

Image: Vatican Dicastery for Human Development

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# Archbishop: tough choices ahead and a new mindset is required

**I**n a wide-ranging interview to mark the second anniversary of his installation, Archbishop Nolan has spoken of his impressions and priorities... and repeated his challenge to parishioners that they must be open to change.

In the interview, which is carried in full in the March edition of the Catholic journal *Open House*, Archbishop Nolan says he has felt supported by parishioners since coming to Glasgow.

He said: "When I was appointed, Archbishop Mario said to me that coming from a small diocese to a large Archdiocese (as he had, and I have) it is easy to feel overwhelmed by the work that needs doing. But he pointed out, 'you have more people to help you'. And that is my experience."

"I don't feel alone in the work we face, I have a great support staff in the Curia and positive responses in parishes."

He stated once again that the priority for his time as Archbishop of Glasgow is evangelisation.

He said: "We were not trained to evangelise. We as

Picture by Paul McSherry



BY RONNIE CONVERY

priests were trained to run healthy, well-served parish communities, but no-one told us how to go out and reach those who have no contact with the Church. It's the same for lay people...

"Yet Pope Francis has made it clear that's what we should be doing. Going out ... taking the Gospel to the peripheries. That involves a

new mindset for all of us.

"It's easy to look at a small functioning parish community and think 'all is well here'. But I need to take an overview."

"Right now, I have maybe 68 parish priests. But we will be down to 50 in a few years – that means one priest for every 400 practising parishioners. We will no longer be able to afford the luxury of having one priest for 100 practising Catholics that we

currently have in some parishes.

"Evangelisation is a hard word. But it basically means sharing the good news which means so much to us with other people."

"It's not about going out with a soap box or coming across as fanatical. Rather it's about a natural, courageous sharing of the fact that our faith means a lot to us – mentioning to friends and colleagues the fact that we go to Mass, for example, in a non-judgmental way, can be a powerful tool of Evangelisation."

The Archbishop also spoke of the need to focus resources on this priority.

He said: "I know of one priest who chose to employ a youth worker. That meant going without some other things the parish might have wanted to spend the money on – building works and so on. But that priest saw Evangelisation of young people as a higher priority – and he was right."

"I am impressed by how people have responded to my calls for more focus on evangelisation but we can't afford to lose momentum. It may be a rocky road for the next few years as we have to take tough decisions about parish closures, but we have waited too long and doing nothing is not an option if we are to have healthy vibrant parishes in the decades to come."

■ The full interview will be carried online at [www.openhousescotland.co.uk](http://www.openhousescotland.co.uk)

## Date for confession

**T**HE traditional 'Day of Confessions' is being held later this month on Friday March 22 in the Cathedral to help people prepare for Easter.

Priests from across the Archdiocese are being 'signed up' to offer one hour slots to hear Confessions during the day. The first 'visitor slot' begins at 9.00 am and the final slot begins at 4.30pm. It is expected that there will be several confessors available at peak slots during the day,

Cathedral clergy will be in the confessionals from 7.45 am on the big day to allow people to get to confession before going to work.

## Refugee paths led to the altar



Picture by Kevin Wyber

**L**OVE was in the air when young Vietnamese refugees Simon and Lucy decided to improve their language skills after moving to Scotland.

For within months of joining classes and converting to Catholicism they married in St Aloysius, Garnethill – the same church which has provided free English language (ESOL) classes for thousands of refugees and asylum seekers since it was founded almost eight years ago.

Many students have been helped into work, college, and university by the volunteers at St Aloysius, the only Jesuit Church in the Archdiocese, but this was the first time that they had organised a wedding!

Simon and Lucy, both 32, had a long-held wish to convert to the Catholic faith and shortly after signing up for classes the couple also participated in the RCIA programme.

They were accepted into the Church at the Easter Vigil last year with ESOL co-ordinator Kevin Wyber as their godfather.

Their Wedding Mass took place at the Holy Souls side-chapel celebrated by Fr John Twist SJ, concelebrated with Fr Henry Ponce SJ, currently chaplain to the Filipino community in the Archdiocese.

Witnesses were volunteer teacher Bernadette Donoghue and Kevin, who earlier took on the role of father of the bride to walk Lucy down the aisle.

Afterwards, joined by 20 friends, the newlyweds enjoyed a wedding buffet in the Ogilvie Centre Hall, organised by volunteers.

Guests included former Jesuit Brother and St Aloysius ESOL helper, René

de los Reyes, who took a day's leave from his seminary studies in London to wish the young couple well before flying back south the following day.

Joining him was Father Simon Thang Duc Nguyen, a retired Vietnamese priest, now confined to a wheelchair after suffering a stroke. He too returned to London the following day but was determined to attend the Nuptial Mass because of his long friendship with the groom.

When the groom first arrived in London, Father Simon gave him accommodation in the church of Our Lady of the Holy Name in Poplar where he was a much loved priest serving the Vietnamese community for many years until his recent retirement.

### Gratitude

In gratitude for his help over the years Simon took his name.

And by the happiest of co-incidences shortly after Simon and Lucy exchanged vows and three years after first applying, they were granted refugee status.

Simon is now studying to be an electrical engineer while Lucy, who was a medical lab technician back home, continues to apply for similar jobs in the Glasgow area.

Simon told *Flourish*: "We both feel truly blessed – it has been such a wonderful year for us – becoming Catholic, getting baptised and being granted refugee status."

"We do not have enough words to thank the people in Glasgow who have helped us – may God bless them all."

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# The light shines afresh on St Gabriel's



**A** SET of historic stained-glass windows, newly installed in St Gabriel's church in Merrylee and now flooding the building with light, have become the symbol of a remarkable parishioner-led revival of faith in the south side parish.

Kept in storage after being removed from the old Our Lady and St Margaret's church in Kinning Park which closed 40 years ago, the fitting of the 120-year-old windows is the culmination of a project which has not only transformed the church artistically but led to increased attendances at Masses.

Like so many other parishes numbers fell dramatically after Covid until a group of parishioners got together vowing to revitalise their community, restore confidence and rebuild relationships.

Parish Priest Father Michael Woodford said: "When I look around the church and see the changes – the windows, the repainting of the church and so on –

I can't help but be extremely proud of the parishioners who threw themselves into it all with such enthusiasm.

"In turn, and this is what is important, we are seeing greatly increased attendances, more young families and people returning – especially after we took the decision to change Mass times."

## **Cherished**

The project began with that most cherished of institutions – the church coffee morning.

**Over the weeks several initiatives were put in place included producing a regular newsletter asking for ideas which initially included a plan to build benches outside the church to allow people to gather after Mass in good weather.**

Next, they looked at church refurbishment and after being told by retired parish Father Brian McNaught, who is resident in St Gabriel's, that the OLSM windows were in storage and could be available, the parish group set about making plans to acquire them.

BY **BRIAN SWANSON**

PICTURES BY **PAUL MCSHERRY**

They noted that replacing the windows would be done not only for aesthetic reasons but, in the spirit of Laudato Si, energy saving as well.

They approached Archbishop Nolan who readily gave his permission for them to be used in St Gabriel's which first opened for worship almost 70 years ago.

Father Woodford said: "We were given eight full windows divided into sections – so 24 in all with the largest being a representation of St Therese of Lisieux.

"We invited people to sponsor each one at £500 for a large section and £250 for a smaller one to defray costs and they were snapped up very quickly.

"We were fortunate that a parishioner has a double glazing company so that was a big help.

"But before they were out in place they had to be thoroughly and carefully cleaned so we had teams of volun-



teers spending days removing generations of dirt from them and the result is quite magnificent".

St Gabriel's is not the only church to have OLSM windows – some have been installed in Ayr Cathedral in the Diocese of Galloway while others have been gifted to Motherwell diocese.

## Notre Dame rises from the ashes

**THE famous Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris is to re-open later this year after a disastrous fire almost destroyed the building in 2019.**

The reopening period will include numerous celebrations and pilgrimages, and will extend from December 8, 2024, to June 8, 2025, the feast of Pentecost.

Fifteen days before the church's reopening, a large procession will accompany the return of the image of Notre Dame to the Cathedral along the streets of Paris.

The reopening itself will begin with a triduum of prayer starting December 7 – the vigil of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

**The event will include the handover of Notre Dame from the French state to the Catholic Church; the 'awakening' of the organ; a Te Deum of thanksgiving, and then Vespers.**

The consecration of the altar will take place during

ing the first Mass in the restored Cathedral on Sunday, December 8, the second Sunday of Advent this year.

The next day will see the liturgical celebration of the Immaculate Conception.

## **Pilgrimage**

Archbishop Laurent Ulrich of Paris has invited people to take part in the reopening celebrations, calling for pilgrimages to be organised.

He said: "Nothing is more beautiful than to see, in parishes or other Christian assemblies, a diverse people, the people of neighborhoods as they are, with children, young people, adults, and the elderly, healthy people and the sick, people with disabilities, foreigners. Nothing is more beautiful than to see Christian associations concerned with leaving no one behind, making room for the most precarious, the isolated, the forgotten: they will be at Notre Dame."

## Apply now to become a Holy Year volunteer

**A** CALL has gone out from the Vatican to find volunteers to help assist pilgrims during the Holy Year which will start on Christmas Eve and run throughout 2025.

Serving as a Volunteer will be a unique opportunity to experience the next Holy close up, helping pilgrims who need information or assistance.

All adults can apply. After registering via the website, the user will be able to choose a period of service.

Applicants will be asked to present a letter from their local parish priest certifying their Catholic faith and active participation in Church life.

Knowledge of Italian is preferable but not mandatory.

After signing up, those who wish to volunteer can



BY **RONNIE CONVERY** follow the progress of their application online. It will be confirmed only following acceptance by the Secretariat of the 2025 Jubilee.

