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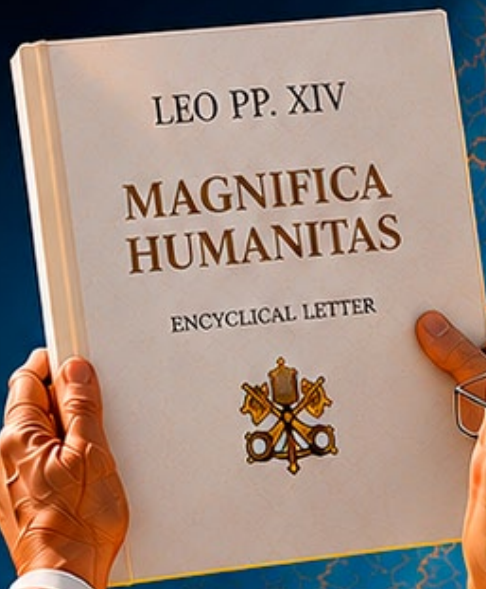
June 2026

POPE LEO XIV'S NEW ENCYCLICAL

MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS

THE IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY.

HOLY FATHER WARNS OF DANGER OF ABUSING TECHNOLOGY



“ No algorithm can make war morally acceptable. ”

– POPE LEO XIV
MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS, 198

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SUMMARY OF THE NEW ENCYCLICAL PAGE 2

Why the Pope's new encyclical matters to you

THE temptation to look away now is strong.

"I don't even know what AI is so what the Pope says doesn't affect me..." But that's where you are wrong.

AI is already affecting you. As an example of 'good use' of the technology, the front page of this newspaper was designed with the help of Artificial Intelligence. But there are far more profound ways this new technology will change your life for better or worse in coming months and years.

Artificial Intelligence is likely to impact employment with many jobs being lost because they can be done by AI.

AI's power to create 'fake' images and videos will raise serious issues about privacy on social media and evidence in courts.

The non-human intelligence of AI systems means that decisions are made and advice is given without reference to conscience, to morality or to justice.

It is a sign of how seriously Pope Leo considers



Ronnie Convery

Editor of *Flourish*

the 'revolution' taking place in our times that he has devoted his landmark first encyclical to the topic.

The lengthy document offers endless food for thought. At the presentation of the document, the Pope called for AI to be "disarmed" and argued that uncontrolled digital technologies risk creating new forms of slavery. And he also warned of the dangers of allowing children to have unfettered access to smartphone technology.

Pope Leo was joined at the launch of *Magnifica Humanitas* by AI developer and founder of Anthropic, Chris Olah. He confessed that the speed of AI development required action. He said: "There is a real possibility that AI will displace human

labour at very large scale. If that happens, supporting those displaced will be a moral imperative of historic proportions."

His words echoed what Pope Leo wrote in the encyclical: "The pursuit of greater profits cannot justify choices that systematically sacrifice jobs, because the human person is an end, not a means, and the economic order must remain subordinate to human dignity and the common good."

Yet it is important to realise that the Pope did not condemn the new technology, nor brand it as evil.

Indeed he pointed out that it can be used for good or for evil and asked humanity to see it as a gift to be used carefully for the common good.

A quick guide to *Magnifica Humanitas*



THE first encyclical of Pope Leo XIV is a powerful appeal for Christians to defend human dignity in an age increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence, digital dependency and global instability.

Just as Pope Leo's namesake, Leo XIII wrote a landmark letter (*Rerum Novarum*) as humanity faced the upheavals of the industrial revolution, so today's Pope Leo writes a hugely important letter as we stand at the dawn of a new age of Artificial Intelligence.

His core message is that moral truth and human dignity must always guide innovation.

Far from rejecting technological progress, the Pope acknowledges its enormous potential. Yet he warns that society risks losing sight of what it means to be truly human.

One of the encyclical's most striking lines insists that artificial intelligence

should not be considered as merely yet another theme to be studied or a crisis to be managed, but rather as something that challenges humanity at a profound moral level.

The Holy Father repeatedly returns to the danger of allowing machines and digital systems to dominate human relationships.

Isolate

He cautions against forms of communication that isolate rather than unite. Young people in particular, he suggests, risk becoming trapped in a culture of endless distraction and emotional loneliness shaped by smartphones and algorithms.

The Pope calls instead for "remaining human" in a digital age that constantly tempts people away from silence, contemplation and authentic encounter.

Peace is another major theme. Echoing the lan-

guage also used about nuclear weapons, the Pope believes artificial intelligence itself "needs to be disarmed." The encyclical warns against technologies being turned into instruments "of domination, exclusion and death," insisting that decisions about war and peace "must never be separated from conscience and responsibility."

At the centre of *Magnifica Humanitas* lies a deeply Christian vision of society. Leo XIV defends the equal dignity of all human beings and insists that technological progress must always serve the common good.

The overall tone of the encyclical is neither fearful nor naive. Instead, the Pope calls Catholics to engage confidently with the modern world while ensuring that faith, ethics and human compassion retain control over the digital systems and machines humanity creates.

■ To read the encyclical in full scan the QR code to the right or visit www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/encyclicals/documents/20260515-magnifica-humanitas.html



The latest chapter in history of May 15th Papal letters

THE first encyclical of Pope Leo XIV signed on May 15, follows a tradition of social encyclicals that helped define the Church's engagement with the modern world.

It began with Pope Leo XIII and his 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, released on May 15 that year. That document marked the Church's response to the upheavals of the industrial revolution, addressing workers' rights, private property, and the moral responsibilities of both workers and employ-



ers. From it emerged what is now known as Catholic social teaching.

The major social encyclicals have often been released on the anniversary of that first document.

Forty years after *Rerum Novarum* to the day (May 15, 1931), Pope Pius XI issued *Quadragesimo Anno*. Released in a time of the rise of communism and fascism it focused on the principle of subsidiarity and the danger of class warfare.

Left to right: Pope Leo XIII, Pope Pius XI, Pope John XXIII

Three decades later, the tradition continued on the same date in 1961, when St John XXIII issued *Mater et Magistra*, on global solidarity, the relationship between the state and the individual, and workers' rights.

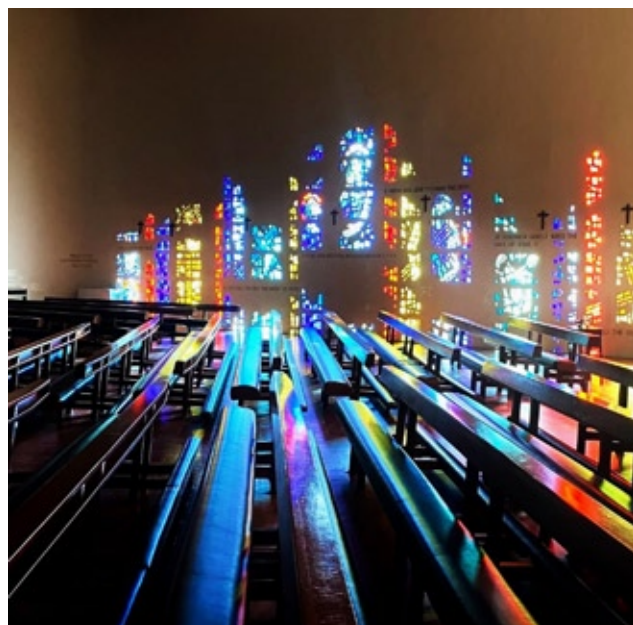
St John Paul II tried to release his big social encyclical too on the anniversary. His document on the dignity of work – *Laborem Exercens* – was supposed to have been published on May 15 1981, but was delayed due to the assassination attempt on his life two days earlier.

Sacred Heart to host stained-glass experts' national gathering

SACRED Heart, Cum-bernauld, hailed as the church with the most beautiful stained glass windows in Britain, is to host a major symposium of the country's leading stained glass artists and conservators.

The Scottish Stained Glass Symposium and Trust's aim is to 'establish and preserve stained glass as an important part of the art, heritage and culture of Scotland' and has a membership which includes artists, conservators and historians, as well as representatives of religious, charitable and public bodies.

Sacred Heart was chosen for the bi-annual symposium because of the unique quality of its exquisitely detailed stained-glass windows, including the Stations of the Cross, which were created by celebrated Scottish artist Sadie McLellan for the opening of the



church which celebrated its 60th anniversary two years ago.

