

FLOURISH

Official Journal of the Archdiocese of Glasgow

May 2024

Pray for peace



Pope pleads for an end to bloodshed

POPE Francis has appealed for prayers during May to end the suffering in Gaza.

“It is with concern and also with grief that I am continuing to follow the situation in the Middle East.

“I renew my appeal not to give in to the logic of vengeance and war. May the paths of dialogue and diplomacy, which can do so much, prevail.

“I pray every day for peace in Palestine and Israel, and I hope that these two peoples may stop suffering soon.

“And let us not forget martyred Ukraine, the martyred Ukraine which suffers so much because of the war.”



Prayer to Our Lady of Palestine

HEAVENLY Father,

we humbly ask you, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Palestine, to help us overcome all the difficulties which face us in the Holy Land, the land which your Son has made Holy; for it is in this land that our Saviour took flesh and brought the entire world to Redemption. We beseech you Father, strengthen us in faith, service, and perseverance so that we may be witnesses to that unending act of love, you who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.



Gaza priest tells of people's suffering

“THE situation is very bad.

“Since the beginning of the war, we have lost 25% of our community because some Christians emigrated and 33 have died. Twenty were killed by the IDF and 13 died for reasons including lack of medicine.

“On top of the 1,200 people killed in the terrible events of October 7th, more than 34,000 people have been killed inside the Gaza strip. It's a tragedy this war. One more week, one more day is not the solution. We repeat the request from the Holy Father Pope Francis for a ceasefire. We ask for a ceasefire and the liberation of all hostages and for help for the thousands and thousands of injured, the majority of whom are women and children.”

Cinema release for saint film

IT'S not often that the story of a canonised saint hits the big screens in a blockbuster film adaptation, but that's what's happening with the release of the new film *Cabrini*.

The stirring and uplifting biopic tells the story of St Frances Xavier Cabrini, an Italian immigrant who became the first US citizen to become a canonised saint.

She founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a religious institute that was a major support to immigrants to the United States. She died in 1917. It had its UK release in 200+ cinemas last month and will be heading to Blu-Ray, DVD and digital download platforms on 27th May.

From the studio and director (Alejandro Monteverde) behind last summer's box office sensation *Sound of Freedom*, the film stars Cristiana Dell'Anna (*The Hand of God*, *Gomorrah*), two-time Oscar nominee John Lithgow (*Killers of the Flower Moon*, *The Crown*), two-time Emmy nominee David Morse (*The Green Mile*, *The Hurt Locker*) and Oscar nominee Giancarlo Giannini (*Quantum of Solace*, *Man on Fire*).

Cabrini was produced by Academy Award-winning Jonathan Sanger (*The Elephant Man*) and features an original song performed by



BY RONNIE CONVERY

the world renowned tenor, Andrea Bocelli.

In 1889, Italian immigrant Francesca Cabrini arrives in New York City, greeted only by disease, crime, and impoverished children.

Witnessing the vast inequality of the city, Cabrini sets off on a daring mission to help society's most vulnerable, but must first overcome the prejudices and indifference of those in power.

However, despite these momentous setbacks, her broken English, and poor health, she remains determined to use her entrepreneurial mind to build an empire of hope unlike anything that the world has ever seen.

St Frances Cabrini's story of defiance in the face of adversity is an incredible reminder of how even just one person's faith and activity can change the world.

Parishes of the future will have to be fewer, leaner, and fitter

THE consultation on the future parish provision for the Archdiocese of Glasgow is inviting parishioners gathered in area groups to indicate which parishes are best placed to serve Catholics in their district into the next decade.

To assist their deliberations, deanery profiles have been prepared and circulated by the Archdiocesan Coordinating Group for Evangelisation.

These provide background information and statistics to assist people in sketching the future shape of pastoral care in their local area.

Included in this data is an acknowledgement of the downward trend in Mass attendance, the overall condition of our parishes, and an estimate of the number of priests available to serve each deanery five years from now.

Most deaneries will see a reduction of around a third in available priests in coming years. Having considered this information it becomes clear that the network of parishes serving the Archdiocese of Glasgow needs to change.

Now the consultation is asking deanery councils to group each of their existing parishes within their area



into one of three groups.

1. Parishes that might be considered as fundamental to the provision of pastoral care by virtue of their greater size, location or other key factors which make them well-placed to respond to significant need over a large pastoral area. Parishes in this group are thought likely to remain in this role for a period exceeding 10 years.

2. Parishes that might be considered as key to supporting the provision of pastoral care throughout the archdiocese covering important geographical areas. The deanery believes that these parishes will remain in this key role for a period of 5 to 10 years.

3. Parishes which might

BY RONNIE CONVERY

be considered as less central to the overall framework of pastoral care in the archdiocese by virtue of their smaller size, location or other key factors which make them less able to respond to significant need over a large pastoral area. The deanery anticipates that these parishes may face closure, amalgamation or realignment within 0 to 5 years.

Canon Andrew McKenzie, above, who is overseeing the process, said: "It's important to remember that the inclusion of a parish in the third category does not mean that this parish will close. Rather it indicates that given the

restraints that are being put upon us, the retention of this parish beyond a period of five years is less likely, given the overall framework of pastoral care in the archdiocese.

"Secondly, parish boundaries will only be realigned when the archbishop decides that this is necessary. It is therefore not being proposed that on a given day a specified number of parishes will close with immediate effect.

"The Archdiocesan Coordinating Group for Evangelisation has asked Deanery Pastoral Councils to prepare a report to be submitted by Pentecost Sunday. This report should include areas of agreement along with areas of disagreement.

"While discussion on parish realignment continues the Archdiocesan Coordinating Group for Evangelisation is anxious that the equally important work of evangelisation and collaboration also continues. Together we need to give new energy to our mission of spreading the Good News. We need to do this in a new spirit of collaboration. This is our primary task and our concern for buildings, while important, should not distract us from in that."

Vatican yearbook reveals more Catholics, but vocations decline

NEW Church statistics just published reveal more Catholics than ever in the world but fewer vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

The Vatican has published the 2024 Pontifical Yearbook containing information on the life of the Catholic Church worldwide.

It reveals that the number of baptised Catholics increased globally, rising from 1.376 billion to 1.390 billion, an increase of 1.0%.

The rate of change varied from continent to continent. Africa recorded an increase of 3%. Europe shows stable numbers. The Americas and Asia recorded a significant growth in the number of Catholics (+0.9% and +0.6%, respectively).

The yearbook reveals a decrease in the number of priests compared to the previous year, continuing the downward trend that has characterised the years since 2012.

BY RONNIE CONVERY

The global number of priests in the world stands at 407,730. Despite this, Africa and Asia showed a sustained increase in ordinations (+3.2% and 1.6%, respectively) while the Americas remained almost stationary. Europe was down 1.7% and Oceania down 1.5% in priestly numbers.

The number of permanent deacons continued to show significant changes, for the first time breaching the 50,000 barrier. The number of deacons improved on all continents.

The number of religious sisters worldwide, however, is currently in sharp decline. Globally, they went from 608,958 professed women to 599,228.

Again Africa bucked the trend with an increase in female vocations – an increase of 1.7%. This was offset by three continents



showing a significant contraction: Oceania (-3.6%), Europe (-3.5%), and North America (-3.0%).

The decline in the number of seminarians since 2012 continues.

The new yearbook reveals that men preparing for the priesthood numbered 108,481, down 1.3% year on year. In Africa, the number of major seminarians (post-

secondary education), actually increased by 2.1%, but in Europe in just one year the number of seminarians fell by 6%.

Of the 108,481 seminarians worldwide, Africa now has the highest number with 34,541, followed by Asia with 31,767, the Americas with 27,738, Europe with 14,461, and Oceania with 974 major seminarians.

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Gaza priest's heartfelt plea to Scots: 'Help us end the horror – it's nearly hell'

OUR lives are nearly hell... that was the stark and tragic message of Fr Gabriel Romanelli, the Parish Priest of Gaza's only Catholic community during a memorable visit to Glasgow.

Fr Gabriel carried out a series of harrowing press interviews, before speaking at a special event held in the Royal Concert Hall – a location chosen because of the huge number of people who wanted to be present.

Then it was on to St Andrew's Cathedral for 1pm Mass with Archbishop Nolan and priests of the Archdiocese and beyond who concelebrated in solidarity.

Speaking at the Cathedral, Fr Gabriel said: "Our lives are nearly hell. Not quite hell only because Jesus is always present with us in the Eucharist."

Earlier the Gaza priest, who has been unable to get back to his flock since the Hamas massacres of October 7, urged Scots to do three things to help his people.

He said: "The first thing I ask is your prayers. Pray that this terrible war might

Picture by Paul McSherry



BY **RONNIE CONVERY**

come to an end. Secondly I ask you to speak about what is happening with wisdom and charity. Don't over-simplify it. Urge those in positions of authority to do what they can to bring peace as soon as possible. And thirdly support us with aid, as SCIAF and the other Caritas agencies are doing.

We need literally everything... water, food, medicines... everything."

Fr Gabriel told his audience in the Concert Hall: "This war has cost the lives of 34,000 people in Gaza so far... men, women and children, not forgetting the hundreds of Israeli and foreign citizens who died in the attacks on October 7.

"In Gaza itself we have

77,000 wounded people. Of them 8000 need urgent intensive care to save their lives but they are not permitted to cross the border to get to specialist hospitals.

"And we do not forget the hostages who were taken that first day. We pray for their liberation. For us every person is important without distinction of race or religion."



Survival story of Gaza's Christians

THE Christian community in Gaza is tiny – just one in every 5000 citizens of the war-torn territory – but they can trace their origins back to the times of Jesus' disciples.

The Catholic Parish – The Holy Family – had just 135 parishioners before the bombardment started. It takes its name from the tradition that Jesus, Mary and Joseph passed through the territory, following the Via Maris after fleeing to Egypt for safety.

Despite their small numbers the Christians of Gaza run vital services for the wider community including three schools and a specialist service for children with severe disabilities.

Since the current violence began the Chris-

tian community has lost a quarter of its members. 33 have been killed in Israeli Defence Force operations including an elderly teacher, over 80 years old, who was shot in the legs and left to die on the street while permission to go to her aid was refused. In addition 200 Christians have managed to escape across the border to Egypt.

What remains will be forever marked by this conflict.

Fr Gabriel said: "When I get back to my parish it will be a different parish. The damage to buildings and structures is great. A quarter of our people have gone. And those who remain are traumatised, depressed and filled with anxiety at what will happen next."

Archbishop and Moderator sign Glasgow-Gaza declaration

'From Glasgow to Gaza: A Cry for Peace in the Holy Land' – full text of the declaration to mark the visit of Fr Gabriel Romanelli to Scotland

ON the occasion of Fr Gabriel Romanelli's visit to Glasgow on 26th April 2024, we, the undersigned, express our solidarity with the people of the Holy Family Parish in Gaza, the Christian community of the Holy Land and people of all faiths and none across the region tormented by war.

In recent months, millions of innocent people have suffered the consequences of violence and war. Families and communities have been devastated. Many have lost hope for a peaceful future. Men, women and children have been robbed of their innate human dignity and their right to survive and thrive. Our cry is "Enough is enough".

• We stand shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters in Christ in Gaza and across the Holy Land. May they feel our solidarity

Picture by Paul McSherry



and Jesus' loving embrace.

• We stand in solidarity with all the sons and daughters of Abraham, the peoples of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faiths in the Holy Land, that all may know deep peace and reconciliation in their lifetimes.