The Volunteer service is provided freely and without payment, with the sole aim of being able to help and assist the tens of millions

of pilgrims coming from all over the world to Rome for the Holy Year.

**Each volunteer will cover travel expenses to and from Rome. However, the Vatican's Dicastery for Evangelisation will cover costs of food and accommodation during the period of service.**

A spokesman said: "Any

Volunteer who chooses to serve for the Jubilee, in addition to committing himself to the success of the event, is called to be a witness of what the Holy Year truly represents: love towards others, mercy, charity, reconciliation and much more.

"Among the many tasks of the Volunteers will be welcoming pilgrims at the different meeting points, providing them with information on all the available services and accompanying them along the routes reserved for them to access the Papal Basilicas where, after passing through the Holy Doors, they will be able to pause for a period of prayer."

For further information check out the "Become a volunteer" page: [www.iubilaeum2025.va/en.html](http://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en.html)





## POPE FRANCIS' LENT MESSAGE



*Dear brothers and sisters,*

**WHEN our God reveals himself, his message is always one of freedom: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."**

The exodus from slavery to freedom is no abstract journey. If our celebration of Lent is to be concrete, the first step is to desire to open our eyes to reality.

When the Lord calls out to Moses from the burning bush, he immediately shows that he is a God who sees and, above all, hears...

Today too, the cry of so many of our oppressed brothers and sisters rises to heaven.

**Let us ask ourselves: Do we hear that cry? Does it trouble us? Does it move us? All too many things keep us apart from each other, denying the fraternity that, from the beginning, binds us to one another...**

Earth, air and water are polluted, but so are our souls. True, Baptism has begun our process of liberation, yet there remains in us an inexplicable longing for slavery. A kind of attraction to the security of familiar things, to the detriment of our freedom.

Let us ask: Do I want a new world? Am I ready to leave behind my compromises with the old? The witness of many of my brother bishops and a great number of those who work for peace and justice has increasingly convinced me that we need to combat a deficit of hope that stifles dreams and the silent cry that reaches to heaven and moves the heart of God.

This "deficit of hope" is not unlike the nostalgia for slavery that paralysed Israel in the desert and prevented it from moving forward.

An exodus can be interrupted: how else can we explain



## Through the desert, God leads us to freedom

the fact that humanity has arrived at the threshold of universal fraternity and at levels of scientific, technical, cultural, and juridical development capable of guaranteeing dignity to all, yet gropes about in the darkness of inequality and conflict.

God has not grown weary of us. Let us welcome Lent as the great season in which he reminds us: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."

This, however, entails a

struggle... We can become attached to money, to certain projects, ideas or goals, to our position, to a tradition, even to certain individuals. Instead of making us move forward, they paralyse us. Instead of encounter, they create conflict...

It is time to act, and in Lent, to act also means to pause. To pause in prayer, in order to receive the word of God, to pause like the Samaritan in the presence of a wounded brother or sister...

Slow down, then, and pause!

The contemplative dimension of life that Lent helps us to rediscover will release new energies. In the presence of God, we become brothers and sisters, more sensitive to one another: in place of threats and enemies, we discover companions and fellow travelers. This is God's dream, the promised land to which we journey once we have left our slavery behind...

**I invite every Christian community to do just this: to offer its members moments set aside to rethink their lifestyles, times to examine their presence in society and the contribution they make to its betterment.**

Woe to us if our Christian penance were to resemble the kind of penance that so dismayed Jesus. To us too, he says: "Whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting".

Instead, let others see joyful faces, catch the scent of freedom and experience the love that makes all things new, beginning with the smallest and those nearest to us. This can happen in every one of our Christian communities.

Allow me to repeat what I told the young people whom I met in Lisbon last summer: "Keep seeking and be ready to take risks. At this moment in time, we face enormous risks; we hear the painful plea of so many people. Indeed, we are experiencing a third world war fought piecemeal.

"Yet let us find the courage to see our world, not as being in its death throes but in a process of giving birth, not at the end but at the beginning of a great new chapter of history. We need courage to think like this."

I bless all of you and your Lenten journey.

*Franciscus*



# Archbishop praises religious orders and congregations as 'example for whole Church'

**ARCHBISHOP Nolan has paid tribute to the men and women religious of the various religious orders and congregations whose hidden work enriches the Archdiocese throughout the year.**

And he urged them to be faithful to their calling while serving as an example to the wider Church.

The occasion was the annual World Day of Consecrated Life which is marked each year on the feast of Candlemas, and this year St Andrew's Cathedral was filled for the occasion.

Currently there are 12 male religious orders operating in the Archdiocese and 21 female Orders and Congregations of Sisters.

BY RONNIE CONVERY

The Archbishop observed that their life of prayer and discernment and communal action was a model for the whole Church.

He said: "In the last year the Pope has tried to remind us we are a Synodal Church. Everyone has a right and duty to speak and make their views known but also to listen to others and listen to the voice of the Spirit and discern and respond to that voice."

"In religious life that sense of listening to the voice of the Spirit and responding as a community is lived out on a daily basis."

But the Archbishop admitted he was disappointed



Picture by Paul McSherry

that the example of religious life was not given greater prominence in the Synod

process.

He said: "I was saddened that religious life barely

got a mention, because the truth is that if we go back to the life of the early Church,

we can see how prayer and communal action brought it together.

"Religious life is a model of the Christian life but it has been lost from people's consciousness. In the past it was more visible through the work of the religious orders and congregations in education, healthcare, social work and so on. And today it should be a model for all of us because it is a living example of a synodal Church in action."

He ended his homily with words of hope. He said: "I hope that in future people will come to appreciate the value of religious life as a model for the whole Church to follow in listening to the voice of the Spirit."

## Glasgow's rich tapestry of consecrated life

**THE history of the Catholic revival in the West of Scotland can largely be traced through the work of the religious orders.**

The first male religious to set up home in the city arrived in the mid 19th century – the Marist Brothers, Jesuits, Franciscans and the Passionists all set up bases in Glasgow in the decade 1858–1868.

The first female orders and congregations arrived even earlier. The Sisters of

Mercy and the Franciscans of the Immaculate Conception were at work in Glasgow in the 1840s.

But the contribution of men and women religious continues to our own day.

Even in recent years the Archdiocese has welcomed new religious orders and congregations, the most recent being the Sons or Mary Mother of Mercy, based in St Barnabas Parish, who arrived in 2020 and the Daughters of Mary

Mother of Mercy who arrived in the same year in the East End and the Sisters of the Society of Marie Reparatrice and the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary who also arrived in 2020.



Right: Celtic captain John McPhail visits his old school St Mungo's in Parson Street to show off the Scottish Cup to headmaster Brother Clare (James Handley), the Marist brother who wrote Celtic's first official history *The Celtic Story*

## Top marks for Our Lady's High



**OUR Lady's High School in Cumbernauld has received top marks from Education Scotland in an inspection report which highlighted the 'high-quality learning, teaching and attainment' of the 1200 pupil school.**

The report praised the strong and effective leadership of the headteacher Nicola Cunningham noting that she is well supported by all staff in an aspiration-

al and positive climate for learning.

It also states that teachers support the learning of young people very well through effective questioning while providing high-quality feedback to all learners.

High levels of attainment in literacy were recognised, and inspectors noted the wide range of well-considered clubs and activities which develop young peo-

BY BRIAN SWANSON

ple's leadership skills and skills for learning, life, and work.

The views of the inspecting team were echoed by Father John McGrath, parish priest at St Joseph's, Cumbernauld, who is also the school chaplain.

**He told Flourish: "It was obvious from the first day I started in the school that the Catholic ethos was at the centre of everything that goes on whether it be the academic work of the school curriculum or the involvement of staff and pupils in work towards Caritas awards and all the other charitable activities."**

"Our Lady's High defines itself as an excellent Catholic school that is open and welcoming to everyone and so I want to thank Mrs Cunningham and all the staff and pupils whose hard work

and commitment have resulted in achieving the highest standards in education."

Mrs Cunningham said: "We are delighted that Education Scotland recognised that all staff work together to ensure that our young people are well supported in their learning."

"We are extremely proud of our pupils and their fantastic contribution during the inspection. We look forward to building on our success in the future to further enhance our community of faith and learning."

Councillor Angela Campbell, Convener of Education, Children and Families Committee in North Lanarkshire Council said: "I would like to congratulate Nicola and her team at Our Lady's High School on the report, which reflects the hard work and commitment of all the teachers and staff to providing a first-class education for every pupil."

## Is God calling you?

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# Glasgow's Chinese Catholics are a powerful witness to faith and an inspiration to all

**LIKE so many initiatives throughout the Archdiocese, the newspaper you are now reading being one them, credit for finding a church for the Chinese Catholic community in Glasgow must go to Cardinal Tom Winning.**

The late Cardinal asked Father Gerry Dunn, a Columban missionary who had served in the Far East, to have what the Cardinal described as a 'special care' for the rapidly growing Chinese population in Glasgow in the 1980s and 90s.

The choice was a good one.

Father Dunn, who died six years ago aged 80, had picked up a bit of Cantonese, saying the Rosary in the language during his overseas postings as a missionary and was able to celebrate Mass phonetically. Equally importantly, he was resident at St Gregory's, Wyndford following the closure of the Columban House in Glasgow. And so the Mary-

hill church became a natural home for the Chinese community to celebrate Mass in their own language.

The unswerving faith of the Chinese families coupled with their deep commitment to the teaching of the Gospels, never fails to impress those from outside the community who attend the monthly Cantonese and Mandarin Masses at St Gregory's.

Among such visitors was Archbishop Nolan who was present at a recent Mass with which was celebrated by London-based Chinese priest Father Joseph Liang in Mandarin. He also met Father Bruno Lepeu from Manchester who visits for Mass in Cantonese.