She pioneered an innovative technique known as dalle de verre which involved painstakingly set-

ting thousands of pieces of coloured glass into concrete.

Sadie, from Bearsden who died in 2007 aged 92, also created win-

dows for Pluscarden Abbey, Glasgow Cathedral, The Robin Chapel, Edinburgh, and Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Cardonald.

Susan Bradbury, symposium chair, said: "When you walk into Sacred Heart church and see what has been created by an artist of such singular talent, you cannot fail to be lifted by what you see".

Father John Campbell, parish priest of Sacred Heart and St Lucy's, said: "We are delighted to be involved with the aims of the group and are pleased to be recognised for our windows in a building which has often been criticised from the outside. But once inside, it is, as an author wrote a few years ago, like stepping into a jewellery box."

■ **The symposium takes place on June 19. Admission is free and open to the public.**

Bishops' letter to first minister



THE Bishops of Scotland have congratulated John Swinney on his re-appointment as First Minister.

A letter, signed by the Bishops' Conference President, Bishop John Keenan says, "On behalf of the bishops of Scotland, I warmly congratulate John Swinney on his re-appointment as First Minister of Scotland

and wish him every success in the weeks and months ahead.

"The Catholic Church looks forward to the opportunity for constructive engagement with Mr Swinney and his Government on the priorities facing people and communities across Scotland, and I assure him, and all members of the Scottish Parliament, of our prayers."

Tributes paid to retiring St Bernard's teacher after 37 years in same school

IT was a day of shared memories, warm tributes, and the award of an Archdiocesan medal, when a community came together at a special Mass to mark the retiral of Eileen Parker, who spent her entire 37-year teaching career at St Bernard's Primary School, Nitshill.

Friends and family joined pupils and staff, past and present, at St Robert Bellarmine's church in Househillwood.

The head teacher Elaine MacEachen told them: "Eileen's legacy will be one of service, faith, and love. Her work reflects a genuine vocation, not simply a profession, as she strives to serve others with Christ in her heart."

She added: "Eileen is a true role model who lives out Gospel values in a quiet yet powerful way inspiring both pupils and staff to do the same."



Unknown to Eileen her colleagues had arranged for her service to be recognised with an Archdiocesan Medal which was presented to her by parish priest Fr Joe Uwah.

After the spontaneous and sustained applause died

BY BRIAN SWANSON

down Mrs McEachen said: "The medal Eileen has just been given is a symbol of appreciation and gratitude which will also be an inspiration for other teachers to

follow in her footsteps."

Eileen told *Flourish*: "It's been the honour of my life as well as an absolute privilege to work with generations of wonderful children here at St Bernard's who have given me so many happy memories."

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St Margaret's children will sing the new Balamory theme song

WHAT'S the story in Balamory... wouldn't you like to know?

Well here it is: pupils from St Margaret of Scotland Primary School in Cumbernauld have been chosen from across the whole of Scotland to form the choir recording the brand-new Balamory theme tune.

The original programme, a huge favourite with generations of pre-school children, was last broadcast 20 years ago but has now been revived for today's youngsters-complete with a new version of the catchy theme tune.

Charity which promotes community singing.

Quality
Father John McGrath, Parish Priest of nearby St Joseph's said: "The school has a very high quality of music so the whole community is delighted and ex-



citied at the choir's success. It just shows you what can be achieved with the great support they have been given and it goes without saying that we are all immensely proud of them."

Quality

Charity founder and director Jenny Cheung said: "Music is at the heart of life

at St Margaret's.

"The joy, commitment, and confidence shown in these sessions have helped pave the way for this national success.

"It is a moment of immense pride for pupils, staff, and families alike".

Primary seven teacher Danielle McGurk said: "They were chosen because they sound like real Scottish children, rather than something more manufactured and the whole school community is very proud of them."



POPE LEO'S MONTHLY INTENTION
JUNE 2026

FOR THE VALUES OF SPORTS

Let us pray that sports be an instrument of peace, encounter, and dialogue among cultures and nations, and that they promote values such as respect, solidarity, and personal growth.

■ Ahead of this month's World Cup finals in USA, Canada and Mexico, Pope Leo's monthly intention is for the values of sport to shine through.



Delivering expert hearing care with empathy and understanding

Expert Help for Hearing Loss

Glen and Jayne Caffley, experienced audiologists, founded Audiology House in Bearsden to offer personalised hearing care.

Their unique combination of clinical knowledge and personal experience with hearing loss allows them to connect deeply with their clients.

Glen, born deaf, and Jayne, with family connections to hearing loss, bring unique empathy and understanding to their practice.

Audiology House features a comfortable, wheelchair-accessible environment with a custom-built sound booth for precise testing.

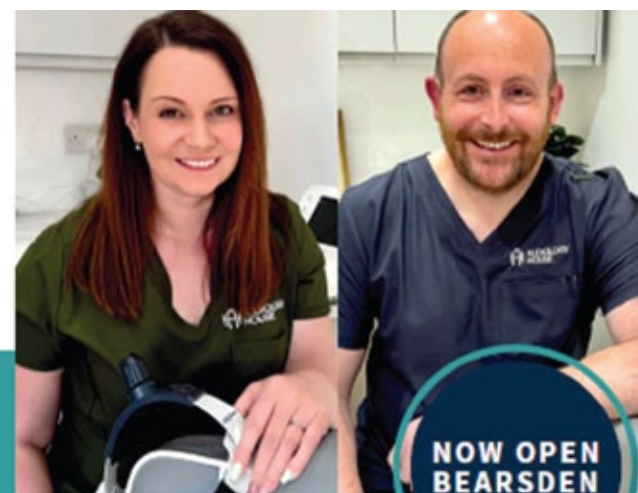
They offer comprehensive hearing tests, expert hearing aid fittings, and specialised ear wax removal. The clinic provides a wide range of hearing aids, including advanced AI models, and allows clients to trial them before committing.

Their approach focuses on understanding each client's unique situation, considering factors like daily activities and aesthetic preferences.

Audiology House also offers ear protection for noisy environments and hobbies, custom-fit in-ear monitors for professionals, and specialised plugs for sleep and swimming.

Glen and Jayne's commitment to independence ensures clients receive unbiased care, with access to all hearing aid manufacturers in the UK.

Their goal is to provide a better experience for every patient, prioritising personalised, compassionate care.



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50 golden years for St Leo's

THERE was a great buzz around St Leo's Parish in Dumbreck last month as parishioners and friends gathered to mark the 50th anniversary of the opening of the current church.

Although the parish was founded in 1962, the current church was only opened in 1976 – and for 33 of those 50 years it has had the same parish priest – Monsignor Gerry Fitzpatrick.

Archbishop Nolan was the main concelebrant at a special Mass of thanksgiving and was joined by Mgr Gerry and Fr Brendan Murtagh – a native of the parish who had once been an altar server there.

The Archbishop spoke about the parish patron, St Leo the Great, and urged parishioners to take their lead from his example – he energised charitable works in a Rome beset by famines, an influx of refugees, and poverty almost 1600 years ago.

The Archbishop recalled too Pope Leo XIII, the Pope of workers' rights and the current Pope, Leo XIV whose popularity, he said, has led to a surge of boys taking the confirmation name of Leo!



BY RONNIE CONVERY



Archbishop Nolan said: "We do well to come together to mark this anniversary of the opening of this church which is filled with memories for you.

"But we do not come to the church to stay here,

away from the world, we come to be energised, fed and enthused with the task of going out to bring God's love to the society around us."

Archbishop to lead day of solidarity with refugees

THERE has never been a more urgent time than now to make a stand against the UK government's increasingly pernicious immigration system.

And the opportunity to do so is provided by Justice & Peace Scotland's 'Dignity Not Detention Solidarity Witness' which will be staged with partners Scottish Peace Network at Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre on 14th June, at 1pm.

You are urged to make the effort to support the only regular gatherings at the site by any Scottish organisations to show support for those inside and demonstrate opposition to a cruel and unjust system – the UK the only country in Europe where unlimited detention of migrants exists.

Archbishop Nolan, who will lead the event, said: "Those who find themselves in detention centres are not a number, not a statistic, they are peo-



BY ANDREW SMITH
JUSTICE & PEACE SCOTLAND

ple. And we have to look those people in the eyes and see human beings."

