

FLLOURISH

Official Journal of the Archdiocese of Glasgow

May 2026

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Picture: Imago Mundi

‘Joined in the prayer of the Holy Rosary, as we ask for the intercession of our Mother Mary, we wish to tell the world that it is possible to build peace ... a new peace’

POPE LEO XIV

Make the X count

Scotland's Bishops urge Catholics to vote in election



DEAR Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As the 2026 Scottish Parliament Election approaches, we find ourselves at another important moment in our nation's life. Elections are not only political events but opportunities to reflect prayerfully on our responsibilities as citizens and disciples of Jesus Christ.

Our participation in public life expresses our love of neighbour and our desire to build a society that honours God through truth, justice, and charity. The Church and the political community have distinct roles, yet both serve the good of every person. The Church forms consciences through the light of the Gospel, while politics shapes society's structures.

When these work together respectfully, society flourishes, especially in its care for the weakest.

It is therefore vital that Catholics approach this election with faith-formed minds and hearts moved by charity.

Many in Scotland today face deep vulnerability: unborn children; the elderly; families in poverty; the disabled; those with poor mental health; people suffering addiction; victims of modern slavery; migrants seeking safety; people considering suicide; and victims of crime.

They deserve not only compassion but public policies that protect their dignity.

We need representatives who act with integrity, val-

ue every human life, and prioritise the poorest. Public service is noble when rooted in humility and the common good.

Our elected officials must also defend fundamental freedoms—thought, conscience, and religion—so Scotland remains a place where people can express beliefs openly and respectfully.

Civility

Public discourse thrives when diverse voices can speak without fear and disagreements are handled with civility. Silencing religious expression deprives society of moral and spiritual richness.

We affirm the rights of parents, who have the God-given responsibility

to educate their children, including choosing schools that reflect their convictions.

Authorities must safeguard this right and protect Catholic schools, which serve families of all backgrounds and help form young people in faith, virtue, and service. Attempts to marginalise, or remove, these schools would weaken Scotland's educational diversity.

As you prepare to vote, reflect on the principles of Catholic Social Teaching—human dignity, the common good, solidarity, and subsidiarity—which illuminate the key moral issues of our time: the protection of life from conception to natural death; care for the poor and vulnerable; fair and sus-

tainable economic conditions; accessible healthcare; the elimination of modern slavery; the strengthening of marriage and family life; care for creation; the promotion of peace and support for poorer nations; and the defence of religious freedom and conscience.

Dignity

These are not merely political issues, but moral ones rooted in the Gospel and the Church's commitment to every person's dignity. Study and pray with these principles as you discern your vote.

Resources from the Scottish Catholic Parliamentary Office (rcpolitics.org) can help form your conscience, enabling you to seek truth, weigh moral implications,

and consider the impact on the vulnerable. Above all, we urge you to use your right to vote.

We pray for respectful and honest conversation throughout this election. Political life must not be poisoned by anger, division, or populist rhetoric.

May all debates reflect concern for human dignity and the common good.

We entrust Scotland—its people, leaders, and future—to the care of Our Lady, Queen of Peace.

May her intercession guide us toward justice, compassion, and unity.

May the Holy Spirit inspire candidates with integrity and humility, and voters with responsibility, prayerfulness, and love of neighbour.

Rosary

And during his African trip he made a point of stopping off at the main Marian shrine in Angola – Mama Muxima – to lead another public rosary for peace.

There he said: "The holy

SOLEMNITY and joy smingle as Archbishop Nolan carries a relic of St Carlo Acutis in procession through the corridors of All Saints Secondary School, Barmulloch.

The eagerly awaited event was planned back in November two months after the teen saint's canonisation in Rome.

St Carlo, who died from leukaemia aged 15, has become known as the internet saint, using his digital talents to spread devotion to the Blessed Sacrament which led to a global devotion to him especially by young people like the pupils from All Saints who took part in a moving celebration of prayer and devotion led by the Archbishop.

Maria Novani, team leader of 'Life in the Eucharist' (LITE), who helped organise the visit with Louise Elliot, Principal Teacher of RE said: "The feeling of peace that descended on the school was incredibly moving. You could see pupils and adults getting very emotional, some with in-

BY BRIAN SWANSON

PICTURE BY PAUL MCSHERRY

tears in their eyes, as the relic came near them.

"I've been to so many events like this over the years and you can't help getting nervous as you wait for it begin but Carlo never lets us down."

Mrs Elliot said: "People will talk about this for years – it really was a wonderful occasion."

For a week the school also hosted a comprehensive exhibition organised by LITE which told the young saint's story.

In the past few years the exhibition has visited 27 parishes, 13 schools, 3 university chaplaincies, 2 hospitals and 2 convents across Scotland, England and Ireland to tie in with similar initiatives worldwide.

Plans are now underway to take the exhibitions to Scottish prisons.

The relic itself, a strand of the young saint's hair, is in the care of the Blessed Sac-



rament Fathers who have a presence in three parishes in Glasgow – St Michael's Parkhead, St Columba's Woodside, and Sacred Heart Bridgeton.

Saint Carlo is buried at the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Assisi fulfilling his wish to be buried near St Francis who was his inspiration from an early age.

Pray to Our Lady for peace, says Pope

POPE Leo has urged Catholics across the globe to pray to Our Lady for peace during the upcoming Marian month of May.

And he has shown the way by holding two special Rosary vigils reminding people of the power and the beauty of the Rosary as a means of prayer.

At a solemn vigil in St Peter's Basilica he said: "My dearest friends, all it takes is a little faith, a mere 'crumb' of faith, in order to face this dramatic hour in history together – as humanity and alongside humanity..."

"Let us rise from the rubble! Nothing can confine us to a predetermined fate, not even in this world where there never seem to be enough graves, for people continue to crucify one another and eliminate life, with no regard to justice and mercy."



Picture: Vatican Media

BY RONNIE CONVERY

Rosary is an ancient and simple devotion that originated in the Church as a form of prayer for everyone. Saint John Paul II described it as the prayer of a Christianity that has preserved the 'freshness of its beginnings'.

Pope Leo went on: "Praying the Rosary, then, commits us to loving every person with a mother's heart

– concretely and generously – and to dedicating ourselves to the good of one another, especially the poorest.

"A mother loves all her children in the same way and with her whole heart, even though each one is different. In the presence of the Mother of the Heart, we too want to promise to do likewise. We strive without measure so that no one may lack love.

"We also seek to provide

the necessities for living with dignity and happiness: that the hungry may have enough to eat, that the sick may receive the necessary care, that children may be guaranteed a proper education, and that the elderly may live their later years in peace.

"A mother thinks of all these things. Indeed, Mary thinks of all these things, and she also invites us to share in her maternal concern."

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New window of St Lucy will be a 'beacon of light' in primary school



THE school community of St Lucy's, Cumbernauld have honoured their patron with the installation of a magnificent stained-glass window destined to become a beacon of light for generations.

Speaking as he delivered a blessing for the new window, Father John Campbell, Parish Priest of Sacred Heart and St Lucy's, said: "This window of St Lucy will help us think of our great patron, she will welcome us into school.

"She is always our patron, guiding us with her light: the example of her discipleship and beautiful friendship with Jesus."

Mrs Coleen Straub, head teacher at the 300-pupil school, said: "The ethos of our school is summed up with the phrase 'Lighting

BY BRIAN SWANSON

Our Paths Together For Our Future'.

"The name Lucy means 'bringer of light' so when we wanted to do something special to honour our patron, we came up with the idea of installing a stained glass window of her which would be the first thing the children see as they come in each morning and the last thing they see as they leave at the end of their school day."

Funds

The window, which is in three sections, was designed and made by a local company and paid for from existing school funds.

Mrs Straub added: "It has

become a big talking point among the children and visitors and of course we are all very proud of it."

St Lucy, patron saint of Syracuse, Sicily, is venerated as 4th century Christian martyr who, according to legend had her eyes gouged out by Roman torturers.

In the stained glass window she is depicted, as is traditional, with her eyes on a dish and for that reason she is also known as the patron saint of the blind.

Her feast day is December 13 and St Lucy's School follows the Sicilian tradition where the youngest member of each family hands out sweets to the rest of the family on the saint's feast day. At St Lucy's in Cumbernauld the youngest child in each class shares treats with their classmates.