Archbishop Nolan said: "The commitment of the Chinese community to their faith is hugely impressive. It is important that we continue to offer every support to them in their lives in Glasgow."

"It was obvious from the

BY BRIAN SWANSON

moment the Mass began that I was with people of great faith, who share a love of the Gospels and who unlike their relatives in China are grateful to be able to have the freedom to worship as they wish and in their own language which is something that we in Scotland take for granted

## Joy

"You could tell their faces that it was a joy for them to be here and it was wonderful to see so many young devout families, many coming from some distance away, taking part."

Edmund Wong, a long-time member of the community who came to Scotland from his native Hong Kong 30 years ago, with his wife Agnes helps Parish Priest Father Allan Cameron in preparing candidates for baptism of reception into the Church. This year he is preparing a young Chinese couple to be received into the

Church at the Easter Vigil. He explains that some of the Chinese community at St Gregory's were born Catholics, some Protestants, others Buddhists while many who did not adhere to any religion.

Edmund, 73, who himself grew up in a family with no religious affiliations, converted to Catholicism after being impressed by his wife's devotion to her faith.

He came to Scotland to work initially in the electronics industry but spent most of his working life in the admin department of Scottish Prison Service at Barlinnie prison.

He said: "When I came to Glasgow with my family all the Chinese Catholics were from Hong Kong. For many years there were no new intake of Catholics and the congregation began to dwindle.

"Things began to change about 14 years ago and we started seeing some devout Mandarin-speaking Catholics and since then the congregation began to grow in particular from 2009 to 2016 and at the same time the baby boom began to kick in.

"Father Allan started the RCIA in Sept 2014 and a Chinese lady was baptised the following Easter and in the first few years about 20



Picture by Paul McSherry



adults and 30 children were baptised at St Gregory's.

## Influx

He added: "The numbers have grown quite a bit over the years – we get at least 70 at Mass every month – and we now also have Andy Lau, who moved from Hong Kong to Glasgow as our permanent deacon.

"With the introduction of British National Overseas visa scheme in early 2021 which fast tracked immigration applications for British nationals there has been

an influx of young Catholic families from Hong Kong who all speak Cantonese making them the largest group at our Masses – but no matter the language we are all united by our shared faith."

Father Cameron, who is learning Mandarin, described the presence of the Chinese community at St Gregory's as 'a blessing' adding: "I think I can say without contradiction that my recent baptismal register contains more Chinese names than Scottish ones."

## Vatican-China ties aim to repair damage

**RELATIONS between the Vatican and the Communist rulers of China in the post-war period have been difficult, but Pope Francis has taken major steps to build a new relationship.**

Under Chairman Mao, Catholics had the choice of accepting an approved 'patriotic' Catholic Church where bishops would be approved by the state or remaining loyal to the 'underground' Church in communion with Rome.

This split remains to this day and the Pope's outreach is part of an effort to reunite the divided Catholic community.

Pope Francis offered a friendly greeting to the "noble Chinese people" during his final Mass in Mongolia



last summer, and he also recently held a meeting with a delegation from the National Federation Italy-China in honour of the Chinese New Year.

With the provisional agreement between Rome and Beijing up for renewal, this year has seen an uptick in activity.

In January, the Vatican

announced the first formal creation of a new diocese by the Holy See in China since the Communist revolution in 1949.

Days before the Holy See announced the ordination of a new bishop for the Diocese of Zhengzhou, who it said had been appointed by the Pope "in the framework of the Provisional Agreement between the Holy See and the People's Republic of China."

Then again on January 31, the Vatican announced a third episcopal appointment in China, revealing that Bishop Pietro Wu Yishun, named bishop of the Apostolic Prefecture of Shaowu, Minbei, in the province of Fujian on December 16, 2023, had been ordained a bishop earlier that day.

### Pioneer Association – Scotland

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# Wee Box – big challenge for Lent

**SCIAF supporters Ricky Ross and Lorraine McIntosh took to the streets of Glasgow to ask people to show their care for some of the world's poorest people this Lent.**

The couple helped SCIAF launch its annual WEE BOX, BIG CHANGE appeal, which raises vital funds for its life-changing work in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Each year generous Scots up and down the country give up a favourite treat such as coffee, chocolate, wine or crisps during Lent and put the money they save into a SCIAF WEE BOX.

They then donate it at Easter to provide a hand-up to vulnerable communities worldwide, struggling to survive due to hunger, poverty and the climate emergency.

This year, SCIAF's appeal focusses on the people of Rwanda, 30 years on from the genocide which left around one million people dead.

Ricky said: "Having seen first-hand some of the programmes that SCIAF are involved in made us realise how important it is to support the ongoing work of SCIAF."

"We are continually

amazed at the difference that the WEE BOX makes – even tiny amounts make a huge change."

Lorraine Currie, SCIAF's Chief Executive said: "Our Lent appeal this year is so important. There are so many wars and tragic things happening all over our world, which we witness every day on our television screens. But there are also ongoing struggles and injustices in countries across the world that we don't hear much about, like in Rwanda."

"SCIAF's work across Rwanda, driven by donations from the people of Scotland, focuses on supporting women and girls who have suffered abuse and discrimination. Working through local Rwandan organisations, SCIAF is supporting projects which help women and girls rebuild their lives, change social attitudes, and build a better future for themselves and their families."

■ **For more details on how to donate, please visit [www.sciaf.org.uk/weebox](http://www.sciaf.org.uk/weebox). Or, to donate £5, you can text SCIAF to 70480.**



## Looking for Lenten inspiration? Try these new online resources

**THOSE looking to deepen their faith and spiritual life during Lent have a wealth of free online resources available this year.**

The Archdiocesan Youth Office is running a weekly Lenten online pilgrimage via zoom. Click the event to find out more and register your spot here: [www.tinyurl.com/rcagyouthlent](http://www.tinyurl.com/rcagyouthlent)

Pax Christi has an interactive Lenten calendar with 40 days of reflection and renewal at <https://paxchristi.net/2024/02/06/lenten-calendar-40-days-of-reflection-and-renewal/>

The Jesuits in Britain have several options to "journey through Lent" with daily meditations based on the writings of Pope Francis,

with prayer material for each day of Lent including music, images and scripture. <https://www.jesuit.org.uk/events/through-lent-with-pope-francis>

The prayer material for each day is available at the Ignatian Spirituality Centre, Glasgow. <https://www.onlineprayer.net/>

SCIAF has launched its annual "wee box, big change" appeal, which raises funds for its work in Africa, Asia and Latin America, focussing this year on the people of Rwanda. They have online prayer resources here: <https://www.sciaf.org.uk/resources/621-wee-box-day-of-prayer-2024>

Pact – the organization which works with prisoners and their families – has prepared a Stations of the

Cross liturgy that includes words from those who have lived experience of the prison system: <https://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/stations-of-the-cross>

Missio, the Pope's chosen

charity for mission, has produced a Lent planner and Via Crucis (below) to assist in organizing and deepening people's prayer life: <https://www.missionScotland.com/resources>



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# Ukrainian Catholics' gratitude for warm Glasgow welcome

**As the second anniversary of the Russian invasion of their homeland was marked by prayers for an end to the fighting, the Glasgow-based Ukrainian community gave its heartfelt thanks to Archbishop Nolan for making St Michael's Church, Parkhead, available to them.**

The Archbishop came along to worship with the Ukrainians last week and took time out to meet the

BY BRIAN SWANSON

PICTURE BY PAUL MCSHERRY

community afterwards and offer them his support.

Father Andriy Chornenko, Vicar in Scotland of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy (Diocese) of the Holy Family, said: "It is extremely important for us to have a church where we can gather on Sundays and Holy Days to hear God's word in our own

language and confer the sacraments.

"Through the efforts of our Bishop Kenneth Novakovsky, we are grateful to Archbishop William Nolan for the opportunity to spiritually care for our people.

"We are sincerely grateful to all Scots for their help and support to all Ukrainians, especially those who were forced to flee the horrors of

the war in Ukraine.

"Most of those in Scotland are mothers with their children, and their husbands are defending Ukraine at the cost of their own lives – you can only imagine their concerns for their families.

"That's why it's so important for them to have a church where they can come to speak with God, thank Him for something, ask for something, and also pray for their deceased relatives and fallen defenders, to whom

many owe their own saved lives."

Weekly Masses are held in St Michael's attracting growing numbers with around 80 people attending the eastern-style Divine Liturgy every Sunday.

Father Andriy added: "There are more attendees during major holidays. For example, last year on Easter, the church was overcrowded.

"Catechism for children takes place every Sunday as

well as the community group 'Mothers in Prayer' and after the service, we gather in the parish hall to have a snack and socialise with each other always striving to create a vibrant Ukrainian parish as a place to meet the living Christ."

Father Liam McMahon, Parish Priest at St Michael's said: "We were more than happy to open our doors to our Ukrainian friends and provide them with a church they can call their own."



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## Pope St Paul VI was a 'martyr', says Francis



**POPE Paul VI – the Pontiff who guided the Church through the 1960s and 70s and implemented the insights of Vatican II has been hailed as a 'martyr' by his successor.**

Pope Francis used the unusual term in a new book about Pope Paul which has been published by the Vatican publishing house, and revealed how much he personally benefitted from the late Pope's guidance.

BY RONNIE CONVERY

He writes: "Paul VI! I have often wondered whether this Pope should not be considered a 'martyr'.

"Indeed, Paul VI mentioned the fact that Vatican II had 'produced a state of attention, and, under certain aspects, of spiritual tension', including the crisis of many priests. In that context he said: 'This is our crown of thorns.'