• We stand in support of agencies and individu-

als who are serving those suffering at their time of greatest need. May they be rewarded for their courage and compassion.

• We stand united with all people of good will who are campaigning for an end to this violence. May we never lose hope and may our resolve not falter.

• We stand together as disciples of Jesus Christ, who, in the very lands that are lacerated by hostility and violence today, called on his followers to be peacemakers. In the name of God, we call for an end to war, closure of heart and hatred to be replaced with dialogue, reconciliation, and peace.

Today we cry out to all people in positions of power to end this senseless violence. We pray to Almighty God that their hearts may be turned towards compassion, and that they may have the courage and wisdom to pursue the path of justice and peace for all who call the Holy Land home.

Archbishop William Nolan, Archbishop of Glasgow

Rt Rev Sally Foster-Fulton, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

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Signs of welcome to the deaf community

A GLASGOW parish priest who learned British sign language in his role as a prison chaplain has taken up a new post as ambassador to the deaf Catholic community in the Archdiocese

Father Paul McAlinden of St Augustine's, Milton, was appointed by Archbishop Nolan after community leaders expressed their concerns to him that the spiritual needs of the deaf suffered because of a lack of support services.

Now, within weeks of his

appointment, Father Paul is working with a core group of volunteers who have also taken a basic course in sign language to spread the simple message to the deaf community: "We are here for you".

Father Paul said: "I first discovered just how important it is to communicate with deaf parishioners when I worked in Yoker and made a home visit to a couple who were deaf.

"I brought along someone who could sign on my behalf and the couple were delight-

BY BRIAN SWANSON

PICTURE BY PAUL MCSHERRY

ed to be able to participate fully in their faith.

"I did that a few times but it saddened me that I could not have an ordinary conversation with them on a one to one basis – I couldn't ask them how the family was and things like that.

"Then, because I was – and am still – a prison chaplain, the Scottish Prison Service suggested that I should study level 1 in British Sign Language because there were always one or two deaf prisoners who required spiritual help.

"So luckily the prison service paid for me to study BSL at college and although I found it quite difficult at times it was well worth it and now I am making use of what I learned but in a different setting.

"It was quite a few years ago that I took that course so now I have been getting help from people who are familiar with BSL and it's all slowly coming back."

"It's early days yet but al-



ready we have planned a bus trip and a retreat later on in the year for deaf people in the Archdiocese but for now we just want people from the deaf community who feel their spiritual needs could benefit to get in touch and let us know what we can do to help."

Liz Ann O'Hare, a retired senior social worker, who works closely with the Catholic Deaf Community in Glasgow said: "For deaf people, sign language is their

first and often only means of communication.

"For many years Deaf Catholics were nurtured in their faith through St Vincent's school in Tollcross and then as adults a full and much-appreciated spiritual and pastoral life was supplied by the Vincentian Fathers and Daughters of Charity in St Vincent's Centre for Deaf people in Tobago St.

"Since the closure of the school and the departure of

the Vincentians many who were regular Mass goers their entire lives have given up. Those who don't give up have enormous difficulty in practising their faith.

"But hopefully with Father Paul's help we can encourage the reluctant deaf community to join us again in the practice of their faith."

■ To find out more email Father Paul on staugustine@rcag.org.uk

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If you have good reason to believe God may be calling you to be a monk, write to:

Vocation Director, Nunraw Abbey
HADDINGTON, EH41 4LW, Scotland
Or email: nunraw.abbot@yahoo.co.uk
Scottish Charity No SCO22611

Pope's green message planted a seed for Callum

SINCE starting secondary school I have always wanted to revamp my school's greenhouse, which had been left unattended for a while.

The Caritas scheme gave me the opportunity and independence to take control and show the necessary leadership to restore the greenhouse.

I was inspired to take on this project, most obviously by my passion for gardening, but also by my Catholic faith, reflecting the teachings of the Bible that humans have a responsibility to be stewards of the earth.

Pope Francis wrote a letter called 'Laudato Si' which talked about 'care for our common home' which effectively means being better carers for our planet and this further inspired me to take the initiative in taking care of the greenhouse.

During my time with the St Roch's greenhouse, I sourced a crucifix from the RE department and hung it on the door.

To be honest I just wanted it in the greenhouse to assert my Catholicism but on a deeper level, I guess I wanted to put it up as a symbol



Picture by Paul McSherry

Hundreds of sixth year pupils from all over Scotland will gather in the Clyde Auditorium on June 3 to receive their Caritas Awards and among them will be Callum Trainer, 17, from St Roch's Secondary School. In this special article for Flourish he tells how his faith and the example of Pope Francis inspired him

of God's authority over the earth's inhabitants including plants, as He created them and designed every different plant on earth from its roots to its petals and functions.

His love for His creation is displayed perfectly through Jesus' crucifixion, which is when God restored all of

creation to Himself from this fallen world.

I also composed a prayer, about how the plants are God's and all power is His, in His will and design for them to grow as He wants.

I cleared out the greenhouse as it was a real mess, cleaned it from top to bot-

tom, populated it with different flowers, planted seeds and created information sheets of the flowers and plants, most of which have been given names.


The Peace Lily is my personal favourite, and has been named Mary, in honour of Our Blessed Lady.

The information sheets raise awareness of the work that is being done, so that next year's Caritas nominees will know how to care for each plant.


My time in Caritas has encouraged me to grow in both my faith and self-confidence and when I leave school I will take with me a better understanding of the teachings of the Bible and how to put these teachings into practice, remembering St James' great quote: "faith without action is dead".

I aspire to be a child of God and take care of God's possessions and from taking part in Caritas I am confident I can go forward and take on that responsibility for the rest of my life".

■ If you or your school want to share your Caritas stories with Flourish email: Brian.Swanson@rcag.org.uk



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Mystery solved: now Francesco has a proper place of rest

A PRIEST blessed a grave in a Girvan cemetery last month surrounded by the deceased's family and diplomatic, civic and foreign dignitaries.

The same grave had been blessed by another priest 83 years earlier, but on that occasion there were no witnesses... the plain coffin of Francesco D'Inverno was lowered into common ground, without even a simple cross to mark his grave.

The story of the discovery of his final resting place is intricately linked to the Italian Cloister Garden next to St Andrew's Cathedral where Francesco's name is listed among those who died in the *Arandora Star* tragedy.

The ship, carrying mainly Italian civilians who had inadvertently found themselves classed as 'enemy aliens' after war was declared, was torpedoed and sank 75 miles west of Donegal on 2 July 1940.

Of the 442 Italian men who died only 22 bodies washed ashore were ever identified, in Ireland and the western isles. The one body washed ashore on the Scottish mainland, was that of Francesco D'Inverno, whose remains were discovered by a nine year old boy playing on a beach near Girvan one day in August 1940.

In an extraordinary twist

Francesco's grave is blessed by Fr Ben



of fate, that boy, Sandy Ferguson, died in September last year aged 92, just hours after having been told the story and been shown a photo of the man whose body he had found 83 years previously.

The extraordinary story

began when Michael Donnelly, a member of the Italian Garden Improvement Group working on a project with Roberto Lucherini and Ralph Gonnella, launched a campaign to find photos and mini biographies of each of the men named in the Cathedral Cloister Gar-

den plaque.

He discovered that Francesco D'Inverno was buried at Girvan's Doune Cemetery. With the willing help of South Ayrshire's Provost, Iain Campbell, local volunteers Lorna and Richie Conaghan and council staff they were able to pinpoint exactly where Francesco had been laid to rest.

Funds were raised to commission a headstone to mark Francesco's final resting place. This was unveiled last month at a special service to remember Francesco and all of the victims of the *Arandora Star*. Present at the grave were 20 members of Francesco's family who made the journey from their home in Kent to attend along with 150 others.

South Ayrshire Provost, Iain Campbell, said: "When I received an email out of the blue last year I was immediately intrigued and wanted to help. Lorna and Ritchie Conaghan run a local project dedicated to carrying out detailed research work in this area, so I knew they would be the best people to contact to try to establish where Francesco was buried.

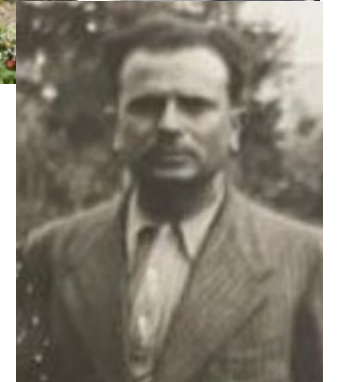
"I'm glad to see a fitting tribute now in place to forever mark Francesco's final resting place. It's been an honour to have played a role

Francesco's family finally have a grave to visit



in his story and to be able to pay my respects to him and the many others who perished following the torpedoing of the *Arandora Star*."

Ralph Gonnella, who lost his grandfather in the tragedy and chairs the Italian Garden Improvement Group, said: "Most importantly the discovery of Francesco's resting place brought closure to his family, who until last year were still of the belief that he was lost at sea. It was so special to have them with us at last to see his gravestone unveiled and his grave blessed."



More information about the *Arandora Star* and Francesco D'Inverno is available in 'Finding Francesco' blog at www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/article/60472/Finding-Francesco

Remembering Fr Des Broderick and Fr John Chalmers

GLASGOW'S oldest priest has died, just days before his 100th birthday.

Fr Des Broderick, a hugely popular pastor, had lived in retirement at Nazareth House for 34 years after a life of ministry which saw him serve in parishes across the Archdiocese.

Born in Glasgow in 1924, he was educated at St Conval's Primary (1929-1936); Holyrood Secondary (1936-1941) and St Mary's College Blairs (1941-1942) before being called up for war-time army service during the Second World War from 1942-1946.

After being released from army service he resumed his seminary training, this time at St Peter's College Cardross (1947-1952). He was ordained by Archbishop Campbell in June 1952 and thus began a lifetime of priestly service.



July-October 1952: Assistant Priest Immaculate Heart of Mary;
1952-1971: Assistant Priest St Teresa's, Possil-

park;
1971-1972: Assistant Priest St Andrew's Cathedral;
1972-1974: Secretary to

Archbishop Scanlan and to the Archdiocese;

1974-1976: Secretary to Archbishop Winning and to the Archdiocese;

1976-1983: Chaplain Notre Dame College, Bearsden;

1983-1989: Parish Priest St Stephen's Dalmuir;

1989-1990: Assistant Priest St Andrew's Cathedral;

October 1990: Retired to Nazareth House.

Retirement

Throughout his retirement Fr Des continued to help out at parishes across the Archdiocese and acted as spiritual director to countless individuals and prayer groups.

His simple and profound devotion to Our Lady, his infectious smile and his gentle manner won the hearts of all who came into contact with him.

Fr John Chalmers, who was 95 years old, died just days after his fellow nonagenarian Fr Des Broderick.

Fr Chalmers, a native of Glasgow's West End, was ordained back in 1952 by Archbishop Campbell after studying for the priesthood at St Sulpice in Paris and the Scots College in Rome.

He was awarded a Doctorate in Canon Law at the Gregorian University in 1954 and that year returned to Glasgow to begin a lifetime of service across the Archdiocese.

He was initially assigned to be a curate at St Mary's Pollokshaws, but after a few months was sent to the Gorbals, where, from 1954-1971 he was Assistant Priest at St John's Portugal Street, during which time he also served as a Notary in the Archdiocesan Tribunal.

His training in Canon

Law was put to good use for the next decade, as from 1970-1982 he was Vice Officialis of the National Tribunal while residing and serving as Assistant Priest at Our Lady and St Margaret's in Kinning Park.