History hunt is on at south side parishes

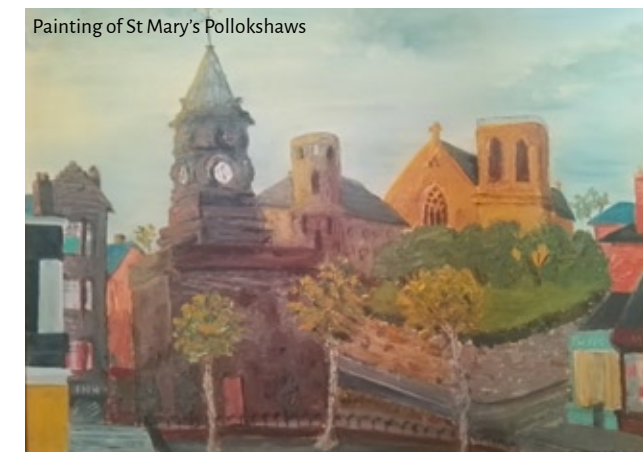
PAST and present parishioners of St Mary's Immaculate, Pollokshaws, are being asked to look through their family albums to help one of the oldest Catholic churches in Glasgow create a digital archive of images and stories of its history.

Led by the St Mary's Restorations Steering Group, the Photo Archive project is seeking photographs and stories that reflect the life of the parish community across the years since it was founded in 1849.

Some of the images collected will then form part of an exhibition, due to be held this summer, celebrating the parish's rich heritage and marking the formal launch of a fundraising campaign to help pay for essential repairs to the church and the hall.

Contributions to the Photo Archive are welcomed from weddings, baptisms and First Holy Communions, as well as from the everyday gatherings and social occasions that have long been at the heart of this 176-year-old parish.

Martin Brown, chair of the Pastoral Council, said:



BY BRIAN SWANSON

"We hope that this growing archive will not only serve as a record of the past but will also create a sense of celebration of faith and unity that can be shared across the generations.

"We have had a lot of positive feedback from parishioners already and we are confident of a good response. Going forward we will launch a major fundraising appeal for planned essential repairs and would welcome any ideas people might have."

Please send your photo-

graphs - together with a summary of who is in the pictures and an approximate date, contact details and a return address - by post or in person to St Mary's Immaculate, 50 Shawhill Road, Pollokshaws, Glasgow G43 1SY.

Digital images may also be submitted via email to stmaryimmaculatepsc@rcag.org.uk

All photographs will be carefully digitised and returned promptly to their owners. Permission will always be sought before any material is displayed or shared.

Glasgow's own bishop in India!

A MUCH-ADMIRED priest who served in parishes across the Archdiocese of Glasgow has been ordained a bishop in his native India.

Father Agnelo Pinheiro was a summer supply priest for brief periods between 2014 and 2018 in several parishes where he gained a lasting reputation as a humble man of deep faith coupled with exceptional people skills.

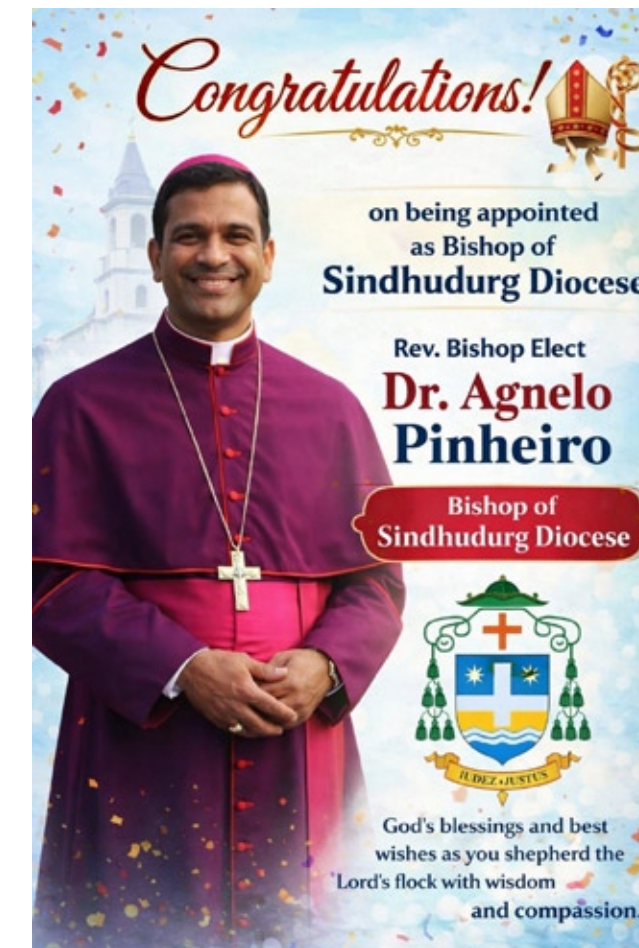
Ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Goa and Daman, the partly-Portuguese-speaking area of Western India with a sizeable Catholic minority he now becomes the new Bishop of the diocese of Sindhudurg, north of Goa.

Rome

The new Bishop Agnelo combined his parish work in Glasgow with three years' study at the Scots College in Rome where he gained a PhD giving him another lasting link with the Archdiocese which financially supported his studies from 2013 until 2016.

The local parishes he served in included St Thomas', Riddrie, working alongside the then-Parish Priest Canon Peter McBride now of St Martin's in Renton.

Canon McBride told *Flourish*: "He was with us in 2015 for my last two weeks at St Thomas and my first two weeks when I then moved to St Peter's in Partick and



BY BRIAN SWANSON

he came back to St Peter's the following year.

"Almost from day one I recognised that he was an exceptional priest who was destined for high office in the Church.

"I once said to him, and it was not a throwaway remark, that he would make

an excellent bishop. We have kept closely in touch over the years so I was delighted when he told me of his forthcoming ordination."

Father Agnelo was ordained Bishop of the diocese of Sindhudurg in Maharashtra, Western India, on April 16th, the Feast of St Bernadette.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Barrhead Travel - pilgrimage specialists who care

For over 12 years, Barrhead Travel in Clydebank has been organising pilgrimages to Marian Shrines across Europe, including Lourdes; Medjugorje; Nevers and Paris.

Led by Franchise Owner and Pilgrimage Director Tony Sillars, these journeys are shaped by both deep faith and genuine care for every customer.

Tony's own connection to Lourdes began 36 years ago, and that personal ex-

perience continues to inspire the warm, supportive environment he creates today. Each pilgrimage is thoughtfully organised, with Tony and his team accompanying throughout, ensuring everyone feels known, valued and at completely at ease.

A hallmark of these trips is their inclusivity. The group will always be encouraged to share meals together, yet just as importantly, space is respected for those who prefer quiet

reflection. Whether joining group excursions or taking time alone, each customer is supported in their own spiritual journey.

Friendships often form quickly and endure long after the trip ends, with many returning year after year.

It is this balance of companionship and care that makes these pilgrimages so special - creating not just meaningful, spiritual experiences, but friends for life.

Mary's Meals' new resources for the month of Our Lady

MARY'S Meals - named after Mary, the mother of Jesus - is launching a special prayer campaign this month to support its work.

Every day more than three million children receive life-changing school meals in 16 of the world's poorest communities thanks to the prayers and generosity of the charity's supporters and volunteers.

Sarah Mallon of Mary's Meals said: "During the month of May, as we take time to honour and celebrate Our Lady in a special way. Please join us in praying for the hungry children who rely on our life-changing school meals, and for all the children and families around



the world who live in poverty."

Special resources are available online. Visit www.marysmeals.org.uk/prayinmay

■ If you would like one of Mary's Meals volunteers to visit your

church and share more about Mary's Meals and its work, the charity would be delighted to hear from you. You can contact them at info@marysmeals.org, call 0800 698 1212 or request a talk via the website.

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Pentecost Mass will be a welcome milestone for our 'New Catholics'

Record numbers joined Church at Easter

NEW Catholics from the Archdiocese who were received into the Church at Easter will be welcomed back to St Andrew's Cathedral later this month to join Archbishop Nolan for Mass on Pentecost Sunday.

This year saw 120 men and women from the Archdiocese join the church - up 20 per cent on the previous year and the highest figure for a decade

Record numbers of new adult converts are also being reported across Europe.