"The exhortation to love the Church was among the most frequent and repeated calls in Paul VI's magisterium. He considered it as the mirror in which to see Christ...

"The figure of Saint Paul VI has always attracted me. I have already said on another occasion how some of his speeches – such as those in Manila, in Nazareth – have given me spiritual strength and have done so much good in my life.

"It is a known fact that my first Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* was intended to be a bit like the other side of the coin of the Exhortation of Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, a pastoral document that I love very much.

"Everyone, on the other hand, has often heard me repeat the expression that fell into my heart from there: the sweet and comforting joy of evangelising. I repeated it when I was bishop of Buenos Aires and I repeat it today."



# Two new bishops named for Scotland

**POPE Francis has nominated two new bishops for Scotland's vacant dioceses, meaning the country will have its full quota of eight bishops for the first time in several years.**

Troon Parish Priest Fr. Martin Chambers who was born in Glasgow and baptised at St Paul's, Shettleston, is named as the new Bishop of Dunkeld. He will succeed Bishop Stephen Robson who retired in 2022 on health grounds.

Archbishop Nolan, who knew the new Bishop-elect while serving as his Bishop in Galloway said he was delighted at the news. "It's good news for the Diocese of Dunkeld with the appointment of Fr Martin Chambers as their new bishop. They will benefit from his enthusiasm, his pastoral sensitivity and indeed his humour!"

"There will be mixed feelings though in Galloway Diocese since the loss of a



Fr Martin Chambers



Fr Frank Dougan

priest of his calibre will be sorely felt. The Church in Scotland though can rejoice in this appointment since Pope Francis has chosen well."

**BY RONNIE CONVERY** Reacting to his appointment, Fr Martin said: "One of the catchphrases of Pope Francis is that, as Christians,

we are called to be 'Missionary Disciples'. The Pope reminds us that, yes, we are all called to take our part in the mission of spreading the Good News in our families

and within our local community. However, the Pope reminds us that, first of all, we must sit as disciples at the feet of Jesus, listening to Him and letting Him guide our steps."

**Meanwhile the Archbishop's former diocese, Galloway, is to get a new bishop who served as Parish Priest in the same parish as Archbishop Nolan before he was named bishop of Galloway.**

The new bishop will be Fr Frank Dougan, of the Diocese of Motherwell, currently parish priest of Our Lady of Lourdes in East Kilbride.

He was born on 8 September 1972 in Lanark. After graduating in Law from Glasgow University, he obtained a Licentiate in Canon Law in Rome. He was ordained on 27 June 2001, for the Diocese of Motherwell.

Reacting to his appointment, Fr Frank said: "I am humbled and more than a little bit nervous that Pope Francis has asked me to take

on this office. I feel confident however that I will not be alone in spreading the joy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I will be joining with every single person in Galloway Diocese all of whom have a role to play."

Fr Frank added: "My mother was from Ayr, and I spent many childhood summers here, so you could say there is a little bit of coming home for me! But most importantly, we must proclaim a Church where everyone can feel at home and welcomed."

Archbishop Nolan said: "I welcome the new appointment. It is a wonderful present for the diocese of Galloway where people have waited almost two years for a new bishop. The diocese will benefit from his pastoral sensitivity developed over his 20 plus years of experience ministering in parishes. He will guide the diocese in harmony with Pope Francis and the universal Church."

## Pollok salutes young faith graduates



**THE gowns, mortar boards and happy faces are familiar, but for these young members of the St Thomas Syro-Malabar Catholic community in Glasgow this was a graduation with a difference, as they marked the completion of an incredible 13 years of faith formation.**

Such devotion to their faith will come as no surprise to those who know the Glasgow Kerala Christian Community who settled into a permanent place of worship and residence in St Conval's Pollok in 2018 after several years of using other buildings for their worship.

Now 400-strong and with a firm focus on family, Mass, scripture, community, the catechism and the importance of marriage and faith development of children, they gather every Sunday to celebrate Mass in their native Malayalam language.

The new graduates began studying catechism at a young age, helped by twelve catechists, and have to pass two written exams a year.

**Monsignor Hugh Bradley (left), the Vicar General of the Archdiocese was on hand to preside at the graduation. He said: "What an amazing witness of faith these young people give.**

"Their commitment to study, their infectious enthusiasm, their deep faith and their boundless joy are truly remarkable.

"They are a great credit to



**BY BRIAN SWANSON** their families and parish and a treasure for the Archdiocese of Glasgow which we are so glad they have made their home."

There are currently 159 children who regularly attend the classes helped by 26 trained volunteer catechists.

The graduation ceremony took place in St Conval's Hall and was presided over by Father Martin Kane, Parish Priest of St. Conval's, a strong supporter of the Syro-Malabar community who, along with the late Archbishop Tartaglia, was instrumental in making the church their permanent place of worship.

Father Kane said: "We were delighted to welcome the new community and remain grateful for their pres-

ence, vibrancy, and contribution to the parish. Under the care of Fr Binu, the mission director, the community continues to flourish in both faith and numbers."

Father Binu said: "We are proud of our students for

showing such commitment on their faith journey. We will always have gratitude for the help and encouragement from the community of St Conval's and all our friends in Glasgow and throughout Scotland."



### St Nicholas Care Fund

The St. Nicholas Care Fund offers grant support to schools, churches and community groups working in the Archdiocese of Glasgow with vulnerable or disadvantaged groups and individuals.

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# What EVANGELISATION means for you. Yes you!

Priests, Religious and lay people from all areas of the Archdiocese gathered last month to hear how they can spread the good news



**R**EPRESENTATIVES from parishes across the Archdiocese gathered in the Curial Offices last month to discuss 'how to evangelise' – in light of the stated priority of the Holy Father, Pope Francis and Archbishop Nolan's focus for the Church in Glasgow.

The Archbishop welcomed the attendees with the honest confession that, despite ministering as a priest for almost 50 years he was never trained to spread the good news among those far from the Church.

He outlined the need for a new mindset among clergy and lay people.

He said: "As a parish priest our focus was always on building string communities of parishioners. But the Holy Father is calling on us to do something different – to go beyond the communities that already exist and help other people to cross the threshold and find God in their lives.

"We all need to learn *how* to do that – it's a gentle apostolate of friendship, drawing people closer to God, without seeming to lecture them or judge them.

"To evangelise others is what God wants us to do so we need to fund practical ways of going forward in that direction."

Suzanne Bunniss, director of Fire-Cloud, an evangelisation project

based in Clydebank which has been working to bring people closer to God and the Church for 17 years, spoke about the five stages or 'thresholds of conversion' a modern man or woman might experience on their journey of faith, based on research done by the Catherine of Siena Institute in the USA.

The presentation was followed by a talk from representatives of the Youth Office in the Archdiocese who spoke about the initiatives they have put in place to draw young people to the faith.

Canon Gerry Tartaglia said that it was often a question of priorities.

He recalled how as a Parish Priest in Clydebank he had decided to forego spending on various projects around the parish such as improvements to the church grounds, so as to employ a youth worker. It was money, he said, that was 'well spent'.

Youth Officer Mishal Novani spoke of how she herself had been evangelised and outlined the Youth Ministry Model where parishes invite a member of the youth team into their community.

A few local volunteers with a commitment to the Church and a heart for young people then work with the youth office to design a programme fitted to the local community's needs and demographics.

## The Archbishop welcomed 75 men and women who are making their journey of faith to the Cathedral as they prepare to be baptised, or received into the Church at the Easter Vigil



## Evangelisation is a 5 step process

- ### 1 Trust

An enquirer will be attracted to the faith through a friend whom they admire and trust and who is open about his or her beliefs, in a non-judgmental, non-preachy way. This quiet witness is seen as attractive and leads to a conversation about what inspires such a person in their family and working life.
- ### 2 Curiosity

A person finds himself intrigued by, or desiring to know more about Jesus, his life and his teachings or some aspects of the Christian faith. This curiosity can range from mere awareness of a new possibility to something quite intense. Curiosity is still essentially passive, but it represents a step beyond basic trust.
- ### 3 Openness

A person acknowledges that he or she is open to the possibility of personal and spiritual change. This is one of the most difficult transitions for a post-modern nonbeliever. Openness is not a commitment to change. People who are open are simply admitting that they may be interested in finding out more.
- ### 4 Seeking

The person moves from being stirred, to actively seeking to know the God who is calling him or her. Seekers are asking "Are you the one to whom I will give myself?" At this stage the seeker is engaged in a real spiritual quest, seeking to know whether he or she can commit to Christ and his Church.
- ### 5 Discipleship

This is the decision to "drop one's nets", to make a conscious commitment to follow Christ in his Church as an obedient disciple and begin to reorder one's life accordingly. What follows is an active spiritual life and dedication to prayer and evangelisation.



**A**RBISHOP Nolan took 75 men and women soon to be baptised or received into the Catholic Church on a trip down memory lane as he presided at the Rite of Election in the Cathedral.

The ceremony marks the start of the 'final lap' of the preparations of the 'new Catholics' before receiving the sacraments at the Easter Vigil.

The Archbishop recalled friends moving house – from Loanhead, south of Edinburgh, to Linlithgow, west of Edinburgh.

A few months later the Archbishop went to see how the friends were settling in, and found himself driving on the Edinburgh bypass, heading to their old house rather than the new one!

"It was a nice drive. It went well. There wasn't much traffic, it was a lovely day – but I was going in the wrong direction!" said the Archbishop.

"Sometimes life is like that. We seem to be doing OK, life seems good, but we don't always stop to ask ourselves where we are

headed, we don't say 'am I going in the right direction?'"

"But you who are here in the Cathedral today, who have made this choice to join the Catholic Church, through baptism or full reception, you *have* asked yourself that question."

"When we realise God is part of our life we have to make a change – it might be a tweak or a major U-turn – but we have to amend it to make sure our ultimate destination is God."

