

FLOURISH

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May 2020

Archbishop's plea: Turn to Our Lady this month

ARCHBISHOP Tartaglia has issued a heartfelt plea to Catholics across the Archdiocese to take up the daily recitation of the Rosary during May.

And he has announced that he will lead a recitation from the Cathedral live on the internet throughout the Marian month.

The Archbishop made his call as churches face continued closure during the traditional month of Our Lady.

Archbishop Philip told *Flourish*: "In times of peril, Catholics have spontaneously turned to Our Lady and to the Rosary to pray for deliverance.

"Together with Pope Francis, I invite you to pray the Rosary during the Marian month of May so that the world may be free from this Covid-19 pandemic.

"My message to people is this: Pray with faith, pray with hope, pray with love. Pray with Mary that the Mother of God may intercede for us and protect us with a mother's love in this time of danger."

During the month of May the Archbishop will frequently lead the recitation of the Holy Rosary which will be live streamed from the Cathedral.

Archbishop Philip told *Flourish*: "I have agreed with Canon Sharkey that the Rosary will be live-streamed from the Cathedral during May on Monday–Friday at 7.00pm starting on Friday 1st May, to seek the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary during this time of the Covid-19 pandemic. I will start the May Rosary on Friday and I intend to lead it on as many days as possible."

■ You can follow the May Rosary (and all Masses from the Cathedral) at www.mcncmedia.tv/camera/st-andrews-cathedral



Pope Francis calls for Rosary to fight virus

POPE Francis has made a simple appeal to every Catholic in the world this month – pray the Rosary!

In a disarmingly simple and short letter addressed to the Catholics of the world he wrote: "The month of May is a time when the People of God express with particular intensity their love and devotion for the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is traditional in this month to pray the Rosary at home within the family. The restrictions of the pandemic have made us come to appreciate all the more this "family" aspect, also from a spiritual point of view.

"For this reason, I want to encourage everyone to re-discover the beauty of praying the Rosary at home in the month of May. This can be done either as a group or individually; you can decide according to your own situations, making the most of both opportunities. The key to doing this is always simplicity, and it is easy also on the internet to find good models of prayers to follow.

"I am also providing two prayers to Our Lady that you can recite at the end of the Rosary, and that I myself will pray in the month of May, in spiritual union with all of you. I include them with this letter so that they are available to everyone.

"Dear brothers and sisters, contemplating the face of Christ with the heart of Mary our Mother will make us even more united as a spiritual family and will help us overcome this time of trial. I keep all of you in my prayers, especially those suffering most greatly, and I ask you, please, to pray for me. I thank you, and with great affection I send you my blessing."

■ You can find the full text of Pope Francis' other prayer on page 12.

POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER TO OUR LADY

O Mary,
You shine continuously on our journey
as a sign of salvation and hope.
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick,
who, at the foot of the cross,
were united with Jesus' suffering,
and persevered in your faith.

"Protectress of the Roman people",
you know our needs,
and we know that you will provide,
so that, as at Cana in Galilee,
joy and celebration may return
after this time of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love,
to conform ourselves to the will of the Father
and to do what Jesus tells us.
For he took upon himself our suffering,
and burdened himself with our sorrows
to bring us, through the cross,
to the joy of the Resurrection.

We fly to your protection,
O Holy Mother of God;
Do not despise our petitions in our necessities,
but deliver us always from every danger,
O Glorious and Blessed Virgin.
Amen.

Archbishop's messages of hope bring comfort and strength to parishioners

Internet used to reach out to those unable to get to Church



Picture: James Chatelard

THE Church in Glasgow has embraced a digital revolution in a bid to bring solace and comfort to people across the Archdiocese.

Archbishop Tartaglia has led the way with a series of recorded video messages which have been posted on the Archdiocese's own YouTube channel and on Facebook. Apart from a heartfelt Easter blessing, the Archbishop has also recorded a visit to the sick in which he prays the simple prayers with those who may be lonely or in hospital and unable to receive visitors.

His most recent video is a thankyou message to care workers and NHS staff.

Meanwhile the Archdiocese's social media channels have seen record numbers using the services to get to Mass online, hear updates from the local and universal Church and to get news on what's happening in their communities.

During the first month of the lockdown the reach of

the Archdiocese's Facebook channel was over 142,000 people, while tweets posted on the official Twitter page were seen by over a million people.

The videos posted on Facebook had more than 10,000 minutes viewing, with figures up over 1000 per cent month on month.

Archbishop Tartaglia has used his weekly Masses which are streamed live from the Cathedral over the internet to offer words of consolation and hope to the whole diocese.

He said: "It hurts so much that our churches are closed and we cannot physically come to Mass and we cannot receive Jesus sacramentally in Holy Communion. Yet we must bear this painful Eucharistic fast for the moment for the sake of the health of all.

"At the same time, we recognise the risen Christ in other ways. We recognise him in faith in the depths of our hearts and in our

prayers at home. We recognise him in the faces of those who are suffering; in the pain of those who have been bereaved; in the dedication of those who help the sick; in our efforts to help one another through this time; in our powerlessness and in our hopefulness; and in our surrender to God's loving purpose. In all these ways, the risen Christ is present and is with us.

"You will tell me that I keep saying, my dear friends, that this time will pass. When, I do not know, but it will. We will come together again. Together we will once more recognise the risen Lord in the breaking of the bread. Finally, the priest will take bread, break it and give it to you to eat. We will once more enjoy sacramental communion with our beloved risen Lord Jesus. We will, together once again, be inspired by him to praise his name and to follow his message. What a day that will be!"

Glasgow's new Catholics wait patiently for their 'Easter'

AMONG the many groups and individuals in the Archdiocese to be affected by the current emergency are those who have been eagerly preparing for many months to be received into the Church through the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults.

The Rite of Election was celebrated on the first Sunday in Lent at St Andrew's Cathedral as it is each year.

It is at this celebration that the Archbishop recognised the desire of the Catechumens – adults preparing for baptism – to celebrate the Easter Sacraments of Christian Initiation and the desire of those baptised in other Christian denominations to be received into the Catholic Church.

Under normal circumstances the Elect would be baptised, confirmed and receive the Eucharist for the first time at the Easter Vigil.

This ceremony, seen as one of the most joyful in the Church's calendar, has now been put on hold because of the Covid-19 restrictions.

A total of 57 adults last met as a group at a day of retreat at Our Lady of Lourdes church hall ahead of the Rite of Election on Sunday March 1.

Canon David Wallace, RCIA director for the Archdiocese said: "We focused on the Sacraments of Initiation through prayer, reflection and sharing their common journey and was well received by those who took part.

"Coming together as part of the diocesan community for the day of retreat was quite breathtaking as they appreciate The Rite of Election, as always, was a very poignant moment in their faith journey."

Canon Wallace added: "There are certainly many people our hearts go out to just now who would be celebrating different occasions in so many ways, no less our Elect and candidates for reception into the Church, however, their 'Easter' will come and we will be ever more joyful for them and their desire to share in full communion with the Church.

"We have much to look forward to and be grateful for!"

St Matthew's renovation is complete

For the past few months parishioners of St Matthew's, Bishopbriggs, watched as the eagerly awaited refurbishment of their church gradually neared completion. It was one of the most ambitious building projects undertaken in the Archdiocese in recent years and hopes were high that the church would be ready to welcome worshippers by Easter. Then Covid-19 struck and work was halted. But as Parish Priest **Canon Robert Hill** reflects in this special article for *Flourish*, the initial disappointment has given way to a renewal of faith and a strengthening of community spirit

QUESTION: How do you make God laugh?

Answer: Tell God your plans!

We pretty much tested the truth of that statement in St. Matthew's recently – or at least, I did with a brilliant plan for the reopening of the church.

As Lent approached, our building work to extend the church, re-order the sanctuary, change the seating, lighting, font, altar, lectern, tabernacle – you name it – was nearing its completion, and the result was looking excellent.

The church was still recognisable as St Matthew's, and during the work we had been using the church hall as our temporary church – St Matthew's-in-exile as I like to call it.

Everything had worked very well in this new setting, and we also had the advantage of being able to see the progress on the project every time we entered or left our temporary church – not least because the only way in and out was past the building site.

It was lovely to be able to see progress: if not exactly on a daily basis, at least from one weekend to the

next. What wasn't so clear was what was happening inside, but that was no less impressive.

New benches were delivered, promising a new era in the life of St. Matthew's – comfortable pews!

The architects, from Page\Park, had come up with wonderful ideas to create a harmony between the major points of focus for the church and the liturgy, so the same material was used for the altar, the lectern and the baptismal font, and we've commissioned a new tabernacle with a design which will be unique to St Matthew's.

So it's all been very exciting, and we were beginning to look forward to the move... and that's when the Lord had the last laugh. Yours truly, in a fit of organisation which is far from characteristic, had 'a plan' for a dramatic move into our new-look church.

It actually started with some thought about what kind of procession we'd be able to have on Palm Sunday. The hall/temporary church had been very successful, but would have been challenging when it came to a procession.

And then came the bit that



“Ours is now the journey not to a building, but to a deeper community of brothers and sisters”

must have made God laugh!

I thought the perfect solution was to transfer from the temporary church in the hall to the newly-refurbished building on Palm Sunday.

We would bless the palms as our last action in the hall, and process with palms to take possession of our new church making it a Palm Sunday to remember.

Of course, there would be a few things we'd need to sort out after that, but what a way to take possession of the new-look building.

Well, it would have been except for a small detail we hadn't taken into consideration, because we didn't know anything about it at that stage, but by the time Palm Sunday came around, there was something much more serious occupying everyone's minds – Covid-19 had arrived.

Instead of a procession to a new look church building, we were soon facing lockdown, uncertainty, worry.

I'm not suggesting for a moment that God was laughing... but very soon, we would have no access to church or sacraments.

Instead, unknown to us,

we were about to begin a journey to a better understanding of Church as the community of God's people, and our journey would hopefully entail a greater realisation of people and the needs they might have in isolation. Ours is now the journey with others, not to a building, but to a deeper community of brothers and sisters.

We still have in mind the grand entry once circumstances allow us into the church, but like every parish caught up in the Covid-19 epidemic, we hope our sense of church as community has been strengthened.