Hospital

In 1980 the then-Archbishop Winning gave him his first parish, appointing him Parish Priest at St Charles' Kelvinside, a post he held until 1993. Next, he was made PP at St Simon's Partick, and Chaplain to Yorkhill Sick Children's Hospital and Queen Mother Maternity Hospital, posts he held for a decade until he retired in 2003.

He died peacefully in the care of the Sisters of Nazareth, fortified by the rites of the Holy Church.

Requiescant in pace.

Bishops urge opposition to assisted suicide

Call for more funding of palliative care as a better solution to terminal illness

In a pastoral letter addressed to all Scotland's Catholics, the bishops of Scotland have urged them to contact their MSPs to reject the recently published assisted suicide proposals.

The bishops describe the proposal put forward by Liam McArthur MSP, as "dangerous" and call on MSPs to focus their energies on improving palliative care which the bishops say is "un-

derfunded and limited".

The letter states, that a law which "allows us to kill our brothers and sisters, takes us down a dangerous spiral that always puts at risk the most vulnerable members of our society, including the elderly, and disabled, and those who struggle with mental health".

The pastoral letter cites evidence from other jurisdictions where assisted

suicide is legal, including Oregon, where consistently around half of people who choose assisted suicide do so because they feel they are a burden on their families or on their communities and healthcare system.

"When vulnerable people, including the elderly and disabled, express concerns about being a burden", say the bishops, "the appropriate response is not to sug-

gest that they have a duty to die; rather, it is to commit to meeting their needs and providing the care and compassion they need to help them live.

"When our society is already marked by so many inequalities, we do not need assisted suicide to put intolerable pressure on our most disadvantaged who do not have a voice in this debate.

"Implicit in assisted sui-

cide is the suggestion that an individual, in certain circumstances, can lose their value and worth. However, as stated in the Church's recent declaration on Human Dignity, *Dignitas Infinita*, 'even in its sorrowful state, human life carries a dignity that must always be upheld' and there are no circumstances under which human life could lose its dignity and 'be put to an end'.

"The Bishops' Conference of Scotland urges the Catholic community to contact MSPs, urging them to work collaboratively to improve palliative care, and to reject the dangerous proposal to legalise assisted suicide, which would devalue life and put immense pressure on the most vulnerable to end their lives prematurely.

"We are called to care, not to kill."

Previously unseen images of Padre Pio released

Picture courtesy of Saint Pio Foundation



NEW images of Padre Pio, never before seen by the public, have just been published by the Saint Pio Foundation.

The release entitled "Photographs of Saint Pio – Memories of a Saint," will mark the 25th anniversary of the beatification of Pio of Pietrelcina, known around the world as Padre Pio.

It also commemorates the 10th anniversary of the Saint Pio Foundation, a non-profit, charitable organisation that promotes knowledge of and devotion to St Pio of Pietrelcina.

The 10 previously unpublished photos were personally selected by founder Luciano Lamonarca in collaboration with

Padre Pio's personal photographer, Elia Stelluto.

Mr Lamonarca said: "We wished to mark these important milestones by making a gift to the millions of devotees and faithful of St Pio in the form of these authentic images of their beloved saint, whom they wish to bring in their homes, churches, and shops and entrust themselves and their lives to him."

Mr. Stelluto added: "In all these years, I have always made the photos of St Pio in my possession available to those who have asked me, in order to be able to increase the devotion of St Pio."

You can view the full set of new photos at www.therealsaintpio.org

This month there has been much discussion of helping people to die "with dignity". Flourish editor Ronnie Convery offers this personal reflection on the death of a loved one

THE Assisted Suicide Bill currently before the Scottish Parliament sounds gentle. Caring even. But the reality is very different.

What is envisaged is a law which will make vulnerable, anxious people facing a terminal illness ever more pressurised into ending their life 'so as not to be a burden'.

It brought to mind a lady I knew well. A lady called Ruby. Her story offers an insight to a better alternative to assisted suicide ...

Ruby was a "great wee woman", cheery, kind to a fault and with a quiet but rock-like faith.

Then Ruby was diagnosed with terminal cancer.

Her family was obviously devastated. But Ruby was serene. "I've had a wonderful life," she said. "I never dreamed I would live to see my grandchildren ..."

A few months after diagnosis, Ruby was taken on a visit to a hospice. She died peacefully there shortly afterwards. What follows is a letter of gratitude to the staff at St Vincent's Hospice in Howwood, written by her son, following her passing:

"From the moment she set foot inside the hospice, as a wondering, slightly wary visitor, she was welcomed. Staff of all types embraced her warmly, and she immediately felt as though she had been taken under your wing.



"I recall that first visit so well. Her sense of wonderment at the facilities, her quick relaxation upon realising that here was a medical facility unlike any she knew existed, where people cared for her deeply. She returned home with a great burden of fear lifted. 'It's great to know that a place like that exists. I would be happy to go there when my time comes,' she said.

"Alas her time came sooner than we realised, but in the meantime, she was charmed by the care of the nurse who visited her at home, taking time to chat with her, caring holistically, combining medical precision with human affection.

"When she needed to be admitted, there were the familiar, friendly faces to welcome her, and a room set aside which she constantly referred to as 'lovely'. 'What

a lovely place this is ... they're all so nice to you in here' became her mantra.

"That unique approach was evident – as she was visited by doctors, nurses, a religious sister and a priest all within that first afternoon..."

The son's letter continues: "I should like to tell all the nurses how much she valued their affectionate care, a care which my father and I found extended to us as we kept vigil in my mother's final hours.

"How extraordinary they were, sometimes spending a whole shift at her bedside, whispering in her ear, combing her hair lovingly, all the time monitoring her medication, combining scientific precision with compassion and love. They were fellow travellers with us on a hard road, supporters who propped us up, yet so, so

sensitive, never intruding.

"My mother's passing was serene. The sun shone in on that Sunday lunchtime as we gathered round her, just as we always had at that hour for more than a decade. My father took her hand, and I began the prayer, 'May the angels lead you into paradise ...' and that was exactly what happened.

"It was 1 o'clock on a Sunday afternoon – the very time at which she always saw us arriving at her house for our traditional Sunday lunch. The nurses, in a final act of incredible discretion, slipped to the other side of the door for those last few moments, ready to come back in when we called.

"I left the room and one of those wonderful women asked if we would like her to call the priest. I said yes, and requested that Canon Sean Cunney be contacted. His care for my mother had been truly extraordinary, visiting her sometimes twice a day, literally fortifying her with every sacrament in the Church's armoury. As the nurse lifted the phone to call him, the door opened, and in he walked. He was like an angel appearing at just the right moment."

The letter ends there.

I believe it illustrates very well what dying with real dignity is all about. It is about human affection, medical care and above all, love. It is not about suicide clinics, or the destruction of the doctor/patient relationship.

And lest you believe the letter I quoted is, as they say, "too sweet to be wholesome", I can assure you that it is not. On the contrary, it is true in every detail.

I know.

I wrote the letter.

Ruby was my mum.



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The post

We are seeking to recruit a Project Fundraiser to secure and maintain current and new income streams with the potential to support the work of the charity.

The project

The Louise Project is a Christian antipoverty project operating in Govanhill to enable families living with hardship to live flourishing lives and to enable communities to thrive.

Govanhill is the most ethnically diverse area of Scotland, and we welcome all people to receive support. The most recent migrant population to arrive are the European Roma from Romania and Slovakia and they are the dominant group supported by the project.

The project offers families access to five well researched programmes of support, to break the cycle of generational poverty, as follows:

- Community Drop-in: Focuses on building relationships, home visits, providing a 'space to be' and access to essentials & a project shop that is run by beneficiaries.
- Community Advocacy: Support to manage issues such as immigration status, housing, debt, utilities, welfare benefits.
- Building Better Futures: Supports personal growth to enhance wellbeing and the development of transferable skills, i.e., literacy & digital skills, budgeting, college entry level classes and supported employment.
- Building Community: There are over 60 languages spoken in Govanhill, racial tension can be palpable. Building social trust across ethnic groups reduces anxiety and discrimination.
- Hopeful Futures: develops a sense of self, life skills and a knowledge and understanding of systems and the causes and consequences of poverty.

Application notes

For an application pack please email recruitment@dcmillhill.org

Closing date for applications: Thursday 30th May 12pm

Interviews will be held on: Thursday 20th June.

Anticipated start date: August 2024

The post holder will work 3 days/week and there is the option for hybrid working, although we expect the first 6 weeks to be solely office based.

If you wish to visit the project, please contact ellie@spaceglasgow.org.uk

Shock and sorrow as bishop-elect of Dunkeld dies at 59

It was with deep shock and sorrow that Archbishop Nolan learned last month of the death of one of his former priests, Fr Martin Chambers of Galloway Diocese, who was due to be ordained as Bishop of Dunkeld on 27th April.

Fr Chambers died in his sleep, aged just 59, just 17 days before he was due to be ordained bishop.

Fr Chambers was educated in the Royal Scots College in Spain, and had experience in Ecuador as a missionary priest. Various appointments as pastor, school chaplain and diocesan responsibilities in Galloway diocese then followed before his nomination as Bishop of Dunkeld.

Just a week before his death Fr Martin had trav-

BY **RONNIE CONVERY**

elled to Lourdes ahead of his ordination as a bishop to pray for his new diocese.

Archbishop Nolan said he was shocked and saddened at the news. He added: "Martin's death is a huge loss not only to his own diocese, and the diocese of Dunkeld where he had been appointed bishop, but for the whole Catholic Church in Scotland."

"When I was Bishop of Galloway I knew him well – a great priest, always welcoming, friendly, with a good sense of humour who worked so hard for his people."

"My thoughts and prayers are with his family and those whose lives he touched during these years of priesthood."



Bishop-elect Martin in Lourdes just before he died

Countdown to the Holy Year

As the Church round the world gears up for the Jubilee Year of 2025, Flourish will bring you updates and news of preparations ahead of what is expected to be the largest religious event in the history of the Catholic Church.

Organisers expect 32 million pilgrims to flock to Rome during the 2025 Holy Year, which will run from Christmas Eve this year, when the Pope will open the Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica, until the end of 2025 when the door will be sealed up once more for another 25 years.

Those visiting the Eternal City will, for the first time, be able to book their passage through the Holy Door using an phone app, which can be downloaded from the website www.iubilaeum2025.va/en.html

Jubilee Bull to be Published

On Thursday 9 May, at 5.30 pm, on the solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord, Pope Francis will officially proclaim the Jubilee of 2025 with the public reading and delivery of the Bull of Indiction in St Peter's Basilica.

After the reading of the Bull, the Holy Father will preside over Vespers of the solemnity inside the Basilica.



BY **RONNIE CONVERY**

If you plan to be in Rome this month it is possible to participate in the ceremony and the prayer liturgy by requesting free tickets on the Jubilee website: <https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/it/richiesta-biglietti-bolla-papale.html> Tickets can be collected at the Info Point, in Via della Conciliazione 7, Rome, from 3 to 9 May 2024, from 10am to 5pm.

The Bull is an official document with the seal of the Pope, which, in addition to indicating the opening and closing dates of the Holy Year, and setting out how it will be celebrated, makes known the themes of the Jubilee and the terms in which it is announced by the Pontiff.

For this ordinary Jubilee Year, as we know, the theme



chosen is "Pilgrims of Hope".

Holy Year will be marked at EXPO in Japan

Archbishop Rino Fisichella (above right) – the prelate in charge of Holy Year preparations – has announced that the Holy See will bring Caravaggio's painting "The Deposition" to Osaka for the Expo of 2025.