This year's RCIA group is the highest for many years – perhaps a sign that the recent focus on evangelisation is bearing fruit.

One of the parishes with the highest number of new converts is Immaculate Conception, Maryhill. Parish Priest, Fr Jim Lawlor was there to support his 'first eleven'. He said: "This year has been like herding cats with nine young people – mid and late teenagers – and two adults. We didn't all make it for the ceremony or the pic – but here we are! Pray for them!"



# EVANGELISATION

## Online course is full of ideas for faith sharing



**ARCHBISHOP Nolan's Appeal to make Evangelisation the number one priority of the Church in Glasgow has left many people looking for resources to help.**

When asked about this, the Archbishop often directs people to 'Sycamore' – an online programme which helps Catholics to spread the gospel in practical ways.

Sycamore is an informal course about the Catholic Faith and its relevance today. It consists of 20 films presented in everyday language.

The films are presented by Fr Stephen Wang, the Rector of the English College in Rome, who was invited by the Archbishop to give ideas and advice about evangelising to the clergy of the Archdiocese of Glasgow last year.

In 2014, Fr Stephen started a discussion group to introduce the Catholic faith to those who knew little about it and to create a welcoming atmosphere where people could relax and feel at



home.

Now over 40 people go to the Newman House chaplaincy every week to participate in a group. The program has also been trusted by over 600 different groups nationally and internationally.

Sycamore operated on a paid subscription basis until March 2020, when the decision was taken to offer all resources completely free of charge. This made it more accessible and has helped countless Catholics to take their faith and responsibilities for spreading it seriously.

So, how does it work? Each film is divided into 3 sections

and at the end of each one, it prompts discussion and chat with carefully thought-out questions, making it suitable for small groups of all ages and backgrounds.

The Sycamore groups can meet in person or online. It is a perfect tool for helping a parish community come closer or reach out to those who don't go to church.

There are over 30 Sycamore courses, arranged into four areas: Enquiry, Formation, Sacramental and Schools.

Some of the most popular courses are: First Holy Communion Parents, Infant Baptism Parents, and the RCIA, Lent Course.

The most recent one has been inspired by the Pope's call ahead of the upcoming Jubilee Year 2025, making this "The Year of Prayer".

**■ Visit the website at [www.sycamore.fm](http://www.sycamore.fm) or drop a message at [admin@sycamore.fm](mailto:admin@sycamore.fm) if you would be interested in a free Zoom!**

## You're never too young to spread the good news

**A GLASGOW schoolboy, whose remarkable dedication to promoting the Catholic Faith has won him praise from two archbishops, is embarking on a brand new evangelisation project aimed at bringing Jesus to his classmates.**

John Ewing, a pupil at St Paul's Primary School in Shettleston had previously supplied some 3100 school-children in the city's east end with their own Mission Rosaries as part of his 'Beads are Seeds of Faith' campaign, for which he received plaudits from Archbishop Nolan.

He extended that last year to the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh for which he received a thank you letter from Archbishop Leo Cushley.

Now John is publishing not one but two books entitled *The Boy Who Took Jesus To School* and *The Girl Who Took Jesus To School*.

"It's the story of a pupil who met Jesus going to school," John explained. "It's just a small book, but it's for those kids who haven't truly met Him... yet!"

The book is aimed at children aged from 8 upwards to help develop their spiritual life. There is also a quick quiz at the end!

Having written the books all by himself, John is now looking for help to translate them into the different languages. While he has found translators for Italian, Polish and even Igbo versions, he is now seeking translators for Spanish, French, German, Chinese and Russian



Picture by Paul McSherry

BY GERARD GOUGH  
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His proud Dad, also John, said: "His granny used to say: 'God works in mysterious ways' and Wee J (Wee John) is living proof of that."

### Rosary

"He started giving out Mission Rosary beads to his classmates a few years ago and he still does – 4510 Rosary beads so far have been distributed to schools in Glasgow and Edinburgh. He is a great believer in prayer and his mission is to get more kids come to Mass.

"Wee J has been working on this little book for

months. It started off as something completely different – about spacemen – and only really came together around Christmas time. To be honest writing isn't his thing and his approach to writing the book was a bit like building a giant jigsaw without a picture to follow, that's the Wee J way!

"What emerged was *The Boy Who Took Jesus To School* and *The Girl Who Took Jesus To School*. We believe the Holy Spirit inspired him to do it and inspired us to help him. It's amazing what kids can do with a little help and encouragement from the grown-ups and most importantly, the Grace of God."

**■ For more details on how to obtain copies of John's books contact [admin@missioscotland.com](mailto:admin@missioscotland.com)**

## Demarco launch for Lentfest was evangelisation in action

**LENTFEST 2024 got off to a flying start with a weekend of activities which were an example of evangelisation in action.**

The legendary Scottish artist Richard Demarco was the speaker at the first-ever Archbishop Conti lecture and he used his talk to speak openly of his Catholic faith, stating that it defined him as a man and an artist.

In a whirlwind talk which covered history, culture, pol-

itics and faith he declared "We are not defined by our nationality, but rather by the fact that we are citizens of 'Christendom'."

"Just think of the faith of the great artists who produced the wonders of renaissance art, and think too of the effect that art had on the people, whose Christian faith defined them," he said.

Speaking to an audience of people of all faiths and none, who had come along

to see the screening of the film of his life, 'Rico', he reminded them of the heroism of those who, in the Second World War, had done everything they could to protect the wonders of Christian art from the bombs which destroyed Montecassino.

He spoke too of the tragic loss of Catholic art and culture at the time of the Reformation when buildings of great beauty were destroyed and artwork and music in-

spired by the Catholic faith were trashed by the zeal of John Knox and his followers.

AGAP's artistic director, Stephen Callaghan said: "It was great to see people come to hear Richard's testimony and insights, and to visit the 'Glasgow Way of the Cross' by the late actor John Cairney. It was a kind of 'soft evangelisation' – reaching out to people in a non-threatening way with the beauty of art inspired by faith."





# Parliament salutes St Mirin's at 70

**ST Mirin's Primary primary school in Glasgow's southside marked its 70th anniversary with a Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated by Archbishop Nolan and with a message of congratulations placed in the records of the UK Parliament.**

In nearby Christ the King Church, King's Park, it was standing room only as current and former pupils, members of staff, family and friends gathered for the happy occasion.

And in what has become his trademark on such occa-

BY BRIAN SWANSON

PICTURE BY PAUL MCSHERRY

sions the Archbishop chose to dispense with formality and deliver his homily while mingling with the children in the pews.

His message was simple – Live your lives according to the Gospels, and never be afraid or embarrassed not only to tell people that Jesus is your friend but to show that you believe by the way you treat others.

Later it emerged that an Early Day Motion, congratulating the school, had been noted in the records of the UK Parliament and will remain there after it was submitted by Stewart McDonald, SNP MP for Glasgow South in whose constituency the school lies.

It reads: "This House congratulates St Mirin's Primary School on reaching its 70th anniversary; recognises the dedication and commitment of the school staff, past and present, for their tireless efforts; acknowl-



es the pivotal role St Mirin's Primary School has played in fostering a strong sense of community and promoting educational excellence in

Glasgow South over the past seven decades; celebrates the countless achievements and accomplishments of the school's students, both

academically and in their contributions to society; wishes St Mirin's Primary School continued success and growth for the future."

**POPE Francis has said several times recently that we are living through a "piecemeal" World War III.**

Given the number of conflicts that are reported in the UK media (not to mention those that never make a headline), it therefore seems bizarre and not a little inappropriate that March 20 is designated as the UN International Day of Happiness.

What could put a smile on the faces of the people of Gaza or Ukraine? What can a "Day of Happiness" offer in the ten areas of potential or actual conflict (Gaza, Wider Middle East War, Sudan, Ukraine, Myanmar, Ethiopia, The Sahel, Haiti, Armenia-Azerbaijan and US-China) we are told by the International Crisis Group to keep in our thoughts this year.

The fact that the world needs an International Crisis Group is a scary thought. Its intention is to prevent wars and devise strategies to build a more peaceful world, reducing the devastating humanitarian, social and economic costs of conflict. As a peace organisation working to achieve a nonviolent world, Pax Christi Scotland is willing and eager to add its voice to any peace strategy.

But it seemed to me that the UN General Assembly had taken a step too far in designating an International Day of Happiness – until I delved a little deeper.

One of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals calls for "a more inclusive, equitable and balanced approach to economic growth that promotes the happiness and well-being of all peoples."

The goals include an end to poverty, a reduction in

## Can we really mark a 'Day of Happiness' when the world is in a period of such turmoil?



**Marian Pallister**

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

inequality, and the protection of the planet, all of which – there is no denying – would lead to well-being and happiness.

We see in our own country that inequality creates discontent. Why wouldn't it? A local charity that my parish supports has seen

the demand for "emergency packs" increase threefold in recent months. Who can be happy when your very dignity is taken away by the need to ask for a bag of groceries to tide you over?

The poet Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote in 1821 "The rich get richer, and the poor get poorer", blaming it on what has become known as "the Matthew effect" – the parable of the talents, in which we read that those who have will receive more and those who don't have, will have even that taken away.


Aren't we taking that at face value? Is it not more about using our personal talents to the full rather than making a mint for our bosses?

As US President Andrew Jackson said in 1832: "When the laws undertake... to make the rich richer and the potent more powerful, the humble members of society... have a right to complain of the injustice to their government".


If we use our talents to make a difference, to bring peace, harmony, and justice, perhaps there's a place for an International Day of Happiness after all.

I'm no Pollyanna, but if we use our voices, our letter writing, and our protests to bring about equality, an end to poverty and conflict, and the protection of the planet, then peace and happiness could well be the end result.