Canon David Wallace, administrator of St Andrew's Cathedral, who also oversees the RCIA programme, said: "Journeying with those who seek life in the Church is always exciting. This year saw the highest number in people becoming part of the

BY BRIAN SWANSON Church in Glasgow in around 10 years.

"I was particularly inspired by our own group of 12 who were received and their eagerness for the sacraments but also to become participants in the life of the Church.

"I have been involved in the RCIA programme for some time but this year it seemed there was a bigger buzz around.

Passion

"There was something fresh and encouraging about their passion to be part of the Church in a way I haven't experienced before. I am excited to see how their journey will progress as we all keep them all in our prayers."

During the programme participants were asked what drew them to the Catholic Church.

Among the responses were:

- "The biggest influence came from my wider family members who were already Catholic and this deepened my desire to feel closer to my family through the same faith.
 - "I loved the idea of being part of a living tradition and a community of people who share the same values.
 - "Those who take their faith seriously seem set apart from others in a unique way."
- The Pentecost Mass will be celebrated at 12 noon on May 24th to which all are welcome.



Picture by Paul McSherry

New start for merged parishes

Holy Family and St Ninian's Church, Kirkintilloch



LAST month saw a series of changes come into effect designed to equip the Archdiocese better for the future given the declining number of priests and historic shifts in population.

The Parish of St Patrick's in Anderston has been merged with the Cathedral Parish and St Peter's Partick. People living west of Finnerston Street are now considered to be part of St Peter's and those east of it (including St Patrick's church and school) are now part of the Cathedral parish.

The church building of St Patrick's remains open and services continue as

BY RONNIE CONVERY normal there provided by the resident priest, Canon Paul Gargaro.

In Helensburgh the parishes of St Joseph and St Gildas were merged. While both buildings remain open the new community will be formally known as St Joseph's Parish.

Merged

In Kirkintilloch the parishes of St John of the Cross, Twechar, St Flannan's, and Holy Family and St Ninian's were merged to form Holy Family Parish with Canon Gerry Tartaglia as Parish Priest.

In Clydebank the parishes of St Margaret's and OHR are merged to become the Parish of Our Holy Redeemer and St Margaret with Fr Liam McMahon as Parish Priest.

Elsewhere in the Archdiocese parish communities in the north east of the city are adapting to change too after the return to Nigeria of Fr Francis Okereke.

Pastoral care of the parish of St Jude and St John Ogilvie is being supplied by Fr Frank Balmer and Fr Innocent Simon, while Fr John Gannon of St Philomena's is providing pastoral care of the parish of St Maria Goretti's.

Archbishop Mario to be remembered in Oxford Dictionary of Biography

IN a powerful signal of his impact on national life, the late Archbishop Mario Conti has been included in the latest edition of the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography - the 'bible' of UK public life - published last month.

The 133rd edition contains the biographies of 229 individuals who died in the year 2022 including Archbishop Mario.

Among the other prominent figures to feature in the new edition are Queen

Elizabeth II and peace campaigner Bruce Kent - described as "probably the UK's best-known Catholic priest", who was general secretary then chair of CND at the height of its campaigns, in the 1980s; he later left the priesthood and married.

Sport

From the world of entertainment among those included are Bamber Gascoigne and Robbie Coltrane, and sport is represented

by figures of note including Dottie Weir and Lester Piggott.

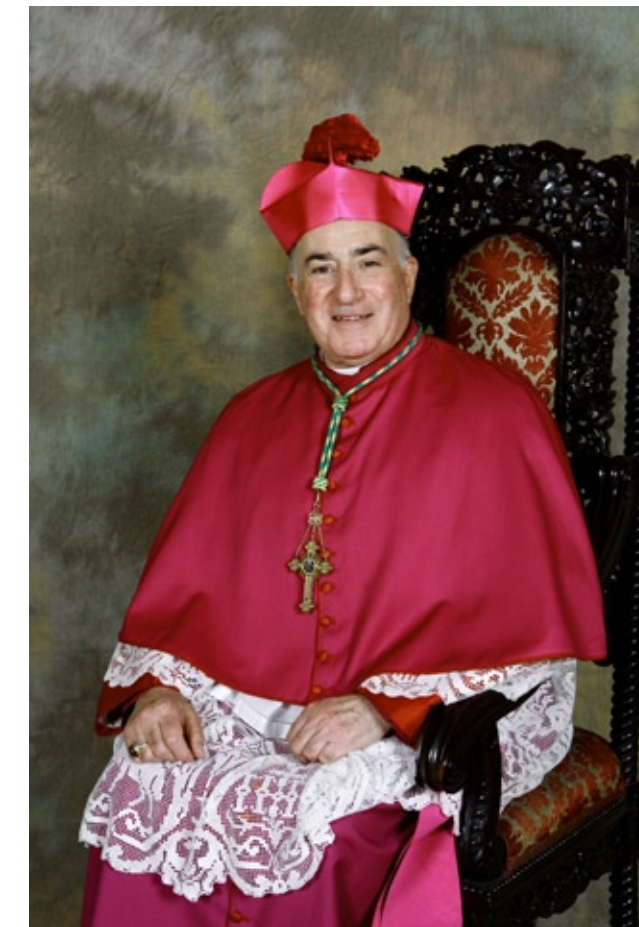
Archbishop Mario's entry was written by his long-time collaborator and friend, *Flourish* editor Ronnie Convery.

He said: "It was a great responsibility, but also a privilege to produce Archbishop Mario's entry. His was such a varied and fulfilled life which was summed up really by his motto - *Sincero Corde Servire* - serving with a sincere heart.

"His interest and engagement in the worlds of culture, politics and academia led to his recognition beyond the confines of the Catholic Church.

"But his identity was very much that of a priest. That was his calling and fulfilment."

The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* is available online in many institutions worldwide. You may be able to access the complete dictionary for free via your local library.



Head teacher's medal award

THE presentation of an Archdiocesan Medal to a devoted head teacher to mark her retirement was the highlight of an evening of shared memories at Immaculate Conception parish in Maryhill.

Madeline McGeachie has been head teacher at St Mary's Primary, Maryhill, for the past fifteen years and before that was a deputy headteacher at St Brendan's in the West End for 17 years.

Mrs McGeachie said: "I remember standing in this position 15 years ago at the previous headteacher's final Mass. Little did I know how much joy and how many wonderful memories lay ahead of me.

She continued: "The boys and girls are the heartbeat of this school. They are the daily reminder of what is important and why I love my job.

"They have made me laugh, think, and most importantly, they have made

me very proud. It has been a delight to watch so many children grow and develop over the years, into wonderful young people."

Parish Priest Fr Jim Lawlor said: "We had a lovely celebratory final Mass as Mrs McGeachie retired as Headteacher of St Mary's Primary School.

"It was lovely to welcome the directorate, former and current colleagues and many friends. Of course, the whole school and parent council were here, among other guests.

"Above all, it was lovely to welcome Madeline's family and a particular word of welcome to Mrs Bain - Madeline's mum - herself a long-serving and respected head teacher.

"Thank you from our hearts for the wonderful service example and love you have given, Madeline. Every blessing for a long and healthy retirement!"



St Josemaria to be commemorated at National Shrine

A STATUE is set to be erected at the National Shrine at Carfin in honour of the founder of Opus Dei.

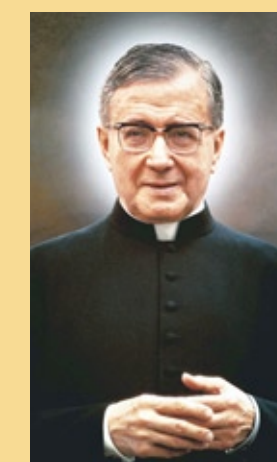
The statue is the result of a project by two women members of Opus Dei to honour the Spanish priest, St Josemaria Escrivà who was canonised in 2002 by Pope St John Paul II who called him "the saint of ordinary life."

St Josemaria dedicated his life to encouraging men and women to seek sanctity in the ordinary activities of daily life.

One of the organisers, Mairi McPherson, said Carfin was a perfect setting to honour the saint as "it is a place where the communion of saints becomes tangible."