Pope Leo has been unequivocal that the Commandment to "love thy neighbour" takes no account of borders, passports, or circumstances.

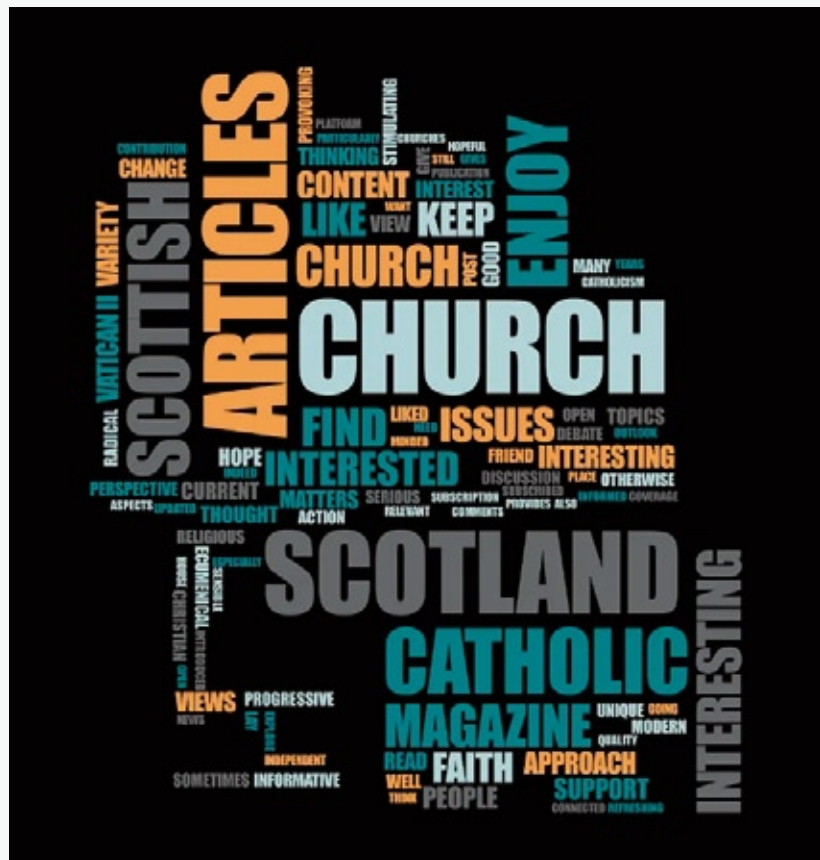
Yet for some in Dungavel, technical errors with visas will seem them locked up, and experience the mental torture of not knowing for how long.

Immigration is an issue reserved to the UK Par-

liament and Dungavel is Scotland's only detention centre. The centre will close across the summer for refurbishment and an expansion of its capacity, which currently sits at 150, to close on 200.

That means more people having their humanity disregarded. The only such facility in the UK that houses both men and women, this creates further discrimination for females incarcerated as they are denied the basic freedom of moving around the centre unless accompanied by a staff member.

OPEN HOUSE SCOTLAND MAGAZINE



Open House is an independent Scottish Catholic journal of comment, opinion and debate which was founded by lay Catholics in Dundee in 1990. Today it is published online in March, June, September and December.

It has a focus on the intersection between faith and contemporary life and carries features on religion and current affairs, arts and culture. It welcomes submissions from contributors, particularly young writers, and hopes to foster a wide conversation among people of faith in Scotland.

A particular theme is chosen for each issue. The March edition had various essays on Peace-making. This June's edition will reflect on Health and Spirituality.

The annual subscription is £25, with an introductory offer of £10 for newcomers.

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Glasgow University chaplaincy Turnbull Hall needs your help!



THE Catholic heart of Glasgow University needs your help to ensure its future.

Turnbull Hall Chapel, a place that has meant so much to so many people over the years is in urgent need of repair.

For generations of University of Glasgow students, staff and local parishioners, it has been there through hard times, happy times and moments when people

just needed somewhere peaceful and comforting to go.

Now the roof urgently needs replaced. The Parish Council has started fundraising, including a "Buy a Slate" campaign and has also created a JustGiving crowdfunding page aiming to raise £10,000.

■ www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/turnbullhall-parish-1



African order hosts Glasgow retreat

THE members of the Congregation of the Sons of Mary Mother of Mercy (SMMM) working in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland, gathered in Glasgow last month for their annual retreat and reunion in St Margaret Mary's Parish, Castlemilk.

The retreat saw the presence of 20 priests from all over the UK and Ireland. The Superior General of the Congregation was also in attendance.

It was an uplifting experience and they enjoyed their stay in Castlemilk and Glasgow in general. They were

given a warm welcome by their hosts Fr Vincent and Fr Richard.

The Congregation of Sons of Mary Mother of Mercy is the first native religious congregation for men founded in Africa, by an African, for a world-wide mission.

The spirit of the Congre-

gation is that of charity, humility, prayer, penance and abandonment to the will of God.

Since its inception in 1970, the Congregation has been growing steadily from strength to strength. Now there more than 200 priests and almost 80 seminarians.

Pope will visit Spain this month

POPE Leo is to pay an extensive visit to Spain this month taking in major cities, holiday islands and cultural centres.

The Papal visit will include a massive Corpus Christi procession through the streets of Madrid.

The packed June 6-12 itinerary also included public Masses, a visit to Barcelona's Sagrada Familia basilica (below), and stops at migrant reception centers in the Canary Islands.

Upon his arrival June 6, the Pope will meet with Spanish King Felipe VI and his wife, Queen Letizia, followed by meetings with government authorities and the country's diplomatic corps.

In the evening, the pope will visit an emergency

homeless shelter operated by Caritas Madrid, before a meeting with young people at the Plaza de Lima, where St John Paul II celebrated Mass during his 1982 visit to the country.

Cardinal Cobo of Madrid said the meeting will serve as a "platform" for the Pope to "speak with the youth of the entire world."

Procession

The Cardinal said the following day would see the traditional procession through the streets. "The Corpus Christi procession will be beautiful," he said. "A great many people are involved: those preparing floral carpets, those carrying the platforms, numerous



associations. We are expecting an enormous crowd."

During his stop in Barcelona the Pope will pay a visit to a prison, followed by a visit to the Abbey of Our Lady of Montserrat, where he will pray the Rosary and have lunch with the Benedictine community.

Then there will be a Mass at the Sagrada Familia, where he will inaugurate the tower of Jesus Christ.

At more than 564 feet tall, the tower makes the basilica the tallest Catholic church in the world.

On June 11, Pope Leo will depart for the Canary Is-

lands where he will meet with organisations working with migrants before another Mass at Gran Canaria Stadium.

On the pope's final day in Spain June 12, he will depart for Tenerife where he will meet with migrants living at the "Las Raices Center" followed by a meeting with organisations helping to integrate migrants.

Before departing for Rome, Pope Leo will also preside over an outdoor Mass at the port of Santa Cruz, chosen for its closeness to the sea, where so many people arrive.



Glasgow marble finds new home as Carfin's baptistry is unveiled

VISITORS to Scotland's National Shrine in Carfin this spring may have noticed the changes to the Baptistry in St Francis Xavier's church.

And those with an eye for detail may spot reminders of churches across the Glasgow area which have been closed over the years now being reused.

For, with the support of Archbishop Nolan, the new baptistry will contain materials sourced from various former Glasgow parishes.

The Guardian of the Shrine, Fr Jim Grant explained. "The space we have created once housed the Blessed Sacrament behind a glass screen. Some years ago, we moved the Blessed

BY RONNIE CONVERY

Sacrament to the centre of the sanctuary, and since then have hoped this area might become a dedicated place for Baptism.

"Baptism is the beginning of our life in Christ – the gateway to all the Sacraments. It felt fitting that it should have a space that reflects its dignity and importance.

Materials

"What you see has been built gradually, using reclaimed materials from closed churches across Glasgow. With the generosity of Archbishop Nolan, I was able to preserve and

gather these pieces over time. The font itself comes from St Cuthbert's, Burnbank, while the gates and marble once served other sanctuaries. Now, they continue that purpose here—a quiet sign of the Church's continuity."

