

FLOURISH

Official Journal of the Archdiocese of Glasgow June 2022

Archbishop: God will never abandon us



GLASGOW'S 'new Catholics' were welcomed to the Cathedral on Pentecost Sunday by Archbishop Nolan.

The Archbishop met many of those who were baptised or received into full communion with the Catholic Church at Easter.

And his message was ... God will never abandon you!

He said: "Sometimes we feel alone at times of crisis. But the Spirit of God is always there with us no matter what we have to face. We need to remember that God never abandons us. He is with us always."

"God has chosen you but also commissioned you to bring His love to the world. He gives us the same Holy Spirit that was in Jesus which inspires us and empowers us to do good."



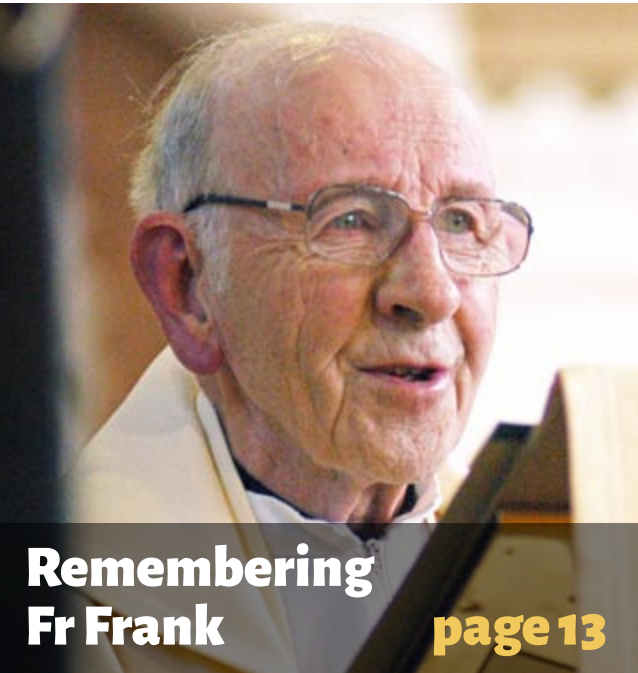
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Mgr Jim's poetic licence aids the hospice

A BOOKLET of meditative verses compiled by retired priest Mgr James Ryan of St Andrew's Bearsden which brought comfort to many during lockdown and raised much needed funds for St Margaret's Hospice, Clydebank been so successful it has sold out!

The verses were originally published individually in the parish bulletin after a recently-widowed parishioner suggested they would help those who felt isolated during the pandemic and unable to attend Mass in person.

But the verses became so popular that parish priest Fr Joe Mackle decided to have the meditations published in a booklet, with the proceeds going to the hospice.

Mgr Ryan, who recently celebrated his 85th birthday, said: "When the parishioner first approached us, Fr Markle said, 'we have the very man here – Fr Ryan is a philosopher', so you can say he volunteered me!"

"I'm not a philosopher of course but I was happy



BY BRIAN SWANSON

to help. I have always loved poetry, from childhood so many of the ones I picked are those I have known all my life and they all mean something to me."

The poems chosen by Monsignor Ryan are accompanied by his interpretation of them and the lessons they can teach the reader written in an easy-to-follow style.

Mgr Ryan, a former parish priest at St Peter's in Partick and who was spiritual director of the Royal Scots College in Salamanca between 1983 and 1990, took his inspiration from a cross section of verses including Daffodils by Wil-

liam Wordsworth, The Owl and the Pussy Cat by Edward Lear, Stop All The Clocks by WH Auden – which featured in the movie Four Weddings and a Funeral – and The Naming of Cats by TS Elliot, which inspired the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical Cats.

Other writers who featured in the booklet included poets Rupert Brooke, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and the 4th-century saint and Doctor of the Church St Augustine of Hippo.

The collection also includes a poem called Hebridean Altars by a Church of Scotland minister Rev Alistair MacLean, whose son, also called Alistair was bestselling author of Guns of Navarone and who taught for a time as a teacher in Stonelaw High School, Rutherglen.

Monsignor Ryan added: "People seem to like them. I'm not on social media or anything like that but I'm told there's been a very good reaction and I am delighted that the hospice benefited as well."

Archbishop announces clergy changes

ARCHBISHOP Nolan has announced his first clerical personnel changes since taking over earlier this year, making the following appointments.

Among the changes, the Cathedral is to have a new Administrator.

The Archbishop said he was very grateful to those involved for their readiness to accept a new office.

Father **LEN PURCELL** steps down as parish priest of Saint Flannan's, Kirkintilloch and Saint John of the Cross, Twechar, to take up a ministry in hospital chaplaincy.

Father **STEPHEN HANNAH**, currently parish priest of Holy Family and Saint Ninian's, Kirkintilloch becomes parish priest of Saint Joseph's Tollcross and Saint Joachim's, Carmyle.

• Canon **GERARD TAGLIA**, currently parish priest of Saint Margaret's and Our Holy Redeemer



BY RONNIE CONVERY

parishes in Clydebank becomes parish priest of

the parishes of Holy Family and Saint Ninian and Saint Flannan's, Kirkintilloch, and Saint John of the Cross, Twechar. In due course an assistant priest will also be appointed to these parishes.

Canon **ANDREW MCKENZIE**, currently parish priest of Saint Joseph's, Tollcross and Saint Joachim's, Carmyle, becomes Administrator of

Saint Andrew's Metropolitan Cathedral.

Canon **GERALD SHARKEY**, currently Administrator of the Cathedral, becomes parish priest of Saint Margaret's and Our Holy Redeemer's, Clydebank.

These appointments are all effective from 2nd September 2022.

Father **CHIEDOZIE (CHIDO) EZERIBE** (Diocese of Minna, Nigeria) has been appointed to Saint Andrew's Cathedral.

Holyrood pupils' Rosary trip to Knock

A GROUP of first year pupils from the rosary group at Holyrood Secondary School are taking part in a pilgrimage later this month to Knock Shrine, County Mayo, where Our Lady, St Joseph and St John the Evangelist appeared to villagers on the night of August 21st 1879.

Since then, the Marian Shrine in the small rural community, where descendants of those who saw the apparition still live, has attracted millions of visitors and has been honoured by the visit of two Popes.

Now it is the turn of the young pupils from Holyrood to experience the pilgrimage for themselves.

Sponsored by the St Nicholas Care Fund, the Archdiocesan charity founded by the late Cardinal Tom Winning and with a donation from the Knights of St Columba, the trip has been organised by RE teacher Martin Mann, who also set up the rosary group at the school.

He said: "I had asked Mrs Watson our Head Teacher for permission to organise this trip for some of the pupils who form the rosary group. She was delighted to support us, especially in



light of the restrictions on travel that we have all suffered during the pandemic.

"The boys and girls are very much looking forward to travelling to Ireland as are my two colleagues who have volunteered to help us make this possible.

"We could not have done it without the support of the St Nicholas Care Fund and the Knights of St Columba and we are very grateful to them. Most of the children joining us have never been to Ireland before so they are very excited.

"While we are there we will continue to pray for our school community, families and friends – something the rosary group dedicate every Monday lunchtime to

doing".

Francesca Lally, a first year pupil, said: "Praying the rosary every Monday was a good way for some of my friends and me to say our prayers and think about those who need our help.

"We had a rosary group at primary and it was nice to join this when we started high school. There were also some people who joined that didn't really know anyone at the school so they joined our group of friends."

During their stay the youngsters will climb Croagh Patrick, a site of pilgrimage associated with Ireland's patron saint, and later be given a tour of the Gaelic Football stadium Celtic Park in Derry City.

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Synod report to be presented at Corpus Christi Vespers

THE findings of countless discussion and listening sessions in preparation for the Synod of Bishops called by Pope Francis on the future of the Church will be presented later this month to Archbishop Nolan.

Currently deaneries are summarising the parish responses and the nine deaneries plus primary and secondary school responses, along with submissions sent privately, will be synthesised on June 11 by a team of representatives from each deanery.

The aim is to come up with a diocesan submission which represents the views of those who took part in the synod process.

The completed synthesis will be presented to the Archbishop in St Andrew's Cathedral on the Feast of Corpus Christi during sung evening prayer at 7pm on Sunday 19th June.