If we have achieved that then we might just have put a smile on God's face after all.

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Fr Joe's stay-at-home vocations walk

FATHER Joe Sullivan, Parish Priest of Holy Cross, Croy, is about to go walking to mark this year's Vocations Sunday on May 3.

But his loyal parishioners can relax because his trek will take him no further than a gentle stroll round the Chapel House – no less than 135 times.

Father Joe explained: “Our annual walk of vocations at Holy Cross will not take place this year due to the current social distancing measures.

“However many of us remain aware of the need to pray for vocations to the Priesthood and Religious

Life so this has inspired a number of parishioners and me to take part in a “Virtual Walk for Vocations.”

He added: “The distance from the church building to the Carmelite Monastery at Waterside, Kirkintilloch, where we normally go, is nearly seven miles, so by a rough calculation, this is the equivalent of walking round the perimeter of the Chapel House 135 times.

“I'll be doing that walk – maybe not all at once – and while the lockdown is in operation a number of parishioners also have promised to walk seven miles for vocations.”

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Nurse James hopes for ordination after COVID emergency

A NURSE working on the frontline during the current coronavirus pandemic is praying that his ordination to the permanent diaconate will be able to go ahead later this year.

James Ward, 45, an orthopaedics charge nurse at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, had his candidacy to the permanent diaconate accepted at his home parish of St Augustine's, Milton during a Mass celebrated earlier this year by Archbishop Tartaglia.

It was one of the last times that the Archbishop was able to take part in a public Mass before the current restrictions were imposed.

It is hoped that these restrictions will be lifted when James is due to be ordained on the feast of Saint Augustine on August 28.

His ordination will be the culmination of a lengthy spiritual journey which began, as he put it, when "God wouldn't take no for an answer"

James, whose wife Angie is also a frontline NHS worker as a pharmacy technician in Primary Care, at Stobhill Hospital, added: "I have always received so much from my faith and felt that I wanted to share that with others in another way.

"In my day to day job as a nurse I encounter patients who need that support from their faith when they are



BY BRIAN SWANSON

PICTURE BY PAUL MCSHERRY

unable to attend Church and be part of that community of faith.

"I spoke to my Parish Priest, Fr Paul McAlinden, who put me in touch with Mgr Paul Murray and Deacon Jim Kernaghan, vocations directors for the permanent diaconate, who steered me through the beginnings.

"They in turn put me in touch with Deacons Jim Aitken, from St Francis Xavier's Carfin and Paul Graham, from St Joseph's Clarkston who took me through the Propaedeu-

tic year and into the programme of study through the Maryvale Institute, a Catholic College in Birmingham.

"I would like to thank Fr Paul, who has supported me from the very beginning and continues to do so, not just in my discernment but in developing my role within the Parish.

"I would also like to thank the Diaconate team who guide and support us during our residential study weekends and summer schools. I would like to thank my Parish family of St Augustine's, who have been incredibly supportive since day one."

Describing his wife as 'his rock' he added, "Angie is a true example to me in charity and love; she also puts up with me being away from home on residential weekends, summer schools and makes sure I rest and eat during periods of study and essay writing. I cannot thank God enough for having her in my life.

"Now after several years of study I feel ready to take the next step and, God willing, I will be ordained into the Permanent Diaconate, the feast of St Augustine, and I'm looking forward to taking the next steps on my journey of faith."

Be not afraid, Pope comforts the anxious

P EOPLE dying without chaplains, families confined to their homes and unable to reach a priest because of the Covid-19 emergency, people anxious about Easter duties. Pope Francis has sought to reassure Catholics across the world who are anxious being unable to get to confession.

"I know that many of you, for Easter, go to confession so you can be right with God again", said the Pope. "But, many will say to me today: 'Father, where can I find a priest, a confessor, when I can't leave my house? And I want to make peace with the Lord, I want Him to embrace me, I want my Dad, God, to embrace me... What can I do if I can't find a priest?' You do what the Catechism says".

"It is very clear: if you cannot find a priest to whom you can confess," explained the Pontiff, "speak with



God, He is your Father, and tell Him the truth: 'Lord, I have done this, this and this.... I am sorry', and ask Him for forgiveness with all your heart, with the Act of Contrition, and promise Him: 'Later I will go to confession, but forgive me now'.

"You will return immediately to God's grace. You yourself can approach God's forgiveness as the Catechism teaches us, without

having a priest at hand. Think about it: this is the moment!

"And this is the right moment, the appropriate moment. An Act of Contrition, made well. In this way our souls will become as white as snow".

Pope Francis refers to numbers 1451 and 1452 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, promulgated by Saint John Paul II and drafted under the guidance of the

then-Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Joseph Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI).

As far as "contrition" is concerned, the Catechism, citing the Council of Trent, teaches that among contrition is sorrow of the soul and detestation for the sin committed, together with the resolution not to sin again".

"When it arises from a love by which God is loved above all else, contrition is called 'perfect' (contrition of charity)", continues the Catechism. "Such contrition remits venial sins; it also obtains forgiveness of mortal sins."

Pope Francis added: "This is a way to approach God's mercy, and is open to all. It belongs to the Church's tradition and can be useful to everyone, especially at this time to those who are sick in their homes and hospitals."

Croy war heroes inspire a new generation

A SET of newly installed sculptures paying tribute to the mining heritage of Croy have inspired Holy Cross Parish Priest Father Joe Sullivan to draw parallels between the sacrifices made during war time and our present day battle against Covid-19.

Father Joe told *Flourish*: "I was particularly honoured to bless and incense the Miners' Panel, the Decorative Seat and the Quarried Stone. The emphasis on the miners reminded me of the Second World War when mining was a reserved occupation and the miners were not 'called up' to fight but had to stay to produce the coal to keep the war effort going."

"The present life changes brought by the Coronavirus outbreak have been compared to those of war-



BY **BRIAN SWANSON**

time and these sculptures really brought the past up-to-date.

"Instead of 'Total War' we are now seeking 'Total Anti-virus.' Instead of 'gas-masks and air-raids' it's 'hand-washing and social distancing.'"

During the War we prayed

for a just peace but expected a huge effort in war. During these times we similarly pray for a just peace but expect a huge effort in health-care from everyone. Yes the soldiers fought in battle but the miners did what they could. Today the health-care workers and medical scientists fight in battle but we do what we can."



The blessing ceremony, featuring what is thought to be Scotland's first sculpture of a female miner, took place to coincide with International Women's Day.

Women worked predominantly above ground cleaning the coal when it came up from the mine and the 'Bogie' at the start of the village depicts this.

Helping to mark the proud industrial history of

the town, it features a memorial bench and plaque at the site where miners met to travel together to work in the local pits. The 'Bogie' and a large sculpted boulder both feature 'Welcome to Croy' signage. The sculptured stone boulder was donated by Aggregate Industries who own the Croy Quarry and have been a local employer for the last 100 years.

Funding for the project came from North Lanarkshire Council's Local Development Programme with pupils from the Holy Cross primary school helping to research and work on the designs.

The miners featured in the memorial were designed and created by David Ogilvie Engineering, Kilmarnock.

100 year old Paddy plans for Lourdes... in 2021

FOR the first time in more than seventy years, Paddy Sherry, the only surviving volunteer helper from the first Glasgow Archdiocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage has been forced by its postponement to forgo her annual trip to the French shrine.

What makes that all the more remarkable is that Paddy, a devoted parishioner of St Peter's Partick, recently celebrated her 100th birthday when she astonished friends and family by telling them she had booked to return to Lourdes again this year.

But days later and with 'heavy heart' Archbishop Tartaglia agreed to postpone this year's pilgrimage.

Canon Tom White, pilgrimage director, said: "Every director of each respective diocesan pilgrimage concerned was of the clear view that, given the current pandemic crisis, this year's pilgrimage should be immediately postponed."

"In light of these grave concerns, I petitioned Archbishop Tartaglia with a view that we should postpone the scheduled pilgrimage."

"With the same concerns for the welfare of pilgrims, His Grace has readily, but with a heavy heart, agreed."

Canon White added: "At this time we cannot guarantee it will be safe to travel, since Lourdes is currently closed and it is unclear when Lourdes or indeed France will be willing to ac-



BY **BRIAN SWANSON**

PICTURE BY **PAUL MCSHERRY**

cept visitors again.

"Without a doubt there will be some people who will be disappointed about this decision. However, I know there will be many who will be relieved, especially in this time of great uncertainty."

Meanwhile Paddy remains in good health and is currently being looked after by her family.

She first volunteered at the famous French shrine with Glasgow Lourdes Hospitalite with the first Archdiocesan pilgrimage in 1948, when the journey from Glasgow took at least 36 hours by train, ferry and bus.

Her stories of these early days delighted friends and family who gathered at her home to celebrate her birthday following a Mass at St Peter's.

Parish Priest Canon Peter McBride said: "Paddy has been a member of the Lourdes Hospitalite group for several decades and a daily communicant at St. Peter's for many years where she also served as sacristan until just a few months ago when ill health forced her to

hand over the reins to another parishioner.

"She was also until last year carrying Holy Communion to the housebound of St. Peter's parish. Before the current emergency she had already booked for Lourdes 2020. She is a remarkable witness in our parish community and beyond."

In a recent interview with *Flourish* Paddy said: "Please don't say too much about me - I was just happy to help people - I enjoyed doing it right from the start and I still do but don't be making me out to be special or anything like that!"

Paddy, who never married, spent her working life as the personal assistant to successive senior partners in a prominent Glasgow law firm and always arranged her annual holidays to coincide with the Lourdes pilgrimage.

Among the many messages and cards Paddy received was a letter of congratulations acknowledging her Irish roots from the Republic's President Michael D Higgins.



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++ Vocations Sunday 2020 ++ Vocations Sunday 2020 ++ Vocations

Vocations grow even in lockdown world

KEEP our seminarians in your prayers in these strange times... That is the powerful message from Father Ross Campbell, director of vocations for the Archdiocese, as he presented a Vocations Sunday update on the current situation involving those currently studying for the priesthood.

Fr Ross told *Flourish*: "While these are challenging times for both the Church and society at large, I am not without hope. I think when we are once again able to return to public Mass many will do so with a deeper appreciation and reverence for Our Lord in the Eucharist. When this happens, so often vocations to the priesthood follow. In the meantime, please keep our seminarians in your prayers as they adapt to how their formation is delivered in these strange times."

