught when the baby died, and we all felt for them so much.

With time to spare, and the sun shining, I crossed the road from the crematorium to the cemetery and went in search of the section that was reserved for babies and stillborn children. It didn't seem to be

## Getting lost in lockdown

signposted, and it's a very big cemetery, but I felt that I would find the wee one's grave if I was meant to, and so I did.

I spent a while in prayer, feeling quite emotional, then made my way back to the crematorium, still in time for the task in hand.

Prior to leaving for the Linn, someone had suggested an alternative route, avoiding the motorway, and so, on the way back, when I spotted a sign for City Centre/Gorbals, I realised this was the way I could have taken, and so I decided to give it a homeward try. It turned out a much better route except that, at one point, when I came to a fork in the road, I veered left when I should have veered right. I quickly spotted a short section of road that linked the two sides of the V, and so I made a right turn to get back on track.

Immediately I spotted that the arrows on the road were pointing towards me and that I was, in fact, driving the wrong way along a one-way street!

At that moment I was grateful for quiet lock-down traffic and was able to take swift remedial action. It wouldn't have happened if I had satnav!

Yet another metaphor for life, sometimes we are going in the wrong direction and need to turn around...



## Fr Frank's log

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

Father Justinian came home last Friday as expected, and seems to feel a wee bit better with every passing day, although he is very tired. The carers are coming in each day, as have family members who live within striking distance. The Ayrshire clan are just too far away, and of an age that makes it impossible for them to travel within the current restrictions.

However, Father Justinian is a great man for Facetime and other such means of communication, far better than I am, and so he keeps in touch that way, not just with Ayrshire, but with his two sisters in America, and friends in other parts of the world. Fair play to him.

Nothing new from Father Gareth, but Father Antony received a text message during the week, with a photograph attached, that has made us re-appraise his encounter with the cyclist on the Taff Trail.

It seems that Merthyr Town FC, the local team for Merthyr Tydfil, nicknamed the Martyrs, or the Red and

Greens, have just brought out a new away kit, which is in fact green and white horizontal stripes and, for all the world, unless you look very closely, it looks like a Celtic top. So, was this mystery cyclist on the Taff Trail, who called out Hail, Hail Father Gareth, while passing at great speed, really wearing a Celtic strip, or might he have been wearing the new Merthyr Town FC away strip? Will we ever know?

In recent weeks we have begun to take tentative steps towards a phased re-opening of churches, and are trying to plan ahead so as to have in place everything we need for when the time comes for Mass again. Certainly, we won't be getting back to normal, or even adopting the new normal, for a good while yet, but it may be that some possibility may happen soon. We are also trying to make sure we have the necessary number of volunteers in place to make it possible. So, as always, protect yourselves, protect others, and protect Christ in your life.

## JERICHO

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Or email: nunraw.abbot@yahoo.co.uk  
Scottish Charity No SC022611

# Maria's voice has been the song of hope in time of trial

**THE musical director of St Andrew's Cathedral Choir has spoken of her great privilege at being the lone singer during the past three months of live streamed Sunday Masses celebrated by Archbishop Tartaglia.**

Soloist Maria Madden and principal organist Steve Rance remain socially distanced in the choir loft and are never seen during the broadcasts.

But as Maria said: "We hope that providing music at Mass enables those watching online to come closer to Jesus and helps to enhance their enjoyment and understanding of each week's liturgy."

"It has been a great privilege to be given this task during this time and we do not take our position for granted."

"We are aware of how very lucky we are, being able to attend Mass each Sunday, pray with the Archbishop and receive the body of Christ at a time when others are unable to do so."

Recalling the Easter Vigil, when the choir would normally have provided the music, Maria said: "We had already put the music programmes together with the choir in mind but with a little tweaking we rearranged the hymns, psalms and Mass parts to suit a solo singer/organist."

"It was a strange and surreal journey into the Cathedral on the night of the Easter Vigil as the roads were so quiet. Walking into the empty Cathedral felt odd and unfamiliar and yet, it was as if we had never been away and it was simply wonderful to sit for a few minutes at the Blessed Sacrament and offer up a prayer before we headed upstairs to the choir loft."