Following the go-ahead from the custodian of the shrine, Fr Jim Grant, the statue was commissioned from the same sculptor as that of the other modern day saints at the grotto.

"We are very grateful to Fr Grant for his support. He suggested we go to the same sculptor who created the stat-



ues of St Gianna Molla, St Carlo Acutis and Padre Pio. The statue of St Josemaria will sit beside these others.

"All of them are within living history of people who are alive today and their stories are well-documented," said Mairi.

The unveiling of the statue will take place on Saturday, June 20, after a Mass to honour the saint.

Mairi and her fellow fundraiser, Julivette, are halfway to the £6000 total cost which includes a donation to the National Shrine at Carfin.

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Glasgow pilgrims mark 70 years of bringing children to Lourdes

BY RONNIE CONVERY

MORE than 3,000 pilgrims gathered in Lourdes last month as HCPT marked 70 years of its life-changing pilgrimage.

Founded in 1956 by Brother Michael Strode, HCPT (Hosanna House and Children's Pilgrimage Trust) began with the aim of helping children with a disability to go on pilgrimage to the French shrine.

The charity marked its 70th anniversary in Lourdes with a joyful Trust Mass, bringing together almost 3,500 pilgrims from across the UK and around the world – including pilgrims from Glasgow.

Throughout their week in Lourdes, the Scots pilgrims took part in a rich programme including Mass, torchlight processions, visits to the Grotto, as well as excursions to the mountains.

And in a moving link to



the beginnings of HCPT, Brother Michael Strode's brother, Peter Strode, was among those who travelled with HCPT, sharing in the celebrations and witnessing the continued impact of his brother's vision.

Chief Executive of HCPT, herself a parishioner in the Archdiocese of Glasgow, Tricia Macfarlane, said, "I feel truly blessed to lead the incredibly special mission of HCPT, even more so as we reach this important milestone of 70 years. I am in awe of our volunteers across the UK and around the world; I see them day in, day out, being the hands and feet of Jesus in delivering HCPT's mission.

"Like most charities, times have been tough for us, but we know the Holy



Spirit, Our Blessed Lady and St Bernadette will help each of us use our gifts and use this special year as a springboard to safeguard HCPT's mission for many years to come.

"We have created a new suite of volunteering opportunities to extend and grow

our mission, throwing open the doors of HCPT so that we can extend the joy and hope of our mission to new parishes and communities. We welcome anyone who'd like to become involved to get in touch."

■ **To find out more go to www.hcpt.org.uk**

Cathedral faith share

DURING the month of May, at the cathedral there will be an opportunity to deepen our faith at the Cathedral.

A series of evenings are planned using the Sycamore Programme, which uses video presentations and then an option to share faith experiences and ideas with one another.

These events will take place in the board room of the Archdiocesan offices at 196 Clyde St, on Wednesday 13th, 20th and 27th May from 6.15pm – 7.45pm. All are welcome!

New tabernacle in memory of Fr Pat

PARISHIONERS from St Joseph's Milngavie are to raise funds to buy a new tabernacle in memory of Father Pat Currie, who served as their much loved parish priest for twelve years.

Father Pat, who retired due to ill health in 2024, died on March 18 in the care of St Margaret's Hospice, Clydebank.

Now the Parish council have revealed plans to have a new tabernacle placed in St Joseph's chapel in his memory and will begin fundraising with a coffee morning on Saturday May



16th in the church hall. Details on how to make individual donations can be found on the latest parish bulletin. ■ **Obituary – page 19**

Elish is King's choice again



THE first practising Roman Catholic to represent King Charles at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland is to reprise her role this year.

Glasgow-born and educated Lady Elish Angiolini LT, DBE, KC will act as the king's personal representative at the annual gathering in Edinburgh, which runs from 15-18 May.

Last year, Lady Elish

said she was "profoundly honoured" to have been chosen as the first practising Roman Catholic to be Lord High Commissioner, who makes the opening and closing addresses to the Assembly and carries out several official functions.

She told ministers, elders and deacons that she believed that prejudice and sectarianism can be overcome by the recog-

nition that we are "all Jack Tamson's bairns."

People are the creation of God, and all require "love, forgiveness and support" in all their imperfection, she said.

Lady Elish's appointment was only made possible after both Houses of Parliament in London changed a law dating back to 1689 that barred Roman Catholics from holding the role.

Thanks to the youthful missionaries for bringing the faith to our schools

FOR the young and enthusiastic missionaries from NET – the National Evangelical Team – it's been yet another faith-filled year of bringing the Gospel closer to pupils at Catholic secondary schools in the Glasgow area.

The first missionaries arrived in Scotland from America in the spring of 2015 and since then NET Scotland has reached tens of thousands of young Catholics in school visits.

And as the class of 25/26 come to the end of their year on the road (a new group is preparing to come to Scotland in September) John Jackson, director of NET Scotland said: "We have found that young people are very good at evangelising other young people with a level of understanding and empathy that the young missionaries have for our youth, and through that they communicate the true

BY BRIAN SWANSON

love of Jesus Christ.

"Many schools invite in a NET team year after year and give credit to the lasting impact of the ministry on the lives of the students."

The current NET team, including two senior supervisors, held retreats in schools and parishes from the end of September and are fully booked until the end of this month.

John added: "Since Canon Jim Duggan from Paisley Diocese brought NET to Scotland in 2015, we have welcomed 150 young missionaries who have mainly come from North America and returned home at the end of their missionary year.

"This year our team reached 9,183 young people with the Gospel and they have left us with very positive comments.

"The new team will follow a similar pattern for the year 26/27 and we are confident that through their work many more of our young people will come embrace the message of God's love."

Canon Duggan, who is chaplain to NET Scotland told *Flourish*: "A mission year with NET is transformative. In the USA, Canada, Australia, Ireland, Uganda and here, former NET missionaries are becoming priests, religious, teachers, youth workers, faith-filled parents and engaged parishioners.

"Their mission year provides the foundation for a life as missionary disciples."

Archbishop Nolan, a strong supporter of NET and its aims, celebrated Mass earlier this month with NET international di-



rectors from Canada, Ireland, Australia and Uganda who were holding their annual meetings in Scotland.



■ **To find out more about the work of NET or how to donate contact info@netscotland.org**



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COMMUNICATIONS SUNDAY SPECIAL REPORT

Digital dangers and outreach opportunities

The Church's presence on the Internet is the focus for this year's Communications Sunday

In this special focus, *Flourish* examines the changing face of Church communication, the immense power of social media, and the challenges facing ordinary Catholics in their daily life as media consumers

THE world changed profoundly at a certain point over the last 25 years, and the chances are you didn't even notice.

The change was not the result of war or revolution or medical breakthrough. It came about because of the smartphone you are probably carrying in your pocket as you read this.

That change – revolution is a better word – is much more profound than simply having instant access to



Ronnie Convery
Editor of *Flourish*

can barely live without."

Archbishop Fischella was brutally frank in his assessment of how the Church communicates:

"Those who are 25 years old quite simply no longer understand what we say. Our homilies and catecheses leave them completely indifferent, not because of the content that we transmit, but because of the language we use which is no longer their language and, therefore, has no impact."

"It doesn't communicate effectively with them. Religious ignorance thus increases and, with it, indifference towards those ideas that should call them to engage with the spiritual and transcendent dimension of life."

Reading these words reminded me

"The mobile phone is a part of ourselves that we can barely live without"

friends and family, or using an app to answer any question which arises in an office or classroom discussion.

What is changed is how we engage with each other as human beings, how our brain works, and how society operates. Our social lives have been profoundly impacted, but maybe our spiritual lives have too.

A few years ago I translated the book by Archbishop Rino Fischella, *Jubilee of Hope*. One passage in particular jumped off the page to me:

"The mobile phone is no longer a tool, but a part of ourselves that we

of a morning in May 2010. I walked into Archbishop Conti's office with a suggestion. "Your Grace, I think we should consider setting up a Facebook presence ... it's a new internet tool and I think it could become an ideal way to reach people in future."

Archbishop Mario was, as ever, glad to support anything which would engage with the wider community. "I can't say I understand what you mean," he said, "but if you think it's a good idea, go for it!"

Looking back, that conversation seems surreal.