Fr John Campbell, parish priest of Sacred Heart and St Lucy's Cumbernauld said:

"The synod experience has been very positive and allowed us to put into practice Pope Francis' invitation

BY **RONNIE CONVERY**

to be a listening Church, listening also to views that are not always easy to hear.

"Now that this phase of the process is over, I would want to emphasise that all are welcome to this diocesan celebration on the Feast of Corpus Christi. No-one is excluded. It is open to all and should be a fitting conclusion to this first stage of the process."

Among the themes which emerged in the listening sessions were:

- A great love for the Church even from people who have felt hurt by the Church
- The difficulty in communication within parishes – perceptions are more important than facts
- The need for a more even distribution of power with parishes
- Ensuring access to the Tridentine Mass
- Need for clearer understanding of the role of divorced and separated people in the Church
- Need for a more welcoming attitude to LGBT people

and recognition that this is an issue for many families

- The question the role of women in influential positions in church – including the issues of ordination of female deacons/priests

The Glasgow submission will form part of a bigger contribution from the Bishops' Conference of Scotland, which will in turn feed into the Europe-wide findings ahead of the Synod of Bishops in Rome in autumn 2023.



News and views for

FLOURISH

Editor: Flourish@rcag.org.uk

PRAYER

Dear heart of Jesus, in the past I have asked many favours. This time I ask a special one (mention favour). Take it dear heart of Jesus and place it within your heart where your father sees it, then with his merciful eyes it will become your favour, not mine.

Amen

Say it three times for three days and your favour will be granted.

Never known to fail, must promise publication of prayer.

Back to school for TV's Paul

GLASGOW-BORN broadcaster Paul Coia, whose voice was the first to be heard when Channel 4 launched, has been welcomed back to his native city and inducted into the Old Aloysian Hall of Fame at his former school.

Paul, 66, who left St Aloysius College in 1973, is a broadcaster, journalist, and presentation coach, and has been given the honour for his services to broadcasting and communications.

During his student days he volunteered with the Glasgow Hospital Broadcasting Service where he was trained in broadcasting, and a year later began working for Radio Clyde.

During his career, Paul has won the prestigious Scottish Radio Personality of the Year trophy. He is the holder of a Webby Live Broadcast award, came runner up in The Golden Rose of Montreux TV Festival, and was nominated for a BBC Gillard trophy.

Paul currently presents weekly shows for BBC Radio London and BBC Radio Berkshire.



BY **BRIAN SWANSON**

His chat show, Meet Paul Coia, ran for four series in Scotland before he joined the BBC and presented the network shows Pebble Mill, Catchword, and Tricks of The Trade amongst others. He has now broadcast on all

five terrestrial channels as well as satellite TV.

As well as being patron of several charities, he is a director of Radio Scarborough, a community station staffed by volunteers and he contributes programmes to Hospital Radio Service Glasgow.

St Aloysius' Headmaster, Matthew Bartlett, said: "It has been a huge pleasure to celebrate Paul's achievements through his hall of fame induction.

"It was fantastic to watch him inspire a new generation of pupils with his life stories."

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Cathedral throws open its doors



ANOTHER step towards normality!

St Andrew's Cathedral will now be open from 9.30am each morning for private visits and prayer. It will close after the last

Mass of the day – currently 6pm Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday and 2pm Tuesday–Thursday.

Why not pop in for a moment of reflection?



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Vatican honour for Glasgow book

A NEW book, 'born' in Glasgow and 'blessed' in Rome has been launched at the city's University ahead of a Vatican launch later this year.

Reclaiming the Piazza III is the final part of a trilogy edited by Glasgow University lecturer Dr Leonard Franchi and the Archdiocese's Director of Communications Ronnie Convery. In this final collection of essays they were joined by the founder of Catholic Voices UK, Jack Valero.

The book has a forward by Archbishop Rino Fisichella, the President of the Vatican Department charged with evangelisation and the preparation of the next Holy Year in 2025.

Reclaiming the Piazza III, which took several years to write, seeks to show that Catholic culture has something positive to contribute to all areas of life ... thus there are chapters on what Catholic culture has to say to the worlds of fashion, architecture, journalism, economics, politics, film, art and so on.

It ends with a delightful reflection on food, faith and family by Glasgow restaur-

ant owner Giovanna Eusebi in which she writes movingly of her late father.

According to publishers, Gracewing, the book "is a timely contribution, showing how the Catholic theological tradition in its perennial wisdom engages with, and helps redress, the challenges of our times. In its content and collaborative approach, this book models the very kind of bridge building it identifies as a fundamental characteristic of the New Evangelisation."

Archbishop Rino Fisichella



Left to right: Giovanna Eusebi, Ronnie Convery, Leonard Franchi, Jack Valero

Among the contributors are well-known local writers Professor Bob Davis and Professor Stephen McKinney of Glasgow University, both of whom have written extensively about Catholic schools.

They are joined by an international cast of writers including Daniel Arasa and Giovanni Tridente from Rome's Santa Croce University, Tim O'Malley from No-

tre Dame University in the US and Fr Andrew Pinsent from Oxford University.

The book has a conclusion penned by the Vatican's Bishop Paul Tighe, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Culture.

Leonard Franchi told *Flourish*: "The whole 'Reclaiming the Piazza' project began when Ronnie [Convery] and I attended a seminar in Rome with Dr Raymond Mc-

Cluskey. We came away impressed by the efforts being made by the Church in Italy to dialogue with modern culture from a position of mutual respect rather than condemnation.

"Over the years the need for dialogue has been growing, and the new book is an attempt to show that the Church has a positive contribution to make to all areas of society, bringing the wis-

dom and insights of faith to the modern world.

"We have also set up a website to carry the project forward – we can't keep on producing more and more volumes. We will run out of piazzas!"

Already, ahead of the launch, the book has drawn acclaim. Fr John Paul Sheridan of Maynooth Pontifical University in Ireland wrote a powerful review for *The Furrow*.

He said: "The editors suggest that for 'the modern Catholic Christian there should be no 'no go' areas in human culture. This is an essential feature of the New Evangelisation'. Each chapter warrants a deep and considered engagement on the part of the reader and the notes and bibliography for each chapter will give plenty of opportunities for further study. That is in fact true of each of the volumes. The footnotes are comprehensive, and the reading material cited and recommended would keep even the most avid reader engaged indefinitely".

■ The website is www.reclaimingthepiazza.com

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Archbishop slams injustice in Holy Land

BY **RONNIE CONVERY**

ARCHBISHOP Nolan has spoken out against injustices and violence in the Holy Land after a visit to the area.

The Archbishop was part of a delegation of European bishops who met local people, religious and political leaders during their week-long mission.

At the conclusion of their visit, they issued a statement which expressed their powerful support for the family of a young female journalist who was shot last month.

Videos obtained by CNN, corroborated by testimony from eyewitnesses, and a weapons expert, suggest that Shirleen Abu Akleh was shot dead in a targeted attack by Israeli forces.

The Archbishop and his bishop colleagues visited the journalist's closest relatives to express their condolences and solidarity. Later they issued a statement saying, "We experienced the deep sorrow and anger felt by local Christians at the killing of Palestinian Catholic journalist Shirleen Abu Akleh and the shameful attack on mourners at her funeral."

They added: "Many of



Archbishop Nolan meets relatives of Shirleen Abu Akleh

those we encountered are facing violence and intimidation by settler groups, restrictions on their freedom of movement, or separation from their families because of the status they are assigned.

"We share the concerns expressed by the Christian community about unilateral restrictions on freedom of worship during Easter, imposed by the Israeli police."

"We witnessed how many people of all backgrounds are living in poverty, which has been compounded by the



pandemic. The absence of pilgrims during the past two years has devastated livelihoods, including among Jerusalem's Christian community, leaving some families struggling to afford housing,

food, or other essentials".

They also called for Jerusalem to remain an open city welcoming all faiths.

They said: "Jerusalem is a Jewish city, a Christian city, a Muslim city. It must re-

main a common patrimony and never become the exclusive monopoly of any one religion.

"We came to meet and pray with our sisters and brothers, mindful of Patriarch Pizzaballa's message that it is our right and duty as Christians to uphold the city's openness and universality."

"The Christian community is essential to Jerusalem's identity, both now and for the future. Yet its continued presence is threatened by occupation and injustice."