The Archdiocese of Glasgow currently has five seminarians in training and three men coming along to the discernment evenings. The three students at the Scots College, Rome, are presently back in the diocese and living in the presbyteries of their home parish, so are able to keep a spiritual structure to their day with



BY BRIAN SWANSON

prayer and the Mass and have time to continue with their online classes at the Pontifical Universities.

Glasgow also has two students at the Beda College who remain in Rome and it is hoped they will be able to return to the diocese later in the summer.

"In terms of future plans – as is the case with so much at the moment, it is a case of

wait and see," said Fr Ross. "We hope that our students will be able to return to seminary in September but the Colleges and Diocesan Vocations Directors are working on contingency plans to continue formation remotely if this is not possible.

"Zoom, something which I had never heard of just a few weeks ago, has now become an indispensable tool for promoting vocations!"

■ If you are considering a vocation to the priesthood – perhaps sign up for our vocations QnA with Fr Campbell, the Archbishop and one of our seminarians Edward Toner. This takes place on Vocations Sunday (3rd May) at 4pm. It will be an online session via Zoom. When restrictions are lifted we hope to continue with the monthly Discernment evenings.



TV show boost to vocations

A TELEVISION documentary which gave a unique insight into the lives of seminarians studying for the priesthood in the Scots College in Rome has proved a major hit with viewers.

Figures just released show that 'Priest School' drew an audience of 80,000 people and 8% share on BBC Scotland when it was screened on BBC Scotland on Sunday April 19 – the highest audience for any digital channel in Scotland.

A spokesman for the Catholic Church in Scotland said: "To put these figures in context, when River City, BBC Scotland's flagship drama had its first airing on the BBC Scotland digital channel, it got a maximum of 30,000 viewers which was considered a good showing.

"We understand BBC Scotland has been inundated with positive feed-

comments have gone in to the formal BBC log. It will pick up more figures and statistics on the catch up iPlayer, but this is an incredible result for early figures.

"We would encourage people to watch it again on catch up via the BBC iPlayer which will improve the viewing record further."

Priest School was made over an 18 month period by Solus Productions Ltd founded in 2009 by director Tony Kearney and producer Jim Webster.

Tony said: "The idea was to smash the mysteries of what is like to train for the priesthood in the Scots College and I think we have achieved that.

"The Scots College is a place of great joy, the seminarians themselves showed great humour but what shone through was meeting selfless young men who want to give their lives to God."

Don't be afraid to say yes to a vocation

■ THINK these strange times we're reliving through are making us re-evaluate what the important things in life are. This time of lockdown has thrown all aspects of our lives out of sync, but our spiritual lives in a particular way.

I am fortunate to be living in a parish at the moment since being sent home from Rome, but I know how difficult it must be for so many people to be unable to get to Mass in these trying times.

There is a need amongst young Catholics, but indeed amongst all Catholics, in their spiritual life to more actively discern God's call. We can all have the best of intentions when asking God what He wants us to do with our lives, but how good are we at actively responding to

Edward Toner, a seminarian for the Archdiocese currently studying at the Pontifical Scots College in Rome, reflects on vocation in a time of lockdown

His voice speaking to us in the depths of our hearts?

I think there are some things we should all consider when thinking about how God is calling us to serve him and the Church with our lives.

Firstly we must remember that God has created us, He loves us and He has a plan for each of our lives. This is the most basic reality of our existence.

Those of us who are baptised share in a universal vocation; the call to be holy.

Becoming saints is our primary vocation, but God asks us to discern exactly how we are going to achieve that holiness. Some will be called to marriage, and through marriage God asks them to be holy and to help their spouse, and please God, children, become holy.

Some will be called to the religious life and will find a path to holiness set somewhat apart from the world and will hopefully help their community grow in holiness.

And those men called to serve as priests will grow in holiness themselves by helping their people get to heaven. So regardless of our personal vocation, we are all trying to become holier people and to help our brothers and sisters reach heaven.

The most basic desire of humanity is happiness; something most people spend a lifetime trying to find.

We will only ever be truly happy and fulfilled if we lead the lives God wants us to lead. As St Augustine once said, "You have made us for yourself O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in you".

If we feel God calling us to one way of life or another then we should trust Him. Put simply; God knows best!

"Be not afraid", as Pope St John Paul II used to say, because God only wants the best for us.

It's normal to feel anxious about pursuing a vocation, but we should never be afraid.

Fear of following God's will comes not from God but from the devil, who is always trying to pull us away from the Lord.

All vocations require sacrifice, the life of the Christian is the Way of the Cross, and as a priest once joked to me, "Jesus asks us to pick up our cross and follow Him, not our cushion!" But if God asks for much it's because He plans to give much in return.

Our vocations are not just something God gives us to keep for ourselves. We are

all members of the Body of Christ and our vocations are supposed to serve God and His Church.

Each of us in trying to be holy should think of ourselves as labourers in the Lord's vineyard; each cultivating our own wee plot of land in the hopes that God will find good fruit to use in the mission of building up of His Kingdom on earth.

If you are generous with God, then he'll be generous with you. So stay close to him, especially during these difficult times, trust in His goodness and don't be afraid to give him everything.

And if you feel God is calling you to priesthood or religious life then please take that active step and speak to your parish priest, you won't regret it!



ANYONE who's spent much time in Rome likely, at one point or another, has had a plate of *cacio e pepe*, a classic dish of the surrounding Lazio region.

It's so celebrated here that just down the block from our apartment building is a popular restaurant called Cacio e Pepe, where, naturally, it's the house specialty.

Seeing that normally bustling eatery locked up for the last couple of months has been a daily reminder of the realities of quarantine. (Before you ask, no, they don't do home delivery; you eat *cacio e pepe* fresh out of the pan or not at all.)

Originally developed by local shepherds as a go-to meal during seasonal migrations of their flocks, it requires just three ingredients: Black pepper, pecorino cheese and pasta. Basically, you boil the pasta, add some grated cheese and pepper, and you're good to go. The cheese mixes with the starch in the pasta water to create a light cream, which is also flavored by the pepper.

However, as famed Italian chef Luca Pagallo says, "*Cacio e pepe* apparently is the simplest recipe in the Italian kitchen, but, in reality, one of the most insidious." That's because you have to get the sequence, the timing and the mix just right, and a tiny error can have disastrous consequences.

In that sense, *cacio e pepe* may be an apt metaphor for the recipe Catholic bishops in various parts of the world appear to be trying to follow with regard to the resumption of ecclesiastical life after coronavirus lockdowns.

On the surface, it too would appear to be simple: Everybody wants Mass and the other sacraments again as soon as possible, so as countries start lifting their restrictions, one would expect bishops to hit the "on" switch almost immediately.

Yet for example, the Italian bishops so far haven't announced a plan for returning to public Masses and other routine pastoral activity, despite the fact that Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte's team has put together a four-stage plan for the national *ripresa*, or "reopening," beginning with certain key industries and culminating May 18 with the long-awaited reopening of bars, restaurants and museums.

On Friday I checked in with Father Ivan Maffei, the spokesman for the Italian bishops' conference (CEI), who said "not yet."

"I really hope the political authorities will be able to give us an answer as soon as possible," he said, obviously implying that the bishops plan to follow the indications of the government.

BY JOHN ALLEN JR
EDITOR OF CRUX

By way of contrast, the French bishops announced on Friday that public Masses will resume beginning on May 11, saying they're acting "in full solidarity with the collective effort to combat an epidemic which is still dangerous and difficult to control," but also with "deep awareness of the impatience of the faithful to come together to celebrate and nourish their faith, and to share it."

The French bishops said they were communicating their plans to government officials (and thus not asking permission) "so the dialogue may continue, both on the national and local levels," and it came two days before, not after, a scheduled video conference call between the bishops and French President Emmanuel Macron.

In Vietnam, at least three dioceses have

To open or not to open, that is the question...



restarted public Masses as the government eases other coronavirus restrictions, and in the US, Bishop Peter Baldacchino of Las Cruces, New Mexico, was the first to authorize public Masses to resume, capping attendance at five, arguing the move was consistent with state requirements. Since then, bishops in two dioceses in Montana and in Lubbock, Texas, have followed suit.

Other bishops have floated ideas for reopening. On his Catholic Channel radio show this past Tuesday, for example, Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York said that in a recent conference call with veteran pastors, they'd discussed the possibility of "working backwards" – starting with resuming daily Mass, then small weddings and baptisms, then eventually returning to the Sunday Mass. So far, however, no firm plan with dates attached has been announced.

In other words, there's no consistent approach, either comparing one bishops' conference to another or one diocese to another.

Like *cacio e pepe*, the ingredients here are three: There's the desire for Mass, there's the desire not to defy public health experts or civil leaders, and there's the bishops' authority to act. The trick is mixing them just right, and therein lies the insidious part.

If a bishop strikes out on his own, he could be accused of putting pressure on colleagues and breaking the gentlemen's agreement of a conference; if he doesn't, people will say he's a bureaucrat. If the bishops together open up too soon, they'll be accused of being reckless; too late, they'll be said to be dithering. If they wait for a government green light, people will complain they're setting a dangerous precedent; if they don't, the claim will be they're arrogant and think the Church is above the law.

The nightmare scenario, which no one wants, is to lift the suspension on public liturgies only to find out the virus isn't really contained, and then have to reimpose it.

This isn't a question the Vatican can settle, since establishing dates and protocols depends on local conditions. In terms of signals, Pope Francis has displayed the same ambivalence many Catholics feel between not wanting to ignore scientific concerns but also urging "closeness" to the people. A bishop looking to the Pope for guidance, therefore, won't find an unambiguous nudge in one direction or the other.

Fortunately, when it comes to *cacio e pepe*, Chef Luca has a handy step-by-step instructional video to guide one through the complexities. Bishops today, alas, have no such resource, and thus perhaps it's understandable their own recipe still seems a work in progress.

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+ Communications Sunday 2020 ++ Communications Sunday 2020 ++ Communications Sunday 2020 ++ Communications Sunday 2020 ++

The greatest story ever told

With churches closed, the Church has had to be more creative than ever in communicating with the rest of society. Later this month (May 24), we will mark Communications Sunday. Pope Francis has written this lovely letter ahead of the event to remind us of how important communication is in our own lives and the life of faith.