What did we ever do before social media to reach out to people and offer information? Yet at the time it was quite revolutionary. No other diocese in Scotland had a social media presence, indeed very few round the world had dared to step into what was regarded at the time as a rather 'inappropriate' way of communicating.

So revolutionary was the idea that the *Glasgow Herald* ran a news story on this 'surprising' new move by the Church.

More than a decade and a half later, social media is no longer an optional extra, it is the living space, the 'home' of countless millions of people around the world.

■ With almost 20,000 signed up followers the Archdiocese of Glasgow reaches more people online than virtually any diocese in the UK and Ireland. Here are the figures showing 'followers' of some of the other major dioceses.

Surprisingly perhaps, many of those who follow the life of the Archdiocese live far from its boundaries, with significant numbers checking in from the USA, Italy and Nigeria.

Archdiocese of Glasgow **19200**

Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh **18600**

Archdiocese of Westminster (London) **16000**

Diocese of Motherwell **12500**

Diocese of Paisley **7500**

Archdiocese of Dublin **7100**

Bishops' Conference of Scotland **5300**

Archdiocese of Birmingham **5200**

Archdiocese of Liverpool **4600**

Diocese of Argyll and the Isles **3900**



Picture: Imago Mundi

Archdiocese of Glasgow's social media record reach

THE Catholic Church in Glasgow is reaching more people than ever before in its history.

Figures show that in the first quarter of the year the Facebook page of the Archdiocese registered more than 1.8 million views from 548,412 viewers.

Of those views, 74 per cent came from people who are not 'followers' of the page.

In other words, people who are perhaps not even Catholic, maybe not even from Scotland, but who

had found their way to the Archdiocese of Glasgow's offerings through the digital forest.

In the same period 110,000 people took the trouble to 'engage' with the Archdiocese and almost 40,000 took time to respond by liking or sharing or commenting on what they read.

These numbers are not a cause for boasting. Rather they are a reminder of our online responsibilities.



Pope Leo's message for Communications Sunday

OUR faces and voices are unique, distinctive features of every person; they reveal a person's own unrepeatability and are the defining elements of every encounter with others.

Faces and voices are sacred ... Safeguarding faces and voices ultimately means safeguarding ourselves. Embracing the opportunities offered by digital technology and artificial intelligence with courage, determination and discernment does not mean turning a blind eye to critical issues, complexities and risks.

Do not renounce your ability to think.

"Do not renounce your ability to think"

There has long been abundant evidence that algorithms designed to maximise engagement on social media – which is profitable for platforms – reward quick emotions and penalize more time-consuming human responses such as the effort required to understand and reflect.

By grouping people into bubbles of easy consensus and easy outrage, these algorithms reduce our ability to listen and think critically, and increase social polarization.

This is further exacerbated by a naive and unquestioning reliance on artificial intelligence as an omniscient "friend," a source of all knowledge, an archive of every memory, an "oracle" of all advice.

Ability

All of this can further erode our ability to think analytically and creatively, to understand meaning and distinguish between syntax and semantics.

Although AI can provide support and assistance in managing tasks related to communication, in the long run, choosing to evade the effort of thinking for ourselves and settling for artificial statistical compilations threatens to diminish our cognitive, emotional and communication skills...

Technology that exploits our need for relationships can lead not only to painful consequences in the lives of



individuals, but also to damage in the social, cultural and political fabric of society. This occurs when we substitute relationships with others for AI systems that catalog our thoughts, creating a world of mirrors around us, where everything is made "in our image and likeness."

We are thus robbed of the opportunity to encounter others, who are always different from ourselves, and with whom we can and must learn to relate. Without embracing others, there can be no relationships or friendships.

Another major challenge posed by these emerging systems is that of bias, which leads to acquiring and transmitting an altered perception of reality...

Power

The stakes are high. The power of simulation is such that AI can even deceive us by fabricating parallel "realities," usurping our faces and voices. We are immersed in a world ... where it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish reality from fiction.

The task laid before us is not to stop digital innovation, but rather to guide it and to be aware of its ambivalent nature. It is up to each of us to raise our voice in defense of human persons, so that we can truly assimilate these tools as allies.

This alliance is possible, but needs to be based on three pillars: responsibility, cooperation and education ...

We are all called upon to cooperate ... it is increasingly urgent to introduce media, information and AI literacy into education systems at all levels, as already promoted by some civil institutions.

As Catholics, we can and must contribute to this effort, so that individuals – especially young people – can acquire critical thinking skills and grow in freedom of spirit.

A wellspring of Glasgow's faith has become a thing of beauty



Restoration of cathedral well brings history of city to life

SHIMMERING in the light of a thousand glass tiles, each inlaid with gold leaf, the newly excavated and restored St Mungo's well, hidden deep in the crypt of Glasgow Cathedral has added another layer to the myths and legends surrounding Glasgow's patron saint.

The new feature sheds light – literally – on the beginning of Christianity in Glasgow.

BY BRIAN SWANSON

Neglected for generations and almost invisible in the sacred space of the crypt, the nearby shrine and burial place of St Mungo was what attracted generations of visitors. Until now.

But the well, which is six metres deep and incorporated into the walls of the Cathedral, once had enormous significance – some people even believe that the water that once flowed into it was used by St Kentigern, also known as Mungo, to perform baptisms.

Others think the well may predate Christianity as a sacred site, which symbolically and literally marks

the starting point of what would later become the Dear Green Place.

Now, in a permanent reminder of 850 years of Glasgow as a Bishop's Burgh, the well has been drained, excavated and transformed into a striking artwork in a collaborative project involving Professor Stephen Driscoll, a leading archaeologist at Glasgow University, David Sneddon of Clyde Archeology and Aproxima Creative Collective.

Its creative director Angus Farquhar told *Flourish*: "I saw that little well in the corner with no signage and it had just been forgotten and I thought wouldn't it be incredible to bring this back as a gift for the people of Glasgow..."

"It had not been touched for many years and we found all sorts of things inside – coins from all over the world, rings, thimbles, tiny pieces of shell with people's names written on them..."

"We drained out the last of the water and cleaned the bottom of the well where we'd done the excavation, and for the first time probably in one or two centuries

the water ran clear again. Apart from seeing the mosaic that was my happiest moment in this project."

The artwork was created by acclaimed Scottish artist Joanna Kessel who credits its annual research trips to Italy as an inspiration for her work.

In Venice she sourced used handblown coloured glass tiles made in 1888 by the renowned Orsoni company which were then used to line the ancient well and reflect the colour of the Cathedral's stained-glass windows.

Orsoni, whose mosaics have also been used to renovate the Basilicas of St Mark in Venice, and St Peter's in Rome, is the only company left in Venice capable of producing the precise type of tiles required for the Cathedral Well.

The beautiful pieces from the city of St Mark now make the well of St Mungo the only well in the world to be lined with mosaics.

The project was made possible thanks to a number of grants from charitable foundations as well as from individuals.



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Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes CARFIN PILGRIMAGE SEASON 2026



MAY

Rosary every night in May at 8.00pm led by primary school children

- 24th Legion of Mary Day of Thanksgiving
Mass at 12.00 noon
Procession 5:00pm
- 30th Aid to the Church in Need Campout 8:00pm–8:00am
- 30th Ukrainian Pilgrimage, Mass at 12:30 pm

June

- 12th Mass for Sanctification of Priests 1:00pm
- 12th Pioneers Mass 7:30pm
- 20th Opus Dei Mass 11:00am
- 21st Galloway Lourdes Hospitality – 70th Anniversary Diocesan Pilgrimage
Mass 3:00pm, Rosary Procession after Mass

July

- 26th Grandparents' day, Mass at 3:00pm

September

- 6th Scottish National Pilgrimage, Mass at 3:00pm
- 26th SVdP Family Day, Mass at 3:00pm
- 27th St Charbel Pilgrimage Day
Mass at 3:00pm, Rosary Procession 4:00pm