"The Holy See will have a dedicated section within the Italian pavilion, and we are particularly grateful to Italy for this collaboration," said Archbishop Fisichella. "Caravaggio painted his 'Deposition' [Jesus being taken down from the cross] at the beginning of 1600, and the work is housed in the Vatican Museums. It will be a great joy for us to bring it to Osaka for the six months of Expo."

The motto of the Italian

pavilion at the Exhibition will be 'Art generates life'.

"The Holy See wanted to give continuity to this motto, and so our sector will have as its motto *La Bellezza porta Speranza* – 'Beauty brings hope'. We have played here on the meanings of the word *porta* [In Italian the noun 'porta' means 'door' and the verb 'porta' means 'brings'].

Learn the Jubilee Hymn in your parish

On the YouTube channels of the Dicastery for Evangelization (Evangelizatio) and that of the Jubilee (iubilaeum25) new videos are available with the official texts of the hymn in English and French.

You can find the English language version here: <https://youtu.be/7uXO8lUcEZI?si=XOxfue6rDUpmYHcj>



Liberia Appeal

‘We want to build a church to honour God. We have the bricks but we need help.’

Oliver – Youth Leader at Divine Mercy Parish, Fishtown, Liberia

In 2003, just five people would meet for Holy Mass in a parishioner’s front room. By 2024, the parish had swelled to 210 people and they badly need a proper church.

Parishioners have made the bricks by hand but need £60,000 to build a church to serve the whole community.

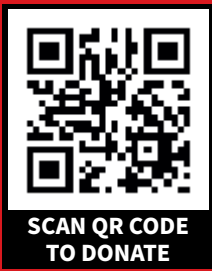
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Canon Tommy bows out with a smile

CANON Tommy Hendry, Parish Priest of St Teresa's, Possilpark, has retired 58 years after his ordination and after an extraordinary 33 years in the same parish.

But that simple sentence cannot adequately convey the love and devotion that his parishioners showed for their priest who was honoured with a Mass of Thanksgiving for his ministry on a day of shared memories with laughter and tears in equal measure.

Anderston-born Father Tommy – always Tommy never Thomas – who celebrated his 84th birthday last month has been in poor health for some time and has now moved into St Joseph's Nursing Home Robroyston in the care of the Little Sisters of the Poor.

Although his voice was weak, and his mobility limited there was no mistaking the power of his message as he delivered a short homily to a packed church of parishioners, family and friends and those of other denominations.

Father Tommy was ordained on June 25 1966 and by a pleasing coincidence his Thanksgiving Mass took place on Vocations Sunday.

In a typically forthright sermon he said: "It's right that we pray for more priests and nuns, but we can't all be priests or nuns – that would be just plain daft!"



BY **BRIAN SWANSON**

PICTURES BY **PAUL MCSHERRY**

"The word vocation comes from Latin and it means to call. So I think that means we should share the great gifts of faith that God has given to us – we all have a talent to share and when we share we are everything, because no one is a failure in God's eyes."

And after the homily came the handclap.

He had chosen the hymns himself and when the final verse faded bringing this most joyous of Masses to a close the congregation rose to their feet, delivering a prolonged standing ovation than many stage performers might envy.

One of the many gifts presented to him was a rugby shirt – a strange choice for those who did not know him.

Who knew that Fr Tommy was once a 16-stone rugby player, with a shock of red curly hair, who turned out regularly for the St Aloysius College First XV?

Tom Ralph, who played in same team when they were schoolboys, said: "He was a pretty useful player and very dedicated. Hard to believe seeing him today. These were great times."

Father Tommy's younger brother, Gerry, said: "As long as I can remember Tommy wanted to be a priest. Even when we were young and growing up together, he told me that that was all he wanted to do but of course we thought he might grow out of it – no chance!"

"In fact, he was so positive that I nearly followed his footsteps but I decided it wasn't for me, but all my life I have been very proud of my big brother."

His best friend at school

Joe O'Hagan said: "He wasn't a 'holy holy' type when we were young, but he was a guy of great faith all his life and still is of course – being a priest was all he ever wanted to do."

Many spoke of his sense of humour including Rev David Wostenholm of Possilpark Episcopal Church who warmly praised his friend for the ecumenical work they carried out together over the years.

Father Tommy held a number of roles prior to taking up his ministry at St Teresa's. These included Assistant Priest St Gregory's, 1973–1980, Chaplain Notre Dame High School and Chaplain Sisters of Notre Dame Downhill, 1973–1985, Assistant Chaplain Glasgow University, 1980–1985, Assistant Priest Sacred Heart Cumbernauld, 1985–1990, Parish Priest St Teresa's Possilpark since 1990.



St Nicholas Care Fund

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

We awarded £15 258 to 7 projects in March. Our next deadline for applications is Monday 6 May 2024.

More info is available at www.rcag.org.uk

Or contact us at:

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Relics of Church's only beatified family visit Glasgow's east end

GLASGOW parish marked its weekend of 40 hours celebrations with the visit of relics from Poland of the only family ever beatified together.

The Ulma family perished together during World War II at the hands of the Nazis – parents, children and even an unborn baby in the womb.

Pope Francis beatified them in what is thought to be the only case in history where a whole family has been raised to the glory of the altars together.

Their arrival in St Anne's in Glasgow's East End was a source of great joy to parishioners and to the wider Polish community now living in Scotland.

Picture by Paul McSherry



BY **RONNIE CONVERY AND BRIAN SWANSON**

ing in Scotland.

Father Leszek Rygielwicz, above, Parish Priest at St

Anne's, described it as a great honour and a blessing for the relics to come to his parish as part of a world tour of Polish churches during the 80th anniversary year of the Ulma family's death at

the hands of the Nazis.

Father Leszek said: "Not just Polish people but Scottish people came in good numbers as well to venerate the relics while they were in our care."

"We also visited people in their homes with the relics who could not come to church and they were very happy with that."

"In Poland the story is very well known so now Scottish people know the story of our martyrs as well."

"Of course it is important to venerate the relics but it is also the message of the family's faith in the most terrible periods in Polish history that we must always remember and be encouraged by."

Story of the Ulma family

THE Ulma family, hailing from the small village of Markowa in southeastern Poland, is believed to be the first whole family to be beatified.

During World War II, Józef Ulma, a Catholic farmer, and his wife, Wiktoria, risked everything to shelter Jews fleeing Nazi persecution.

Their courageous act of compassion was discovered by the Gestapo in March 1944.

The entire Ulma family – mother, father and seven children, along with the Jewish refugees, were executed.

In September 2021, the whole Ulma family reached another milestone when Pope Francis approved their beatification. This significant step acknowledged their martyr-



dom and sanctity, elevating them to the status of Blessed.

The beatification ceremony, held in Markowa, drew crowds of faithful and dignitaries, honoring the Ulma family's extraordinary sacrifice.

Their feast day is celebrated every year on 7 July (the day of the anniversary of Józef and Wiktoria's wedding).

Vatican puts out the call for Dalí's masterpiece

City's best known artwork is chosen to prepare for the Holy Year in Rome. But it will return in the summer

GLASGOW'S famous Salvador Dalí painting 'Christ of St John of the Cross' is set to be loaned to the Vatican.

The artwork, housed at Kelvingrove Art Gallery, will take top spot this month in the cultural programme organised by the Holy See in preparation for next year's Holy Year.

And in a sweet twist of fate, it will be displayed at the Church of San Marcello al Corso – the same church at which the late Archbishop Conti was ordained a priest.

The request approved by the City Council states

that "in addition to raising the profile of the city of Glasgow to new audiences, there are very good curatorial reasons to endorse and support this request.

"The painting will be displayed alongside the original drawing by St John of the Cross, and Dalí's *The Assumpta* (1952).

"Although both paintings by Dalí have been seen together before, this presents an important opportunity to see both works, designed as part of a close series, together in an ecclesiastical context and, uniquely, with the original drawing by St John."

BY **RONNIE CONVERY**

Valued at more than £60m, Dalí's painting was purchased by Glasgow Corporation in 1952 for just £8,200.

It is scheduled to be shown between May 13 and June 23 this year as part of a series of arts events leading up to the Jubilee year.

The artwork has recently been on loan to the Dalí Theatre and Museum in his hometown of Figueres in Spain in recent months. The artist designed the museum, and is buried there.

The painting has been

fitted with laminated low reflective glass to provide extra protection while on display on its travels.

Glasgow Life said the painting will return from Spain before being loaned out to the Vatican. It will return to Kelvingrove and go back on display in July this year.

A spokesperson for Glasgow Life said: "Glasgow's museums and galleries are home to collections of international significance and vibrancy. Loans of objects are important as they help to highlight our global reputation as a culturally rich city."

Salvador Dalí (1904–1989)



The best £8,200 Glasgow's museums ever spent

CHRIST of Saint John of the Cross, the world famous painting by Spanish surrealist Salvador Dalí has long been considered one of the greatest pieces of artwork inside Kelvingrove Art Gallery.

The dazzling painting depicts Jesus looking down on a shoreline and fisherman –

without his crown of thorns, nails and blood. The story goes that Dalí's decision to show him without the usual marks of crucifixion was made following a dream.

The work was purchased by Glasgow for £8,200 in 1952 – less than Dalí's original asking price of £12,000. The painting is now esti-

mated to be worth around £60million – and the council has in the past turned down an offer of £80m from the Spanish Government for it.

Misconception

It is, in fact, a common misconception that the painting had been purchased by the public purse.

The money was from a fund set up from the profits of the Kelvingrove International Exhibition of 1901, which was used to buy works of art for Glasgow's museums.

So the museum pressed ahead – with millions of people flocking to see the artwork through the decades.

A painting that has always divided opinion... even among Glasgow's archbishops!

OVER the decades the Archbishops of Glasgow have taken contrasting views of Dalí's masterpiece.

The Archbishop at the time of the picture's arrival in the city, Archbishop Campbell, is recorded as having publicly criticised the painting, labeling it as blasphemous and unsuitable for display in a place of worship.

Archbishop Campbell's condemnation stemmed from his belief that Dalí's depiction of the crucifixion deviated too far from traditional representations of

the sacred scene.

He found the surrealistic elements of the painting, particularly the unconventional perspective and the absence of explicit suffering in Christ's figure, to be irreverent and disrespectful to the religious subject matter.

Debate

The Archbishop's denunciation sparked a heated debate at the time... some agreed with his assessment, viewing Dalí's interpretation as a departure from the solemnity and reverence traditionally as-



Archbishop Conti

sociated with religious art, while others defended the painting as a bold and innovative reimagining of a



Archbishop Campbell

half a century later, in 2006, the BBC broadcast an hour-long documentary on

the painting in which they asked the then-Archbishop of Glasgow, Mario Conti, to participate.

It was an inspired choice, because as a student in Rome in the 1950s he had seen the painting when it toured Europe with a stop in the eternal city.

At the time it was unknown, but the future archbishop recalled that it struck him immediately.