HUMAN beings are storytellers. From childhood we hunger for stories just as we hunger for food. Stories influence our lives, whether in the form of fairy tales, novels, films, songs, news, even if we do not always realise it. Often we decide what is right or wrong based on characters and stories we have made our own.

Stories leave their mark on us; they shape our convictions and our behaviour. They can help us understand and communicate who we are.

We are not the only beings who need clothing to cover our vulnerability, we are also the only ones who need to be "clothed" with stories to protect our lives. We weave not only clothing, but also stories: indeed, the human capacity to "weave" (Latin *texere*) gives us not only the word textile but also text.

The stories of different ages all have a common "loom": the thread of their narrative involves "heroes", including everyday heroes, who in following a dream confront difficult situations and combat evil, driven by a force that makes them courageous – the force of love. By immersing ourselves in stories, we can find reasons to heroically face the challenges of life.

Yet since the very beginning, our story has been threatened: evil snakes its way through history.

Not all stories are good stories

"When you eat of it ... you will be like God" ... the temptation of the serpent introduces into the fabric of history a knot that is

difficult to undo. "If you possess, you will become, you will achieve..." This is the message whispered by those who even today use storytelling for purposes of exploitation. How many stories serve to lull us, convincing us that to be happy we continually need to gain, possess and consume?

Falsehoods

We may not realise how greedy we have become for chatter and gossip, or how much violence and falsehood we are consuming. Often on communication platforms, instead of constructive stories which serve to strengthen social ties and the cultural fabric, we find destructive and provocative stories that wear down and break the fragile threads binding us together as a society.

By patching together bits of unverified information, repeating banal and deceptively persuasive arguments, sending strident and hateful messages, we do not help to weave human history, but instead strip others of their dignity.

Exploitation

But whereas the stories employed for exploitation and power have a short lifespan, a good story can transcend the confines of space and time. Centuries later, it remains timely, for it nourishes life.

In an age when falsification is increasingly sophisticated, reaching exponential levels (as in the world of deepfake), we need wisdom to be able to welcome and create beautiful, true and good



stories. We need courage to reject false and evil stories. We need patience and discernment to re-discover stories that help us not to lose the thread amid today's many troubles. We need stories that reveal who we truly are, also in the untold heroism of everyday life.

The Story of stories

Sacred Scripture is a Story of stories. How many events, peoples and individuals it sets before us! It shows us from the very beginning a God who is both creator and narrator. Indeed, God speaks his word and things come into existence!

As narrator, God calls things into life, culminat-

ing in the creation of man and woman as his free dialogue partners, who make history alongside him.

The Bible is thus the great love story between God and humanity. At its centre stands Jesus, whose own story brings to fulfillment both God's love for us and our love for God.

Jesus spoke of God not with abstract concepts, but with parables, brief stories taken from everyday life.

Gospels

The Gospels are also stories, and not by chance. The Gospel asks the reader to share in the same faith in order to share in the same life. The Gospel of John tells us that the quin-

tesential storyteller – the Word – himself becomes the story: God has become personally woven into our humanity, and so has given us a new way of weaving our stories.

An ever new story

The history of Christ is not a legacy from the past; it is our story, and always timely. It shows us that God was so deeply concerned for mankind, for our flesh and our history, to the point that he became man, flesh and history. It also tells us that no human stories are insignificant or paltry.

Since God became story, every human story is, in a certain sense, a divine story. In the history of every

person, the Father sees again the story of his Son who came down to earth. Every human story has an irrepressible dignity.

"You" – Saint Paul wrote – "are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts"...

By the power of the Holy Spirit, every story, even the most forgotten one, even the one that seems to be written with the most crooked lines, can become inspired, can be reborn as a masterpiece, and become an appendix to the Gospel. Like the Confessions of Augustine. Like A Pilgrim's Journey of Ignatius. Like The

Story of a Soul of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus. Like The Betrothed, like The Brothers Karamazov. Like countless other stories, which have admirably scripted the encounter between God's freedom and that of man. Each of us knows different stories that have the fragrance of the Gospel, that have borne witness to the Love that transforms life. These stories cry out to be shared, recounted and brought to life in every age, in every language, in every medium.

A story that renews us

Our own story becomes part of every great story. As we read the Scriptures, the stories of the saints,

and also those texts that have shed light on the human heart and its beauty, the Holy Spirit is free to write in our hearts, reviving our memory of what we are in God's eyes. When we remember the love that created and saved us, when we make love a part of our daily stories, when we weave the tapestry of our days with mercy, we are turning another page.

We no longer remain tied to regrets and sadness, bound to an unhealthy memory that burdens our hearts; rather, by opening ourselves to others, we open ourselves to the same vision of the great storyteller.

Telling God our story is never useless: To tell our

story to the Lord is to enter into his gaze of compassionate love for us and for others. We can recount to him the stories we live, bringing to him the people and the situations that fill our lives. With him we can re-weave the fabric of life, darning its rips and tears. How much we, all of us, need to do exactly this!

With the gaze of the great storyteller – the only one who has the ultimate point of view – we can then approach the other characters, our brothers and sisters, who are with us as actors in today's story. For no one is an extra on the world stage, and everyone's story is open to possible change. Even when we tell of evil, we can learn to leave room for redemption; in the midst of evil, we can also recognize the working of goodness and give it space.

Entrust

Let us entrust ourselves to a woman who knit together in her womb the humanity of God and, the Gospel tells us, wove together the events of her life... Let us ask for help from her, who knew how to untie the knots of life with the gentle strength of love:

O Mary, woman and mother, you wove the divine Word in your womb, you recounted by your life the magnificent works of God. Listen to our stories, hold them in your heart and make your own the stories that no one wants to hear. Teach us to recognise the good thread that runs through history. Look at the tangled knots in our life that paralyse our memory. By your gentle hands, every knot can be untied. Woman of the Spirit, mother of trust, inspire us too. Help us build stories of peace, stories that point to the future. And show us the way to live them together.

FRANCISCUS

Glasgow priests' digital revolution brings Church to their parishioners

THE current emergency is encouraging priests throughout the Archdiocese to find creative ways to use the internet to engage with their parishioners.

Many of the clergy are now embracing social media platforms with a corresponding increase in the number of parishes now streaming daily Masses.

At St Helen's Langside, Mgr Paul Murray's parish council meetings have been conducted by Zoom and coffee mornings are also now online.

At Our Lady of Lourdes, Cardonald, Parish Priest Canon David Wallace is bringing the church to the people with a regularly updated virtual tour of the 80-year old building.

He said: "I thought if the people can't come to church then I'll bring the church to them. It's been fascinating to show some parts of the building that most parishioners never see and to talk a little bit about things like the stained glass windows and so on. I'm learning something every day as well."

Canon Wallace, a talented musician and singer, intersperses his commentary with appropriate hymns, psalms and prayers.



At St Gregory's, Wyndford, Fr Allan Cameron used the internet to have 40 Hours Adoration in the parish, adding that he didn't want to give up this spiritual high point of the year when people needed Christ more than ever. He told viewers on Facebook: "In our lockdown we have to face the place where the Lord is and while we feel distant the Lord hasn't abandoned us."



Canon Peter McBride, parish priest of St Peter's in Partick, who is known for his sense of humour, posted videos on Facebook which appear to show him taking part in the Camino de Santiago.

The posts have been warmly received by viewers who praised him for cheering them up during the current crisis.

Canon McBride's creative decision to expose the Blessed Sacrament at the door of the Partick Church, leading to parishioners kneeling on the street outside, has also caused much appreciation on social media.



In Cumbernauld Fr John Campbell has been using Zoom to arrange online coffee mornings to help parishioners stay in touch and has started a new series online to help parishioners deepen their faith. He said: "Every Tuesday we will stream a 'Back to Basics' session revisiting our faith and hopefully learning more about it. On Vocations Sunday we will have special evening broadcast to reflect in the theme of vocation. On Mondays of May we will have May devotions every Monday at 7.30pm."



In Clydebank "cooking Canon" Gerry Tartaglia has been supplementing his offerings of Holy Hours, Masses and Youth Zooms by giving online cookery classes to parishioners who now know that spaghetti carbonara should never be made with cream, and never have mushrooms in it! The live streams of Masses from Our Holy Redeemer has led to scores of positive comments about the beauty of the venerable old church.

Italian bishops' ten commandments for celebrating the Mass via the internet

TEN golden rules for celebrating Mass online – the boom in online Masses has led one Bishops' Conference to issue practical guidelines for the celebration of the Mass online during the current health emergency.

The Italian Bishops published their guidelines as priests across the world began to use the web to livestream services.

The ten "practical indications" begin by emphasising what seems obvious but these days may no longer be obvious, namely that "the Eucharistic celebration must be carried out in a sacred place, paying due attention to the care and correct conduct of the different rites."

Recommendation two calls for careful "preparation of the homily and prayers of the faithful".

Note three points out that "it is opportune to proclaim the Word of God not in a not but slow and meditative way".

"All ritual forms, verbal and

non-verbal, ask for preparation and dignity: from the proclamation of texts and prayers to silence, from the dignity of the liturgical spaces to the vestments, to the relevance of the music..." is the admonition in point four.

The recommendation to kneel and stand in the appropriate places is recalled in the fifth recommendation... "It is important to remember that the faithful must be trained in a 'presence', even if mediated by the media, which does not exclude the involvement of the body".

Point six prioritises live celebrations over recordings... pointing to the importance of safeguarding the transmission, live, of the celebration avoiding the "proliferation of recorded celebrations".

Where necessary (point seven), a "very small number of concelebrating ministers" is allowed, always "maintaining a social distance".

Point eight is important

from a technical viewpoint, urging a wide screen view of the celebration rather than a close up focus on the priest's face. "The frame, being generally a room – in many cases that of the smartphone – should not constantly take a close-up, but opens to a wider screen where you can see the altar, the ambo, and the celebrant".

And if point nine seems obvious, it is nonetheless important – "audio must be taken care of from a technical point of view".