"Amid these challenges, there are nevertheless signs of hope. We visited Christian organisations taking responsibility for the well-

being of their community and wider society. They are working tirelessly to alleviate hardship and improve lives."

"We met young people who, despite facing daily violations of their fundamental human rights, refuse to be the last generation of Christians in the city."

"Pope Francis affirms the universal value of Jerusalem, which goes beyond any consideration of territorial issues."

"Inspired by Christ our Peace, all Christians must help preserve the city's sacred character and promote an authentic vision for Jerusalem as a place of dialogue and unity".

Walfrid story ready to be told

THE world's first PhD to examine in comprehensive detail the life of Brother Walfrid, man of God, Marist Religious, champion of the poor and globally revered as the founder of Celtic been completed and is ready to be shared with the worldwide family of fans.

Glasgow University post graduate student, and life-long Celtic fan, Michael Connolly who has spent five years of painstaking study into the man born Andrew Kerins in County Sligo in 1840, is now planning to write a book about his research which will contain many new facts about the club's founder who arrived in Glasgow aged just 15.

When he was 24 he joined the Marist teaching order, took the name by which generations would know him and devoted the rest of his life to working with the poor in some of the worst slums in Europe. He died in Dumfries in 1915, aged 74.

Michael, 31, whose research was funded by the Glasgow arts group Nine Muses, said: "When I started this research I said I felt blessed to have the opportunity to really get to know

BY **BRIAN SWANSON**

Brother Walfrid and now that it's finished I can definitely say that I still feel that way.

"It really has been a huge privilege."

As well as spending countless hours poring over books, newspaper articles, and substantial material from Celtic's own extensive library, Michael also travelled to Walfrid's birthplace in Ballymote, County Sligo where he interviewed a number of his relatives.

Recalling his meeting with them Michael said: "His grandnieces, Ann Maguire, Frances Healy and Margaret McGee were all very generous in giving me their time by offering their own insights into aspects of the

family history and recounting tales of helping out on the old Kerins farm. They spoke of their pride in what one of their direct relatives had gone on to achieve after departing Ireland in 1855."

Michael also spent some time with the Marist community in Lyon.

The research was carried out through Stirling University where he now teaches and will receive his doctorate when he graduates on June 29th.

He said: "It's been quite a journey – but as the famous song goes says I never walked alone, and there are so many people I want to thank for their help and encouragement over the past five years, especially Dr Bradley from the university who monitored me from the

start, everyone at Celtic and the fans who got in touch with all sorts of information and of course Nine Muses for their funding."

Michael's PhD supervisor, Dr Joseph Bradley, said, "There were a few very worthwhile candidates to carry out this PhD by research. Michael grabbed the opportunity and, along with Emma O'Neill of Nine Muses, who provided the financial support required to do such a study. I've never had any concerns Michael would successfully get to this end point, but also, a starting point too of sorts. His work is ground-breaking and more. It will be inspiring for many people in terms of Catholic education, charity, Christian evangelisation and sense of Mission. A monumental work is in the offing."

■ **Michael is one of several contributors to Dr Bradley's new book *Celtic Minded 5* described as a series of essays on Celtic, football culture and identities, published by Argyll Publishing priced £15. For more details visit <https://www.thirstybooks.com/bookshop/celtic-minded-5>**

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Painting focuses on blessing of bread

FRENCHMAN, Pascal-Adolphe-Jean Dagnan, having been born in 1852, died at the age of 77. He added Bouveret to his surname as he was raised mostly by his grandfather.

In the latter years of his life, probably influenced both by his devout wife and the Catholic Revival in France, he increasingly turned his attention to religious themes.

His most famous religious painting was of the Last Supper but I have chosen a rather sweet little piece entitled *Le Pain Bénit* sometimes referred to in English as The Sacramental (Blessed) Bread.

He was probably aware of an earlier work by Léon Henri Antoine Loire of the same title but set not in a church but rather in an elegant Café de Paris.

There was, in days gone by, particularly in France and in French Québec, a Catholic custom of the priest blessing bread brought by the Faithful which, after Mass, was distributed to them by the altar server to consume or even to take home to share with those who were unable to come to Mass.

BY MGR TOM MONAGHAN

This was a sacramental, a sacred sign, different from the Holy Eucharist. The bread was simply blessed but not consecrated and, therefore, was not the Body and Blood of Christ. This tradition was especially treasured by those who had been unable to receive Holy Communion. Look at the painting. The “Grand-mère” with unseeing eyes reaches for the basket with aged hands. The ladies, are reverently bowing and all covering their heads with bonnets except for the young red-headed girl who, with dangling and booted feet might be looking at the boy rather than the basket! Perhaps she is the boy’s sister since they both have similarly coloured hair!

There are signs of dampness in the ancient walls of the church. No plasterers or carpenters present who could have fixed the walls. Only the server is decked in colour looking like a boy-bishop with his spotless lace surplice and white-clothed basket.



Pascal Dagnan Bouveret, *Le Pain Bénit*, 1885

PRAYER OF THE MONTH

Let us Pray: May sharing at the heavenly table sanctify us, Lord, we pray, so that through the Body and Blood of Christ, the whole family of believers may be bound together. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Eternal city beckons for Glasgow youth

YOUNG Catholics across the Archdiocese will travel to Rome later this month for a pilgrimage of faith ... with a dose of fun thrown in too.

Organised by the Archdiocesan Youth Office the trip will see the 20 young adults, led by Youth Office Director Canon Gerry Tartaglia, visit the great Papal basilicas, the catacombs where the first Christians worshipped and some of Rome’s most famous sites.

It is hoped the young people will also be able to meet up with the Archbishop who will be travelling to Rome at the end of the month to join other newly-appointed archbishops from around the world to celebrate Mass with the Pope on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul.

Mairi-Claire McGeedy, Youth Office Co-ordinator, told *Flourish*: “The young adults are all in the 18–30 age group and are very much looking forward to the trip. Each day will have a different theme with differ-



ent highlights.

“The plan is to focus on a different kind of prayer each day ... adoration, the rosary, lectio divina, the divine office and meditation so as to give our young pilgrims an experience of the richness of the prayer traditions of the Church.

“Similarly, there will be a different theme each day – Jesus, the Church, the Eucharist, Our Lady and Mission. Canon Tartaglia will be the spiritual guide each day and his knowledge of the eternal city will also come in handy for some of the practical arrangements.

“We hope to meet up with



the Archbishop at the end of the trip as he arrives for the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul. It would be a great way to round off the group’s Roman trip.”

Later in the summer the Youth Office is organising a five day trip for younger people. Around 35 teenagers are expected to travel south to Alton Castle in Birmingham Archdiocese to take part in a Camp for secondary school pupils. There they will meet up with other young people from across the UK for a time of activities, bonding

and growth in faith.

And plans are taking shape for a large contingent of young people from the Archdiocese to take part in next year’s World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal which is scheduled for August 1–6 2023.

Registration will open in September for the WYD pilgrimage but anyone seeking advance information or who might be able to offer some financial sponsorship to help a young person attend is asked to contact the Youth Office at youth@rcag.org.uk



ALTHOUGH cardinals of the Catholic Church have many responsibilities, nothing they'll ever do is more important than electing the next pope. As a result, every time a sitting pope announces a new crop of cardinals, one key question is what impact the selections appear to have on the next conclave whenever it might come.

With regard to the 21 new cardinals Pope Francis announced last month, including 16 under 80 and thus eligible to vote for the next pope, the question appears simultaneously easier and maddeningly more difficult to answer.

To begin with the easy part, it seems clear that, in the main, the 16 new electors are largely Francis loyalists, meaning prelates who share the pope's broadly progressive vision. That's certainly true of the new American cardinal, for instance, Robert McElroy of San Diego, considered one of the staunchest liberals in the U.S. bishops' conference.

Indeed, in several instances Francis seems to have bypassed important archdioceses traditionally led by cardinals in favor of smaller venues in the same neighborhood, with the common denominator being that those smaller places are led by his allies.

McElroy was given the red hat instead of Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles, among the largest and most complex archdioceses in the world, one that's been led by a cardinal since 1953, and which is only about 120 miles away. Yet while McElroy is seen as a staunch liberal in church politics, Gomez is usually perceived as more conservative.