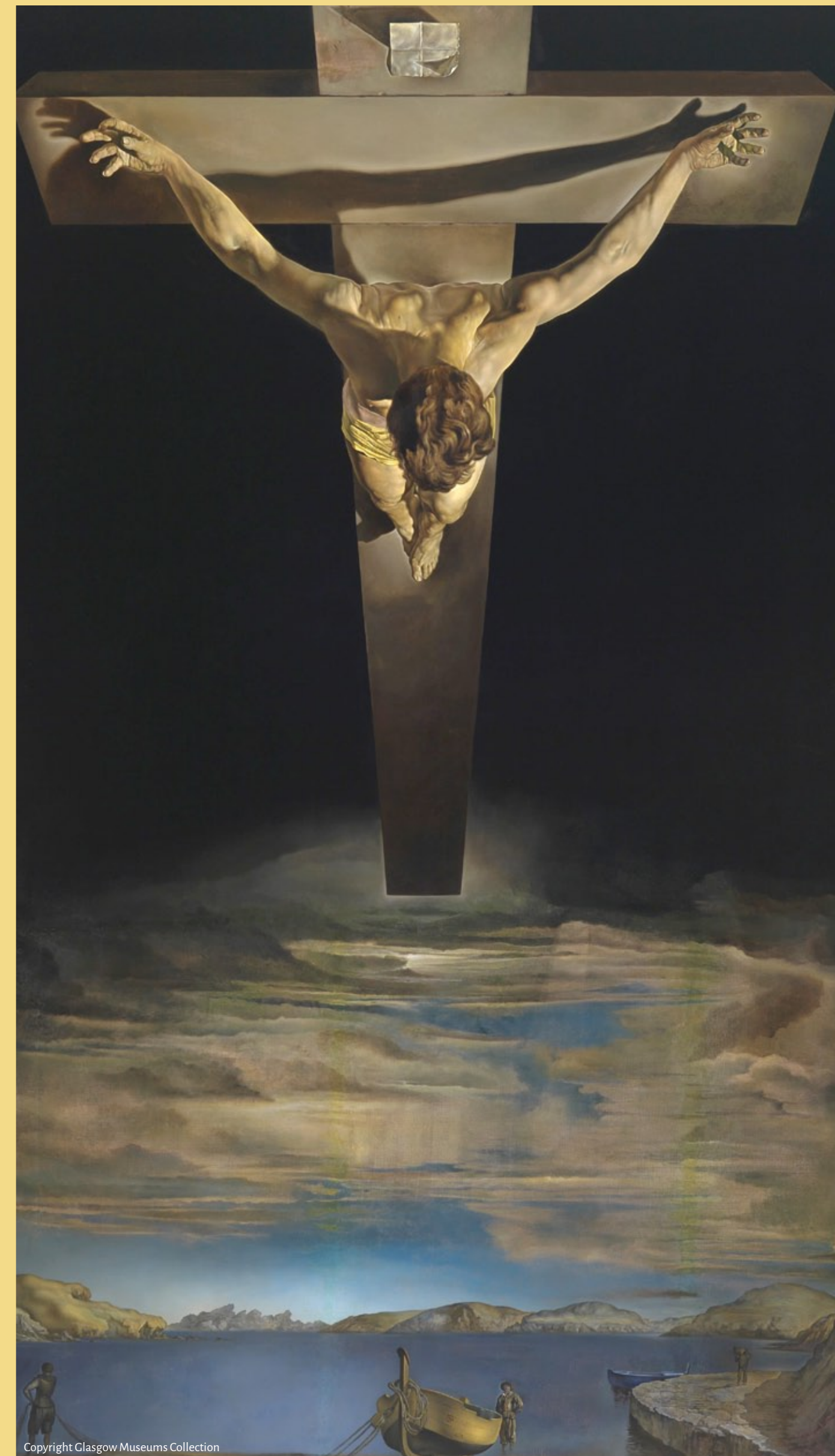
In the programme – *Private Life of an Easter Masterpiece* – he was asked how he felt about the artist's decision not to depict a suffering Christ, to omit the

crown of thorns, to display Christ on the cross without fixings, without nails, without injury to his skin.

Archbishop Mario replied with a typically theological insight.

He said: "I am quite comfortable with the way the artist depicts Christ because it shows something of the intention of Christ."

"He is there because he was prepared to be there, because he was prepared to accept his Father's will. So the painting invites us to contemplate, at an ever deeper level, the reality and the mystery of the Cross."



Copyright Glasgow Museums Collection

Five fascinating facts behind the artwork

- The painting is based on a sketch by the Spanish mystic, St John of the Cross which shows the crucifixion 'from above'.
- Dalí said it was in a dream, that the importance of depicting Christ in the extreme angle in the painting was revealed to him.
- Dalí had Hollywood stuntman Russell Saunders suspended from an overhead gantry, so he could see how the human body would appear from the desired angle and envisage the pull of gravity.
- The lake at the bottom of the painting is the bay of Port Lligat, Dalí's residence at the time ... it is thought to represent the Sea of Galilee.
- In 1961 a visitor attacked the painting with a stone and tore the canvas with his hands. It was restored over several months by conservators and returned to public display.

Rome prepares for Holy Year with festival of culture



ASPECTACULAR cultural programme has been announced in preparation for the Holy Year 2025 which is due to open on Christmas Eve this year.

And the good news is that Scots pilgrims to Rome this year will be able to participate in all the events free of charge.

The musical programme is entitled "Harmonies of Hope" and on November 3, 2024, the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia will perform Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony, directed by Maestro Jader Bignamini, currently Musical Director at the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

Then just before the opening of the Holy Door, at 6pm on 22 December 2024, at the Church of Sant'Ignazio, the Sistine Choir will perform various polyphonic compositions by Palestrina, Perosi and Bartolucci.

The visual art program has the title "The Heavens Opened" and will include an exhibition of works by Salvador Dalí, (including the Glasgow masterpiece) which will be held over

the summer. Later in the year there will be an exhibition dedicated to the art of Marc Chagall.

Archbishop Rino Fisichella, the Pro-Prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelisation, who is heading up preparations for the Holy Year, said: "The motto 'Pilgrims of hope' intentionally possesses universal characteristics. Everyone hopes, without exception. The experience of hope is rooted in the heart of every person as an expectation of a good and a desire for it to come true."

He added: "Hope is the object of study by various sciences: from literature to psychiatry; from sociology to philosophy and theology... the need to give voice to hope unites knowledge and makes humanity more involved in a process of progress and well-being".

All events are free and open to the public until all places are taken. No tickets will be needed to participate.

More information at <https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en.html>

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Glasgow conference will launch new theology forum

A MAJOR conference on the future of the Catholic Church in Scotland is being hosted by the independent journal Open House next month.

Entitled 'Scotland's Synod Journey - A conversation about becoming a synodal church' it will bring together a range of speakers who will be welcomed by Archbishop Nolan to the Eyre Hall in the Archdiocese of Glasgow offices.

The conference will mark the launch of a theology forum aimed at Catholics in Scotland who have post-graduate theology degrees, and those with an interest in theology, in service of the Church.

The event is scheduled for Saturday 8 June 2024, 10am-4.30pm. Doors open and registration from 9.30am.

Among the speakers are:

- Professor Werner G. Jeanrond, a native of Saarbrücken in Germany, who has taught theology at the Universities of Dublin (Trinity College), Lund, Glasgow, Oxford, and Oslo. He holds a PhD in systematic theology from the University of Chicago and an honorary DD from Regis College in the University of Toronto.
- Sr Gemma Simmonds, a Sister of the Congregation of Jesus and a senior research fellow at the Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology, Cambridge where she teaches pastoral theology and Christian spirituality. Sr Gemma has served as a missionary in Brazil, a chaplain in

Prof Werner G Jeanrond



Dr Mary Cullen

the Universities of Cambridge and London and a volunteer chaplain in Holloway Prison.

- Fr Tom Magill, a priest of the Diocese of Motherwell.



Fr Tom Magill



Sr Gemma Simmonds

After graduate studies at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, he was Vice-Rector and acting Rector of the Pontifical Scots College, associate

professor of theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and lecturer in Sacred Scripture at the Pontifical Beda College.

- Dr Mary Cullen, editor of Open House. She helped establish the Catholic Justice & Peace Commission in Scotland in the 1980s and has worked in education, local government, and as Head of Communications and Education at SCIAF. She has a PhD in theology and religious studies from the University of Glasgow.

All attending will be welcome to discuss the way forward for the Church in light of Pope Francis' teaching on synodal decision making and governance.

You can book a place online at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/open-house-conference-2024-scotlands-synodal-journey-tickets-875837121407>

Tickets cost £20, non waged £10.

Golden jubilee for St Paul's Primary

Picture by Paul McSherry



Top marks for St Cuthbert's

ST Cuthbert's Primary, in Possilpark, has joined the growing list of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese which have been highly praised by Education Scotland.

Central to the school's recent report was its strong sense of community based on Gospel values.

It was these values, the report noted, that contributed to the "warm positive and nurturing relationship between children and staff across the school".

The inspection report went on: "Collectively all staff work well to drive forward improvements in children's attainment."



Head teacher Susan Quinn said: "It is wonderful to see the hard work and the commitment of staff

and pupils in their school recognised in this report.

"It's really gratifying that the inspection team recognised that our children are welcoming, friendly, polite, and proud of their school."

Brilliant

Councillor Christina Cannon, Glasgow City Council's education convenor added her congratulations saying: "I am particularly pleased that the report outlined the brilliant work the school is doing in respect of children's rights and that children are actively encouraged to be part of that the decisions taken by teachers and staff."

ARCHBISHOP Nolan continued his series of visits to primary schools in the Archdiocese to help them celebrate significant anniversaries reflecting the boom years of the sixties and seventies when a number of new Catholic schools were built to cope with the expansion of council estates and a growing Catholic population.

On this occasion it was the turn of Saint Paul's Primary School, Whiteinch which

BY BRIAN SWANSON is marking 50 years in the present building in Primrose Street.

Delivering his homily at the Thanksgiving Mass at St Paul's Church where he addressed a congregation of families, friends, teaching staff past and present, former and current pupils, and local politicians, the archbishop said he was very impressed by what he saw on a brief tour of the school.

He added: "I would say

this to all you boys and girls here today that it's not the building that's most important but the people in it - the teachers who work so hard and help you every day in so many different ways, and those who encourage you at home,

"And every day you learn more about Jesus who is your friend who will always be there for you because he loves you and cares for you - that is the most important lesson you will ever learn."

Geraldine walks from home to Rome and meets the Pope

A PARISHIONER from St Catherine Labouré parish in Balornock, who had a surprise meeting with Pope Francis after she walked solo from her front door to the Vatican for charity, now wants to share her experiences with parishes throughout the Archdiocese to boost her fund-raising efforts.

Geraldine McFaul, 54, spent six months and covered 2000 miles last year raising £15,000 for Mary's Meals and Dementia UK in memory of her parents Pat and Agnes.

She said: "Since I returned people have been constantly asking me is: 'where are you walking to next?'"

"I don't think I can top my from 'Home to Rome' trek but never say never I suppose! In the meantime, I want to honour and thank all the kind strangers who helped me throughout my journey by sharing my stories and of course continuing to raise funds for the charities."

The trek, which she completed in November, involved a series of challenges – not least since she pulled a trailer with her all the way, containing all of her camping equipment, clothes and food while averaging 12 miles a day.

Throughout her journey in the UK, France, Switzerland



Picture: Vatican Media

BY **BRIAN SWANSON** and Italy, Geraldine was, in her own words, 'kidnapped with kindness' by strangers almost every day.

She was fed, given a garden camping spot or a spare room to spend the night and encouraged with good wishes and donations for the charities.

Then, when she got to Rome, a surprise was waiting for her.

She said: "I knew I had two tickets for the General Audience and was delighted that my 94-year-old godfather, Desmond McGowan, was going to be there with me."

"It was only when I went to collect the tickets the day

before the Audience, that I discovered that I was to be presented to Pope Francis.

"Massive thanks for this surprise go to my Parish Priest Canon Anthony Gallagher and Archbishop William Nolan."