Point 10 insists that maximum attention should be paid to the "decorum of the liturgical celebration" using "liturgical books (missal and lectionary) and not other aids." As for the altar and ambo, "they are to be well lit; at the altar there should be no shortage of candles; next to the ambo, in the Easter season, the Easter candle (of wax) is placed and there can be also floral arrangements that are always sober and never excessive."



Radio Alba triples listeners as Glasgow's Christians discover the rich schedule offered by Dumbreck-based station

RADIO Alba, Glasgow's very own online Christian radio station, has seen a massive boost to its listening figures during the current Covid-19 pandemic.

Average daily audience figures were three times higher over the past month compared with the same period last year.

In response Monsignor Gerry Fitzpatrick, who helped found Radio Alba seven years ago, has added extra Masses, special prayers and newly composed religious music to the regular features already available.

Monsignor Fitzpatrick, parish priest at St Leo the Great, Dumbreck, and director of music for the Archdiocese said: "At times like these it's natural that people turn to their faith for the hope it brings them.

"We are delighted that people are listening to Radio Alba in greater numbers and we hope they will continue to do so."

Proving particularly popular with listeners is a prayer to St Roch, the 14th-century French-born patron saint of plague sufferers.

Monsignor Fitzpatrick said: "He was reputed to be a healer who cured with prayer and the Sign of the Cross.

"His image, with staff in hand and little dog at his feet,



both as a statue and a painting can be seen in churches in towns and villages all over southern Europe and there are four chapels in Scotland dedicated to him.

"They include St Roch's in Glasgow which by coincidence is a former parish of mine."

The prayer reads:

St Roch, you were noted for your goodness to the poor and your simplicity of life.

The healing power of God was seen in you

and many were comforted and cured of sickness

when you invoked the sign of the cross.

Be with us as we appeal to God for healing

for ourselves, for those we love,

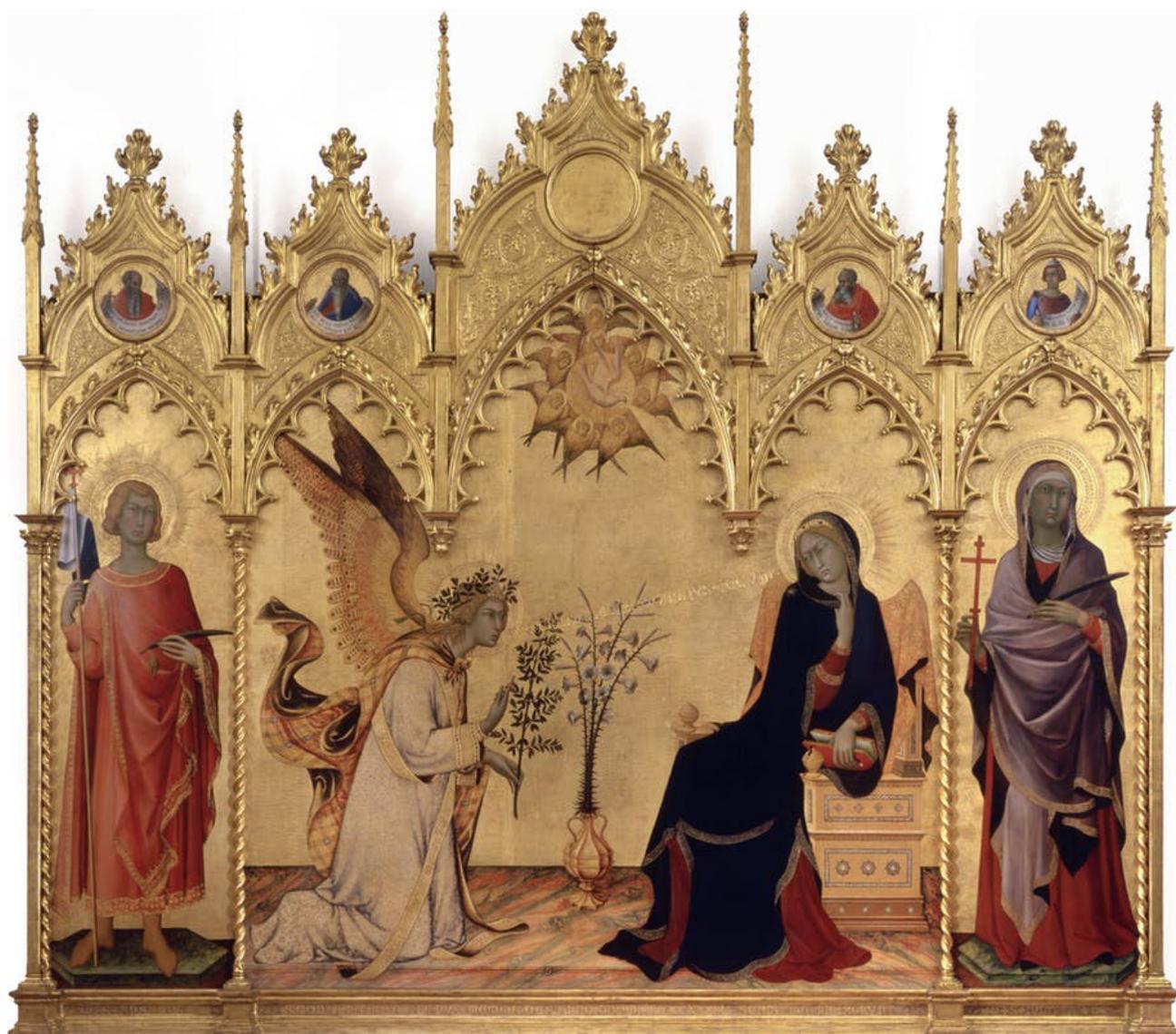
for our community,

and for all affected by the coronavirus.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

■ To listen to Radio Alba visit website <https://radioalba.org> or download the app from the app store on any Apple or Android device.



Art of the month

Hidden symbols reveal wonders of Our Lady

THE Month of May is known among Catholics as Our Lady's Month. Strange to say, during this month there are no major feasts of the Blessed Virgin.

In May we celebrate Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament to honour her relationship to the Holy Eucharist and to place her before us as a model in our duties and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. On the same day, May 13 we celebrate Our Lady of Fatima which is an Optional Memorial which means it is a feast day the Church encourages us to celebrate, without strictly requiring its observance.

While there are lots of sweet and lovely little prayer cards of Our Lady of Fatima, I know of no notable paintings of her under this title. Still, we cannot think of May without Mary and so I have chosen a rather splendid painting in which the Archangel Gabriel hears Mary, full of grace, willingly surrendering her will to that of God.

The annunciation is, of course, a feast of Our Lord but it points to the importance and role of Mary in the work of Salvation. "Let it be... Thy will be done."

The painting which dates from

BY **MGR TOM MONAGHAN**

the 14th century is entitled, "The Annunciation with St. Margaret and St. Ansaret" (who were patron saints of Siena's Cathedral).

Simone Martini painted the central panel and probably Lippo Memmi, his associate and brother-in-law was involved in the side panels. The rather splendid frame, though probably similar, is not the original. It can be seen at the Uffizi Gallery in Florence.

Gold

At first glance, with its five peaks, it looks rather unusual (the technical word would be a pentaptych) but the central section is double size and consequently it is a triptych (three images) painted on wood in tempera and gold, with a dominant central panel.

The use of rare and expensive materials such as gold-leaf and lapis lazuli are an indication that this work is considered as incredibly important. It is, indeed, a masterpiece... The Archangel Gabriel holds an olive branch, a symbol of peace and points at the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, breathing down towards Mary,

with rays of golden light speaking to her as does the angel. The Virgin stops reading but keeps her finger in the book and, looking perplexed, assumes a reluctant posture, while looking at the angel. This, of course, is before she gives her Fiat.

Unsure of what is involved, nevertheless, she will gladly agree to God's plan.

Look closely and you will see something unusual.

The words the angel speaks are actually written in the painting, being directed right into Mary's ear. "Ave gratia plena dominus tecum" (Hail favoured one the Lord is with you).

There is a great elegance and richness in this painting and the most wonderful detail and symbolism. Consider the vase of lilies. They are a symbol of Mary's purity. Look at the incredible detail in the angel's wing and the flow of his cloak; hanging in the air as if he has just arrived. One final and unusual point...

Simone Martini was alive in the time of Petrarch, the scholar and poet whose father knew Dante. In exchange for a painting of his beloved, Petrarch immortalized Martini in two of his sonnets!

POEM OF THE MONTH

This poem means a great deal to many people. It is often recited at Marian Devotions and Holy Hours and invariably someone afterwards would ask for a copy. The author is Mary Dixon Thayer who wrote more than one poem for Our Lady. This prayer-poem was popularized in the 1950s by the Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen.

Lovely Lady dressed in blue —

Teach me how to pray!

God was just your little boy,

Tell me what to say!

Did you lift Him up, sometimes,

Gently on your knee?

Did you sing to Him the way

Mother does to me?

Did you hold His hand at night?

Did you ever try

Telling stories of the world?

O! And did He cry?

Do you really think He cares

If I tell Him things —

Little things that happen? And

Do the Angels' wings

Make a noise? And can He hear

Me if I speak low?

Does He understand me now?

Tell me — for you know.

Lovely Lady dressed in blue —

Teach me how to pray!

God was just your little boy,

And you know the way.

PRAYER OF THE MONTH

O God, who chose the Mother of your Son to be our Mother also, grant us that, persevering in penance and prayer for the salvation of the world, we may bring to completion, more effectively each day, the reign of Christ in the world. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



Pope's prayer to Mary in times of pandemic

In the present tragic situation, when the whole world is prey to suffering and anxiety, we fly to you, Mother of God and our Mother, and seek refuge under your protection.

Virgin Mary, turn your merciful eyes towards us amid this coronavirus pandemic. Comfort those who are distraught and mourn their loved ones who have died, and at times are buried in a way that grieves them deeply. Be close to those who are concerned for their loved ones who are sick and who, in order to prevent the spread of the disease, cannot be close to them. Fill with hope those who are troubled by the uncertainty of the future and the consequences for the economy and employment.

Mother of God and our Mother, pray for us to God, the Father of mercies, that this great suffering may end and that hope and peace may dawn anew. Plead with your divine Son, as you did at Cana, so that the families of the sick and the victims be comforted, and their hearts be opened to confidence and trust.