One can see the same pattern with the choice of Bishop Peter Okpaleke of Ekwulobia, Nigeria, over Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama of the national capital of Abuja, and also the selection of Bishop Oscar Cantoni of Como in Italy over Archbishop Mario Delpini of Milan. Como, the much smaller venue, is less than 30 miles from the sprawling metropolis of Milan.

The bottom line is these picks seem to boost the prospects for a "continuity" vote in the next conclave, meaning someone cut from the same cloth as Francis.

Mathematics reinforce that supposition, since as of August 27, when the consistory takes place in Rome, Francis will have named 83 out of 132 total voting-age cardinals at that point. That's extremely close to the 87 cardinals it would require to achieve a two-thirds vote, should all 132 of those electors actually take part in a conclave.

Pope's choice of new cardinals reflection of changing times

However, a caveat is in order: The last conclave was populated with John Paul II and Benedict XVI appointees and yet they elected Francis, so anything is possible.

On the "harder to handicap" side of the ledger, most observers also would say there's no obvious new papabile, meaning candidate to be the next pope, in this crop of cardinals. Had Francis named the 63-year-old Kaigama, for instance, cardinals seeking to break with the current regime might have looked to him as a sort of "center-right" alternative, with the additional cachet of being the first pope from sub-Saharan Africa.

To take another alternative, had Francis selected Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Ukraine's Greek Catholic Church, he immediately would have figured in speculation about the next conclave – not only because he would represent a sympathy vote in Ukraine's conflict with Russia, but because Shevchuk is seen as a formidable churchman in his own right.

(Granted, there's an ecclesiological argument to be made that Eastern prelates shouldn't become cardinals because it's an office of the Latin church, but that's never stopped popes from offering the red hat before, or, for that matter, stopped Eastern prelates from accepting.)

It's also true that at least a handful of these new cardinals might face challenges as papal candidates on the basis of their track record on clerical sex abuse cases. Cantoni from Como, for example, was investigated by civil authorities in Italy in 2008 for allegedly covering up an abuse charge while he was the vicar for clergy, and again in 2017 he was interviewed on an Italian TV program about his role in allegedly covering up abuse in a Vatican pre-seminary sponsored by the Como diocese.

Cardinal-designate Fernando Vérgez Alzaga, meanwhile, who serves as president of the Vatican City State, is also a member of the Legion of Christ, and some might worry his standing could be compromised by links to the order's founder, the late Mexican Father Marcial Maciel Degollado, who was found



caption
BY JOHN L ALLEN JR
EDITOR OF CRUX

guilty of abuse by the Vatican in 2006.

Perhaps the basic reason, however, that this crop of cardinals makes anticipating the outcome of the next conclave more difficult is because so many of the picks are relative unknowns, in keeping with Francis's broad policy of reaching out to the peripheries.

It's exceedingly difficult to project how the new cardinal from, say, Mongolia, is likely to vote in the next conclave, or from East Timor, or the first Indian cardinal from the Dalit underclass.

(Some observers believe the policy of distributing red hats to the peripheries may favor the candidacy of Cardinal Matteo Zuppi of Bologna, seen as a strong Francis ally and also a product of the Community of Sant'Egidio, which has long had a presence in many of these far-flung locations. It was Zuppi, for instance, who helped negotiate the Mozambique peace accords that ended the country's civil war in 1992, which gives

him strong "street cred" in the region. That, however, is just one hunch among many.)

Moreover, the fact that so many of Francis's cardinals come from far-away locales and are men who don't often make the scene in Rome means the cardinals today are relative strangers to one another. One veteran Vatican cardinal recently said that in the last conclave, he estimated he knew personally about two-thirds of the participants – were it to happen again today, he said, he'd know only about a third.

The COVID-19 pandemic obviously complicated things too, as it made international travel difficult for almost two years, meaning the opportunities for cardinals to interact in person were far more limited. In addition to discussing a recent reform of the Roman curia, presumably another reason Francis has asked all the world's cardinals to gather in Rome for this consistory and then a couple days of meetings is to allow them to begin to get to know one another.

This lack of familiarity suggests a good share of the electorate the next time around will be learning as they go, as opposed to arriving in Rome with preferences already set. That reality could augur one of two outcomes – either a protracted conclave because of the difficulties in achieving consensus across such a diverse set of personalities, or a quick one because many of these novice cardinals will simply follow the lead of someone they trust to know the lay of the land.

In other words, we just don't know how it will play out ... which, of course, is part of the adventure of it all.

From the beginning, Pope Francis has scrambled the traditional calculus in the Catholic Church in all sorts of ways. Perhaps it's only right and just, therefore, that his picks for the next conclave also seem destined to keep us guessing.

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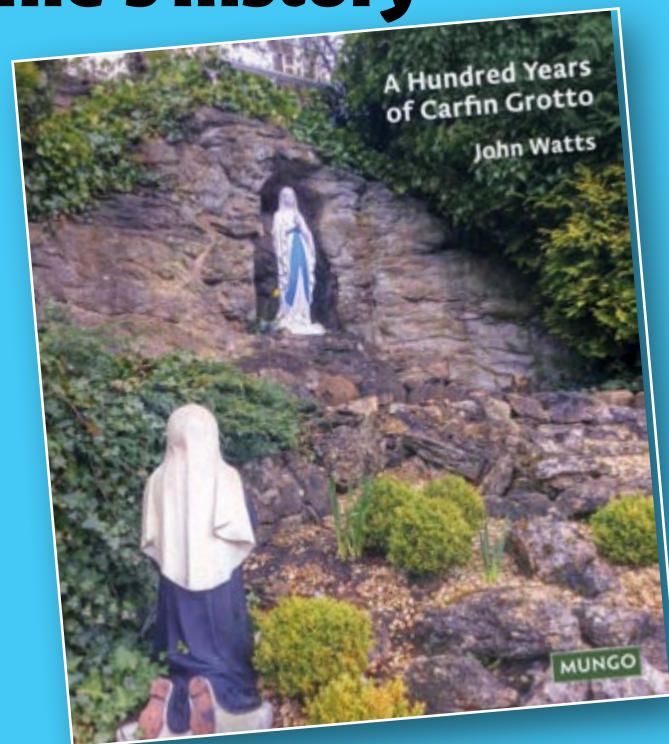
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100 YEARS OF CARFIN GROTTO

‘Scotland’s Lourdes’ looks back – and forward – as Carfin Grotto marks a century of devotion

New book marks shrine’s history



In a new book published to coincide with the centenary of the Carfin Grotto, author *John Watts* reflects the enduring appeal of the Scottish Lourdes. This is an edited version.

How can we account for the remarkable story of the Carfin Grotto? It is not a place made sacred by a supernatural appearance; rather, it came about by human decision.

Yet it has lasted for a hundred years, and still thrives today. How can we account for the extraordinary early growth, the wide fame and the longevity of something made by man in a little-known mining village far from the centres of society?

The phenomenon of Carfin very soon caught the attention of the secular press. One journalist, after witnessing a gathering there in 1923, commented with admiration on the Catholic Church's ability to 'stir the emotions and hold the allegiance of the people'.

This did not come about by chance. It was a sure instinct on the part of its founder that saw a place for a 'Scottish Lourdes' in 1922: saw that this was the right time, and that it would answer a need.

Of great importance has been the strong visual impact of the Grotto. Its processions and pageants with their

rich symbolism – the blessing of roses, the baskets of wheat and grapes, the living Madonnas – have always had the power to stir the emotions.

When the Shrine first opened Catholics were more marginalised within Scottish society than today, but over the years they acquired a growing pride and self-esteem. There were many reasons for this new confidence within a changing Scottish society, but one of them was certainly the Grotto: its huge gatherings could not but give the people a great pride in their Faith.

In normal times it still welcomes some 100,000 visitors every year, and the piety and loyalty are still there to be seen. And if its numbers are less, in other ways there is growth. Like the Church itself, the Grotto is ever putting out new shoots.

In every decade there have been new shrines opened, and new opportunities for devotion; and in the last ten years a number of old almost forgotten shrines have re-opened.

And yet in its essence it is unchanging. Ninety years ago Fr Taylor wrote of this Scottish Lourdes that it was 'built upon what the Immaculate asked of Bernadette: on penance and prayer'. And this remains the case to this day.