October

Rosary every night in October at 8pm led by secondary school children

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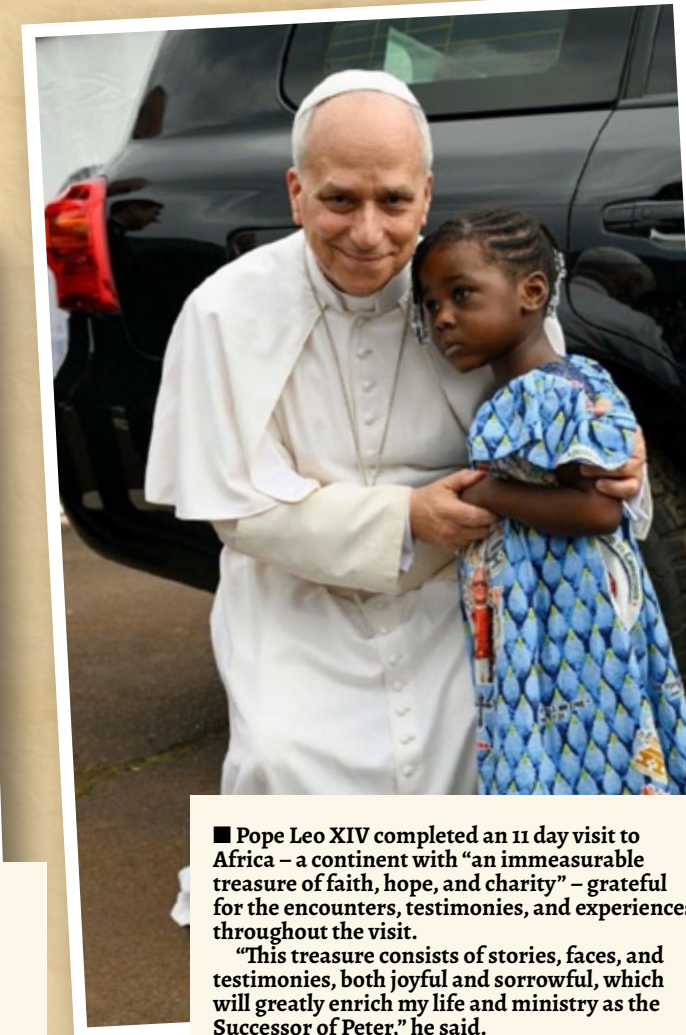
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PHOTOS OF FAITH

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



■ Five patron saints have been chosen for the next World Youth Day in South Korea to represent the event's themes of truth, love, and peace. The list includes Pope St John Paul II, founder of World Youth Day; St Andrew Kim Taegon and companions, martyrs of the early Korean Church; St Frances Xavier Cabrini, known for her work with migrants; St Josephine Bakhita, whose life reflected faith amid suffering; and St Carlo Acutis, associated with evangelisation in the digital age.



■ Pope Leo XIV completed an 11 day visit to Africa – a continent with “an immeasurable treasure of faith, hope, and charity” – grateful for the encounters, testimonies, and experiences throughout the visit. “This treasure consists of stories, faces, and testimonies, both joyful and sorrowful, which will greatly enrich my life and ministry as the Successor of Peter,” he said. Pope Leo highlighted Africa's role in the life of the Church, saying the continent is called, as in the early centuries of Christianity, to contribute to the worldwide mission of evangelisation.



■ Trafalgar Square in London came to a standstill recently for a performance of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus. Thousands of people gathered to see a passion play depicting the passion, death and resurrection. The new Archbishop of Westminster, Richard Moth, joined the spectators. The 2026 event marked the 15th and final annual Passion of Jesus performance by Wintershall in Trafalgar Square. The 90-minute show featured over 100 actors, accompanied by live animals (donkeys and horses).



■ An unusual sight to say the least ... a bishop arrives in his cathedral accompanied by his own private army. The photo shows a recent Mass at the Cathedral in Monza (near Milan in northern Italy) where the ancient tradition is still preserved. The 'Alabardieri di Monza' along with the Swiss Guard at the Vatican, are the only private armies with the right to participate in the sacred liturgy. Composed of 20 members the group use 18th century uniforms and swords during their service at the Monza Cathedral for major feasts.



■ King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia of Spain met with Pope Leo XIV at the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican, highlighting the historic ties between the Spanish Crown and the Holy See. During this visit, King Felipe VI was installed as a Canon of the Basilica of St. Mary Major, a traditional role for Spanish monarchs.



OASIS

Nourish your soul with our monthly spirituality supplement

Let's never be mean with the mercy of God ... it must always run freely

SHORTLY after my ordination, doing replacement work in a parish, I found myself in a rectory with a saintly old priest.

He was over 80, nearly blind, but widely sought out and respected.

One night, alone with him, I asked him this question: "If you had your priesthood to live over again, would you do anything differently?"

From a man so full of integrity, I had fully expected that there would be no regrets. So, his answer surprised me.

Yes, he did have a regret, a major one, he said: "If I had my priesthood to do over again, I would be easier on people the next time. I wouldn't be so stingy with God's mercy, with the sacraments, with forgiveness.

"You see what was drilled into me in the seminary was the phrase: The truth will set you free.

"So, I believed it was my responsibility always to give a hard challenge, and that



Scribblings of the spirit

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

can be good. But I fear that I was too hard on people. They have pain enough without me and the Church laying further burdens on them.

"I should have risked God's mercy more!"

This struck me because, less than a year before, as I took my final exams in the seminary, one of the priests who examined me, gave me this warning: "Be careful," he said, "never let your feelings get in the way.

"Don't be soft, that's wrong. Remember, hard as it is, the truth sets people free!" Sound advice, it would seem, for a young priest.

However, after 50 years in

ministry, I'm more inclined to the old priest's advice: We need to risk more God's mercy.

The place of justice and truth should never be ignored, but we must risk letting the infinite, unbounded, unconditional, undeserved mercy of God flow more freely.

The mercy of God is as accessible as the nearest water tap, and so we, like Isaiah, must proclaim a mercy that has no price tag: Come, come without money, without virtue, come, drink freely of God's mercy!

What holds us back? Why are we so hesitant

in proclaiming God's inexhaustible, prodigal, indiscriminate mercy?

Partly our motives are good, noble even. The concern for truth, justice, sound orthodoxy, proper morality, public form, proper sacramental preparation, and fear of scandal, are not unimportant...

Timidity

But sometimes our motives are less noble and our hesitancy arises more out of timidity, fear, legalism, the self-righteousness of the Pharisees, and an impoverished understanding of God.

Thus, no cheap grace is dispensed on our watch!

In doing this we are, I fear, misguided, less than good shepherds, out of tune with the God that Jesus incarnated. God's mercy, as Jesus revealed it, embraces indiscriminately, like the sun that shines equally on the good as well as the bad, the deserving and the un-

deserving, the initiated and the uninitiated.

For our part then, especially those of us who are parents, ministers, teachers, catechists, and elders, we must risk proclaiming the prodigal character of God's mercy.

We must not dispense God's mercy as if it were ours to dispense; dole out God's forgiveness as if it were a limited commodity; put conditions on God's love as if God needs to be protected; or cut off access to God as if we were the keeper of the heavenly gates.

We aren't. If we tie God's mercy to our own timidity and fear, we limit it to the size of our own minds. A bad game.

What God wants is for everyone, regardless of age, religion, culture, personal weakness, or lack of Christian practice, to come to the unlimited waters of divine mercy.

We are, I fear, stingy with God's prodigal mercy.

Serenity beats gadgetry any day in my book

HERE'S the hill I'll die on... domestic gadgets are useless clutter, the lot of them.

Apart from the essential of course ... I'm not suggesting we should be washing clothes in the bath! But gizmos, devices, the latest inventions and me are not a marriage made in Heaven.

My partner in actual marriage puts up a spirited rebuttal when I make the case for a new vacuum cleaner, which is way more often than national average.

We all know domestic appliances have inbuilt obsolescence. No need for that when I'm around. If it's got a plug, I'll kill it in jig time.

Take the banana tree for example. It's supposed to prevent browning and other first world problems. While it had a moment of popularity I'm sure it's not a 'must-have' when any young couple is setting up home.

In many variations the food chopper and blender has been on the market since the early post-war years. Yet you never see an influencer using one in her Insta-update.

That's because language



Mary's musings

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



unbecoming is not a great look for a pristine yummy mummy preparing a kale and almond milk smoothie as part of her morning wellness ritual.

Back in the 80s I had a Braun Multipractic. It was

the kitchen essential no self-respecting newly-wed would be without. It was also the least-used.