"It was such a beautiful and fantastic experience just to be near the Pope in front of the audience crowds in St Peter's Square."

"At the end, Pope Francis was brought around on his wheelchair to each person, row by row."

"He greeted me with a big beaming smile and held out his hand."

"I gave him a box with two books written by the founder of Mary's Meals, Magnus

MacFarlane-Barrow, along with a letter from Magnus to the Pope, explaining my adventure and the work of the charity."

"It was over in a flash, but the memory and privilege of that day will live with me forever."

■ **If you would like Geraldine to come and give a talk at your parish/group email her on: Home2rome2023@gmail.com**

What's on in the month of May

THE GLASGOW CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL invites you for a weekend of Renewal. An opportunity for deepening relationship with Our Lord through a prayerful preparation for the feast of Pentecost. Venue: 3/1 Victoria Chambers, 142 West Nile Street, Glasgow G1 2RQ. Guest Speakers: Gary Stephens and Daniella Stephens. Friday 10th May: 7 pm to 9 pm. Saturday 11th May: 10:30 am – 4:00 pm. Tea and Coffee provided. Bring a packed lunch on Saturday. For more information phone: Minin 07448786569 Email: glasgow.service.team@gmail.com



THE MEN OF ST JOSEPH: The Men of St Joseph wish to invite all men over the age of 18 to join them for monthly fellowship meetings, including the rosary, Lectio Divina and Adoration. Meetings are held on the 1st Thursday of each month in St Anthony's Parish House, 62 Langlands Road, Govan, G51 2BD. Contact: themosj.scotland@gmail.com



THE SCOTTISH CATHOLIC EDUCATION SERVICE, Justice & Peace Scotland, and SCIAF, present the Laudato Si' Learning Festival – Growing Laudato Si' in Scotland. Guest speakers are Dr Ben Wilson, Director of Public Engagement at SCIAF and Laura Young 'Less Waste Laura' Zero Waste Advocate and Environmental Scientist. The event will take place on Friday 10th May 2024 at Sinclair Academy, Winchburgh 9am-3pm. Cost per person £20. Lunch included. More details at www.sces.org.uk

Devotion to Our Lady flourishes as Fatima devotions resume for summer

THE month of May marks the start of outdoor Marian processions in the Glasgow area in honour of Our Lady of Fatima.

The two principal places where the devotion is celebrated are at Carfin, near Motherwell and Howwood near Johnstone. The devotions will begin again on 12/13th May 2024 and continue each month until 12/13th October.

The Vigil at Howwood takes place on the 12th of each month at 7.30pm and includes a procession with the statue, recitation of the rosary and the celebration of Mass followed by adoration and Benediction.

The commemoration at Carfin follows the same structure and begins at 7pm.

The members of the World Association of Fatima Scotland are sponsoring a series of other events to mark the month of Our Lady.



On 12th May at St Mary's, Whifflet, Coatbridge there will be the showing of the Fatima Film at 6pm followed by a talk and discussion at 7pm.

On 19th May 2024 at St Joseph's, Clarkston a Fatima Day will see Mass at 10 am followed a Rosary Proces-

sion, led by the Childrens' Rosary Group, Blessing of the Roses, a talk and then discussion in the parish hall over tea and hospitality.

The annual national day of devotion to Our Lady of Fatima will take place at Carfin Grotto, on Tuesday 21st May. Organisers are hoping to have children from two/three schools take part. The day will begin at 10am with a short film and talk on 'Our Lady of Fatima' Mass will be celebrated at 11.15am by Spiritual Director, Fr Joe McAuley.

The Blessing of the Roses will follow thereafter.

At all these events the Fatima Team will be on hand to sell their 'wee blue book', scapulars and to enrol persons for the Fatima Pledge. Once a person is enrolled the pledges are sent to the shrine at Fatima where they are placed at the statue of the Madonna at Our Blessed Lady's feet.

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Sisters' door is open to all

INSPIRED by the charism of St Vincent de Paul and his love of Christ present in all people, there is a project, initiated by the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul, which reaches out to all who pass by its front door, inviting them to pop in for a cup of tea and a chat in the heart of the east end opposite St Michael's Church – we're hard to miss!

The idea of the Listening Heart was born partly as a result of the Covid pandemic which resulted in great instances of loneliness and grief in the lives of so many people.

The timing was providential as it also met the criterion of the Pope's heartfelt desire for the Church to be one of outreach and accompaniment.

As volunteers, and for me it is a privilege and a pleasure, we received a thorough course of training from the Sisters and DC Services, focusing on their charism of serving our brothers and sisters in a holistic way.

Coupled with times of prayer and reflection, we learned about 'Vincentian

A year on since we reported on the opening of the Listening Heart Project in the Gallowgate by the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul, volunteer Maria McMahon gives an update on its amazing work in this special article for Flourish



Values', underwent safeguarding training, created our own logo and mission statement and opened our doors to offer a welcome space to all.

From tentative beginnings, our numbers have grown over the year. Our welcome sign over the shop door and windows is written in a variety of languages, as we are in the heart of a community comprised of people

of different races, languages and religions. All are welcome.

We see each person who crosses our threshold as a blessing, a guest sent to us by God. Our task, as volunteers, is chiefly to be good listeners, to ensure that anyone who comes into the Centre leaves feeling uplifted and happier.

The volunteers working at the Centre vary in age and

background, but with one thing in common – a desire to meet the needs of each person who comes through the door. The words attributed to St Francis of Assisi come to mind, "It is in giving that we receive".

As well as being there to listen, we also signpost our visitors to specific organisations and agencies who are often able to offer practical help.

We also have very healthy links with associated parishes and other Christian churches in the vicinity. On our agenda is establishing firmer links with our local schools. The project is a sterling model of community and ecumenical outreach.

The Centre is going from strength to strength, and we look forward to the challenges which may lie ahead.

If you feel you may have something to offer as a volunteer at the Listening Heart, we would be delighted for you join us.

The qualities required are simple – love, respect, kindness, time, a listening ear and, of course, a listening heart.

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St Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral

Attend morning mass at this landmark, twin spired church before a guided tour, viewing its beautiful stained glass and mosaics followed by a visit to the Cathedral's Museum. Afternoon free in Armagh City.

St Patrick's Centre, Medieval Cathedral of Down & St Patrick's Grave

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Remembering the massacres of Rwanda

THIRTY years ago this month Rwanda was in the midst of the darkest chapter in its history.

Almost one million people were slaughtered as neighbour turned on neighbour as tensions between the dominant ethnic groups in the country burst out into bloody violence across the country.

The genocide lasted just 100 days but changed Rwanda forever.

Just six weeks after the killing spree, two SCIAF staff travelled to Rwanda and the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to oversee the rescue and care of the traumatised survivors.

Duncan MacLaren, SCIAF's Director at the time, was joined by Emergencies Officer Joan McErlean on the mission to assess relief needs in the hastily-built refugee camps.

Duncan said: "What was humbling was that so many people from the Catholic parishes of Goma approached Caritas agencies to volunteer their help. They were assigned the task of checking all the tents be-

tween the feeding stations so that we did not miss out on people with mobility issues such as the elderly, disabled people and pregnant women who couldn't make it to those areas.

"We could see there were people living on the edge of life, giving what they had to help others in desperate need.

"We discovered that during the genocide, not only had neighbours turned on each other but those in mixed ethnic marriages had been murdered too in machete attacks and other violent assaults. We heard that there had been some heroic examples of people hiding and protecting neighbours, but such incidents were rare.

"What we found extraordinary was that this had happened in Rwanda – probably the most Catholic country in Africa. What went so wrong?"

Joan, who had extensive experience of working in Africa, said: "We felt a palpable sense of danger, especially in one of the border camps which would seem to be a place of sanctuary.

"The refugee settlement



Duncan and Joan recalling their time in Rwanda

at Goma was a chaos of frightened people, some who had run for safety with their children and who had lost relatives in the massacre. The Rwanda militia were never far away – in fact they had also fled Rwanda, (fearing retribution once the United Nations peacekeeping troops arrived) – but once in DRC they moved around the camps with impunity."

The pair remember the trickiest moment of the whole trip, when their

truck lost a wheel as they travelled through dangerous terrain.

Duncan explains: "We knew that if we stayed there on the road our lives were at serious risk and we needed to travel on to a border town for safety. Around us was "a lost paradise" – one of the most beautiful landscapes in the world, like the Perthshire hills, but the reality was that we needed to get out of there.

"Then suddenly out of nowhere came a Cana-

dian army truck with UN soldiers and it halted next to ours. Fixing the wheel posed no problem to them and we were back on our way and they surely saved our lives."

Joan remembers the group picking their favourite Saint to pray to 'rescue' them from the situation.

She said: "I picked St Christopher and I remember Duncan chose St Dominic. He worked wonders for me in Nigeria, driving an old VW Beetle on cha-

otic roads! Our prayers obviously worked."

In later years, Duncan went on to become Secretary General of Caritas Internationalis in the Vatican and answered the question about how such a tragedy could happen in a Catholic country. He organised a working group on peace-building and reconciliation which resulted in these two elements being part of the integral human development approach which SCIAF and many other Caritas members follow throughout the world. SCIAF's work in Rwanda continues to this day.

Lorraine Currie, SCIAF chief executive said: "SCIAF was there for Rwanda in 1994 and continues to work there now. It's testament to Joan and Duncan's dedication that they made that trip so soon after the devastation of the genocide.

"While Rwanda has made great progress in these 30 years, the violence has left its mark and much of our current work focusses on supporting girls and women who have suffered sexual and gender-based violence."

"THROUGH LISTENING AND COUNSELLING, MY WOUNDS HAVE BEEN HEALED."

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Getting older: a choice between going crazy or growing deeper in holiness

IN a poem *Serenade*, Brazilian poet Adelia Prado speaks of a painful ache we feel inside us as we forever wait for something or someone to come and make us whole.

What are we waiting for? Love? A soulmate? God? No matter, the frustration eventually pushes us towards a choice, go crazy or turn holy:

*I am beginning to despair
And can see only two choices:
Either go crazy or turn holy.*

And when that someone or something finally does come:

*How will I open the window,
unless I'm crazy?*

*How will I close it, unless I'm
holy?*

Either go crazy or turn holy. The older we get the more we realise how true that is, how eventually that's the choice forced on all of us, both by the way we are built and the limitations inherent in life itself.

Why? Is there something wrong with life and with us? Why can't we find a peaceful space somewhere between crazy and holy?

Well, the biblical preacher in the Book of Ecclesiastes offers a reason.

After penning that beautiful, oft-quoted text about how there is a time for everything – a time to be born

and to a time to die; a time to plant and a time to harvest; a time to break down and a time to heal; a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance; a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to keep silent and a time to speak; a time for love and a time for hate; and a time for war and a time for peace – he offers us this.

God has laid out a beautiful rhythm for life and has made everything beautiful in its own time, but God has put timelessness into the human heart so that we are out of sync with the seasons from beginning to end.

God has established a beautiful rhythm to nature; but we, unlike the physical elements and the plants and the animals who don't have timelessness in their souls, never quite fit into that rhythm. We are overcharged for life on this planet.

You find expressions of this in literature everywhere in both religious and secular circles. For example, the renowned German theologian Karl Rahner used to affirm that in the torment of the insufficiency of everything attainable we learn that here in this life there is no finished symphony.

In that, he echoes Saint Augustine's famous line that

Scribblings of the spirit

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



is as true and apropos today as it was 1700 years ago when he wrote it: 'You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you'.