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**Arnold Clark**





**F**ans of the epic British period drama “Downton Abbey” will recall that in the series finale, at one point Gladys Denker, maid to the Dowager Countess Lady Violet Crawley, schemes to sabotage her chief rival, Spratt the butler, by revealing that he moonlights as an advice columnist for a ladies’ journal, expecting that he’ll be fired.

Instead, the dowager declares herself amused, and Spratt’s job is safe.

Later, Spratt says to Denker that she made a fatal mistake regarding their employer in her haste to be rid of him. When Denker asks what it was, the reply is lapidary.

“She never likes to be predictable,” Spratt says.

Anyone who’s been paying attention for the past decade knows there’s a fair bit of the dowager inside Pope Francis too, who also seems to recoil from the idea that someone has him figured out.

Last month brought a couple of these Downton Abbey moments.

To begin with there was a document on the sacraments, which carries the Latin title *Gestis verbisque*, or “actions and words”.

**Here’s the surprise: For a Pope who has spent much of his reign inveighing against fussy legalism, *Gestis verbisque* takes a remarkably legalistic stance vis-à-vis sacramental formula, insisting that if they’re not followed to the letter, the sacraments are invalid and must be repeated.**

The new note confirms the line taken by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in August 2020, when the erstwhile Holy Office decreed that a baptism employing the language of “We baptise you” rather than “I baptise you” is invalid, on the theological basis that the minister of the sacrament is not the “we” of the community but the “I” of Christ acting through the priest.

Emblematic cases in this regard have arisen in the US, in Detroit in 2020 and in Phoenix in 2022.

In Detroit, Father Matthew Hood came forward after the 2020 Vatican document appeared to report that the deacon who celebrated his 1990 baptism, which had been captured on video, used the “We baptise” language, thus rendering the sacrament invalid, along with Hood’s priestly ordination in 2017 and every sacrament he’d ad-



## The Pope of surprises strikes again!

ministered in the years since.

Hood was ordained anew by Archbishop Allen Vigneron, and people who’d received sacraments from him before were invited to repeat them.

In Phoenix, it emerged that a local priest named Father Andrés Arango had been using the “We baptise” formula for 26 years, rendering thousands of baptisms he’d performed over that time invalid.

He was removed from his post, and the diocese set up a special section on its website to help people arrange to be baptised anew.

When those stories broke, many critics argued that the Church was being overly harsh and ritualistic, that the more compassionate thing to do would have been to say that while the baptisms in question were illicit, meaning conducted without permission and thus subject to sanction for the minister, they were nevertheless valid, since the people undergoing baptism had a sincere intention to receive the sacrament.

Making such a distinction would, arguably, be a very Pope Francis move. In that context, it would have been completely rea-

BY JOHN L ALLEN JR  
EDITOR OF CRUX

sonable to expect the dicastery, with the Pope’s encouragement, to draw a similar conclusion about the sacraments, once again overturning a previous ruling. Instead they cut the other way, doubling down on the conservative position.

Later, the Vatican also released a letter the Pope had dispatched to Jews in Israel, which was addressed to Karma Ben Johanan, a 41-year-old professor of Christianity and Jewish-Christian relations at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and who’s also engaged in teaching and research at the Jesuit-sponsored Gregorian University in Rome.

The unpredictable element here is that Francis is a Pope who generally doesn’t like to even acknowledge, let alone placate, his critics. That’s another point of contact with Lady Violet, by the way, who once famously pronounced her motto as “never complain, never explain.”

Yet in this case, Pope Francis has gone out of his way to reach out to his detractors, trying to calm tensions that have developed

in Jewish-Christian relations due to his response to the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza.

“This war has also produced divisive attitudes in public opinion worldwide and divisive positions, sometimes taking the form of anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism,” the Pope wrote.

“The path that the Church has walked with you, the ancient people of the covenant, rejects every form of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism,” Francis said.

**“We, Catholics, are very concerned about the terrible increase in attacks against Jews around the world,” he wrote. “We had hoped that ‘never again’ would be a refrain heard by the new generations, yet now we see that the path ahead requires ever closer collaboration to eradicate these phenomena.”**

Those lines come after many Jewish leaders have objected to what they see as the Pope’s moral equivalence regarding the war in Gaza, lamenting violence on all sides without clearly identifying Hamas as the aggressor and Israel as engaged in legitimate self-defense.

Many Jewish leaders became especially incensed in November after a Palestinian delegation reported Francis had used the word “genocide” to describe Israel’s offensive, a claim a Vatican spokesman tried to deny but without great success.

In that context, the new letter clearly seems an effort on the part of Pope Francis to mend fences.

Whether Catholic theological conservatives will be reassured by the new edict on the sacraments, or whether Jews disappointed in the Vatican will be consoled by the new letter, remains to be seen.

What is certain, however, is that both developments have shown us the Pope still capable of surprises.

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# S I S A O

Nourish  
your soul  
with our  
monthly  
spirituality  
supplement

## Feeling angry? Bitter? Down? The psalms are the prayer for you

**G**OD behaves in the psalms in ways that God is not allowed to behave in theology.

That quip comes from Sebastian Moore and should be highlighted at a time when fewer people want to use the psalms in prayer because they feel offended by what they sometimes find there.

More and more, we see people resisting the psalms as a way to pray (or desire to sanitize them) because the psalms speak of murder, revenge, anger, violence, war-making, and patriarchy.

**Some ask, how can I pray with words that are full of hatred, anger, violence, speak of the glories of war, and of crushing one's enemies in the name of God?**

For others, the objection is to a patriarchal coloring in the psalms – where the divine is masculine and the masculine is too-much deified. For yet others, the offense is aesthetic. Their objection: “They’re bad poetry!”

Perhaps the psalms aren’t great poetry and undeniably do smack of violence, war, hatred of one’s enemies, and the desire for vengeance, all in the name of God. Admittedly, they’re also patriarchal in character. But does that make them a bad language for prayer? Let me suggest something to the contrary.

One of the classical definitions of prayer says “prayer is lifting mind and heart to

God.” Simple, clear, accurate. I suggest that the actual problem is that we seldom actually do this when we pray.

Rather than lifting up to God what is actually on our minds and in our hearts, we tend to treat God as someone from whom we need to hide the real truth of our thoughts and feelings.

Instead of pouring out mind and heart, we tell God what we think God wants to hear – not murderous thoughts, desire for vengeance, or our disappointment with God.

But expressing those feelings is the whole point. What makes the psalms particularly apt for prayer is that they do not hide the truth from God but express the whole gamut of our actual feelings. They give an honest voice to what’s actually going on in our minds and hearts.

Sometimes we feel good and our spontaneous impulse is to speak words of praise and gratitude, and the psalms give us that voice. They speak of God’s goodness in everything – love, friends, faith, health, food, wine, enjoyment.

But we don’t always feel that way. Our lives also have their cold, lonely seasons when disappointment and bitterness simmer or rage under the surface. The psalms give us honest voice where we can open up all

### Scribblings of the spirit

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



those simmering feelings to God.

Also, there are times when we are filled with the sense of our own inadequacy, with the fact that we cannot measure up to the trust and love that’s given us. Again, the psalms give us voice for this, asking God to be merciful and to soften our hearts, wash us clean, and give us a new start.

As well, there are times when we feel bitterly disappointed with God and need some way to express this. The psalms give us voice for this (“Why are you so silent?” “Why are you so far from me?”) even as they make us

aware that God is not afraid of our anger and bitterness; but, like a loving parent, only wants us to come and talk about it. The psalms are a privileged vehicle for prayer because they lift the full range of our thoughts and feelings to God.

However, there are a number of reasons why we struggle with that.

First, because our age tends to eschew metaphor and taken literally, some of the images in the psalms are offensive. Second, we tend to be in denial about our actual feelings. It’s hard to admit that we feel some of the things we sometimes

feel – grandiosity, sexual obsessions, jealousies, bitterness, paranoia, murderous thoughts, disappointment with God, doubts in our faith.

**Too often our prayer belies our actual thoughts and feelings. It tells God what we think he wants to hear. The psalms are more honest.**

To pray with full honesty is a challenge. Kathleen Norris puts it this way: If you pray regularly “there is no way you can do it right. You are not always going to sit up straight, let alone think holy thoughts. You’re not going to wear your best clothes but whatever isn’t in the dirty clothes basket. You come to the Bible’s great ‘book of praise’ through all the moods and conditions of life, and while you feel like hell, you sing anyway. To your surprise, you find that the psalms do not deny your true feelings but allow you to reflect them, right in front of God and everyone.”

Feel-good aphorisms that express how we think we ought to feel are no substitute for the earthy realism of the psalms which express how sometimes we actually do feel.

Anyone who would lift mind and heart to God without ever mentioning feelings of bitterness, jealousy, vengeance, hatred, and war, should write slogans for greeting cards and not be anyone’s spiritual advisor.

## A journey through the season of grace with Pope Francis as guide

BY JOHN HAMPSEY

**S**INCE his election in 2013, Pope Francis has visited many countries, reformed the Vatican Curia, appointed cardinals to new and less ‘important’ places and written many letters and encyclicals to encourage Christians and other people of goodwill in their faith.

His major themes have been care for the environment, anti-war, more compassion and mercy for those who find the Church’s teachings hard to follow, encouraging all to live in love and joy, and a desire to allow ordinary Catholics to have an input into Church practice and teaching through a policy of ‘synodality’.

For our Ignatian Spirituality Lent Retreat this year (online and in book format) we chose a daily quotation from the writings of Pope Francis,

to which we add a suitable quotation from Scripture.

We then offer our retreatants a picture and some music (in the online version) to help stimulate prayer and finally we give a suggestion for pondering over this subject matter.