Protect those doctors, nurses, health workers and volunteers who are on the frontline of this emergency, and are risking their lives to save others. Support their heroic effort and grant them strength, generosity and continued health.

Be close to those who assist the sick night and day, and to priests who, in their pastoral concern and fidelity to the Gospel, are trying to help and support everyone.

Blessed Virgin, illumine the minds of men and women engaged in scientific research, that they may find effective solutions to overcome this virus.

Support national leaders, that with wisdom, solicitude and generosity they may come to the aid of those lacking the basic necessities of life and may devise social and economic solutions inspired by farsightedness and solidarity.

Mary Most Holy, stir our consciences, so that the enormous funds invested in developing and stockpiling arms will instead be spent on promoting effective research on how to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future.

Beloved Mother, help us realize that we are all members of one great family and to recognize the bond that unites us, so that, in a spirit of fraternity and solidarity, we can help to alleviate countless situations of poverty and need. Make us strong in faith, persevering in service, constant in prayer.

Mary, Consolation of the afflicted, embrace all your children in distress and pray that God will stretch out his all-powerful hand and free us from this terrible pandemic, so that life can serenely resume its normal course.

To you, who shine on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope, do we entrust ourselves, O Clement, O Loving, O Sweet Virgin Mary. Amen.

Br Walfrid's French visit revealed



SINCE beginning the research project in September 2017 I have been on a fascinating journey retracing the steps of Brother Walfrid.

So far I've travelled to his birthplace in Ballymote, County Sligo and interviewed his surviving relatives.

I've also visited the parish school in Spitalfields, London where he taught after moving there from Glasgow.

Most recently, I've now visited the Marist Archives located in Lyon, France where I managed to uncover some new details about Andrew Kerins' formation as Brother Walfrid in his early 20s.

I first became aware of the Marist archives in St-Genis-Laval, near the city of Lyon in south-east France, around eighteen months ago in 2018.

It was then that I made initial contact with Carles Domenech, archivist for the combined historical records of the Brothers in France.

Given that a young Andrew Kerins had travelled to France in the early 1860s to 'take the habit' and join the Marist Brothers my focus was to uncover as much details as possible on what was perhaps the most formative event in the life of Brother Walfrid's life.

He travelled from Glasgow to the Marist training college at Beaucamps in the north of

Postgraduate student Michael Connolly, currently compiling the world's first PhD into the life of Brother Walfrid, describes a visit to the Marist training college in France where he studied as a 24 year old postulant

France as a 24-year-old postulant in 1864. Thanks to the work completed at the Lyon archive, all of the surviving historic materials from the Marist bases in France are now able to be researched from a central location.

The archival collection is understandably wide-ranging and dates back to the foundation of the Marist Brothers by Saint Marcellin Champagnat over two centuries ago in 1817.

I was delighted and grateful to be working alongside Brothers Alois – a German – and Andre Lanfrey – a Frenchman – who very kindly offered their own translations of and insights into some of the new information uncovered.

I also visited two sites in the region which are integral to the origins of the Marist Order. La Valla is a small hilltop town set within a mountainous region between the French cities of Lyon and St Etienne.

It was here that Saint Marcellin Champagnat, then a local priest, came and gathered candidates together on January 2nd 1817 to instruct

them on how to become the very first Marist Brothers.

We were able to see for ourselves the original classroom where the Marist educational tradition began. The site is now preserved as part of a museum and visitor centre which welcomes guest from all over the world. I noted that the guest book there was signed by pilgrims from China, Russia and Brazil. A truly global movement!

The second stop on our whistle-stop tour was Notre Dame de L'Hermitage – the original 'Mother house' for the Marist Brothers – which is set close by La Valla in the Rhone valley outside Lyon. This worldwide base for the institute was first constructed during the lifetime of Saint Champagnat.

It also now houses an extensive modern museum which details how the Brothers branched out from their humble origins in France and eventually spread their teaching to all corners of the globe, including of course Scotland.

The opportunity to immerse myself in the very

origins of the Marist Brothers by visiting both La Valla and L'Hermitage was above and beyond what I expected to achieve from the trip to Lyon.

Coupled with the archival work carried out at St-Genis-Laval and living within the international community of Brothers for the week, I now have a much deeper understanding of the Marist charism and how it manifests in practice.

Everywhere I have been people have been more than helpful in sharing what they know about Brother Walfrid and I've learnt so much along the way.

I'm learning something new all the time and am excited to share my knowledge when my research is complete.

■ For this update I would like to thank Brother Dr Brendan Geary, who recently retired as Marist Provincial for West Central Europe, for helping to facilitate a research trip which was almost two years in the planning. My thanks also to Emma O'Neil from the Nine Muses group who funded the research trip as well as providing a limited-edition box set of Peter Howson's portrait of Brother Walfrid to present as a gift to the Marist community in Lyon.



Knights of St Columba

The Knights of St Columba wish to send our sincere thanks and gratitude to all our NHS Staff, Frontline workers, Social Care workers, volunteers and to all who are risking their own lives helping others beat the Coronavirus.

Our Love and prayers continue daily for all of you and for all who have suffered during this very difficult time.

May the Blessed Mother and St Columba guide us all and keep us healthy at this time and in the future.

*Bertie M. Grogan
Supreme Knight*

Knights of St Columba Head Office
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T: +44 (0) 141 883 5700

Pope thanks to street papers

In a letter sent on Monday to over 100 street papers around the world, Pope Francis acknowledged that the coronavirus outbreak has severely tested the people who rely on them for an income.

BY TONY INGLIS

a Caritas Italy project called *Scarp de' tenis*.

"I would like to acknowledge the world of street papers and especially the vendors – who for the most part are homeless, terribly marginalised, or unemployed: thousands of people across the world who live and have a job thanks to selling these extraordinary newspapers," Pope Francis writes.

Street papers are publications produced to support those who write, edit and distribute them. These newspapers often seek to give the marginalised a voice in their community.

More than 100 street papers are published in 35 countries, in 25 different languages. They provide 20,500 people with employment and an income.

Pope Francis expressed appreciation for this mission, and warmly recalled

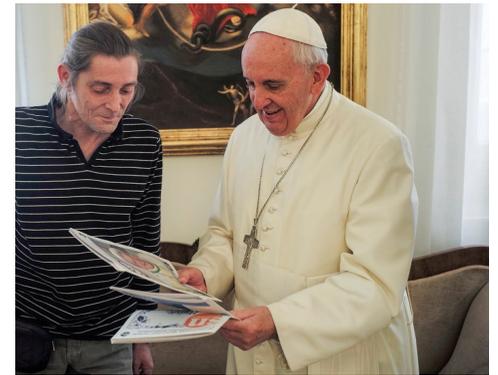
The publication provides an income and "access to fundamental citizens' rights" to

over 130 people facing financial and social difficulties.

Pope Francis also lamented that the Covid-19 pandemic has kept those who rely on street papers from working. He said the "most vulnerable, the invisible, and those without an abode are at risk of paying the highest price" from the coronavirus.

"I would like to express my solidarity with the journalists, the volunteers, and the people living thanks to these projects and who these days are doing everything they can thanks to many innovative ideas," he said.

The pandemic, said the



Pope, has made their work difficult. "But I am sure that the great network of street papers will come back stronger than ever."

In conclusion, the Pope encouraged everyone to turn our attention to the poor during this unique moment.

He said the poor can "help us all realise how much is actually happening to us and what our circumstances really are."

"Thank you for the work you do," said Pope Francis, "for the information you provide, and for the stories of hope that you tell."



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SPUC Scotland would like to thank all NHS Staff, Frontline workers, Social Care Workers, Volunteers and all who are saving lives daily during this exceptionally difficult time in all our lives.



Picture: Imago Mundi

Faith leaders' message of thanks to health workers

ARCHBISHOP Tartaglia has delivered a "heartfelt message of affection support and gratitude" to frontline workers described last month by Pope Francis as "saints who live next door".

Speaking on behalf of the Archdiocese, the Archbishop paid tribute to the "doctors, nurses and all health care workers, who are striving so valiantly in taxing conditions to care for the sick in this epidemic of the coronavirus."

He added: "I want you to know that we hold you completely in respect and admiration and that you are in our thoughts, our hearts and in our prayers. Keep well, keep safe, and may God protect you."

The Archbishop's powerful message echoes that of Pope Francis, who paid tribute to the care workers of the world.

Pope Francis said: "They

are heroes – doctors, volunteers, religious sisters, priests, shop workers – all performing their duty so that society can continue functioning.

"If we become aware of this miracle of the next-door saints, if we can follow their tracks, the miracle will end well, for the good of all."

Meanwhile, Church leaders from Scotland's diverse faith communities have united to thank frontline workers in a new online video reflecting the unique community spirit brought about by the current emergency.

Produced by the charity Interfaith Glasgow, contributors include Archbishop Tartaglia; Rev Daniel Carmichael, Moderator of the Glasgow Presbytery, Church of Scotland; Rabbi Rubin, Senior Rabbi of Scotland; and representatives of the Muslim, Sikh and Buddhist communities.

Addressing front line workers directly Archbishop Tartaglia said: "I would advise you to look into your own faith, into its prayers and its scriptures and its wisdom and try to find the resources there to give you peace of mind and strength to come through this as better and more thoughtful person."

■ **"We Are Together" can be viewed on any of the following:**
YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1dj74FZyf7Y&feature=youtu.be>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/interfaithglasgow/videos/2627572407522689>

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We would like to offer our sincere thanks to all our NHS and Frontline staff working to contain and treat the Covid-19 virus. Thank you also to all the Social Care Workers, volunteers and all who are risking their lives on a daily basis.

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**News and views for FLOURISH:
flourish@rcag.org.uk**


Glasgow Care Foundation

Glasgow Care Foundation wish to express their thanks and love to all our NHS staff, Frontline workers, social care workers, volunteers and all who are assisting our country in beating the (COVID-19) virus.

At the moment our focus is purchasing and distributing supermarket vouchers to individuals and families to buy food. We are also supporting community organisations with a grant to buy food to deliver to the most vulnerable people within Glasgow.

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The University of Glasgow would like to express their gratitude to all NHS Staff, Frontline Workers, Social Care Workers, Volunteers and all who have taken on the important roles in assisting to beat the Covid-19 Virus. Thank you for all your compassion, love and hard work helping to save lives.