That single line expresses both a non-negotiable understanding of the human person and a non-negotiable path he or she must walk. We don't have a final home here and that's why at the end of the day there is no option other than going crazy or turning holy.

It's no surprise that Ruth Burrows, the renowned spiritual writer, begins her autobiography with these words: 'I was born into this world with a tortured sen-

sitivity and my path has not been an easy one'.

While this motif is everywhere present in religious literature, it is also present in the thought of many secular poets, novelists, and philosophers.

For instance, after he won the Nobel Prize for Literature, Albert Camus, a professed atheist, was asked by a journalist if he believed in God. He answered: No, I don't believe in God, but that doesn't mean I am not obsessed with the question of God.

Why that obsession? Because in his thought he could not make sense of the world, nor find a fully sensible place

in it for humans, unless there was a God. Without a God, human existence cannot make peace with itself.

He likened the condition of someone in this world to that of a prisoner in certain medieval prisons, where they would put a prisoner in a cell that was so small that he or she could never stand fully upright or ever fully stretch out. The perpetual feeling of being cramped, it was believed, would eventually break the prisoner's spirit.

For Camus, that's our situation in life. We can never really stand up fully or ever stretch out fully. Eventually, this breaks our spirit – and we either go crazy or get holy. That's also the basic view of other atheistic existentialists like Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre.

Go crazy or get holy! Richard Rohr offers us a third option: get bitter. He submits that once we get to a certain age, we have only three options left open to us: We can become a pathetic old fool; or we can become a bitter old fool; or we can become a holy old fool.

Notice what's non-negotiable. We will all eventually become old fools. We have the choice only as to what kind of old fool we will be – crazy, bitter, or holy!

Revealed: the litany of the Catholic mum!

SOCIAL media is alive with reels which celebrate a common interest, career or lifestyle. It's known as the 'of course' trend or #ofcourse.

I'm a florist, of course I know the names of all the flowers. We're nurses, of course we'll take your blood pressure ... You get the picture.

I think Catholic mothers should get in on the act. Here's my take.

We're Catholic mothers, of course we'll have the biggest Child of Prague we can source on proud display in the garden on your wedding day.

We're Catholic mothers, of course we know all the Mass times in Glasgow, at any hour of the day or week. Ditto the Confession schedule for Holy Week. Just for your ease, we'll text this to you in advance.

We're Catholic mothers, of course we'll have a tasty



Mary's musings

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

fish dish ready to throw in the oven when we come home from the Passion. All those years when you were ready to eat a scabby dug by 4.30 on a Good Friday has ensured we are well-prepared. We're not too proud to employ Plan B and pull in at the chippie for fish suppers.

We're Catholic mothers, of course we'll sing our favourite hymns to your babies the first time we meet them (Just before his second birthday my eldest grandson turned his head around in the buggy and implored me "stop Gran, you're hurting my ears.").

Last month when the

newest baby in the family, Amelie Louise Rachael, arrived, I gave her the full four verses Guardian Angel in the hospital the day she was born.

We're Catholic mothers, of course we pray to St Anthony when we've lost our keys. You should be glad of this because it saves you a lot of bother helping us retrace our steps or rooting around down the back of the couch.

I'm happy to report this tradition has had a big uptake in the family. A call has just been put out for prayers for the swift finding of Amelie's big sister's bedtime dummy!

We're Catholic mothers, of course we have a stockpile of 'holy cards.' Aren't you grateful when you've got a Baptism of First Holy Communion to attend in the morning?

On the subject of cards, we're likely to have every prayer card ever given to us along with a box stuffed full of funeral orders of service, broken medals and rosary beads in need of repair.

We're Catholic mothers, of course we will pre-empt any mention of a future event with a 'God willing' or a 'please God.'

We're Catholic mothers, of course our idea of a holiday is Rome or Fatima.

We're Catholic mothers, of course you've all got saints names. You can be grateful our reading material during pregnancy was some version of Popular Saints' Names for Babies. Otherwise Polycarp or Scholastica could have been

under consideration!

We're Catholic mothers, of course you could make a cross out of a palm before you could tie your shoelaces.

We're Catholic mothers, of course we have a medal on the dashboard of our cars.

We're Catholic mothers, of course we send the entire family a Happy Feast Day text on the appropriate day. Speaking of patron saints we'll know the patron saint of butchers, bakers and candlestick makers. That's St Luke, St Honore and St Blaise in case you wondered.

I'm taking a wee bit of licence here. I don't believe there is a patron saint for candlestick makers so I've included St Blaise as he is the patron of candles.

Of course worth a shot in any candle or candlestick emergencies, I'd have thought.

A love of music, a welcoming priest, and devotion to Mary led Robert into the Church

ROBERT Simans – violinist, pianist, composer and tutor – was baptised into the Church days before he died, and after a lifelong search for truth about what it was to be fully human that he found at the last in the Catholic faith.

He was born in Harrogate, Yorkshire, into a musical family of Jewish ethnicity. An early starter, he began playing the piano at the age of three!

Synagogue observance and an obsession with music formed his early life. Interest in sport extended no further than caddying for his dad's weekly golf games.

As a school pupil, he was not the keenest. Rather dreamy, he was often startled to be the target of a well-aimed teacher's blackboard duster.

Then came his Eureka moment, the first of several. A visit to the school from the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company caught his imagination and he was permitted to take part in workshop rehearsals. The music, the singing, the sound! Amazing! Gilbert and Sullivan's operettas became his life-long love.

His attendance at synagogue continued and, at 13, he made his Bar Mitzvah. Then he heard Elgar's Dream of Gerontius, based on Cardinal Newman's poem and Dante's Divina Commedia and said he was converted! His fam-

ily reacted with consternation.

Over the following years much reading and research took place, from CTS pamphlets to CS Lewis, Pope John Paul II and Sister Lucia's remembering of her Fatima experience. All happened in parallel with studying music.

Fast forward through the Royal Academy of Music, National Service, employment as violinist in orchestras, Catholic marriage to Kathleen and settling down in Glasgow.

Then there were the obstacles that entered along the way and some accommodation with the atheism claim that fitted the fast material world in which he lived. All the while, he gave himself tirelessly to voluntary work in local schools introducing generations of children to the joys of the world of music. It took two family tragedies for God to re-enter the scene.

A friend introduced him to the then Fr John Keenan at Turnbull Hall, the University Catholic Chaplaincy, and their friendly chats about the condition of the world, the meaning of things and where to find the truly human turned out to be a spiritual ac-



companiment along the way.

He attended Mass at the Chaplaincy on Sundays and weekdays, remaining behind for private prayers which concluded with a fervent genuflection. He led a musical ensemble there for Christmas and Holy Week Liturgies.

The faith that wound from the synagogue of his youth was beginning to see in its sights a lasting home in the Catholic Church. It was not so much a break from the past but an integral journey from grace to grace.

A quiet and unassuming man by turn, Robert planned to have quite a public baptism as a testimony to the faith he had now embraced. Illness overtook him and he was baptised 6th March 2018 days before he died.

The Fatima apparitions always had a fascination for him and his magnum opus, a dramatic cantata All of Light written for Academy of Sacred Music Choir, with soloists and orchestra and Robert delighting to accompany on the piano, was premiered in St Mirin's Cathedral, Paisley, on 6th October 2017, the centenary of the final vision. It was Part I, The Angel Prepares the Way...

Bishop McGill's exam prayer

As pupils across the Archdiocese start a gruelling schedule of exams this month, Flourish republishes a prayer composed by the former Bishop of Paisley (himself a priest of the Archdiocese of Glasgow) Bishop Stephen McGill, which has been a favourite of generations of students preparing for school and university exams.



Dear Lord, please help me in my examinations.

Help me to face them with courage, steady in nerves and keen in mind.

Please help me to grasp fully the questions that are asked,

to remember all that I have studied, to express my answers accurately and with the completeness desired.

Grant me dear Lord, a due sense of timing,

and let me not waste precious minutes in useless asides and unwanted digressions.

Before I hand in my papers,

Give me the wisdom

to examine what I have written, and the alertness of mind to detect and correct any mistakes I may have made.

Lord grant me success if success is good for me.

But I know that you know what is best for me.

With loving trust therefore I say,

Whatever the results, blessed be Your holy will.

ART OF THE MONTH



A painting for the month of May

ANTONELLO da Messina's "Virgin Annunciate" crafted during the 15th century, reinterprets the traditional Annunciation scene by omitting the figure of the Angel Gabriel.

BY MGR TOM MONAGHAN

In the angel's absence it is the viewer who faces the Virgin Mary as her gaze moves from the Sacred Scriptures. She raises her hand. Is it in greeting to the angel or perhaps to hold back his words, giving her a moment to frame her answer?

Perhaps she has already made her decision and needs to hear no more of the angel's beautiful words of greeting.

The Virgin's serene countenance conveys a sense of inner tranquility. The intricate folds of her robes suggest a careful mind. She is the

Immaculate Conception. The book on the table hints at the fulfilment of divine prophecy through Mary's acceptance of her role in God's plan.

By omitting the Archangel and focusing solely on the Virgin Mary, Antonello emphasises her pivotal role in the Annunciation narrative and almost forces the viewer to reflect on her unwavering faith and submission to God's will.

Look at her eyes and contemplate Mary's inner thoughts and emotions and the divine moment unfolding before her. It is a compelling meditation on faith, obedience, and the power of divine grace.



PRAYER OF THE MONTH

God our Father, we honour the Blessed Virgin Mary, greeted by the Angel Gabriel as she contemplates the mysteries of your love.

Mary, Mother of God, be our intercessor and guide. May we be inspired by your heroic virtue and humble acceptance of your vocation.

Help us to live lives of holiness and service, always seeking to do God's will as we strive to bring about his kingdom on earth.

This we ask through Christ our Lord. Amen.

May is the month of so many lovely feast days

MAY is a properly “festive” month! From the great feast of the Ascension, through to Pentecost, our weekdays might return to “Ordinary Time”, but the Sundays mark the beautiful feasts of the Holy Trinity and “Corpus Christi” (which, in fact, is the feast of the Lord’s Body and his Precious Blood).

Each festive Sunday has its own unique focus, but that doesn’t mean there aren’t themes which unite them. In a sense all the Sundays this month will invite us to reflect on how we respond to the great events we have celebrated through Holy Week and Easter, especially by living in unity, prayer, mission, and thanksgiving.

Seventh Sunday of Easter

The First Reading, from the Acts of the Apostles, recalls a moment during the period between the Ascension and Pentecost, a period reflected in our liturgical calendar today. The community seeks to complete



Fr Tom Kilbride

Rector of the Royal Scots College, Salamanca, Spain

the group of apostles after the loss of Judas and, after prayer, Matthias is chosen. It is understood as a moment in which the community’s longing for the Spirit is already partly fulfilled. There is a harmony in prayer, discernment and purpose.

That is what John (Second Reading) encourages of his community too, namely that if we are true believers in Jesus, we will live as he taught us, because he has shown us the intimate love between the Son and the Father. He reminds us that he saw this for himself, and, in the Gospel, we hear of one of those moments when the apostles did get a glimpse into that

union of divine love as they witness Jesus praying to his Father at the Last Supper.

It is a prayer of deep communion between the Son and the Father, yet in it he prays for us, his disciples. He knows there will be hard times, but his love will sustain us. This Sunday, we are reminded of the importance of that unity in prayer and purpose, faith and charity, which ought to mark the community of believers in the Church.

Pentecost Sunday

All of the options for the readings today (for the Vigil, the day Mass and the optional ones for Year B) are powerful. Quite literally, they all speak about the Holy Spirit as power!