■ *A Hundred Years of Carfin Grotto* by John Watts is published by Mungo Books and is available now priced £10 from Carfin Grotto.

INSPIRED by the unswerving passion of Canon Thomas Taylor and built by the selfless sweat of hundreds of out-of-work miners, Carfin Grotto, Scotland's Lourdes shrine, is, by any definition, unique.

It was, quite literally, a labour of love which has seen a piece of wasteland evolve into an oasis of peace, prayer, and pilgrimage.

The Grotto contains precious relics from part of the largest collection outside of the Vatican, statues both grand and humble of more than 90 saints, over 40 shrines, a magnificent modern church and a glass chapel dedicated to the victims of the 1988 Lockerbie bombing and originally used that same year at the Glasgow Garden Festival.

Faith built Carfin Grotto and by faith it has been nourished for 100 years and now as the centenary of its opening on October 1st 1922 approaches 'the gathering place of faithful hearts' dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes is to be doubly honoured for its singular contribution to Scottish Catholicism.

Not only has it been chosen as the only religious site in Scotland to receive the relics of St Bernadette as part of a highly anticipated UK-wide tour later this year, but the grotto will also be officially dedicated as 'Scotland's National Marian Shrine' by the Bishops of Scotland during the anniversary mass.

St Bernadette's relics will remain for a week at Carfin, from September 24 during which time the centenary will celebrated with a Mass on St Bernadette's feast day of October 1st – a period which is expected to see the largest gathering of pilgrims at the grotto for generations.

While no firm programme for the visit of the relics has yet been drawn up it is thought that all eight Scottish dioceses will be allocated a day each to come to Carfin with the smaller dioceses combining with each arranging its own programme.

Father James Grant, who was appointed parish priest at St Francis Xavier's Carfin and Guardian of the Grotto in January 2020 said: "When the relics of St Therese of Lisieux came to the Grotto three years ago around 15,000 pilgrims came here so I would imagine there will be a very large turnout from all over Scotland when St Bernadette's relics arrive in September.

"The days of the large devotional processions for which Carfin Grotto was known and which could attract up to 50,000 people are now long gone and unlikely to return but it still has the power to attract more than 70,000 pilgrims every year because there's still a desire for people to come and experience the peace and calm of the place.

"I came here during the first lockdown when churches were closed, you had to remain in your own area and only go out for essentials, and of course exercise, and I was struck by how many people visited the grotto during that period.

"Who's to say how many prayers were said and how many people who have never been here before have returned?"

Like Canon Taylor, founder and first

guardian of the grotto, his successor is a practical man and knows that, especially in the centenary year, Carfin Grotto cannot stand still.

Pilgrims need fed and the grotto needs funds – it doesn't 'run on Hail Marys' as the old saying goes – so many will be delighted to hear that respected caterer Paul Larkin of Anya's Catering is to take over the running of the much-loved pilgrimage centre which closed in 2019.

Father Grant said: "When I was appointed I was 100 per cent determined to re-open the pilgrimage centre as soon as I came here but then Covid came along and put a hold on that.

"But I'm pleased to say that work has already started on the reopening and Paul and his team are ready to run it and they will run it well and hopefully be in operation later in the year and round about the time we are celebrating the centenary and remembering the incredible achievements of Canon Taylor."

The legendary Canon was 90 when he died in 1963 and all his life he was regarded by some as a maverick hero and to some an eccentric, but above all he was a true pastor who had the people's interest at heart.

In advance of the celebrations and the visit of the relics, older shrines have been reopened and cleaned up and in some cases restored, extensive resurfacing and landscaping work has been carried out and new statues have been added.

One of them is the first statue in the UK of 15-year-old Blessed Carlo Acutis an English-Italian schoolboy who died in 2006 from leukaemia and having been beatified two years ago is now on the path to sainthood.

Father Grant said: "Who would have thought that one day Carfin would have a statue of a future saint holding a mobile phone?"

"That's significant I think because it shows our young people that not all saints are old men with grey beards."

Also recently installed in the grotto is the first UK statue of Saint Gianna Molla, an Italian paediatrician who died in 1962 after refusing an operation which would have saved her own life to protect her unborn child.

Her daughter Gianna Emanuela survived and still works as a doctor in Italy and a letter thanking the parish of St Xavier's for honouring her mother is particularly treasured by Father Grant.

While there have been no visitations, no apparitions, and no miracle cures at Carfin, the Grotto is itself a miracle of faith – a triumph against all odds – a barren field transformed into a fertile garden of peace and prayer in honour of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Yet perhaps the most impressive feature of this special place is the gates.

There are none.

That, surely, is the true message of Carfin Grotto that for the past century it has been and will continue to be, open to all where no one is excluded.



Timeline of faith: from empty field to Marian sanctuary

1915 Archdiocesan priest Fr Thomas Taylor, who has studied for the priesthood in France and who was widely recognised as the man who brought devotion to St Therese of Lisieux to Scotland, was appointed parish priest of St Francis Xavier's, Carfin. One of his first acts was to organise Corpus Christi Processions which had so impressed him in France and were to become a feature at Carfin Grotto in the years to come.

1920 Fr Taylor, then aged 47, led a 20-strong parish group on one of the earliest Scottish National Pilgrimages to Lourdes and on its return, and

inspired by the experience, and encouraged by his fellow Carfin pilgrims, decided to build a replica shrine and church hall in an empty field across the road from the original St Francis Xavier's church.

1921 Catholic background who were out of work because of the national strike – Canon Taylor called them his Crusaders – gave their time freely to lay the 'hall foundations and create the 'hill' of Lourdes with the rubble.

1922 February: With worsening weather conditions and the effects of the strike deepening the number of volun-

teers dropped away until just one man was left. Canon Taylor's response was to hold a Novena to St Therese and place a relic on the uncompleted site.

1922 March: The volunteers returned and work continued to complete what was always intended to be a modest shrine for the parish. The area landscaped with shrubs, a piece of rock from Lourdes was added and set in a slab of Iona marble.

1922 October: Life-sized statues of a kneeling Bernadette and Our Lady, sent from Rome and paid for by ex-miner and local bookmaker, Patrick Nugent,

had arrived late but, by happy coincidence the delay meant that the dedication Mass conducted by Father Taylor, and watched by a crowd of 2000, took place on the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary.

1923 A statue of St. Therese of Lisieux was erected within weeks of her beatification in Rome by Pope Pius XI.

1924 Archbishop Mackintosh of Glasgow visited the Grotto – until 1948 Carfin was part of the Archdiocese of Glasgow – and gave his permission to extend it to accommodate the substantial number of visitors it attracted. This was the beginning of the grotto as we know it today.

Charities need help more than ever

SOME of Scotland's best-known charities are asking people to dig just a little bit deeper as they face unprecedented times.

A rising demand for services means rising costs, and charity groups are warning that the voluntary sector is now facing an unprecedented squeeze: rising prices, falling donations and inflation eroding the value of pre-existing grants and contracts — just as demand for their services is skyrocketing.

The cost of living crisis means people are more anxious about their own incomes, meaning they are less likely to give money left over to charity.

But that same crisis means charities are playing a bigger role than ever in helping people at home and abroad to survive the pressures.

A Charity Commission survey found last October that a third of organisations expected to generate less revenue from fundraising during 2022, while nearly

two-thirds anticipated “a threat to the charity’s financial viability” in the next year.

Local causes told *Flourish* that they remain grateful for the sometimes ‘heroic’ levels of support they were still receiving from volunteers and members of the public. But they ask *Flourish* readers to go the extra mile this month to offer whatever help they can ahead of the summer holidays, when donations often fall away.



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Dame Dorothy's life and death lessons

THIS much I know. In the tricky business of child-rearing it's much less about what you tell them and more of what they see you do. Actions speak louder than words and all that...

If you want to get a message across to your children you can lecture them or cajole them and still meet with no success. The amount of times I dispensed pearls of wisdom and carefully-crafted arguments, ostensibly presenting the case for both sides while subtly hammering home my point.

All for no return for my effort, particularly in their teenage years when deliberately taking the opposite course of action comes with the territory. I could have saved myself a whole lot of bother if I'd kept quiet and just gone about my business because the reality is they learn by observing and imitating us.

Mary's musings

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



One mother who has taught her children lessons in spades is the terminally ill cancer campaigner, Dame Deborah James. So near the end is she that by the time you read this she may have already died.