Don't forget your WEE BOX changes lives

THESE are strange days for us all. Here at SCIAF we're living through this just like everyone else, but we're also hearing from our partners all over the world about the dreadful situations they're facing as well.



Ian Dunn
 SCIAF Communications Officer

Right now, we're listening to them, to understand how we can best support them through this crisis. We'll continue to work hand in hand with them, and the communities we serve, to overcome the challenges they face, now and in the future.

Of course, this crisis hit during Lent, a blow to us all, but a particularly tricky time for SCIAF as it had a big impact on our WEE BOX campaign. This year's appeal is focused on women affected by sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and our supporters have responded with incredible generosity.

However, the closure of Churches just before the

fourth Sunday of Lent, when we have our annual collection was a big blow, that means we will struggle to help as many women in the DRC as we had hoped too.

And the situation there isn't getting easier.

Situation

Our ambassador, singer and actor Lorraine McIntosh, travelled to the DRC to see our work there in January and she's been thinking a lot about the women she met there.

"I saw how money from Scotland for the WEE BOX appeal is helping them to recover, earn a living and build

a future again," she told us.

"However, having seen first-hand the conditions in which these extremely poor communities live, I am very concerned about how the coronavirus will affect them. With no clean running water, how will they protect themselves and their families? How will they make ends meet under a lockdown if they can't farm or sell their produce?"

"With no state help or savings, how will they keep up with the rising food costs. Many people like the women and girls SCIAF is helping are living with HIV and AIDS as a result of rape. How will they



be able to get their medicine or treatment? One thing is clear. After everything they have been through, due to

coronavirus, life for these women, girls and their families will become even harder."

Lorraine added that 'during these difficult times, we know there is a lot of pressure on families in Scotland and communities are coming together to look after one another. Please also remember the desperately poor communities around the world who were already struggling. We can't leave them to face this crisis alone and they need our help more than ever'.

Times are hard here, but they are worse elsewhere. SCIAF are trying to get help those who desperately need it.

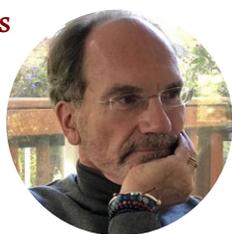
There's still time to make a difference.

Sadly you can't hand your WEE BOX into your Parish, but you can still make your donation to SCIAF online at www.sciaf.org.uk/donate or call 041 354 5555.

When you give to the WEE BOX BIG CHANGE appeal before the 20th of May your donation will be doubled by the UK government.

Advice for coping in a pandemic

Life under lockdown presents new challenges for people of faith. **Rev Michael Ross** (who is a Deacon of Motherwell Diocese and also a clinical psychologist) offers some tips on staying well and sane in the current pandemic



WE are all finding ourselves in strange, uncharted times.

For almost all of us, pandemics were things of the past, tragic events that occurred long before the progress of modern medicine. And yet, here we are, in the middle of a global emergency. This is an anxious time for everyone, for those isolated at home, separated from family and friends, and for those who are continuing to perform their usual work routines, and especially for those on the front-line of our NHS services. However, as 'lockdown' becomes the new normal, considering the best means of coping with enforced isolation is becoming increas-

ingly important.

The problem is, these are novel times, far outside the experience of almost all of us. How do we learn what's best to do, or not to do? One important potential source of helpful advice may be available to us from those who choose to live in isolated, confined, extreme situations.

Researchers Smith and Barrett provide some useful evidence to support us. They have considered working populations including polar scientists, astronauts, submariners, oil-rig workers and expeditioners. What can their collective experiences tell us about our own current circumstances? The physical contexts encoun-

tered by these groups differs to our own domestic experience, but the psychological stresses are somewhat similar. We share a need to adapt to unusual conditions, we share a need to learn to cope with a sense of threat, uncertainty and danger. Studies with people living in extreme environments may point us to some useful strategies.

Transitioning from our usual lives to our current confinement takes time and knowing that a transitional period is necessary is useful. To ease this transition, the development of a routine seems crucial. Routines appear to give us a sense of control, and help to reduce uncertainty by ensuring consistent structure in each day.

Remember to acknowledge what you're feeling. It might be helpful to apply some curiosity to your own inner world. You might say, 'I'm noticing some anxiety, or loneliness, or sadness.' If feeling particularly stressed, find your own way to connect with your physical body. Take some slow breaths, press your feet hard into the floor, slowly press your fingertips together. At the same time, focus on what you are doing. Notice what you can see, hear and smell, right now.



Uncertainty about what lies ahead easily leads to feelings of anxiety and fear. Thinking rationally about what risks we actually face, and taking steps to minimize those risks, can be useful. Remember to focus on what you can do. Fear and anxiety are normal responses to current events, you can't control them. Nor can you control the spread of the virus all by yourself.

But you can control what you do, here and now, and focussing on that can be helpful.

Under the present restrictions on our lives, monotony and boredom are genuine threats. This is where social media can be of enormous value, from streaming media and podcasts, to 'Face Time' interactions with family and friends.

Variety appears important, and taking up hobbies and creative pursuits, neglected in the past through a lack of time, is helpful. For Ernest Shackleton's crew in 1908, the staging of theatrical performances, and reading aloud to one another proved invaluable. Amateur dramatics, anyone?

Alternately, try a new recipe or reach for that board game at the back of the cupboard that you've forgotten about. Exercise is crucial and there appear to be no end of 'YouTube' routines to engage with.

It might be worthwhile to think carefully about social media interactions. Letting friends and family know what times through the day are best for calls might enhance the value of that contact. Similarly, it might be important to consider what content in a contact might be the most useful to you. With 24 hour news feeds, it becomes very easy to overload ourselves and others with consistently depressing information.

Feelings of low mood and low motivation are almost inevitable consequences of isolation. Again, acknowledging those feelings and, at the same time, focussing



on small achievements can be beneficial. Sharing these achievements with others, or even holding celebration meals to mark these achievements can bolster feelings of being able to cope. Keeping a journal during this time can also be an important way of processing thoughts, feelings, frustrations and worries.

Being cooped up with the same people for extended lengths of time can be stressful and this includes those nearest and dearest to us. Tolerance for others and for ourselves is called for and some degree of self-restraint may be invaluable. It may be useful to consider establishing an area of personal space in the home, a safe place to retreat to when the going gets especially tough.

Research indicates that setting some ground rules for difficult discussions about the irritations experienced among us in 'lockdown' can also be necessary. Above all, be kind to yourself. Think of all the supportive things you would say to a family member or colleague in these dark days. Then, say those things to yourself!

We will all cope with isolation in our own ways. Paying attention to some of the research may provide some useful, and even helpful, clues. The important thing to remember is that, this, too, will end!

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THE early part of last month has commemorated a couple of landmark anniversaries for me and my family.

On 1st April 2000 I conducted the wedding of my niece, so this year marked their 20th anniversary. I'm ashamed to say I forgot about it, initially, and then belatedly contacted her to offer the two of them my congratulations.

It was a memorable day and it was the last family gathering that my mother attended before she passed away the following year. The father of the bride, my famous, or infamous brother Hugh, the doyen of Scottish sports journalists as I like to call him, is still in lockdown with his beloved wife, but using social media he was able to get a lovely Italian meal, complemented by good wine, sent to his daughter and son-in-law, from Massimo's Restaurant in Bearsden, so that they could celebrate.

I am also writing this log on Holy Wednesday, and this marks the 60th anniversary of my father's death. On the morning of Friday 8th April 1960, the Friday before the beginning of Holy Week that year, two policemen came to our door at 5 Thurso Street in Partick, to inform my mother that her husband, who was working away in Consett at the time, in the steel works, having been made redundant from the shipyards, had collapsed and died on his way to work earlier that very day. It's hard to believe that 60 years have passed since then. My

Confessions of a technophobe priest



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



brothers and I were 6, 8 and 10 years of age at the time. Our mother was 40.

In the meantime, we, the Passionists, have settled into a different pattern of life, and this now includes streaming some Masses and services from the oratory of our Passionist community house in Bishopbriggs.

Unfortunately, we are not able to do it from the church as we don't have proper streaming facilities, but people who have been able to log in seem to enjoy the intimacy of the smaller space, while still of course longing for our return to St

Mungo's.

We are also being joined by people from Ireland and also from other countries, Italy, Spain and Singapore included. There has been the odd technical glitch but, for the most part, it has gone quite smoothly.

The actual oratory in our house is very small and wouldn't have been at all suitable, and so, for the time being, we have converted the late Father Lawrence's room into a sacred space and that is where we stream from.

Father Lawrence continues to make his presence felt. While we were stream-

ing our Service of Healing and Reconciliation on Holy Tuesday night, just as Father Antony prepared to proclaim the first reading, a telephone sounded. We cast accusatory glances at each other, wondering who was daft enough to leave their phone on, and then we realised that, from behind a curtain concealing a book case, it was actually Father Lawrence's phone that was sounding!

Father Antony quickly turned it off and we resumed the service. Afterwards I tried to redial the number but it appeared to be withheld.

With Father Gareth away, I took the unlikely step of joining Facebook so as to support Father Antony in contact with Passionist Young Team from St Mungo's in any way that I could.

As an avowed technophobe, however, I had no idea what this actually entailed, and I got a bit panicky when my mailbox filled up with all these friend requests, hundreds of them, some from very good people I knew, but mostly from people I've never heard of in my life.

I have decided, therefore, I am going to un-subscribe, or whatever it is you do, as I don't really see myself becoming a social media buff – a night in with a good book seems much more appealing!

Otherwise, Father Gareth is still in Wales, with a bit of a sore throat at present, and a blocked nose, so it's really his mum that's looking after him now and not vice-versa. Father Antony maintains his evening walks, still stopping at his mum's house; I continue to provide daily care for my brother who

has now received his letter from the Prime Minister, although, vulnerable as he is, he might be in better shape than many at the moment; and lastly, Father Justinian, who has just celebrated his 89th birthday, continues his house isolation, with an occasional walk in the garden.