Fr Grant added: "I hope visitors will see in this space not only beauty but meaning: a reminder of our shared beginning in Christ and the dignity given to us in Baptism."

"Costs have been kept to a minimum, with much of the material reused and sourced over time. I hope that people will treasure this place and keep all who will be baptised here in their prayers."



Canon lawyers meet by the Clyde



EARLY morning visitors to St Andrew's Cathedral could have been forgiven for thinking they were living in the middle of a vocations boom last month as dozens of priests filled the pews and the sanctuary for Mass.

In fact, the clerics were visiting Glasgow for the Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland's annual meeting which was held in Glasgow and saw delegates

joined by the Archdiocese's own Canons Gerry Tartaglia and Paul Gargaro.

Archbishop Nolan celebrated Mass for the delegates at the start of their sessions and Most Reverend Fredrik Hansen DD Bishop of Oslo offered Mass later in the week.

The delegates were delighted with their Glasgow welcome. Following the event, the General Secretary of the Society, Fr Luke Beck-

ett OSB wrote to express his thanks to the Archbishop: "As I look back over the Conference I see the support of you and your team at every stage – from our planning, through to setting up the Eyre Hall (the new sound system was excellent) and to welcoming us when we arrived.

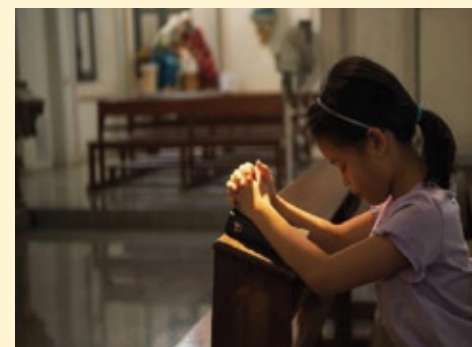
"It was a joy to have our daily Mass in the splendid context of your lovely Cathedral."



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Princess pops in for Mary's Meals milestone

A CHARITY founded in a Scottish hut and which now feeds millions of children every day worldwide has had a royal visit.

The Princess Royal visited the shed at Dalmally where Mary's Meals was founded to help celebrate the incredible milestone of feeding three million children every school day.

Mary's Meals, which began by feeding just 200 children in Malawi, recently announced the incredible milestone – one which Founder, Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, above meeting the Princess, says he "could never have imagined."

Last month the Princess

Royal joined Magnus and a small group of supporters and volunteers, at the tin shed in the village of Dalmally where the story began more than 20 years ago.

Gift

She spoke with volunteers about their work and unveiled a plaque commemorating the visit, while she also received a gift presented by schoolchildren – a commemorative photo book featuring children whose education is made possible through Mary's Meals' school programme.

Mary's Meals was born in 2002 when Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, from Dal-

mally in Argyll, visited Malawi during a famine and met a mother dying from AIDS. When Magnus asked her eldest son Edward what his dreams were in life, he replied simply: "I want to have enough food to eat and to go to school one day."

Today, 24 years later, Mary's Meals provides more than three million school meals a day across 16 countries, including Haiti, South Sudan and Syria. A nutritious meal, funded by a donation of just 10 pence, brings hungry children into the classroom, where they can gain an education and better opportunities for the future.

Pilgrimage to historic home of Scotland's 'heather priests'

BY RONNIE CONVERY

THIS month sees the annual pilgrimage and Mass at one of Scotland's most important Catholic sites – Scalan.

For much of the 18th century, the college at Scalan in the Braes of Glenlivet was the only place in Scotland where young men were trained to be Catholic priests, the so-called "heather priests". From 1717 to 1799, over 100 were trained despite numerous attacks by Hanoverian soldiers. Scalan was burned to the ground by them on several occasions but was always rebuilt.

The college played a vital role in keeping the traditional Catholic faith alive in northern Scotland.

Alexander Geddes, the Scottish theologian and scholar, and his brother, Bishop John Geddes, were among the famous figures who studied or taught at the college.

Alongside preparations for the Annual Mass on Sunday 14th June at 4pm there will also be a series of Open Days for 2026 taking place on 13th June, 8th August and 5th September.

Visitors are welcome to drop in between 1-4pm where all areas of the site will be accessible and volunteers will be on hand to answer any questions and share their knowledge and stories about the remarkable history of this special place.



www.franciscanvocations.org.uk

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Churchmen's favourite cook is retiring

THE man who has catered for three archbishops, countless priests and innumerable religious and lay people is hanging up his apron after 45 years in the food business.

Paul Larkins has been the regular caterer for Archdiocesan occasions since the time of Archbishop Conti, and he told *Flourish* he retires with many happy memories.

"I am struggling to think it's coming to the end of a wonderful journey. I would go as far as saying it has been pretty much a vocation!"

"Having the pleasure of serving three Archbishops

over the past 25 plus years just feels very surreal."

Paul's ecclesiastical food journey began 25 years ago when he was asked to provide lunch at the Assembly of Clergy's annual meeting in Christ the King Church Hall.

Paul said: "During this time, I was very fortunate to serve and look after many priests and religious organisations. Did I always get it right, possibly not. But I honestly put my heart and soul into every event from a small lunch to catering for 1000 guests."

"We lost Archbishop Mario Conti in November 2022 and lost Archbishop

Philip Tartaglia in January 2021.

May they rest in peace. It was my pleasure serving both of them and more recently Archbishop Nolan.

"There were many more priests I had the pleasure of knowing ... the late Mgr Peter Smith, Mgr Hugh Bradley, Mgr Paul Murray, Mgr John Gilmartin, Canon Tom White, Fr Alex Strachan, and many others I had the privilege to meet and serve."

"Many Sisters of Religious congregations too. Oh, some crazy ones, but all lovely. I am grateful to the Archbishop's PA Anne Fitzgerald, to Annette Moran



and all the staff in the office, especially Kevin, Wullie and George. I am very privileged to have known each and every one you.

"Hopefully my staff who are taking over part of the business will continue to provide quality food and service for the Archdiocese of Glasgow in the years to come."



Surprise honour for Fr Eugenio

ONE of the best loved priests in the Glasgow area got the surprise of his life last month when he was awarded the annual gold medal of the charity Italian Scotland for his years of selfless service.

Fr Eugenio Montesi, the Xaverian priest who is remembered with huge affection for his ministry across the West of Scotland, was presented with the award by Sir Anton Muscatelli, president of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and Patron of Italian Scotland at a lunch in Glasgow.

Organisers kept news of the award secret because they knew that Fr Eugenio would run a mile if he thought he was to be honoured!

Fr Eugenio's old friend, Lady Rita Rae (above left), undertook to get him to the award ceremony by asking him for a lift, while his Xaverian confrere Fr Jim Clarke (above right) turned up without advance warning!

Fr Eugenio was born in Corinaldo in Italy in February 1939 – the birthplace



BY RONNIE CONVERY

of St Maria Goretti.

He entered the Xaverians and made final vows and was ordained in 1962. He came to Scotland in 1963 and ministered until 1970.

He served as a missionary in Sierra Leone from 1970 until 1976 and came back to Scotland from 1976 until 1985. He was back to Sierra Leone until 2003 and after eight years in Chicago he asked to come back to Scotland in 2011 where he has worked ever since.

In his acceptance speech he spoke movingly of his childhood memory of seeing the mother of St Maria Goretti being pushed in her wheelchair to receive communion at the local church, the wheelchair being pushed by Alessandro Serrinelli, the man who had murdered her daughter in 1902.

That extraordinary image of the power of forgiveness is one that has guided the life of Fr Eugenio.

After the shock wore off he said: "Rita insisted I would go with her to the restaurant for Sunday lunch. I

kept asking her are you sure I am invited? Well the rest we know!

"Thanks so much to the Italian/Scottish community ... I am proud of all of you. I was struck by so many happy smiling people."

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SCIAF's pilgrimage of peace



IT'S fair to say we live in turbulent times. With wars and conflicts all around us it's easy to lose hope.

But SCIAF – the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund – believes that a better world is possible and is urging others to join them on a pilgrimage of peace.

Michael Hamilton from SCIAF's community engagement team said: "We are urging people to join in solidarity with us and the many innocent victims of war around the world and walk and pray for a peaceful

future for humanity."

The walk for peace will take place from 9.15am on Saturday, 13 June and will follow a 5.6 miles route from St Joseph's Church in Blantyre to Motherwell Cathedral.