We invite our retreatants to take as much as they find helpful. They don’t have to use everything, sometimes less is more!

This booklet is free (however donations are appreciated from those who can afford to give).

You can access it here: <http://tinyurl.com/ISCLentBook2024>



## Prepare for Holy Year with a year of prayer

**I**N preparation for the Holy Year of 2025, Pope Francis has dedicated 2024 as a Year of Prayer.

The recent Synod of Bishops reflected on how God personally calls us and central to that is a personal relationship, built on listening. That we allow ourselves, individually and communally, to be guided by the Holy Spirit is important.

Glasgow’s Ignatian Spirituality Centre has produced a booklet, *Walking together in Prayer*, designed to be a resource for individuals to help deepen prayer during this special year.

They are offering these books free to any parish that wants them. You can access a digital copy here. <http://tinyurl.com/ISCGlasgow-YOP>



# Solitude can be a source of joy this Lent



**H**AVE you heard of FOMO or JOMO? 'Fear of Missing Out' or 'Joy of Missing Out'. These concepts been something of a talking point in the lifestyle columns in the last couple of years.

FOMO points to the negative. It suggests a lack of confidence, something that is lacking, a gnawing feeling that others have it better. They live more interesting and satisfying lives.

JOMO on the other hand speaks of contentment, embracing solitude and a keenness to disconnect from outside concerns. Instead of being governed by the desires of others they follow their path.

The curtailment of in-person social activity in the pandemic and the resultant recognition that the constant whirl of socialising could be draining showed us 'going out' wasn't all it was cracked up to be.

It was a new dawn to discover getting the glad-rags on of a Friday or Saturday evening versus snuggling under a blanket with a book to read or a film to watch wasn't much of a decision. Maybe not every weekend but certainly the balance for many of us shifted.

As an only child quite used to solitary pursuits I've always enjoyed time on my own. I think I only realised just how much when I was knee-deep in toddlers. 'Might as well crack on with it now' was the thinking at the time.

In the spring of 2020, with all my children independent, solitary walks along the River Kelvin reminded me of how much I enjoyed my own company. Forest bathing, they call it.

I drew strength from having time to ponder and contemplate. Those walks were time to pray for global concerns, lives broken and lost.

I often thought of the Carmelite Sisters in our Archdiocese, in Dumbarton and Kirkintilloch, and in Dysart in Kirkcaldy. They answered the call to put their lives totally at the service of God in a cloistered community.

Eschewing marriage and family life, and removing themselves from the business of life as they



## Mary's musings

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

knew it, they immersed themselves in the call to serve God.

The order's founder, St Teresa of Avila wanted the sisters to be "apostolic: involved though our life of prayer, in the Church and the world."

She wrote: "This is the reason for prayer, my daughters, the purpose of this spiritual marriage; the birth of good works. This is what I want us to strive for and let us desire and be occupied in prayer not for the sake of our enjoyment but so as to have the strength to serve."

Thanks to social media we can give ourselves a glimpse into their lives of service through their websites and in videos. Their deep peace, serenity and prayer is as much activism as any march or protest we might witness on the streets.

Like all religious orders the Carmelite communities are much reduced. Few are called to this radical life and fewer still accept the call.

For most of us our contemplation in Lent and through the year will be in the midst of our busy lives of work and family duties. As I watch the sisters in videos posted online and delve into their websites I find my Lenten journey is being illuminated and deepened.

Life has moved on from those still and quiet days of Covid when only essential workers were out on the roads.

As I read and deepen my understanding of their charism I find, as much as I am talking to God, I am now listening more to Him.

## ART OF THE MONTH



# Let sacred art come to the aid of your Lenten prayer

**THE picture "The Repentant St. Peter", painted by the eminent Greek-born Spanish artist El Greco in the late 16th century, encapsulates the essence of redemption, faith, and human fallibility.**

BY MGR TOM MONAGHAN

St Peter is depicted at the height of his remorse after denying his friendship with Jesus three times, as prophesied by Christ himself.

As we continue with our Lenten Penances we might well meditate on Peter's penitence.

His bowed head, clasped hands, and eyes brimming with sorrow convey the weight of his

betrayal and the depth of his remorse. The painting is striking in its simplicity yet rich in symbolism.

Saint Peter's weathered face and hunched posture reflect the burdens of his guilt and the trials he has endured. The emotional turmoil etched upon the Fisherman's face moves us to repent of our sins and renew our belief in Christ.

There is a sense of gravity to

the scene, mirroring the solemnity of Saint Peter's sorrow. But the use of light suggests the possibility of redemption and divine grace.

During this Holy Season we can contemplate the themes of remorse, forgiveness, and the resilience of the human spirit. We can use the painting as we reflect on our own struggles with moral frailty and the enduring hope for redemption.

El Greco's skill as a painter serves as a timeless reminder of the transformative power of repentance and the boundless mercy of forgiveness.

## PRAYER OF THE MONTH

God our Father, grant us the grace to reflect on the depths of your forgiveness. Like Saint Peter, may we acknowledge our failings, and seek forgiveness and renewal. Let Saint Peter's remorse, guide us through this sacred season, as we seek to correct our weaknesses, and walk in Your footsteps. May our fasting, our prayers and our acts of charity be a testament to Your love. This we ask through Christ our Lord. Amen.



# Scripture's simple message: "Don't give up.."

**ALL of March this year is in Lent, with Easter Sunday on the last day of the month.**

We are all well on already, no doubt, with our Lenten penances and trying that little bit harder with our prayer and our charity too.

It's not always easy to stick to our resolutions and plans, and our Sunday liturgies will acknowledge that. However, the readings will also give us hope and encouragement not to give in.

There is always hope that though things seem hard and dark at the time, there is always light at the end of the tunnel. That could well sum up our Lent journey to Easter this March!

## Lent Sunday 3

The First Reading today takes us to the heart of the Old Testament Law and the Covenant, as Moses is given the Ten Commandments. These will form the core of



**Fr Tom Kilbride**

Rector of the Royal Scots College, Salamanca, Spain

what God is asking of his people.

However, in the Gospel, we hear how that core has become cluttered by other things. Jesus takes the drastic step of driving out the sellers and money-changers from the Temple, the place at the very heart of Israel's worship of God. There is clutter and distraction, preventing them from coming to God and living the covenant justice and goodness he requires.

For us, Lent is our time to perhaps "de-clutter" our hearts and our lives of the things that prevent us from coming to God and living as he asks. We are told, of course, that the true Tem-

ple, the place where God comes to meet us, is Jesus himself, a Temple which will be seemingly destroyed on the Cross but raised up again, when another Passover comes.

We are invited to come to him, now, who is at the heart of our relationship with God, in whom we worship and whose commandments form the core of how we are to live. What do I need to "drive out" in order to know him more fully and hear his voice more clearly?

## Lent Sunday 4

In the First Reading we are reminded that the People of God went into exile in Babylon, a moment in their history which is interpreted as a punishment for their sins and infidelity. However, God's providence – shown through the king of Persia, Cyrus – brought them home again. Sin brought them low, but God brought them back to life again. St Paul reminds us that this has always been God's way, the way of merciful love, which has come to its greatest expression in the love we are shown in Jesus.

In the Gospel, likewise, Jesus speaks powerfully of God's love for the world, proved by the sending of his Son. Yes, people live in sin and darkness; yes, there is always the possibility that we will refuse God's love, but God always holds it out to us.

Even if it means "lifting up" the Son – a hint of the Cross – sin will not have the last word. Salvation will win out. The serpent "lifted up" brought healing to those

who were dying; the Cross will bring life out of death.

Here, Jesus is speaking to Nicodemus, the timid Pharisee. We will meet Nicodemus again on Good Friday, after the crucifixion, as he brings his gift of spices and balm to help with the burial of Jesus. His fears and his uncertainty will give way to courage, faith and love.

## Lent Sunday 5

Once again, this week we are given a message of hope in the midst of our Lenten journey. As we prepare to enter into the story of Jesus' Passion, there is promise of a new covenant, new life and a new beginning.

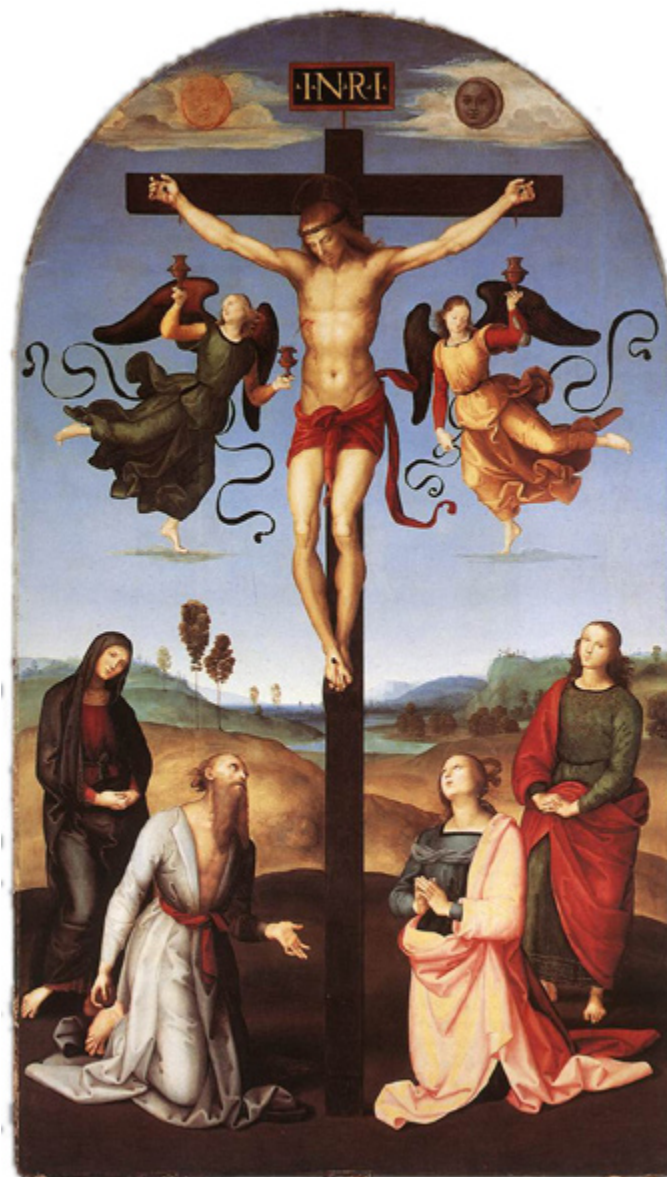
For Jesus, it will come at a cost, and he prophesies that he will "fall to the ground and die" like a wheat grain. However, that will not be the end: he will be "lifted up" (a phrase we also heard last week). As we noted last week, this refers to Jesus being "lifted up" on the Cross, but it also hints at him "raised up" in the resurrection. It is also Jesus "raised on high" in glory.