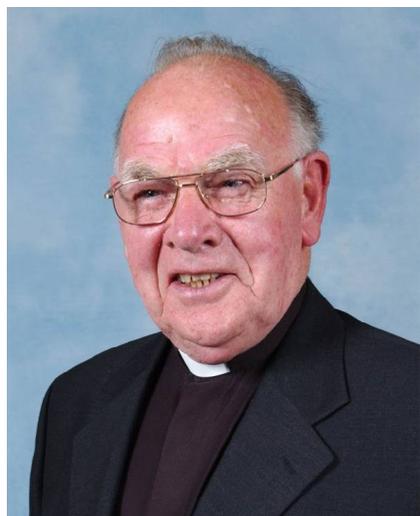
Castlemilk priest remembered

THE death occurred last month of Canon Barney Devine, long-time Parish Priest of St Margaret Mary's, Castlemilk, one of Glasgow's oldest priests.

The Canon was born on 18 July 1927 and ordained a priest on 17 June 1951 by Bishop Daniel Cohalan, Bishop of Waterford and Lismore at St John's College Waterford, Ireland.

He had been educated at St Patrick's Primary Castlederg (1932-1939); Christian Brothers' school Omagh (1939-1945) and studied for the priesthood at St John's College Waterford (1945-1951).

He spent all his priestly life in Glasgow, serving in four parishes (one twice!): 1951-1967: Assistant Priest: Our Lady of Fatima; 1967-1977: Assistant Priest St Augustine's; 1977-1981: Parish Priest Our Lady of Fatima;



Canon Barney Devine RIP

1981-1987: Parish Priest St Catherine's; 1987-2008: Parish Priest St Margaret Mary's.

Archbishop Tartaglia wrote the following letter to the Canon's family and home parish of Castlederg, County Tyrone, on learning of his passing.

"Please convey to the family of Canon Bernard Vincent Devine, known to us all here as "Barney", my prayerful condolences on his death. He was 69 years a priest, all of these spent in the service of Jesus Christ and his Church in this Archdiocese of Glas-

gow. Please assure Sister Bridget and Sister Bernadette, his other family and friends, who have been able to assemble in St Patrick's Cemetery, Castlederg, for his committal, that I have offered Mass for the repose of his soul.

"We have already notified our priests of his death. The people of this diocese are already praying for him, nowhere more than in St Joseph's Residence, where he died, and in St Margaret Mary's Parish, where he was Parish Priest for the last 21 years of his active priestly ministry.

"It was his wish that his Funeral Mass should take place in St Margaret Mary's Church. Once the present emergency is over, I will schedule a public In Memoriam Mass in St Margaret Mary's for Canon Barney.

"May he rest in peace."

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Joy of the Easter season fills May's selection of readings



Canon Robert Hill

THIS month takes us to the very end of the Easter season, on the very last day of May, which also ends the season of Easter quite neatly, finishing as it does on Pentecost Sunday.

We also manage to cover most of the Easter season this month, from the 4th Sunday, often known as Good Shepherd Sunday, and also the World Day of Prayer for Vocations to the Priesthood and religious life, and the 7th Sunday, which is the World Day of Prayer for Communications.

As we shall see, the anomaly in the Gospels at this stage in the Easter season is that they are taken from the Gospel of John's account of Jesus' final teachings at the Last Supper, ending with the great Prayer with which that narrative ends. If this anomaly does nothing else, it will remind us that the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus make up a single event, and should always be treated as such. Thursday 21 May is the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord and a Holyday of Obligation.

3 MAY Easter Week 4 Year A. World Day of Prayer for Vocations to Priesthood and Religious Life

John 10:1-10

By the time we reach the first Sunday of the month of May, we are about half way through the Easter Season. The Gospel on this day is always from John chapter 10, which for many years now has been designated the World Day of Prayer for Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life.

This year, Jesus' focus is on the gate of the sheepfold. He has just completed a ferocious onslaught on the Pharisees in the aftermath of his curing of the man born blind.

These Pharisees, protesting that they are not blind (despite the fact they cannot see who Jesus is or what he is doing), are very much like blind shepherds.

Jesus on the other hand is not only the true shepherd; he is the gate of the sheepfold because he guarantees safety and security for the flock which his Father has given him.

This model, combining shepherd and sheep fold, is appropriate for Vocations Sunday.

Tiziano Vecellio (Titian), *Pentecost* (1545).



10 MAY

Easter Week 5 Year A. **John 14:1-12**

The scene for today's gospel is the Last Supper in the Gospel of John – specifically the farewell discourse. The passage for today will be recognisable – at least in part – to many of us. The first half of it is frequently used in the funeral liturgy, and particularly in the Vigil and reception of the deceased the night before the funeral Mass itself.

In that liturgy, the gospel ends at verse 6, "Jesus said: 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me'". All might have been well if Jesus had not added, "If you know me, you know my Father too. From this moment you know him and have seen him."

This is all too much for Philip, who asks, "Lord, let us see the Father and then we shall be satisfied", to which Jesus replies, "have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? To have seen me is to have seen the Father, so how can you say, 'Let us see the Father?'"

Jesus must have been exasperated on hearing this.

After all his teaching, after his signs, especially after raising Lazarus from the dead, the disciples still do not grasp that what Jesus does, what he says, and who he is are all manifestations of God, his Father.

Jesus is forced to return to

an argument he has already used in this gospel with the Pharisees and their associates – they were challenged to believe on the evidence of the works that Jesus performed, if on nothing else. The disciples are urged to do at least that.

We can have the greatest sympathy for these men who have been with Jesus during his ministry. They have accepted Jesus' teaching, they are trying to understand his instructions, but how could they learn without the final part of the equation?

It will not become clear to them until after Jesus' resurrection. Then, even though they will struggle to make sense of this, and will need the Holy Spirit to teach them, they will begin to understand more clearly. We have been baptised, we have been confirmed, and we have heard the story of Jesus' death and resurrection. We have the sacraments, the scriptures, but even with these, do we have any better understanding that in Jesus' words and actions, we hear and see God's words and actions?

17 MAY

Easter Week 6 Year A. **John 14:15-21**

The sign that Jesus' disciples love him will be found when they keep his commandments. No elaboration of this is given, but Jesus immediately goes on to say that he will ask the Father, who will give the disciples

another advocate.

Actually, Jesus does not say 'advocate', but 'paraclete', which does not move the discussion very far! It's not easy to describe succinctly what 'paraclete' means, because for the Jews it meant a companion, a guide, a mentor, whereas for the Greeks and Romans it meant a legal representative, hence the translation 'advocate', in the sense of a good lawyer.

So when our translation says that Jesus will ask the Father to send an advocate, it is partially correct, but there is more to the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit than legal adviser.

The rest of the passage gives us some clues as to what the Paraclete will do for disciples. First, the Paraclete is the Spirit of Truth. That is why it is so important for us to invoke the Holy Spirit when we try to understand the things of God. Secondly, The Spirit will be our companion, so that Jesus will not leave his disciples of any generation as orphans.

There will be a bewildering time coming soon for disciples when the world will no longer see Jesus – first, because he will be laid in the tomb, although he will rise again on the third day – secondly because he will no longer be visible on earth. But his disciples, to whom the gift of the Holy Spirit is given, and who are those who will receive his

commandments and keep them, will also be loved by Jesus' Father.

21 MAY

Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord Year A.

Matthew 28:16-20

The Ascension of the Lord is a very well-known story, and yet when you look at how it is described in the gospels, specific details are few and far between. To begin with, only Luke's gospel explicitly describes the event. Luke also gives an account in the Acts of the Apostles (today's first reading), but his two accounts don't quite match. Luke's gospel says Jesus ascended at the end of the day of Resurrection, and it happened just outside Jerusalem. In Acts however, Luke says that for 40 days Jesus continued to appear to disciples, and then was taken up into heaven.

We tend to think of today's gospel from Matthew as an Ascension story, but Matthew locates his end of gospel scene on a mountain in Galilee. He does not explicitly say that Jesus ascended from there! The original end of Mark does not mention this at all.

So, what are we to make of this? A few things are clear. After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to disciples, as individuals, or in groups. He teaches them that the Christ had to suffer, die, and then rise again.

Jesus' final act before his Ascension is always reassuring: in Matthew, he says "Know that I am with you always".

Perhaps that's the single most important point we can take from the Ascension story. We can feel isolated, separated from Christ when life gets tough; we remember his final encouragement: he is *always* with us.

24 MAY

Easter Week 7 Year A. **John 17:1-11**

This is another Sunday of the Easter season which has a World Day of Prayer attached to it – this time Communications. This one is not as old as Vocations Sunday – it was a product of the Second Vatican Council. The association with the 7th Sunday of Easter each year is a good one. The gospel for this Sunday always comes from John Chapter 17, which is Jesus' prayer for those who will carry on what he began – his disciples in every generation.

They are the ones who will make his name known in their own time; who will bear witness to his words and deeds by their own words and deeds. At one level, this is a prayer for all disciples, because we are all commissioned to be Jesus' witnesses, the proclaimers of his Gospel in our words and deeds. Specifically on this Sunday, we pray for those professionals in media who dedicate their lives to proclaiming the gospel through the media of print, radio, television, and the ever increasing ways in which the media exists today.

31 MAY

Pentecost Sunday **Gospel - John 14:1-12**

On the last Sunday of Easter – Pentecost, we return to the scene of the evening of the First Day of the Week – the day of Jesus' resurrection, when he suddenly appeared in the midst of terrified disciples, locked away behind closed doors, hoping that they will not share the same fate as Jesus. When Jesus appears – the barrier of the closed doors does not prevent him entering the room – he imparts what he had promised at the Last supper; then he bequeathed his peace: a peace the world cannot give.

Now he delivers what he has promised. They are given the power to forgive sins, which is the most important expression of Jesus' ability to heal what is broken in humanity.

Forgiveness makes the acceptance of peace a possibility, a reality. And he delivers his promise to send the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, to be sent by the Father in Jesus' name. These gifts are given to us to this very day – the peace of Christ, his bequest.

We could almost call this Jesus' hallmark – not just any old peace, or cessation of violence. This peace is one the world cannot give. Only the Holy Spirit can ensure we remain in that peace. With peace comes forgiveness.

There can be no peace when refusal to forgive exists. Jesus promised that after he left his disciples, he would send the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, who would maintain in them all that Jesus had won for them by his death and resurrection – gifts which are hallmarks of the Church.

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