Michael said: "Many people feel hopeless right now. Every time we turn on the television there is news of yet more bombing, yet more death. Wars are decided by politicians, but in the end it's innocent people who suffer. We do, however, believe in the power of prayer and it is right that we lift

those who suffer injustice to God with the hope of a better world.

"We hope as many people as possible will be able to join us. Although it's over five miles, we will be going at a gentle pace and hoping to reach the Cathedral in about two and a half hours. We will be warmly welcomed at the Cathedral with drinks and food to look forward to.

■ **Please sign up by following this link: <https://www.sciaf.org.uk/get-involved/events/942-walk-and-pray-for-peace>**

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HISTORIC CHURCH RENOVATED

Membra Jesu Nostri: A musical treat to mark the start of a new era for Partick parish



A CONCERT of sacred music is planned later this month to celebrate St Peter's restoration. The event is scheduled for June 28 – the vigil of the parish's patronal feast.

The Harmonia Mundi Ensemble will stage the inaugural concert marking the full reopening of St Peter's Church following its recent refurbishment.

It will be the first professional concert held at St Peter's Church as it begins a new chapter.

The programme will feature Dietrich Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Nostri*, performed by an international ensemble of musicians from Scotland, Italy, and Hungary alongside Glasgow-based performers.

Organiser, Marco Di Chio, said: "We are especially pleased to welcome two distinguished singers from the

Italian Baroque music scene, Elena Bertuzzi and Giovanna Dissera Bragadin, who will travel to Glasgow specifically for this occasion.

"This event is designed to be fully accessible to the public, with free admission and voluntary donations only, ensuring that no financial barriers prevent attendance."

Tradition

The project aims to contribute to the tradition of sacred music at St Peter's while offering professional opportunities for Glasgow-based musicians and engaging the wider local community through a shared cultural experience.

Entrance is free on the day with a suggested donation to cover costs.

The concert begins at 4pm on the Sunday afternoon, June 28th.

home in Saint Peter's."

Like churches across Scotland, St Peter's faces the challenges of secularisation and changing demographics. Yet the parish continues to adapt with confidence and energy.

Daily Masses, Eucharistic Adoration, youth outreach, sacramental preparation, care for the sick, work with schools and a growing missionary presence all form part of parish life. In an area where many churches of various denominations have closed or been converted to other uses, St Peter's continues to look outward with hope.

More than 120 years after its opening, the doors of St Peter's remain open wide, welcoming new generations to encounter Christ, discover faith and become part of the continuing story of the Catholic Church in Glasgow.

The aim was never simply to preserve an historic building. The renewal of St Peter's is ultimately about supporting the mission of the Church for future generations.

Community

In recent decades St Peter's has become a spiritual home for Glasgow's Polish Catholic community, with regular Polish Masses reflecting migration patterns. The parish was linked with the former St Simon's Parish in 2013 and formally merged in 2023.

More recently, St Peter's has welcomed parishioners from the former parish of St Patrick's in Anderston.

Monsignor Paul said: "Our eastern boundary has expanded from Kelvin Way to Finnieston Street, taking in some of the territory of Saint Patrick's Parish. We hope the parishioners from Saint Patrick's will feel at

2026



1902

St Peter's is restored and open to all...

In the heart of Glasgow's West End, amid the sandstone tenements and busy streets of Partick, stands St Peter's Church – a landmark whose story mirrors the growth, transformation and resilience of Catholic Glasgow itself.

For more than a century, the great red sandstone church on Hyndland Street has served generations of worshippers: Irish immigrants and shipyard workers, Highland migrants, Polish Catholics, students, and young West End families.

Later this month – on Sunday June 28 – the transferred feast of Saints Peter and Paul, the Archbishop will celebrate Mass at 11.00 am marking the completion of an (almost) two year renovation project on the venerable building. Anyone with past associations with St Peter's is invited to come and see the transformation.

While the surrounding district has changed dramatically, St Peter's has remained a constant presence as a living centre of prayer, worship and mission.

The origins of St Peter's lie in the extraordinary growth of Glasgow during the 19th century. Partick, once an independent burgh on the western edge of the city, expanded rapidly through shipbuilding, engineering and heavy industry along the River Clyde.

Immigrants

Large numbers of Irish immigrants settled in the district, many fleeing famine and poverty during the mid-1800s. By the late Victorian era, the original St Peter's church had become too small for its growing congregation. The Catholic community was increasing not only in numbers but in confidence and civic importance.

Plans were therefore drawn up for a major new church on Hyndland Street. The foundation stone was laid in 1901 and the church opened in 1903.

The new building represented more than a place of worship. It stood as a sign that the Catholic community, once poor and marginalised, had become a permanent and confident part of Glasgow life.

Designed by the distinguished architectural firm Pugin & Pugin under the direction of Peter Paul Pugin, St Peter's became one of their most ambitious Scottish churches and the last completed before Peter Paul's death in 1904.

The striking red sandstone exterior still dominates Hyndland Street, while the interior retains much of its original beauty, including the impressive high altar and retdos installed in 1906 and the great west

BY RONNIE CONVERY

PICTURES BY PAUL MCSHERRY

window of Christ the King, installed in 1948 by the renowned Irish firm Earley & Co.

For much of the 20th century, St Peter's was the spiritual home of a thriving Catholic community including generations of students attending Glasgow University. Former parish priests include much-loved figures such as Monsignor Gaetano Rossi and Monsignor Jim Ryan.

Yet while St Peter's treasures its history, the parish today is focused firmly on the future.

The adjoining presbytery, originally designed to house five priests, now accommodates Monsignor Paul Murray and Fr Isaac Abba. It has also become home to six mem-

bers of NET Ministries Scotland, part of a missionary outreach to young people across the country. Through retreats, school visits and youth ministry, they aim to inspire young people to "love Jesus and embrace the life of the Church."

Mission

The methods may have changed since the parish was founded more than 120 years ago, but the mission remains the same: proclaiming the Gospel and building a living Christian community in the heart of the city.

That same forward-looking spirit has shaped the extensive works recently completed at St Peter's. Over the last 18 months the parish has undertaken a major programme of restoration and renewal costing more than £2 million.

Monsignor Paul explained: "All the roofs have been re-slatted with Vermont slate, the cast iron gutters and downpipes restored, and the leaded glass windows completely renewed. There has also been extensive replacement, repair and repointing of the stonework. The stained-glass windows have been repaired and cleaned, while the interior has seen complete redecoration, new flooring, improved lighting, and a new sound system."

Importantly, the work was carried out while parish life continued uninterrupted.

"We are very grateful to our contractors for planning the work so that the church could remain open on Sundays throughout the project, even if parishioners sometimes had to navigate complicated routes around scaffolding after Holy Communion!" Monsignor Paul said.



We believe in giving back to our communities



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15 years of a very special garden of healing



LAST month saw the 15th anniversary of the opening of the Italian Cloister Garden at St Andrew's Cathedral.

In the last decade and a half the space has become a much loved oasis of peace and tranquility for visitors to the Cathedral and passers-by alike with its striking mirrored monuments, and gently flowing stream.

The garden was designed during the Cathedral renovation by Roman architect, Giulia Chiarini who remembers her model immediately struck Archbishop Conti as summing up perfectly his idea of a place for the 'healing of memories'.

Though it recalls the loss of life in the *Arandora Star* tragedy in World War II, the monument and garden have a wider significance – open to all who seek comfort and wisdom and a reminder of the precious need for peace in times of war.

It has as its focal point a

BY **RONNIE CONVERY** striking monument, a labyrinth in mirrored plinths with inscriptions from the Sacred Scriptures and the great Italian poets. A 200 year old olive tree, gifted by the people of Tuscany was planted and a fountain and stream traverse the central space.

Around the walls, granite plaques tell the story of the Cathedral, of the Catholic revival in Scotland and of the *Arandora Star* tragedy.

Two sculptured Coats of Arms flank the central door from the Cathedral into the Cloister Garden.

They join together the last of the pre-reformation Catholic Archbishops, James Beaton (who died in 1603) and the first Archbishop of the post-reformation period, Charles Eyre (who died in 1902).