It was sold as labour saving when chopping, blending and whatever else it did. That may or may not

have been true. Unless you cleaned the beast aggressively you had more chance of ending up with salmonella than a moist and light Victoria sponge.

A friend who was an early adopter of the travesty of efficiency and ergonomics that is the potato ricer told me if she leaves it until after dinner to wash it, it takes a jackhammer to dislodge the potato.

Reward

Mashing never did my generation or those gone to their eternal reward any harm. Far from it; we've got the forearms to prove it. When age might otherwise diminish our muscle mass years of mashing tatties has given us some pushback.

But who said smooth and fluffy mash should be the nirvana of our existence. A few lumps here and there happily transport us to the tea-times of our childhood when our harried mothers served us mince and lumpy potatoes and it didn't mar our psychological well-being.

Only those who have either entirely lost their marbles or have money to burn

will succumb to an upcoming trend - the clothes ladder. For clothes that are not clean enough to be returned to the wardrobe yet too clean for the laundry basket. You could write the script for how that would turn out in my house.

One of my children who shall remain nameless had such a fulsome bundle on an exercise bike that when another of them went to look for said bike it took a week to work out (no pun intended) where it was.

Apart from my inability to keep my appliances in working order and my aversion to gadgets I'm taken by the ideas of living simply and the spirit of detachment.

When our hearts and thoughts are filled with material possessions and our happiness depends on our next acquisition, we leave no room for God. His space and importance in our lives gets diminished.

In living simply our material consumption declines and we live sustainably and in solidarity with the poor.

The old adage 'use what we need and need what we use' serves us well.

ART OF THE MONTH

Our Lady teaches us how to mourn without despair

PIETÀ, left unfinished by the aged hand of Titian, stands as something more than a masterpiece; it is a confession of faith.

The old painter, nearing the end of his earthly life, placed himself within the scene. That kneeling figure, stooped with years yet still clinging to Christ, is the ninety-year-old artist himself, pleading silently to God: these were not lost but were entrusted to the Blessed Mother of God.

There is, in the shadowed tones of Titian's painting, a strange and solemn light. It does not banish the sadness of death but softens its edges. It transfigures it from within.

Our Lady teaches us how to mourn without despair. How to love without clinging. How to hope when all seems lost. At the foot of the Cross, she received a Son whom she could not keep; and in so doing, she

BY MGR TOM MONAGHAN

received a motherhood that could never be taken away.

When a good priest is taken from us, we are invited to entrust him into those same maternal hands. She who held the broken Body of her Son now holds the soul of a priest who served her Son faithfully.

Patrick's years of hidden service, his fidelity in small things, his quiet endurance of trials known only to God: these were not lost but were entrusted to the Blessed Mother of God.

It was as though he had placed himself into the keeping of Our Lady; as though the hands that had so often offered the Holy Sacrifice were content, at last, to be folded in hers.

received a motherhood that could never be taken away.

When a good priest is taken from us, we are invited to entrust him into those same maternal hands. She who held the broken Body of her Son now holds the soul of a priest who served her Son faithfully. She does not forget or neglect her priests; she remembers them with a particular tenderness.

Titian's Pietà is, in the end, not a painting about death, but about the holiness that can inhabit death when it is united to Christ. It is a call to contemplation and also to trust. For if we have known a good priest, we have witnessed, however imperfectly, the life of Christ reflected in a human soul. And if we entrust him now to Our Lady, we may dare to believe that the final word has not been spoken by death, but by the quiet, enduring promise of resurrection.



PRAYER OF THE MONTH

O Blessed Mother, who received the lifeless Body of your Son with tender faith,

receive the souls of faithful priests, who, like the aged artist at the foot of the Pietà,

clung to Christ even in the hour of fading strength. Forget not those who have served your Son at the altar. Hold them close to your Immaculate Heart, until the sorrow of parting yields to the joy of the Resurrection. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The trauma of the children of violence

IT'S the children and young people who suffer most when countries are in turmoil or involved in conflict.

I arrived in Romania just days after Nicolae Ceauşescu and his wife Elena were executed on Christmas Day, 1989.

It wasn't a good way to start a new year - a photographer and I walked into a country where women had been forced to have children; where children who had any form of disability just didn't exist according to Ceauşescu. They were dispatched out of sight, and it is estimated that under his dictatorship from 1965-1989, over 15,000 children died in state-run orphanages and institutions.

We visited a number of those orphanages, both in the capital and in remote rural areas. Wherever they were, they were horrendous.



Marian Pallister

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

In the years which followed, I visited many more as they were being run down and comfortable foster homes were established. I reckon that the official figure of 15,000 deaths is low - but the deaths of the survivors lived in must have scarred them emotionally and physically for life.

Trauma is a word sometimes used casually these days. I would apply it with every ounce of its essence to the children and staff in those nightmarish establishments.

Of course, the staff were blamed for the conditions in the earliest days post Ceauşescu. But we found

that there was no funding, no replacement equipment, often no equipment in the first place - and no pay for the handful of staff caring for sometimes several hundred babies and young children.

The place with the broken washing machine, broken windows, dozens of children with disabilities, and six feet of snow outside sticks in my mind.

Dictators have this habit of destroying the lives of children.

There were (again an estimate) 1.5 million children - Jewish, Romani, German children with disabilities - murdered during the World

War II Holocaust. We never explored the effects on children who survived, many of them now coming to the natural end of their lives.

When turmoil erupts in any country, what is the effect on the children? Around 300,000 children were murdered during the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Over 95,000 children were orphaned, and around a third of all Rwandan children witnessed the slaughter of family members. Not surprisingly, peace remains a stranger in that area of Africa.

Who is considering the effects of the current war on Iran? A war where on the very first day of action, two missile strikes on Shajareh Tayyebeh school killed over 168 people, including 110 children. Yes, the UN's human rights chief has urged the US to investigate (surely not the right country to investigate). But who is car-



ing for the survivors?

Who is making sure that surviving children in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon will be able to handle life in the future? My friends in Palestine say that for their children, trauma is on-going. Seeing parents, siblings, friends, pets and homes destroyed in front of their eyes must leave deep and lasting emotional damage.

Is this all part of the plan? Is the anger, the madness, and the power-seeking we witness in today's leaders so all-consuming that the suffering of children can be dismissed as of no consequence?

The children will grow up. We reap what we sow. Of course I believe that working for a nonviolent world is a better option.

Sunday scriptures can help us to keep alive the joy of the Resurrection as Pentecost beckons

WE are well into the Easter season, and indeed by the end of this month we will have returned to the “green” colours of the Ordinary weeks of the year.

In our Sunday – and especially in our weekday – First Readings, we hear of the growth of the Church in Acts of the Apostles and in the Gospel passages, move on from the Resurrection appearances of Jesus to something more reflective, about who Jesus is and what this new life means for us.

Fifth Sunday of Easter, Year A

As the Good News spreads, the early community faces a practical issue of how to maintain and balance the preaching mission to grow the Church and the service of the needy in its fast-expanding communities (First Reading). Its response is to forge new forms of ministry.

Preaching, prayer and



Fr Tom Kilbride
Parish Priest of Christ the King, Glasgow

service are three aspects which are singled out as being of particular importance. The seven deacons who are selected are men “full of the Holy Spirit” and of faith.

By bringing God’s message and care to others, the Church does as Jesus did and so carries out what Jesus suggests in today’s Gospel, doing “the works that I do”. If Jesus came to show the Father, to be the Way, the Truth and the Life, then the Christian community carries out his work by reflecting that Truth, showing

the Way – Christ himself – and living his Life. We become, like him, a “royal priesthood” and in him, “a holy nation” (Second Reading), sharing in his mission and offering our sacrifice to God in witness, service and prayer.

Sixth Sunday of Easter, Year A

Like last week, the mission spreads (actually as a result of a persecution, although we don’t hear that in the selection for today). Preaching, prayer and serv-



disciples proclaiming “the mighty works of God” with the energy of the wind and the fire driving them outwards.

St Paul (Second Reading) reminds us that through our Baptism, we have all received that same Spirit which draws us into prayer, but also to service and to proclamation (saying “Jesus is Lord”), the same dynamic we have seen over these past few weeks. Eastertide begins and ends with Jesus giving the Holy Spirit and with mission. How will we carry it out in the weeks and months ahead is up to us, if we commit ourselves to using the gifts he gives us “for the common good”.