Her cancer was so advanced when she was initially diagnosed in 2016 that she had to make her peace early on with the knowledge she wouldn't see her children reach adulthood. She set herself realistic goals and rejoiced in achieving her heart's desire to see her son and daughter into secondary school.

She selflessly set to out to help others in the same

situation and to encourage anyone with early symptoms to seek medical advice. Her passion for saving lives resulted in a fundraising campaign which has surpassed the £6.5 million mark.

Her podcast, You, Me and the Big C attested to her candour, humour and optimism, as, no doubt, will her book which will be published posthumously. The title *How to live when you could be dead* says it all.

When offered any treatment to extend her life she pursued it with gusto, later probably with desperation, but she wanted to squeeze out every last moment.

More recently after an especially difficult few months when she was told all the options had been exhausted she was heartbroken but accepting of the news her final weeks were upon her.

In a trip last month to the Chelsea Flower Show where she saw the rose named in her honour she spoke of her hopes her daughter might one day have the Dame Deborah James rose in her wedding bouquet.

Sharing the terrible lows of her illness and the aching sadness at being separated from her family during long hospital stays, she hasn't held back on the awfulness of her situation. Yet Dame Deborah has shown both her children and our wider society how to live joyously with terminal cancer and other life-limiting conditions.

The ordinary which we take so much for granted is elevated for her. For all



the distress she found the pleasure of the good days was heightened by the realisation of how precious they are.

Now, she has surrendered herself to the loving care of her family, supported by the professional service. Her

wish has been to die in her parents' home, having enjoyed early summer days in their garden and "with the normal buzz of my life as I go." Dame Deborah James is as powerful a lesson in living well and dying well as we will see.

Top marks for OLM's Mini Vinnies

THE Mini Vinnie group in Our Lady of the Missions Primary in Giffnock has been praised for a series of 'faith in action' projects organised throughout the last school year

Mini Vinnies are youthful St Vincent de Paul Society members who aim to do charitable work within their school and local communities. Across the school, there is a Mini Vinnie representative in each class from Primary 4 to 7 who leads projects throughout the school and feedback to their own classes the work that they have carried out.

At the beginning of the year the OLM pupils who were selected to be Mini Vinnie representatives took



the theme from the school improvement plan of 'faith in action' and created a schedule of activities.

In recent months pupils have made links with care homes and hospices (through creating cards and writing letters), helped

tidy parish and school grounds, participated in Sunday Masses by volunteering as readers and welcomers and led a Rosary for Peace throughout the school where they launched a school pledge to say 4500 decades of the rosary during one week in May.

They also organised a winter clothing appeal for those in need. Hundreds of donations were handed in by generous families of hats, scarves, gloves, shoes, warm winter jumpers and jackets.

John Sherry, a Saint Vincent de Paul volunteer who organises donations for the charity said: "The Paisley Diocesan SSVP President, Joe Hendry, and I were more than surprised by the amount of clothing that had been donated by the chil-

dren and their parents and the quality of the items donated.

"The clothing was quickly distributed widely, to refugees, single mums with children, victims of domestic abuse, those recovering from addictions and more generally those in need.

"What surprised us on the day of the uplift from the school was the number of Mini Vinnies who were on hand to assist. The children were most interested as to where their collections would be used and asked some searching questions about our project."

The group has also enjoyed visits from the St Vincent de Paul representative of the local parish who has helped to teach them about the background of St Vincent de Paul Society.

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Fr Frank was an East End legend

THE teachers of wisdom were regarded as men of God. The primary purpose of the sacred author was to help the people in a time when they had experienced suffering and pain. The author was the "mouthpiece of God."

The first reading of Fr Frank's funeral Mass was familiar to many: "The souls of the virtuous are in the hands of God, no torment shall ever touch them. In the eyes of the unwise, they did appear to die, their going looked like a disaster, their leaving us, like annihilation; but they are in peace. If they experienced punishment as men see it, their hope was rich with immortality; slight was their affliction, great will their blessings be".

"But they are at peace..."

I could have finished the homily here. That reading from the Book of Wisdom sums up Fr Frank's life.

In the second reading chosen for his Requiem we read the words of St Paul to the Romans: "The life and death of each of us has its influence on others."

If we were ever in any doubt about the life and death of someone leaving a lasting influence, we needed only to look around us at the gathering of peo-



BY **FR LIAM MCMAHON**

ple who filled St Michael's for Fr Frank's funeral.

Fr Frank's life – and his death – influenced all of us in all the seasons of life, from the young men with whom he played football many years ago to the Tuesday "Cup of tea and roll and sausage" group who gathered in the hall in his final years.

His death is difficult for all of us – it is difficult for me, for you, for Fr Frank's family and friends and for the Parish family.

We need each other as a community as we come together to give him back to the God who gave him to us.

The Gospel of Fr Frank's funeral came from the Beatitudes.

The best commentary on the Beatitudes is the example of the life of Jesus. He is gentle and kind. He mourned, he experienced hunger and thirsted for what is right. That is what Fr Frank did for 67 years.

Fr Frank mirrored these qualities in a life dedicated to God in this Archdiocese and, in a particular way, to the people of St. Michael's.

I was reflecting over the past couple of days on the Gospel where Jesus asked Peter: "Do you love me?" Fr Frank, like Peter, could say: "Lord, you know I love you." Jesus continued: "Feed my sheep."

It was back in 1948 that Fr Frank heard the call to follow the Good Shepherd and entered seminary in London to study for the Priesthood. At his ordination in 1955, he would have said: Adsum – Present – that is all the

Church asked of him, and 'present' he was for almost 68 years.

We all have our favourite memories of Fr Frank.

When I first arrived at St. Michael's and was having dinner with him, he reminded me that he was a plain eater (mince and potatoes, stew, etc.). He said to me: "I don't like any of that foreign food you would eat – things like pasta. As a matter of fact, I can't stand pasta."

I replied: "Don't worry, Frank, I won't give you pasta."

I then asked him: "What would your favourite dinner be?" He said: "Let me think. My favourite dinner would be macaroni."

He had a great sense of humour ... We have an 'Alexa' in the kitchen and Fr Frank was fascinated by the fact that Alexa would talk back to us, answer questions and play requests. He said to me: "How does she know the songs to play?"

I replied: "Talk to her, tell her who you like." He said: "John McCormack." He sang along with John McCormack – we all know what a good singing voice Fr Frank had. Suddenly he stopped, mid song and said: "I have lost my singing voice – how old were you when you lost yours?"

One day, while having lunch in the Euro Café in Duke Street, Fr Frank was filling me in on the doctor's instruction that he must never go anywhere now without his walking stick. He had been told to use it everywhere – in the Church, in the house, while

outside. I asked him where it was today. He replied: "In the house!"

During the first year of lockdown, we drove through the city every evening – from the East End to the West End – along Great Western Road and back home. A journey to break the long days of being indoors. After a few weeks, Fr Frank asked me: "Is this

the only road you know?"

Our next foray, therefore, was down the coast to Greenock, two bowls on the back seat for ice cream on the Promenade. Noticing the ferry for Dunoon, we decided to make that another journey and, hoping that we were not breaking too many lockdown rules, we had lunch in Dunoon.

Memories are indeed priceless!

After the Chrism Mass on Holy Thursday this year, I went to the hospital to anoint him with the "new oils." He believed in the resurrection. He died, peacefully, on the Sunday dedicated to Divine Mercy – a fitting day to go home to God.

May he rest in peace.

Protest is a sacred right

THEY call it 'the Queen's Speech', though of course the Queen didn't deliver it this year.

This 'Speech from the Throne', written by the government and read by the monarch, marks the official opening of a new parliamentary session. The government sets out its priorities and programme for the coming session in the speech, including its proposed new legislation.

Some of this year's planned legislation is pretty hair-raising, if, like Pax Christi Scotland, you come at it from a peace perspective.

There's the British Bill of Rights, which among a number of other watering down measures could remove any obligation to properly address violence against women and girls – but, human rights issues are devolved and the Scottish government opposes this move by Westminster.

And then there's the Public Order Bill, aimed at preventing 'disruptive tactics' used by protest groups.