The Cloister Garden recalls in a special way the morning of 2nd July 1940, when, off

the coast of Ireland, the liner *Arandora Star* was torpedoed and sank. Aboard were hundreds of Italian civilians living in Scotland who had been arrested and interned after Italy's entry into the war. The cloister garden contains the world's largest permanent memorial to the victims.



Monument's inscriptions

Believe in God and believe also in me. I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

JOHN, 14:1, 6

I know it is time to leave; I know it is late; but let me stay and watch a little longer.

PASCOLI

The water that I shall give will become a spring of water within, welling up for eternal life.

JOHN 4:14

Lord, you know so well that my hope lies in you alone.

PETRARCH

...infinite goodness has arms so wide that it welcomes all who approach.

DANTE

In His will is our peace: that sea to which everything flows.

DANTE



Clockwise from top: The Italian Cloister Garden today; the plaque carrying the names of the victims of the *Arandora Star* tragedy; visit of UK Ambassador to Italy, Jill Morris; Archbishop Conti blessing the site before construction; Edinburgh Festival Director Nicola Benedetti on a visit to the Garden

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The Church
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Where there's a will there is always a way... to help others

Making a will can be an act of charity

MANY of us reach a point in life when we begin to think not only about what we have achieved, but about what we will leave behind.

For Catholics, that reflection is not simply financial — it is spiritual.

We are all called to be good stewards of all that has been entrusted to us in life, and one of the most lasting ways we can do that is by remembering a favourite charity in our will.

Across Scotland, Catholic charities quietly perform extraordinary work every day. They support the homeless, visit the lonely, protect unborn children, care for the elderly and offer practical help to families facing hardship. Many of these organisations survive because ordinary people, often people of modest means, decided to leave a final gift of kindness.

Leaving a charitable legacy is not only for the wealthy. Even a small percentage of an estate can make a tremendous difference. After



ensuring that loved ones are provided for, many Catholics choose to leave something to a parish, a hospice, a missionary order or a local charity which has touched their lives personally.

There is something profoundly Christian about such a gesture. A legacy gift

says something important about the values by which we lived. It is a final act of generosity, an extension of the charity we practised during our lifetime.

For many people, making or updating a will brings peace of mind. It can spare families unnecessary dif-

ficulties and ensure that cherished causes continue their work long into the future.

A carefully considered legacy may become one of the most meaningful gifts we ever give — a quiet but enduring testimony of faith, compassion and gratitude.

Please consider the PCT-St Nicholas Care Fund when you are making a will or leaving a legacy.

Your support will help change the lives of children living in poverty, will assist older people in situations of isolation and vulnerability and will foster initiatives which bring people together in our local communities.

Applications from eligible organisations are invited quarterly – next deadline 3 August. More information is on our website at www.rcag.org.uk



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The enduring fascination of the Little Flower – St Thérèse of Lisieux

ONE of the saints who speaks to me is Thérèse of Lisieux, commonly known as the Little Flower.

This wasn't love at first sight. For years I was put off and left cold and uninterested by how her person and her image have become encrusted in an overly saccharine piety.

She was too sweet, too pious. Not a saint for me! That changed, thanks to a friend who told me, "Don't read books about her – read her!" I read her and found in her a soul friend.

Who is Thérèse of Lisieux? She was a Carmelite nun who died from tuberculosis in 1897. She was only 24 when she died, and as a Carmelite nun hidden away in a convent in rural France, she died in anonymity, probably known by fewer than a hundred people.

However, during the last two years of her life, as she lay dying from tuberculosis, she kept several diaries. After her death, her Carmelite sisters sent her un-



Scribblings of the spirit

Fr Ronald Rolheiser offers practical insights each month into improving our spiritual lives

published diaries to a few other convents, intending to let a small circle of religious women know of her death and a little about her life.

The rest is history.

The manuscripts were leaked to a wider public and in less than ten years, printing presses were literally having trouble meeting the demand for her autobiography.

Now 130 years later, little has changed. She remains extraordinarily popular.

Why? Why this perennial intrigue about Thérèse?

Thérèse had an anomalous background that produced an extraordinary character. Her life as a child was

in many ways tragic. Her mother got sick at the time of Thérèse's birth and was unable to care for her during the crucial first year of her life. She was cared for by a nurse and an aunt.

Mother

As a one-year-old she was returned to her mother, but her mother was already terminally ill and when Thérèse was four, her mother died. Thérèse then chose her older sister, Pauline, to be her new mother. Five years later, Pauline entered the convent and at just nine, Thérèse again lost a mother.

Shortly after this she took ill and almost died. This

was triggered by a visit to Pauline who was then a Carmelite nun. After Pauline had spent some time focused on her little sister, she then became preoccupied in adult conversation. Left out, and in sheer frustration, little Thérèse stood right in front of her big sister and, shaking her dress, began to cry.

"What's the matter?" asked Pauline. "You didn't notice!" cried Thérèse, "I'm wearing the dress you made me!"

She then became desolate and on returning home took to bed and for some weeks, despite the best efforts of various doctors and every kind of cajoling by her family, hovered between life and death. Eventually she recovered. Such was the oversensitivity of her childhood.

Thérèse was doted on and loved in a way that few children ever are. Her father, her sisters and her extended family considered her their little queen and she

was cherished and made to feel extraordinarily precious and unique. Her sister Celine photographed her every move. Few children ever grow up as nurtured in love and affirmation as did Thérèse.

Her personality bore out the effects of both the tragedy and the love. On the one side, she could be heavy, dark, withdrawn, and otherworldly. She made easy friends with mortality, was a mystic of darkness, the austere adult, the little girl-woman, who, wounded early, grew up fast.

But, on the other side, she always remained the magical child, Cinderella, who, because she was so loved and graced, developed a very robust self-esteem, a confidence and a capacity to love as few others ever have. Only a Thérèse of Lisieux could end all her letters with the phrase: I kiss you with my whole heart!

A saint so pathologically complex can be a soul friend to our own complex souls.

S
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Nourish your soul with our monthly spirituality supplement

This month let's hear it for all our dads!

It's June and it's Father's Day on the 21st. Time for a shout-out for all the dads and father figures.

Unlike Mother's Day with its historical cultural and religious associations the annual celebration of fathers wasn't adopted until the early 20th century.

Apparently dads can expect more to be spent on them than mums can at Mother's Day. Something to do with the fact men are harder to buy for. But the gross national spend on Father's Day is still much lower than at Mother's Day as people are not as likely to mark the occasion.

Not me. As a proud daddy's girl it meant every bit as much to me as Mother's Day. Only a couple of my friends still have their dads. My own dear dad is 35 years gone. But not from my heart and prayers.

At a wedding when all eyes are on the bride as she proceeds up the aisle, glorious in her bridal gown, I'm always watching her dad. Memories of my dad and me, Himself and our daughters, and our daugh-



Mary's musings

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



ter-in-law and her lovely dad, come flooding back. If there are dry eyes in the church they're not mine.

It's the end of a chapter for the father. No matter the closeness of their bond and the unlikelihood their relationship will change he

is passing the torch to the new keeper of her heart.

He has fulfilled the promises he made on the day of her Baptism. There he received the blessing of the father when the celebrant says "May he bless the father of this child. He and his wife will be the first teachers of their child in the ways of faith. May they be also the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what they say and do, in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Unlike the ancient passing of authority of his daughter to her new husband the 'giving away' is symbolic. Some of his feelings he might share in his father-of-the-bride speech. The rest will most likely be held deep in his own heart.

Before this rite of faith and of passage it's the mil-

lions of little moments that bring us here. It's the everyday, the humdrum of life.

From the moment a mother knows she is carrying new life her own life is transformed. Her body becomes a sanctuary for her child and she is changed forever. As long as there is breath in her body her child will take precedence before her own needs.

Essential

The father is just as essential as the mother. With his strength and protection and loving guidance his child will confidently take their place in the world.

Children learn by example. They don't do as we say, they do as we do. That's nothing new. It applies to attending Mass just as much as it does to tidying up their toys or clearing the table after dinner.

A father's attendance at Sunday Mass is sending a clear signal to the children. If he is not practising his faith the chances are his children will fall away.

I'm always impressed when a non-Catholic or

non-believing father makes the effort to attend with his wife and family. It speaks of family unity, of parents travelling in the same direction.