Trinity Sunday, Year A

Although we return to our “ordinary” season, we pause to celebrate God as Trinity. If there is a “theme” running through the readings for today, however, it is God as love. Rather than grapple with the great mystery of God, we instead hear about how God relates to us: as a God of love.

Moses encounters God in the First Reading as “a God merciful and gracious”, who reaches out to save his people with unending covenant fidelity, or “steadfast love” as it is translated here. That love is shown above all when Jesus comes (Gospel), sent because “God so loved the world”. What was true for the covenant people becomes true for all people – God wills that all people be saved, simply because he loves us so much! Paul ends his letter to the Corinthians by invoking that love of God upon them (Second Reading), a love represented by the three Persons of the Trinity, a unity-in-love, which becomes the hallmark of the community of believers themselves – comforting, restoring, agreeing with and living in peace with each other.

That is what proves that we believe in the “God of love”, Paul suggests, which takes us back to where May started: proclamation, service and prayer. These are the things that demonstrate our faith in the Risen Jesus, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, and responding to the unending love of the Father.

ice are again highlighted. Philip’s preaching and witness bring the Samaritans to faith, while the arrival of the apostles and their prayer bring them the Holy Spirit.

In the Gospel, Jesus says he will ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit on his disciples, and so he does. Peter and John mirror this prayer, and the Samaritans receive the Spirit too. That Spirit has been at work in Philip, bringing them to faith.

Peter (Second Reading) reminds us that God gives us the courage and the wisdom we need when we face opposition. The “Spirit of Truth” (Gospel) will help us give “reason for our hope” (Second Reading) when we are asked or challenged. But always with “gentleness and respect”, in other words living the love which Jesus says is at work in us when we are one with him and keep his commandments.

Seventh Sunday of Easter, Year A

After the Ascension, the Easter season takes our focus away from the expanding mission to bring us back to the Upper Room in Jerusalem, to join the Apostles, Mary and the others in praying for the Holy

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The life and death of a priest who brought God’s gentleness to countless souls

In the stillness of evening prayer, a life of more than half a century in the priesthood drew gently to its close.

BY MONSIGNOR TOM MONAGHAN

We had wondered if the Lord would call him on his patronal feast day but not so. It was after Vespers on the Vigil of the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the feast of his twin brother Joseph, that Father Patrick Gerard Currie entered into his final moments.

The liturgy had been offered with care and devotion: Vespers followed by Sacramental Absolution and a Spiritual Communion. It was, by all accounts, a moment both beautiful and sacred.

There was the quiet impression of a summons—an interior call that might be expressed in the simple words: “Enough now, Patrick. Give me your soul.” And so, it happened, peacefully and within the hour, this good priest, this most

beloved priest, of many years entered into the mystery he had so often preached: the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Father Currie’s priesthood stretched back over five decades, to a day in Saint Peter’s College, Cardross, when Archbishop James Donald Scanlan anointed his hands with Sacred Chrism and called him to serve.

From that moment forward, his life was given over to the care of souls, in ways both visible and unseen.

He came from a large and wonderful Dumbarton family who, like all of us, have been sharing many stories about Father Pat.

Some speak of lives quietly changed, others of souls guided back to faith. One priest, who had never met Fr Currie, recalls hearing, from his mother, how

Father Currie had saved her brother’s soul.

Countless such accounts coming to mind, form the fabric of memory and affection. They will endure in conversation, in parish halls, and in the recollections of those who knew him.

But to dwell only on such stories would be to miss something deeper.

Dedication

For the truest measure of this life is not found in anecdote, but in mystery: the mystery of grace at work in the hands of a good priest who was the very embodiment of priestly dedication.

Father Currie himself might well have resisted any attempt to catalogue his achievements and of what he had accomplished in the lives of so many parishioners. One can almost hear him say, quietly and firmly, “Keep to the Scriptures—and speak not of me, but of the Lord.”



When we speak of Father Currie as a “good priest,” we do so plainly, without exaggeration and without

rhetorical flourish. He was a good priest—not because of the stories told about him, nor even because of

the quiet acts of kindness that marked his ministry—but because he belonged to Christ, and Christ worked through him.

That is the goodness that endures. It does not depend on recognition or remembrance, but on grace.

It is the quiet shaping of a life according to the pattern of the Cross and the hope of the Resurrection.

In his final moments, having prayed Vespers for him and offered a Spiritual Communion, Father Currie received one last time the Lord he had so often held in his hands. It was a fitting conclusion: a priest meeting Christ at the threshold of eternity.

Now, those who remain are left with a simple and solemn duty: to pray for him, as he once prayed for them. For the one who held the Very Christ in his hands is now, we trust, held by Him and called to flourish in eternal life.

Requiescat in pace.

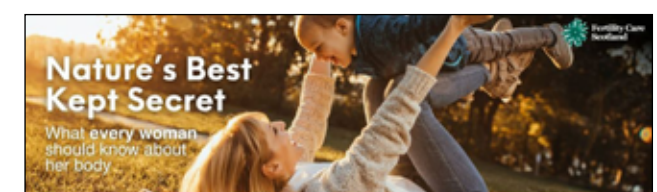


Fertility gathering

Fertility Care Scotland hosted a teacher training day recently at the Little Flower Hall, Carfin, joined by seven teachers from Ireland.

The Taking the Next Steps® course, presented by Toni Cameron and Marie Sandison, focused on developing teaching and chart interpretation skills, including identifying variants of ovarian activity within the continuum described by Professor James Brown.

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Hopes for the next Scottish Parliament

“CONTINUE to speak strongly against war, seeking to promote peace, dialogue, and multilateralism among states to find solutions to problems. Too many people are suffering today, too many innocent lives have been lost, and I believe someone must stand up and say there is a better way” – April 2026

Pope Leo's words are words for our time: the world is at a dangerous crossroads with the Iran conflict and an American President intent on getting his own way.

There are more conflicts now than any time in living memory. Diplomacy and negotiation skills have never been more needed amongst world leaders. We need a functioning multilateral system to discuss and resolve disputes reasonably. That's why Pope Leo's words have been so powerful. He speaks truth

Anne Callaghan

Advocacy and Campaigns Officer, SCIAF

to power.

When a new cohort of MSPs are elected to Scottish Parliament this month, we hope that they will follow Pope Leo's example: speaking out against injustice, and seeking peace in these troubled times. Our newly elected politicians will have a heavy burden on their shoulders; attending to the problems here in Scotland, while also making sure that Scotland stands in solidarity with our most vulnerable brothers and sister abroad.

At SCIAF, our mission is compelled by Christ's love. We work with those in the world's poorest places to end poverty, protect our common home, and help people recover from disaster. We inspire loving action in you, the Scottish Catholic community, to

sustain our work.

We believe that a green and just world is possible, if we put our faith into action. That's why we also campaign and make calls on governments like Scotland or the UK to take positive action.

We hope the next Scottish Government will make sure Scotland continues to be a good Global Citizen – and speak up for those people who would be silenced by wars and conflicts, ravaged by hunger or disease, or be condemned to an unlivable planet without access to water – all because of human-induced climate change.

We want to see Scotland continue to be a good Samaritan – it can do this by providing funds for international development, to



help people build a future free from poverty and injustice.

It can also continue to fund a climate justice fund for those communities facing the ravages of climate change and significantly increase humanitarian support to respond to crises around the world.

Scotland could also create a Centre for Excellence

in Scottish universities to help share learning and best practice on how to go about addressing the impacts of climate change, called Loss and Damage, in communities around the world.

SCIAF wants to see Scotland be bold and speak up on the international stage and help champion causes such as global debt, climate

change action and peace.

It also means getting things right at home in cutting emissions and making polluters, like those using private jets pay for their climate damages. We know that those most deeply affected by climate change are those who live in poorer countries who have done the least to cause climate change.

Future

It means Scotland signing up to the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and joining other progressive nations who recognise that the writing is on the wall for fossil fuels and the future is renewables.

Wouldn't it be nice to not be subject to the whims of dictators or would-be dictators? It would help address fuel poverty at home, too. All reputable scientists and economists say the sooner we make the changes, the cheaper it will be.

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