How disruptive do you have to be to be jailed for 12 months? I'm asking for a friend, you understand – well, several friends you might know, one of them being the Archbishop of Glasgow, who over the years has spent many hours at the North Gate of Faslane demonstrating with other religious leaders and peace organisations against nuclear weapons.

To my knowledge, the Bishop President of Justice and Peace Scotland has never glued himself to the perimeter fence of the naval base. If the Westminster bill were passed, such gluing – or 'locking' as it's called now, would be a crime south of the border.

The Scottish Parliament and Police Scotland have different approaches to demonstrations, but they do get you for it if you push



Marian Pallister

The chair of Pax Christi Scotland – and our new columnist – focuses on the issues of the day



far enough.

I feel that veteran peace campaigner Brian Quail, a valued member of Pax Christi Scotland (as well as most anti-nuclear organisations), would be offended if I didn't mention his protest record, which to date has led to six prison sentences for non-payment of fines and 16 convictions for breach of the peace. Retired teacher Brian's protests have included throwing himself under an armoured personnel vehicle believed to be carrying nuclear weapons.

The Scottish government offers instructions on its website on how to protest at our parliament, and Police Scotland give live updates on Twitter on their handling of protests – though of course that doesn't stop them arresting folk who step out of line.

Nonviolent protest is a tool used by Pax Christi

member organisations around the world. Our Lord used nonviolent protest (El Greco and Caravaggio do Him an injustice in painting a man having a temple tantrum). Seeking to curtail human rights and public protest doesn't bode well for democracy.

Our aims include seeking a peace-filled welcome for refugees and migrants. This isn't a devolved issue and we'd seek to use non-violent protest against the latest legislation governing the rights of asylum seekers.

We aim to address discrimination – how else but through nonviolent protest?

As for our commitment to remove Trident from Scotland and persuade the UK government to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons? See you at Faslane's North Gate...



Fr Frank O'Rourke RIP

Born in 1928, he was ordained a priest on 29 June 1955 by Archbishop Campbell.

He served in the following parishes:

1955: St Michael's Glasgow (Assistant Priest);

1963: St Kessog's (Assistant Priest);

1976: St Mary Immaculate (Assistant Priest);

1981: St Constantine's (Assistant Priest);

1984: St Luke's (Parish Priest);

1991: St Michael's Glasgow (Parish Priest);

2011: Retired.

Enjoy the summer, but let the Sunday Gospels inspire your break



Fr Tom Kilbride

In June, thoughts turn to summer and holidays. School, college, university terms are entering their final weeks. For some, this is exam time; for others, dissertations and papers are due. For students and teachers alike, June holds out the hope of rest after a hard school year.

Similarly, our liturgy this month concludes the intense period of the Lent and Easter cycle. However, we don't get to put our feet up as we resume the "ordinary" Sundays. Rather, be prepared to get your walking boots on. Jesus is not about to take a break!

Trinity Sunday, Year C

Although the Easter cycle formally ends at Pentecost, there is a feeling that on the following Sundays we want to continue enjoying its beauty and joy. So, this Sunday, in our celebration of the Trinity, the readings offer us a chance to look back and give thanks for all that God has done for us.

The First Reading cel-

brates God's gift in Creation, for example, but also shows the care and joy God finds in it. God is like a sculptor, carefully and playfully crafting something beautiful. That care becomes even clearer when the Father sends the Son to show us the depth and extent of his love by his words and by his example on the cross, a love which is poured out as the power of the Holy Spirit, constantly making us new and drawing us ever more closely to Christ and the Father.

While there is a deep mystery in this feast, the readings invite us simply to a sense of joy, of awe and of comfort in the gifts and the love God gives and shows us in so many ways.

Corpus Christi, Year C

Sharing food is such a basic way of showing concern, friendship and unity with each other. So, the actions of Melchizedek and Jesus in today's readings touch us on a simple, human level. However, by offering bless-

ings in these moments, both Melchizedek and Jesus unite those involved with God too, doing something more than just feeding the body.

Both stories present the food being shared and the bonds created as gifts of God. Even more deeply yet, St Paul reminds us that Jesus took the elements of a meal, a meal made all the more holy by a thanksgiving blessing and forged from it a new and unbreakable bond with him, with God and with each other since the food he gave was his very self.

His Body and Blood, given and shared, is more than a meal, binding us together as a community. It is the life of Christ himself, drawing us into a communion of life and love with God and with each other on the deepest level. We are drawn into the unbreakable covenant love of God by our sharing in its greatest proof: the gift Jesus offered of himself on the cross.



13th Sunday of the Year, C

Today, we step back into our "ordinary" cycle of Sunday readings, accompanied by the Gospel of Luke. In fact, today's Gospel is a good point to resume, since it marks the start of a major section in Luke's Gospel.

Jesus, we are told sets off "resolutely" on the road to Jerusalem. From now until the end of Year C, Jesus will be on that road, his eyes fixed on Jerusalem and all that will happen there. The first step in that journey today essentially poses the question: "Will you join me?" Jesus gives full freedom to those he calls, no one is to be forced.

When we choose to follow him, however, the journey demands something of us (St Paul in the Second Reading): we must love our neighbour. After all, it was out of love for us that Jesus took that road to Jerusalem and to the cross.

14th Sunday of the Year, C
As we continue along the road to Jerusalem with Jesus, today's Gospel suggests that the destination does not mean something just for him. Luke also knows that Jerusalem is where the story of the Church will begin. There, on Pentecost day, the Spirit will energise and inspire the disciples to begin preaching the gospel to others.

So, today we get a "trailer" of what is to come. Luke has already described the Twelve having a taste of mission, but now it is a wider group

The Last Supper by Jean-Baptiste de Champaigne (1631-1681), Detroit Institute of Arts

that is sent out in pairs. It will not always be easy – they may be rejected – but the Gospel must be preached, because the world needs to hear God's tender invitation to find new life.

Jerusalem, like a mother (First Reading), will be the starting point for that comforting and healing message for her children and for all people, a message whose first word is "Peace".

15th Sunday of the Year, C

Questions are asked about the invitation to follow Jesus' way and to be sent out as his messengers. What does it all mean? Is this the way to find life? The lawyer in the Gospel knows he should love God and love his neighbour, but he wants more: "Who is my neighbour?"

The famous reply (the parable of the Good Samaritan) turns things upside down: it's not just about whether I regard another as my neighbour, but about whether I am a neighbour to others myself. The Samaritan shows what that looks like as he crosses familiar boundaries to show compassion. But his compassion is not just a vague feeling of pity: he gives of his time and resources to help the man and then invites another (the innkeeper) into it.

The call to "go and do likewise" is a challenge Jesus sets us all, but it is nothing less than what he himself models. After all, his giving of his whole self on the cross is where this journey to Jerusalem is heading, and he invites us to share it. We will be going with him along that road each Sunday for the rest of the year. Let's get those walking boots on!

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It's good to be making a return to the Log this month, although I must say I was glad of the short break as well.

My energies were low after my Covid isolation, and as our return to church came just in time for Holy Week, there was little opportunity to ease in gently.

It also meant that Father John, who was at last able to begin ministry in St Mungo's, had a baptism of fire. Leading up to Holy Week, Father John, Father Antony and I, sat around the table at home to cast lots. The reason was that on Holy Thursday night in St Mungo's we usually have a Holy Hour at the Garden of Repose with a series of short reflections on the experience of Jesus in Gethsemane.

Also, on Good Friday Night, as Passionists, we traditionally preach the Seven Last Words of Jesus from the Cross. I wrote out the themes for the Holy Thursday reflections, and for the Seven Last Words, on pieces of paper, folded over twice, and put them into separate containers. We then, each in turn, had to draw out pieces of paper from the containers to discover which reflection we had to give, and which words from the Cross

Queues for the confessional – a welcome sign of return to Church



Fr Frank's log

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

we had to preach on.

It seemed to be a fair and transparent way to do it, and it created a bit of light-hearted drama as well, but Father John was in a bit of a panic, especially as I had also appointed him to lead the Good Friday Service. We advised Father John that, because of the long Gospel on Good Friday, he should keep his homily short. He was surprised at this as, in India, he said, this must be, by far, the longest sermon of the year.

Not in Scotland, friend!