From the wind and fire of the Acts account, to the fountains of water at the Vigil or the breath and mission given to the apostles by Jesus in the daytime Mass, nothing seems to stand still: everything is in motion, including the disciples!

If the Spirit moves powerfully, the consequence is no less potent: mission and witness to the world. The first community, united in prayer as we saw last Sunday, now preaches in languages all can understand. The disciples are sent into the world. We profess in the Creed that the Spirit “has spoken through the prophets”. Now, we are told, he will speak through us too!

We are reminded today that the gift of the Spirit should move us to action: to speak and give witness to the Gospel; to engage in ministry and service ac-



cording to the gifts we are given; to bring Christ’s life, peace and power to the world around us.

Trinity Sunday

In today’s Gospel, Jesus uses words we know well and use often: “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”. While this is warrant enough to speak about the Trinity, it is only part of what is being said today.

The risen Jesus (the Son) has been given all authority (by the Father) and sends the apostles out (empowered by the Spirit, as we saw last week) to teach and baptise. In the First Reading, the questions Moses asks also say a great deal about God as he has made himself known: God is creator of heaven and earth, our maker, who has spoken a “majestic” word from the “heart of the fire”. As well as Creator (Father), then, God is Word (the Son) and Fire (the Holy Spirit of Pentecost).

Where Moses tells the people that this great God calls them to keep his commandments, Jesus tells the apostles to teach the nations “to observe all the commands” he gave. His word is the word of that same creating, revealing, transforming God.

The people worshipped

God, the Eleven fell down to worship Jesus (though some hesitated!) and Paul invites us to cry out “Abba! Father!” (imitating Jesus), now that we are filled with the Holy Spirit and have become God’s children with and in Christ.

Corpus Christi – The Body and Blood of the Lord

The Temple in Jerusalem must have been a messy place, with all the animal blood spilled in sacrifices. But blood is a sign of life, and so the blood of the sacrifices poured out on the altar or over the people became a sign of the life and the bond shared between them and God.

So, as the Letter to the Hebrews tells us, the blood of Jesus, poured out on the Cross in a new covenant, signifies that we are drawn into a shared life with God. What differs, however, is that the sacrifice is not “symbolic” but real. That is, on the Cross Jesus pours out his own blood, not that of some symbolic animal. He offers himself as the sacrifice. Because of that, there is no longer any need for

animals to be killed in repeated rituals since Jesus’s blood secures a covenant relationship which cannot be broken.

Since he is also God, his is a perfect sacrifice which forges an eternal covenant. Our Holy Communion now is our share in that bond of love which, though forged through his death on the Cross, is now undying and eternal. As we take his Body broken for us and his Blood poured out for us, we are drawn into that life and the love from which it is born. What a privilege it is to share in it!

If the Body and Blood of Christ is the gift which seals the new covenant, then honouring it and celebrating it really seals our celebration of the Lord’s Passion, his sacrifice on the Cross and the life he now shares with us, which we recalled in Holy Week, rejoiced in through Easter, are sent out to announce at Pentecost, and now cherish and live by as the rest of the year opens out before us.

How fitting it is, then, that these months of Sundays conclude with this amazing feast!

JERICHO +

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PHONE FOR A FREE BROCHURE

From prison cells to hospital wards, the door is always open for the priest

RECENTLY we celebrated Good Shepherd Sunday, and I was reminded of the year I spent as Catholic chaplain to a young offenders' institution back in the 1990's, filling in for the regular chaplain who had gone on sabbatical.

One of the chaplains from another Christian denomination, someone whose company I really enjoyed, was an actual, working shepherd from Ayrshire. He would regularly bring in his shepherd's crook, a beautifully carved wooden object, as fine as any bishop's crozier, and use it creatively to illustrate bible stories during prayer services.

It was a very challenging period of my life and one which I learned a lot from.

One of the things I remember is that when I would have the freedom of a particular wing to visit the cells of young Catholics, having been given a master key to open all the cell doors on that wing, the way of identifying the cell of a Catholic was that there was a green card inserted into a slot on the cell door with



Fr Frank's log

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

their name on it, along with some other details.

It was then up to the young offender whether they wanted me to enter their cell for a chat, or not. In all the time I was there, not one person refused me entry, whether it was that they really wanted to chat to the priest, or whether it was just something that would break the monotony of their daily routine.

It was the same with Masses and services. These were always very well attended, for whatever reason, and I can only hope that this corporal work of mercy did some little good, for at least one or two young people, during my time there.

This memory sparked another, earlier memory from the 1980's when, just after ordination, I was based in St

Mungo's, and we would take turns at the weekend, filling in for the chaplain to the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, a member of the Passionist community, so that he could have a bit of time off each week, usually from a Friday evening to a Sunday afternoon.

He would then return from his well-earned breather to celebrate the hospital Mass, aided by a team of volunteers who would ensure the safe passage of the patients from their wards to the place where the Mass was to be celebrated, and then bring them back again.

When we were fulfilling this role, the practice was that, when the Catholic chaplain was called out to attend a patient, day or night, and the patient was administered with the Sac-

rament of the Sick, or the Last Rites, as many people still refer to them, the chaplain would then write on the patient's card that they had been attended by the priest.

I think the intention was that, if the patient was later to take a turn for the worse, then the nurse would be able to tell the family that they had received the Sacrament, and so there was no need to send for the priest again.

Nine times out of ten, of course, that family would want the priest sent for again, often at 2 or 3 in the morning, but you just accept that as part of ministry, and part of a dying person's family's vulnerability at such a difficult time.

The detail I want to recall, however, is that the note on the patient's card saying they had been attended to, had to be written in green ink. So, between the green card on the cell door of Catholic young offenders, and the green ink to indicate that a Catholic had received the Last Rites, there was obviously something in those days that associated



Catholics with the colour green. I wonder what that could be?

Of course, Good Shepherd Sunday is also Vocations Sunday, and my main job at that time, which was my first appointment after ordination in 1983, was as Vocations Director for the Passionists in Scotland.

I wish I could look around our province now and be able to point out all the many members whom I brought into the order back then. Sadly, while there was a decent number who joined over the three years I was in

the role, they nearly all subsequently left.

I could quote the great Bob Dylan in saying that "there's no success like failure, and failure's no success at all". However, the privilege of accompanying young people on their journey for a while, trying to discern what God was calling them to, even if it wasn't to the Passionist life, was something I believe was worth doing, and not really a failure at all.

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

Next time you watch the news or read a paper, spare a thought for the journalists working in war zones

In my experience, there is nothing more scary than being jetted into a war zone. I know that for some journalists it becomes a way of life, and I admire them for their resolve, their bravery.

For me, it was a wake-up call to become more involved in the peace movement and perhaps that's why I ended up so dedicated to the aims of Pax Christi as a worldwide organisation and as a Scottish action group.

Being driven through a minefield in a vehicle marked 'UN' was no safeguard – we were underway before the driver said, "I should have mentioned to you, they're firing at UN vehicles now." Being held at a check point with a rifle shoved in my chest was no fun either.

And in my experience, there is nothing more heart-rending than encounters with refugees or those going back to homes wrecked by conflict.

The orphaned child who takes your hand as you



walk through a refugee camp lives with you forever (her name was Ra and God knows what fate awaited her).

The image of the old lady with legs so swollen she could scarcely stand after fleeing dozens of miles from her home to a refugee camp – yes, that lurks in the

recesses of your memory.

The old couple explaining how the soldiers came to their little farm and wrecked it, shouting obscenities at them as they cowered in a corner – that still brings a tear.

But for journalists attempting to bring us the situation in Gaza, there are

none of these encounters.

If you wonder why the BBC's international editor Jeremy Bowen always sends footage from Israel or Jordan or Egypt, it's because Israel won't allow foreign journalists into Gaza.

Yet that is what serious journalists are trained to do, paid to do – to speak to



Marian Pallister

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

all 'sides', to bring evidence to the outside world of the situation on the ground in a conflict.

Palestinian journalists and "civilians" send out reports, images, and videos. And when the likes of Bowen say that these can't be verified, it isn't because he is biased towards Israel but because that's simply a fact.

Footage

We have also seen footage produced in Gaza by Israeli forces. Again, that can't be verified. No outside news agencies are there to check out the facts, interview a range of people, investigate the truth. On-line journalists can only bring us "the truth" through Zoom inter-

views.

As Christians, we learn that God is the essence of truth, yet here we are in the Holy Land unable to know "the truth". As UN chief Antonio Guterres said recently, "An information war has added to the trauma of the war in Gaza – obscuring facts and shifting blame. Denying international journalists entry into Gaza is allowing disinformation and false narratives to flourish."

Pope Francis has said, "Justice must always accompany the search for peace, which presupposes truth and freedom."

Pax Christi Scotland suggests that only by seeking the truth we can advocate for peace and justice in today's conflicts.

Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes

CARFIN

PILGRIMAGE SEASON 2024



MAY		
Every evening during May at 8pm, Holy Rosary at the grotto		
Led by the primary school children of the Diocese of Motherwell		
13th	7.30pm	Monthly Legion of Mary, Rosary Procession, Mass and Benediction.
21st	10.00am	Primary schools Fatima Pilgrimage
26th	3.00pm	Legion of Mary Pilgrimage and Mass
JUNE		
1st	8.00pm	Evening Prayer followed by all night Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
2nd	7.00am	Morning Prayer concluding all night Adoration
	7.30am	Holy Mass for the Feast of Corpus Christi
	3.00pm	Eucharistic Procession concluding with Blessing of the Sick
7th	1.00pm	Feast of the Sacred Heart, Mass for Sanctification of Priests
	7.30pm	Annual Pioneer's Mass
9th	3.00pm	HCPT Reunion Mass
13th	7.30pm	Monthly Legion of Mary, Rosary Procession, Mass and Benediction.
16th	3.00pm	Ukrainian Pilgrimage Mass
22nd	All day	Catholic Military Association Pilgrimage
30th	3.00pm	Motherwell Diocesan Hospitalite Mass
JULY		
13th	7.30pm	Monthly Legion of Mary, Rosary Procession, Mass and Benediction.
28th	1.00pm	Grandparents Day with Mass
AUGUST		
13th	7.30pm	Monthly Legion of Mary, Rosary Procession, Mass and Benediction.
14th	7.00pm	St Francis Xavier Choir Concert (Grotto fundraiser)
15th	9.00pm	Torchlight Rosary in the grotto for Feast of the Assumption
18th	12.00pm	St Andrew's and Edinburgh Archdiocesan Pilgrimage
25th	All day	Polish Pilgrimage
SEPTEMBER		
1st	3.00pm	Scottish National Pilgrimage with Papal Nuncio
8th	3.00pm	Irish Day (Famine Remembrance)
13th	7.30pm	Monthly Legion of Mary, Rosary Procession, Mass and Benediction.
15th	3.00pm	Knights of St Columba Pilgrimage
21st	All day	SVDP Family day
28th	11.00am	Salesian Vocations Pilgrimage
OCTOBER		
Every evening at 8pm, Holy Rosary at the grotto		
Led by the secondary school students of the Diocese of Motherwell		
6th	7.00pm	Rosary Sunday Torchlight Procession
13th	7.30pm	Monthly Legion of Mary, Rosary Procession, Mass and Benediction.
DECEMBER		
8th	7.00pm	Torchlight Rosary in honour of the Immaculate Conception
CHECK THE WEBSITE FOR CHANGES WWW.CARFINGROTTO.ORG		

For more information please contact: The Parish Priest
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