And then there are the men who step up. Children whose lives would have been blighted by the loss of fathers who died or divorced. The men who have picked up the reigns, guiding the children they are learning to love. With all the complications their situation might bring, they nurture and develop the bonds of family.

We are witnessing a culture of sexist and misogynistic behaviour in the Gen Z male population where manliness is determined by physical strength even to the point of aggression. The gentle strength of fathers is needed like never before.

Children with strong and loving fathers and women whose lives have graced by faithful and devoted men who share in the sacred vocation of parenthood are truly blessed.

Happy Father's Day to you all.

ART OF THE MONTH

When words of faith paint a holy picture

THE motto of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur is at once simple and profound: "Ah, how good is the good God."

It is a phrase of gratitude, the kind of sentence that might rise spontaneously to the lips in prayer.

If you wished to write it quickly – faster than ordinary longhand allows – you could employ the curious art known as shorthand.

Our picture, from the writer's imagination, illustrates two systems of shorthand, separated by nearly two millennia: the ancient Tironian system and the more modern system devised by Isaac Pitman, which is still used.

The first system was devised in the first century before Christ by Marcus Tullius Tiro, the faithful secretary of Cicero.

It came about because Cicero was a great orator, and Tiro had to capture his speeches as they flowed.

Ordinary writing was

BY MGR TOM MONAGHAN

far too slow. So he created a vast library of signs and symbols, numbered in the thousands, each representing a word or a commonly used ending.

The hidden text in our picture is in the French language, and is the motto of the Notre Dame Sister of Namur who was also my paternal aunt:

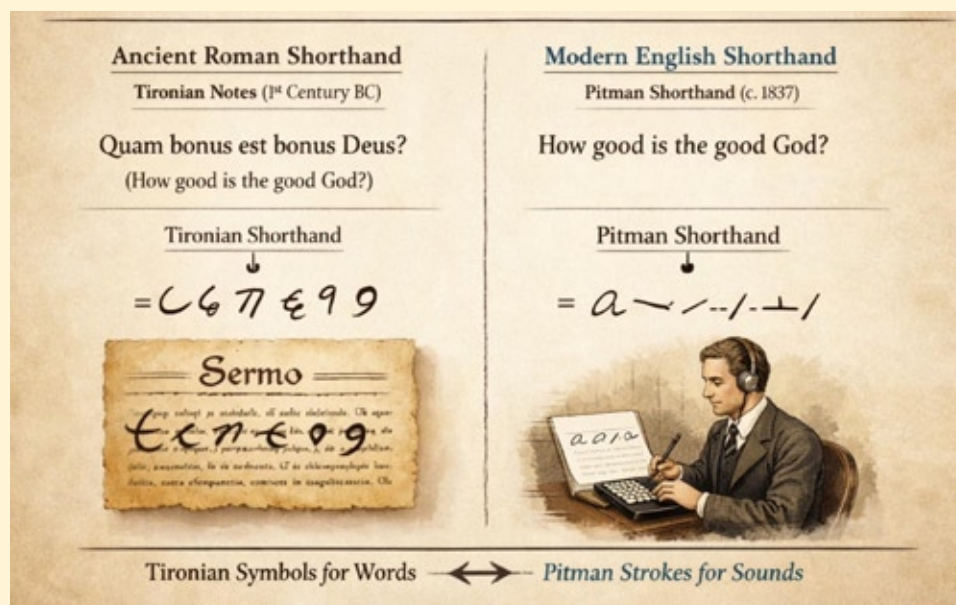
"Ah! Qu'il est bon, le bon Dieu! – Ah, how good is the good God."

Translation

Aunt Maria, or Sister Gabriel of the Annunciation, told us as children her shorthand translation was, "Ain't God good!"

The order was founded by Saint Julie Billiard in Amiens, France in 1804.

The motto expresses the Sisters' profound appreciation of the love and generosity of God as they make



known, by their work and vocation, even to this day, the hidden goodness of our loving God.

This string of compact hieroglyphs would be perfectly intelligible to the writer but, to everyone else, it looks mysterious, but with

a certain beauty.

Isaac Pitman took a radically different approach to the ancient secretary of Cicero. He represented words by simple strokes, dots or small dashes.

Whichever system is used, the phrase remains

the heart of the matter.

The motto captures a whole theology of gratitude. If ever a sentence deserved to be remembered in shorthand or longhand, it is surely this small cry of wonder: "Ah, how good is the good God!"

PRAYER

O gracious God, how wonderful is Your goodness, hidden and yet everywhere revealed. You have filled the world with signs of Your love, and You have given us grateful hearts to recognise them.

Like those who once wrote swiftly to preserve a word, teach us to write Your praise with our lives. Not merely in symbols or strokes, but in acts of faith, charity, and joy.

Through the example of Saint Julie Billiard and the witness of the Sisters of Notre Dame, help us to remember always the simple truth that sustains the soul: "Ah! Qu'il est bon le bon Dieu!"

Caring for migrants is not just another 'optional extra'

WHEN people are desperate, they will sign up to anything.

I've had to dissuade young people in Africa from committing to 'universities' in China and Europe that simply didn't exist. Yet the bait on social media was for free courses, free accommodation and a degree that would put the world at their feet.

They've been shocked to have their dreams of a golden future shattered when I've been able to show them that these scams lead young women into modern slavery in factories at best, horrific prostitution situations at worst.

The latest scams purport to recruit young men for jobs in Russia – but in reality are ensnaring vulnerable people into the military.

Untrained, they are used as cannon fodder in the war against Ukraine, or they are forced to work in munitions factories producing the drones that are killing Ukrainians.

Ironically, the UK government, which is so determined to keep migrants



Marian Pallister

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

away from British shores, has sanctioned Russia in an attempt to safeguard migrants from Egypt, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Morocco, Nigeria, Syria and Yemen.

While this is an admirable move on the part of Westminster, it doesn't alter the fact that what UK politicians on both sides of the House are desperate to put into action are measures that steal migrants' dignity and can so easily end in tragic loss of life.

Drowned

In April, four migrants drowned in the Channel. In May, a woman and a 16-year-old girl died when a small boat carrying over 80 migrants ran aground on a French beach as it set off to cross to England.

We are still putting those who do arrive in the UK into appalling accommodation, denying them any right to work, and keeping them waiting for months before deciding their fate.

Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch wants to implement "tougher" policies that include quitting the European Convention on Human Rights, leaving the UK free to deport 750,000 immigrants in five years. Keir Starmer has produced a White Paper that uses violent language against migrants, saying they have created an 'island of strangers' who have done 'incalculable damage' to the UK.

The current 'hostile environment' is evidently not hostile enough, according to this document.



I feel there is a distinctly Trumpian feel to this anti migrant doctrine.

I would like us instead to listen to Pope Leo, who as he returned from his African pilgrimage told journalists who asked about migrants:

"They are human beings, and we must treat human

beings humanely, not treat them worse than animals, as often happens. It is a very big challenge: a country can say it cannot receive more than a certain number of people, but when people arrive, they are human beings and deserve the respect that belongs to every human being because of their

dignity."

The prayers of Pax Christi Scotland are that we follow Catholic Social Teaching (which is what Pope Leo refers to) and care for our brothers and sisters, wherever they are from. They left home in desperation, they are human, they deserve dignity.

Sunday readings for June's favourite feasts

ARE we already nearly halfway through the year? It seems no time at all since we began Lent (or even finished Christmas!) and here we are in June, resuming our Ordinary Sundays once again.

After the great feasts of Pentecost and Trinity, we first celebrate the great gift of the Eucharist. After that, our Sunday readings will speak to us of the mission to which Jesus' disciples are called, but we listen to them strengthened by what we have learned and experienced over these past few months, through Holy Week, Easter and Pentecost above all.

The year might be passing quickly, but let's not forget what we've been celebrating these past few months!

Corpus Christi, Year A

The manna given to the People in the desert was a wonderful gift, "bread from heaven", by which God taught them to look to Him for real nourishment (First Reading). That great gift,



Fr Tom Kilbride

Parish Priest of Christ the King, Glasgow

however, was nothing compared with the "true bread" which is Jesus himself (Gospel).

If the manna fed the people in a physical way during the Exodus, satisfying their physical hunger and needs, the true bread "that came down from heaven" is nourishment for eternal life, drawing from the very life of God. It is not simply a gift from God (like the manna), it is the gift of God, Jesus himself, giving us a share even now in his life, with the promise and hope of a share in that life for ever.