It was also a baptism of fire for Father John, in that more people than ever seemed to avail of the Sacrament of

Reconciliation during Holy Week. We had factored in some extra times for Confession, and just about every session ran well over time, leaving us fairly exhausted at the end of it, but at the same time feeling it had been very worthwhile.

It was great, too, that the main Holy Week ceremonies, the Sacred Triduum, were just about back to normal. On Holy Thursday, at the Mass of the Last Supper, with Father Antony as the main celebrant, we were able to incorporate the Mandatum, the Washing of Feet.

We had no problem getting twelve good people to volunteer, but I noticed that



a few of them winced a bit as the water seemed to be warmer than expected.

It reminded me of when Father Gareth was doing baptisms. He would set up the font after the 12 o'clock Mass and there would be steam rising from the font. I would panic, of course, and say that he couldn't pour water that hot over a wee baby's head, but he always said it would be fine by the time the service started. Thankfully, he was right.

On Good Friday we were able to venerate the Cross, even if we couldn't kiss or touch it, but it remains one of the most moving experiences of the year for me as young and old, and even babes in arms, come forward and adore this most overwhelming expression of God's love for us, revealed in the Cross of Christ.

At the Easter Vigil we had also restored the Service of Light at the beginning, with people holding lighted can-

dles for the singing of the Exsultet, and then later for the renewal of Baptismal promises. Of course, there are still things we can't do, like Holy Communion under both species, but we are getting there, thank God.

On Easter Tuesday, Father John returned home to India to participate in his Province Chapter, to make a retreat, and to visit family. There was a late panic as his flight to London, the first stage of the journey, was cancelled, but he managed to get another flight.

With Father Antony having to be away on other duties, Father Frank Trias has been thankfully helping out again. Father Justinian enjoyed a visit from old friends from Germany, whom he had met in Taizé 40 years ago. Me? I am plodding on.

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

THE excusable doesn't need to be excused and the inexcusable cannot be excused.

Michael Buckley wrote those words commenting on Peter's triple betrayal of Jesus. Here's the context. Peter had betrayed Jesus in his most needy hour, not out of malice, simply out of weakness. Now, facing Jesus for the first time since that betrayal, Peter is understandably uncomfortable. What do you say after betraying someone?

Well, he didn't need to say anything. Jesus took the initiative and, as Buckley highlights, he didn't excuse Peter. Jesus didn't say things like, it's perfectly understandable to be afraid in a situation like that! You weren't really yourself! I understand how that can happen! He didn't even tell Peter that he still loves him. None of that. He simply asked Peter, "Do you love me?" and when Peter said yes, everything moved forward. No excuses were needed. The excusable doesn't need to be excused and the inexcusable cannot be excused. Our humanity already explains why we are prone to betrayal; what needs to be spoken in its wake is a reaffirmation of love.

A couple I know had this happen in their marriage.

If you find it hard to forgive...

They went to a party together one Friday night and the wife, partly through the influence of alcohol and drugs, left the party with another man. Her husband was unaware of this for a time but, upon finding out what had happened, was understandably very distraught. He went home alone and spent a sleepless night thinking, his thoughts moving through a series of vengeful fantasies to what (through grace) he eventually decided on.

He was sitting at the kitchen table midmorning the next day when his wife, sheepish and self-chastened, came home. She had her apologies rehearsed and was ready to face his justified anger and fury. She got something

Scribblings of the spirit

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



else. Her husband didn't let her voice any apologies or excuses, nor did he explode in anger. Rather, calm and sad, he simply said this to her: "I'm going to move out of the house for a week, so you can think this through. You need to decide. Are you my wife or are you someone else?" He came back a week later to her apologies, but more importantly to her renewed, more radical commitment to their relation-

ship. Their marriage has been solid and grace-filled since. She is now committed to a marriage in a way she never quite was before.

No doubt upon his return, this man's wife did offer some tearful apologies and excuses. His refusal to let her voice them earlier may well have served a purpose long-term, but was admittedly somewhat cruel short-term. Even when something can't be excused, we still need the opportunity to say we are sorry. Apologies are important, both for the person offering them and for the one receiving them. Until an explicit apology is made, there is always unfinished business. However, explicit contrition is not ultimately what moves things forward when a relationship has been wounded or fractured. What moves things forward is a renewed com-

mitment to love, to a deeper fidelity.

The inexcusable cannot be excused. Strictly speaking, that's true, though sometimes a deeper understanding of things somewhat excuses the inexcusable. Here's an example.

Several years ago, this incident occurred in Australia. A Catholic School Board had just finished building a new multi-million dollar school. Not long after its opening, one of its students, a boy in high school, started a fire in his locker, unaware that the gas valves for the school's heating system were right behind his locker. A huge fire started and the whole school burned down. To his credit, the boy summoned his courage and owned up to what had happened. Then, of course, a never-ending series of questions ensued: Why would he ever do that? Why would anyone start a fire in his locker? What accounts for that kind of reckless stupidity? What can excuse the inexcusable?

I very much appreciated an answer given to these questions by one of the Australian bishops. Speaking to a questioning group of teachers and school admin-

istrators, his short answer said it all. Why would this young student do something like that? Because he is a boy! Young boys have been (for no explicable reason) starting fires long before gas valves ever appeared on the planet. Moreover, there's no excuse for it, save human nature itself.

Often times, that's the excuse for the inexcusable: Because we're human! Indeed, this was the real excuse for the woman who under the influence of alcohol and drugs betrayed her husband, just as it was the real excuse for Peter when he betrayed Jesus.

But, this must be read correctly. This doesn't give us permission to appeal to our morally inept human nature as an excuse for betrayal or stupidity. We're human! Boys will be boys! The lesson rather is that whenever our moral ineptness has us fall into betrayal or stupidity, what ultimately moves things forward is not an apology or an excuse, but a renewed commitment in love.

■ Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser is a theologian, teacher, and award-winning author. He can be contacted through his website www.rolheiser.com. Now on Facebook www.facebook.com/ronrolheiser



Church must not become a sect

Pope calls for greater openness and welcome

POPE Francis has restated his call for a less judgemental Church saying that gay Catholics should find a warm welcome in parishes and refugees should be welcomed in our hearts and our homes.

The Pope's words about gay people were published on a new website for LGBTQ Catholics and their families in response to questions sent to him. He said God "does not disown any of his children" and that a Church that is "selective" about its membership more resembles a "sect" than what the Gospel commands.

"God is Father and he does not disown any of his children," wrote the Holy Father. "And 'the style' of God is 'closeness, mercy and tenderness.' Along this path you will find God."

When asked "What do you say to an LGBT Catholic who has experienced rejection from the Church?" the Pope

replied that "I would have them recognize it not as 'the rejection of the Church,' but instead of 'people in the Church.'"

"The Church is a mother and calls together all her children," he continued. "A 'selective' church, one of 'pure blood,' is not Holy Mother Church, but rather a sect."

During a speech earlier this year reflecting on the challenges of parenting, the pope went off script to tell parents not to condemn children with different sexual orientations.

"Never condemn your children," said Francis, who said that parents should accompany their children and "not hide behind an attitude of condemnation."

And in another intervention the Pope said migrants must be welcomed with open arms in the Church. In a powerful message for the World Day of Migrants

he states bluntly 'A better future must be built with foreigners'.

"Building the future with migrants and refugees means recognizing and valuing how much each of them can contribute to the process of construction."

Pope Francis lamented ongoing tragedies of human history, which remind us how far we have yet to go along the path toward "the dwelling place of God with humanity."

"In the light of what we have learned in the tribulations of recent times, we are called to renew our commitment to building a future that conforms ever more fully to God's plan of a world in which everyone can live in peace and dignity."

Concretely, said Pope Francis, all inequality and discrimination must be cast aside from society, and "no one must be excluded."

"God's plan is essentially

inclusive and gives priority to those living on the existential peripheries.

"Among them are many migrants and refugees, displaced persons, and victims of trafficking."

The Pope added: "The inclusion of the most vulnerable is the necessary condition for full citizenship in God's Kingdom."

Pope Francis offered the example of history to show that migrants and refugees offer a valuable source of social and economic growth to their adopted nations.

"Their work, their youth, their enthusiasm and their willingness to sacrifice enrich the communities that receive them. Yet this contribution could be all the greater were it optimized and supported by carefully developed programs and initiatives. Enormous potential exists, ready to be harnessed, if only it is given a chance."



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