"And although the Easter Vigil is the most joyful of all the Church's liturgical celebrations, we felt a melan-

BY BRIAN SWANSON

choly, a sadness that no-one else was there to celebrate with us in person – our choir could only listen, watch and hopefully join in from home via the live streaming service.

"There was no congregation, lighting their candles, renewing their baptismal vows, no-one being baptised or confirmed and we felt a keen sense of how fortunate we were to be there, representing all those who could not be – praying with and for them."

## Together

Since the last choral Mass in the Cathedral on March 15, shortly before lockdown, members of the 32-strong choir have been keeping in touch via Zoom and other forms of social media.

They also plan to remotely produce a CD of some of their best loved hymns and psalms to be sold for choir funds.

Maria said: "It is likely that the cantor and organist-only arrangement will endure for some time even after the Churches are permitted to re-open for public Masses as there is some dubiety about when choirs can safely return to sung rehearsals and worship."

"Until that great day, we are simply keeping the choir's seats warm for them until we will all be together again."

Picture by Paul McSherry



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

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**Teresa Bernadette (nee Grace)**  
who died July 6 1980  
and our much loved sister  
**Marie Veronica**  
who died July 20 2004.  
Loved and remembered always.  
Leo, Paul and Angela

# UK Government's plans will hit the poorest hardest

**THE Prime Minister's recent announcement that he will abolish the Department For International Development (DFID) by merging it with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) demeans our country.**

It will hurt people who live in extreme poverty, reduce the effectiveness and value for money of the UK's aid and undermine Britain's international standing.

A global pandemic the likes of which we've not seen in our lifetime is tearing through the world's poorest communities, threatening to reverse decades of development gains. UK Aid is more critical than ever, and it's essential to ensure the focus remains on fighting poverty and reaching those in greatest need.

Boris Johnston has made clear his intention to use aid to further Britain's national interests – a clear violation of the primary purpose of aid which is to alleviate poverty! This will blunt the impact of aid on those most in need, and risks more people suffering and dying as a result.

DFID and the FCO must not be subordinate to our foreign and commercial policies. Aid priorities must primarily tackle extreme poverty, not promote national interests.

The Prime Minister should, of course, be congratulated for maintaining the Government's commitment to spending 0.7% of gross national income on overseas development assistance. That said, SCIAF is deeply concerned about how this money may now be used and that it will now be diverted away



**Alistair Dutton**

SCIAF Chief Executive

from the world's poorest people to states where we have security concerns.

This merger comes without proper consultation, not least with the UK's international development and humanitarian sector, and only days after the International Development Committee published a new report praising DFID's achievements and calling for MPs to support it as a standalone department.

The changes also circumvent the Government's Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, subjecting Whitehall to bureaucratic engineering without a vision or strategy, let alone concrete policy, to orientate or guide it.

Scotland is outward-looking and internationalist by tradition and inclination. This merger is likely to be deeply unpopular and SCIAF's own supporters will be gravely concerned. Scots workers also play a key role in providing life-saving aid around the world through the DFID office in East Kilbride.

The move could not come at a worse time. According to World Bank forecasts COVID-19 threatens to push an extra 100 million people into extreme poverty, while the climate emergency continues to threaten the lives and livelihoods of those who have done least to cause it. It also comes fewer than 200 days before we

leave the EU.

Aligning overseas aid under our foreign policy

creates the extreme danger that it will be used to win favour with possible allies.

For DFID to function effectively and to serve its purpose of reducing poverty and inequality in some of the world's poorest countries, it must remain an independent department that is represented in Cabinet by its own Secretary of State.



**■ SCIAF is working as part of part of the international development and humanitarian sector to resist this merger, and you can help too. Visit [www.sciaf.org.uk/campaigns](http://www.sciaf.org.uk/campaigns) to find out how to contact your MP and urge the Government to keep DFID independent.**



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