We share in his death, when we eat his Body and drink his Blood (Second Reading), becoming one

with him and with one another, all the while looking forward to being completely one with him in eternal life.

This is the truly wonderful gift we share in Holy Communion. How often do we take it for granted!

11th Sunday of the Year, A

As we return to the "ordinary" Sundays, guided by Matthew's Gospel, we begin with Jesus calling the Twelve by name and sending them out to share in his work of preaching and healing. In fact, this and next Sunday's passages come from chapter 10 of Matthew's Gospel where Jesus teaches the disciples about their future mission.



El Greco, St Peter and St Paul, ca.1590

The crowds are "helpless", like sheep without a shepherd, and Jesus has compassion on them. This is the grounds for the mission: he will be their shepherd, but he invites his disciples to share in that mission, at this point to the "lost sheep" of Israel itself. Only later will the mission extend to all the nations.

In the First Reading, Moses is reminded that God carried his people in their trials, and calls them now to be something precious, a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation". Paul reminds the Romans that God's love is shown in the fact that we were sinners, but he came to save us anyway. We can rejoice that he has reconciled us to himself. In all of these texts, God's compassion for us is glimpsed: he does not save us because we

deserve it, but because he simply wants to, out of love for us.

12th Sunday of the Year, A

If last week's readings highlighted compassion, this week's are more challenging. Jeremiah faces insult and rejection for preaching God's word, even from his "close friends" while Jesus suggests that the mission he is giving his disciples might also bring its trials. However, the repeated message is that they are not to be afraid. (Jesus says it three times in this short passage!) They are to trust in him and trust in the Father, who cares for them intimately.

Likewise, Jeremiah expresses his unshakeable trust in God, his "dread warrior". The disciples are being called to share in Jesus' own mission, as we saw last week. His mission will bring him to the Cross, so their share in it will bring them challenges too, even persecution. But as his mission led beyond the Cross to the Resurrection, so theirs, if they are faithful to him, will lead them to life.

Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul

We celebrate this Solemnity on Sunday this year, transferred from its usual 29th June date. Although we take a step aside from the sequence of ordinary Sundays in doing so, in fact the feast fits neatly into the themes of the past two Sundays: the journeys Peter and Paul make encapsulate the mission for which Jesus was preparing them.

Both take up the mission of bringing the message of God's reconciling and saving love for us to the furthest reaches, both face rejection at times and ultimately give their lives for it. The Gospel must be preached, and nothing would silence these two, as the readings today attest. Both are "rescued" by God, Peter from Herod and Paul "from the lion's mouth". They embody the compassion of Jesus and face the challenges of giving witness to him to the very end. "I have fought the good fight", Paul says.

Sometimes we crumble at the first sign of challenge. May Saints Peter and Paul help us as we take up the call to evangelise today.

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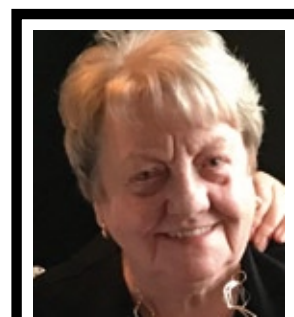
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PHOTOS OF FAITH

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



■ A religious sister has died trying to rescue two of her fellow nuns from drowning. The Brazilian Carmelite Sister Nadir, who was 45, dived into the sea at a beach near Catania in Sicily to help other nuns struggling in the waves. She was the superior of the San Giuseppe al Carmine monastery in the Sicilian city. The Archbishop of Catania, Luigi Rennà, was moved to tears by the news. He said: "Her gesture speaks of a life lived in self-giving and service."



■ The Vatican's 'Foreign Minister', Cardinal Pietro Parolin has been named as one of the first recipients of the newly established European Order of Merit. Cardinal Parolin received his medal from Roberta Metsola, the President of the European Parliament – and Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the EU Commission. In accepting the Cardinal recalled how the EU's founding father, Robert Schumann, was a devout Catholic whose cause for beatification is already well-advanced, and he praised the European Union for maintaining peace in Europe and supporting human rights. Angela Merkel, former Chancellor of Germany, and Lech Wałęsa, former leader of Solidarność and former President of Poland, were admitted as distinguished members of the Order at the same ceremony.



■ At the Venice Biennale which opened last month, the Vatican Pavilion presents a project that focuses on listening. "The Ear is the Eye of the Soul," takes the form of a "sound prayer" spread across two locations in the city. The heart of the project, commissioned by the Vatican Culture chief, Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça, is the 'Mystical Garden', a 17th-century monastic space located a short walk from the Venice Santa Lucia Station, managed by the Discalced Carmelites. Here, visitors are invited to an immersive listening experience through new sound commissions by 20 international composers, musicians, poets, and artists, including Brian Eno and Patti Smith.



■ Incorrupt remains of the saints are a feature of Catholic life in many parts of the world. Last month saw the 'recognition' of the venerated body of Saint Annibale in the Sicilian town of Messina, in preparation for the Centenary which began on June 1, 2026. Saint Annibale Maria di Francia (1851–1927) was an Italian priest, founder of the Rogationist Fathers, renowned as an "Apostle of Prayer for Vocations" and a champion for orphans and the poor. Canonized in 2004, he focused on the Gospel command to pray for vocations.



■ Despite the catastrophic bombardment of their country, members of the Order of Malta from Lebanon managed to travel to Lourdes for their annual pilgrimage. The First Lady of the country, Nehmat Aoun, took part as a member of the Order of Malta delegation. The presence of 150 pilgrims and sick people from Lebanon at the international pilgrimage felt nothing short of miraculous. A spokesperson said: "To be welcomed so warmly by the international community of the Order in Lourdes was deeply moving. Their presence and support were a powerful reminder that Lebanon is not alone. We came carrying Lebanon. We returned carrying hope."

Unlike our own children some mothers' babies are too hungry and weak to cry

MY 'babies' Jamie and Katie are now 25 and 22 but I remember their early days like it was yesterday.

Now working for SCIAF, my mind often wanders back to those days, particularly when my work relates to children in the countries we serve.

When they were very young they would get weighed regularly at the 'baby clinic' where my sister Jacqueline worked as a health visitor – and every week I would bounce out the door, proud as punch that they had gained weight and I had made that happen. I would head straight to my parents' house for lunch and to share my news.

I also remember their 'Red Books' and Jamie being on the 97th centile for

Claire Cook

Advocacy and Campaigns Officer, SCIAF

his height. "This boy will be over 6-foot-tall one day" they said. Well he's only 5'10" but I did my best!

Fast forward those 25 years and I have the privilege to work for SCIAF. My colleague Jonathan has just returned from Malawi, which is facing a food crisis, and is giving the staff an update on his trip.

He tells us of a baby clinic in Nsanje and what strikes me is he says it was eerily quiet. That's not how baby clinics should sound. They should be bustling, loud places with healthy babies screaming out their lungs for their next feed, and mothers chatting away.

These babies are too

weak to scream and the mums too weak to breast-feed their babies. Some little ones are barely clinging to life.

The mums patiently wait for their child to be weighed and measured. A tape is wrapped around their tiny arms to gauge how far the malnourishment has progressed. Measure green and they are deemed safe for now. Yellow means they are on the brink. Red? Read means danger but brings hope too.

For those with the frailest babies measuring in the red zone, the hope comes in the form of a 'Super Cereal' of rich nu-



tritional value – a mixture of corn, soya and Vitamin Premix which comes in a powder form.

This remains a cornerstone of emergency nutrition programming. Be-

cause maize is Malawi's staple food, it is culturally familiar and easily prepared as porridge, making it especially suitable for young children, pregnant and breastfeeding wom-

en, and other vulnerable groups during the lean season.

To carry out this life-saving work, SCIAF received funding from the Scottish Government Humanitarian Emergency Response Fund, known as HEE. Scotland has a long and proud friendship with Malawi, spanning right back to the days of David Livingstone – they even named one of their main cities after the man from Blantyre.

So, when you next visit the baby clinic, or hold your grandchild, or get a smile from a baby on the bus, please think of these babies in Malawi.

■ Say a prayer and consider supporting SCIAF's life-saving work at www.sciaf.org.uk/donate

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