Earlier in Lent, we heard the story of Jesus' Transfiguration. Today, in what seems to echo that moment, the Father's voice announces glory for Jesus, even in the face of suffering and death. It is precisely because he gives up his life for us freely and embraces the Passion, that he will win the victory, and prove the supremacy of the Father's love we heard about last week.

His prayer in suffering is heard (Second Reading) and the Father promises to glorify him because of his obedience (Gospel).

## Palm Sunday

Mark's account of Jesus' Passion is a stark and lonely affair. As the Cross approaches, Jesus seems to be more and more abandoned and alone. The shouting of "Hosanna!" gives way to the



Crucifixion (Città di Castello Altarpiece) by Raphael

shouts of "Crucify him!"

His friends desert, betray and deny him, while his prayer on the Cross suggests abandonment even by God. And everything goes dark, at midday.

For any glimmer of hope, we turn to the Second Reading where Paul's famous "hymn" reminds us that is by undergoing death on the Cross in obedience to the Father that he is raised to the heights of glory, to be worshipped by all Creation.

We enter into Holy Week in sombre mood after hearing Mark's account of Jesus' death, but the hope we have reflected on in earlier weeks is not entirely extinguished. We will return...

## Easter Sunday

And so our Lenten March month ends at the empty tomb, hearing from Mark's or John's Gospel (Vigil or

Sunday morning). Following the important readings of the Vigil, which celebrate movement from death to life, slavery to freedom, sin to forgiveness, Mark gives us a glimpse of the first light of Easter morning with the news that the crucified one has risen.

John, on Easter Sunday morning, challenges us to "see and believe". To embrace a new life and know God's promise kept for us, as the scriptures had promised.

We wake up on Easter Sunday this year having moved our clocks forward an hour: summer-time has (officially) arrived! Yes, indeed, in so many ways, the light will have dawned for us, and a new season begun.

In Lent it was a promise; in Holy Week, a sombre challenge; at Easter, a promise kept and a new life begun!

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# Lent means getting fit... at least in a spiritual sense!

**RECENTLY** discovered that the incredibly gifted daughter of a friend of mine in Dublin, after suffering a health scare, has been diagnosed with having protrusions between the vertebrae.

Part of the medical advice she has been given is that she should stop going to the gym, which she enjoyed doing on a very regular basis, and that, especially, she should not exercise using weights.

I was glad to hear that it was nothing more serious than that but, at the same time, I could very much empathise with her as, quite a number of years ago now, I can't remember exactly when, I was also diagnosed with having protrusions between the vertebrae.

I did not need to be advised to avoid the gym, as that was not something I was inclined to do anyway.

A few times over the years I had made the occasional effort, but it never lasted. Back in the early 1970's, after returning from a holiday on the Isle of Barra, myself and some friends decided



## Fr Frank's log

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

we needed to lose some weight, and so we took out membership in a gym on Queen Street. We started going about three times a week after work, but it fizzled out quite quickly, especially as we usually ended up going for a bite to eat and a drink afterwards, and ended up putting on more weight.

In 1995, when I transferred as Novice Master from Minsteracres Monastery in County Durham, to the Passionist Retreat at Cloonamahon in County Sligo, Father Augustine, whom many readers of this log will remember from his time at St Mungo's, and who is now resident at Mount Argus, tried to encourage me to join the local gym that he attended.

The gym was called Better

Bodies but, to be honest, I saw no evidence of any kind of better body taking shape in me, nor in him, and so that didn't last long either.

The reason for my protrusions was simply wear and tear, mainly caused by my foolish tendency, even as I got older, to do a lot of lifting and shifting of heavy stuff around the church, when really, I should have been getting others to help me.

If chairs, benches, tables, or whatever, needed to be moved from one place to another, to facilitate a liturgical service, sometimes even up and down flights of stairs, I would just, lacking patience, go ahead and do it, and then wonder why I had a sore back afterwards.

When the pain got more

severe, I was referred for scans, and was diagnosed as having protrusions between the 3rd and 4th vertebrae. It was decided that no surgery was required at that time, but that I should quit the heavy lifting to avoid more serious deterioration.

### Providence

Accordingly, a little team of people from Mount Argus parish established themselves as my minders and movers, and God help me if any of them saw me doing any lifting and shifting on my own.

Providentially, as it turned out, it was while getting these scans that it was discovered I had some nodules on my thyroid, and that did lead to necessary surgery, and a partial thy-

roid removal, just a couple of months before I moved to St Mungo's in 2016.

The ongoing effects of my protrusions, other than avoiding heavy lifting, is that I can't really bend down very well. This means, every three months or so, going to a podiatrist to get my toenails cut and, if I drop something on the ground, I need to physically kneel down to pick it up again.

Even Father Justinian at 92, and my brother, with all his adverse health conditions, can bend down much more easily than I can. I always hope that, when I have to do this, anybody who is looking on just thinks I am very holy, and that I like spending lots of time on my knees in prayer.

Still, it's a very small price

to pay for my stubborn foolishness, and lack of bodily discipline over the years, that brought it about.

Hopefully I am able to muster more discipline, not just of the body, but of the spirit, mind and soul too, as we enter into another Lent, the church's springtime season; even though, as we begin it this year, we are still in winter.

As always there were big attendances at Masses, both in St Mungo's and St Roch's, to be signed with ashes. May we not waste this special time of grace, and enjoy a disciplined, and blessed, 40 days and nights of growth in the Lord.

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



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# Spreading the word about SCIAF and its amazing work ... one class at a time

**MY name is Michael Rainey and I'm a SCIAF volunteer. I've been volunteering for about seven years, going into schools and talking to young people about the work of SCIAF.**

In some of my local primary schools I have also worked on a project we call, 'Talented Fundraisers'. I have been involved with SCIAF for about 30 years, mostly fundraising within my local parish.

As time passed, I became more interested in the work of SCIAF, what drove us as a Church and as individuals, to engage in this challenging work. For me the answer is complex and multifaceted. I was brought up in a traditional Catholic family, that undoubtedly had an impact. My life experiences gave me a sense of social justice and I suppose I began to question inequalities around the world.

In 2014 I was fortunate

BY MICHAEL RAINEY

enough to have the opportunity to visit Ethiopia as part of a team, to see the impact the work of SCIAF was having in that part of the world.

On the first day we visited one of our projects, a school. A nun working at the school referred to us as, 'ambassadors for Christ'. To be referred to in those terms in the midst of such need was very humbling!

But most of my volunteering takes place in schools, explaining the work of SCIAF, explaining the philosophy of treating people with dignity and respect, the hallmark of Catholic Social Teaching (CST), enabling individuals to develop their God-given talents to support themselves and be self-sufficient.

Helping one individual has a ripple effect which reaches out to their fami-



lies, their communities and beyond. It ripples forward to their children and to future generations and touches people in ways I can hardly imagine.

I've been privileged to witness youngsters articulate with such enthusiasm, their hopes for the future, a future unthinkable were it not for the work of SCIAF and the kindness of the people of Scotland.

I have listened to first-hand accounts from par-

ents and grandparents of how SCIAF's interventions saved lives, giving people, 'a hand up, not a handout.'

I've been doing this work in schools for over six years, explaining how SCIAF goes about its work. But it's the informal conversations that take place after the more formal presentations when I see that young people really get what we are about.

That perhaps is one of the most satisfying aspects

of going into schools. Pupils tell you about what their families have done for SCIAF in the past and when they then ask you questions, you know they have been fully engaged with the presentation, even if it didn't look like it at the time!

I tell them I am proud to be part of something much bigger than the sum of its parts, something that does so much good around the world and they also should be proud. Senior pupils will sometimes ask more searching, political questions. Time is always tight and I'm afraid I answer a question with a question, what would Jesus have said/done? Takes it back to scripture and usually generates more discussion, sometimes with me, sometimes with their teacher.

The 'Talented Fundraiser' projects involving some of my local primaries last for about three months and mirror the strategy SCIAF

employs in the field, in other words, they invest in people. In the project the school gets a small sum of money and the young people run a small business with the profits donated back to SCIAF.

During these months it's delightful to see the enthusiasm of young people, it's infectious. It's a pleasure to see how they begin to see the bigger picture.

Using their skills and talents as the weeks go by, it's like watching them put together a jigsaw and eventually they realise they've achieved something, and they can make a difference.

Of course, the WEE BOX appeal during Lent is a key time for schools and Parishes to get involved with the work of SCIAF. I'll be doing my bit by delivering assemblies and workshops and my hope and prayer is that we continue, as the Church, to support our sisters and brothers as generously as we can.

# WEE BOX

# BIG CHANGE

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