

FLOURISH

Official Journal of the Archdiocese of Glasgow November 2020

Let not your hearts be troubled



BLESSED CARLO
Saintly hero for youth
PAGE 2

LET not your hearts be troubled ... trust in God, yes, and trust in Me.
These words from St John's Gospel are, in a way, "November words".
So often they are used in funeral liturgies and Masses for the dead. And this month too they will bring us comfort as we remember our loved ones who have gone before us to the Father's house where there are many rooms.
But this is a November like no other.
The pandemic means that our minds are strained by uncertainty, our hearts break with sorrow and our souls are filled with anxiety. We need more than ever to hear those "November words" ...
Let not your hearts be troubled ... trust in God, yes, and trust in Me.
And yet amid the restrictions the Church is alive, active, creative in reaching out to the world. In this special edition of *Flourish* we focus on the great work being done across the Archdiocese and beyond.
New initiatives abound, new forms of outreach are taking place, love is slowly but surely conquering fear.
In the words of Archbishop Tartaglia: "Holiness in the time of a pandemic calls us to love our neighbour, comfort them, protect them and keep them safe...In this pandemic, we need to be strengthened, consoled and guided by the word of Christ."
Let us cling to those words of Christ this month, those "November words" ...
Let not your hearts be troubled ... trust in God, yes, and trust in Me.



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Archbishop says blessed teenager points the way for young people

DURING Pope Benedict XVI's memorable visit to Scotland and England 10 years ago in 2010, it was striking that he addressed our young people in a very personal and fatherly way, inviting them to become "the saints of the 21st century."

Well, last month, in Assisi, as if to respond to that invitation, a young Italian teenager was declared Blessed. He is Carlo Acutis, whom a prominent Catholic news agency described as "the first millennial to be declared a Blessed."

He was born in London in 1991 to Italian parents, after which his family moved to Milan in Italy where Carlo began to grow up. Sadly, young Carlo contracted leukaemia and died at the age of 15, but not before giving a witness of holiness that could not be ignored. Carlo's sanctity was recognised definitively by Pope Francis who authorised his beatification in Assisi. Blessed Carlo's body will remain in Assisi, a place that he loved, for the veneration of the faithful.

I think that Blessed Carlo's witness of holiness is important for today's young people and for the Church in this age for a number of reasons:

Blessed Carlo shows that today's young people can become the saints of the 21st

BY ARCHBISHOP PHILIP TARTAGLIA

century. As his mother freely admits, Carlo was a boy who was not brought up in an especially religious family setting. Yet God touched his heart and filled him with a desire to follow Jesus such that he evangelised his parents rather than they him, and brought them back to the practice of their baptismal faith.

Blessed Carlo's life shows that God loves us and is present to us and calls us in whatever circumstances we find ourselves to follow Jesus. I think that is an important message for today's young people especially who live in the midst of a world that is often godless. God always calls. God always loves. God is always present.

Young Carlo was captivated by the person of Jesus. He wanted to follow Jesus and be like him, which is the key to holiness. The principal way in which Carlo encountered the person of Jesus was in the Eucharist. He went to Mass and received Holy Communion as often as he could, and he brought his Mum and Dad back to Mass. His whole spirituality was based on the foundation of the presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist.

He often said, "The Eucharist is my highway to

heaven", words that were re-quoted at the Mass of Beatification in Assisi. Blessed Carlo's profound awareness of the presence of Christ in his life is a huge message for us today and for young people today. Jesus is much more than a symbol or an ideal. He is a person, real, living and true, that we encounter most wonderfully and most fully in the Eucharist. In a time like just now, when our access to Mass is limited, it is important to believe and to recognise that the Eucharist is the key to following Jesus and to Christian life.

Witness

Young Carlo's witness to Jesus was also expressed in his love and practical concern for his neighbour. Those who tell his story say that he defended and stood up for young people who were being mistreated and bullied at school, which is a very contemporary concern. He also tried to help other young people whose families were in difficulty and whose parents were breaking up. He had a very particular concern for young people with special needs. Blessed Carlo's life and witness reflected the great commandment to love God above all things and our



neighbour as ourself.

Carlo's entire life on this earth was as a child and as a young person, and he was rooted in his own times. Like many a young boy or girl, he loved football. But perhaps his belonging to the present time was reflected most directly in the fact that he had played computer games and developed computer skills. Remembering that he died in 2006, his favourite console for computer games was PlayStation 2, which was state of the art at the time, but has probably now been surpassed by more advanced models. Carlo said

that he tried to use his computer skills to bring Jesus to as many people as he could. One of his achievements in this area was to build a website dedicated to the Holy Eucharist, which brings us back to the foundation of his spirituality.

Young Carlo sadly contracted leukaemia, and this very grave illness constituted his final witness to Jesus. He said that he offered his suffering and his death for the Church and for the Pope. Carlo is entombed in Assisi wearing the uniform of Generation Z, his tracksuit and trainers. Blessed Carlo

Acutis is indeed a saint for the 21st century who will be forever young.

In the Gospel, Jesus invites us all to come to the wedding feast of eternal life. Blessed Carlo accepted that invitation wholeheartedly. He accepted and he presented himself, clothed in the garments of holiness. Remembering the words of Jesus in the gospel that many are called but few are chosen, may we too follow the way of the Lord and at the end be clothed in the garments of salvation, through the grace of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.



Dominican Nuns of the Perpetual Rosary

Praying at the Heart of the Church

"Only in Heaven will we understand how much the prayer of cloistered religious effectively accompanies apostolic action!" Pope Benedict XVI

To follow Christ in the footsteps of St. Dominic – this is our Dominican vocation.

Young women discerning their vocation to the religious life are encouraged to write to:

**Mother Prioress
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www.fatima-dominicans.com
vocations@mail.telepac.pt**

To JESUS through MARY!

Canon Robert hangs up his Flourish quill

In the beginning was the word... and after producing more than three quarters of a million of them for **Flourish**, Canon Robert Hill, is now hanging up his quill.

For the past 16 years, Canon Hill, parish priest at St Matthew's Bishopbriggs, has faithfully, and in his unique style, interpreted the words of Scripture for our readers, offering scholarly and practical insights into the Sunday readings, but now feels the time is right, with the recent reopening of his newly refurbished church, to step down.

BY BRIAN SWANSON

He said: "It's been an immense pleasure for me to contribute to *Flourish* over the years and I hope that my successor enjoys it as much as I have."

Canon Hill, a priest for more than 40 years, has always been keen to keep his Scripture reflections and parish work separate by rising early to begin writing with his devoted dog Barney acting as his alarm clock.

Canon Hill, who has also written books of Gospel reflections available on Kindle

Picture: Paul McSherry



said: "Barney always makes sure I'm up around 5:30 and then after he's been dragged round the park I start work. This is a hobby for me and one I enjoy very much."

Archbishop Philip paid a special tribute to the Canon on behalf of all *Flourish* readers. He said: "I am very grateful to Canon Robert Hill for providing commentary on Scripture passages for

Flourish for the last 16 years. Canon Hill is one of our distinguished specialists in Sacred Scripture. In his articles, he has brought erudition, spirituality and pastoral experience to the commentaries he has written for the pages of *Flourish*.

"On behalf of all *Flourish* readers, thank you Canon Robert."

Restoring the saints

If you happen to drop into St Brigid's church in Toryglen anytime soon, prepare to be impressed.

A surprise legacy has paid for a long-planned project at the southside church which had been put on hold indefinitely because of lack of funds.

Thanks to money bequeathed by devoted parishioner Cathie Clark, 79, who died 18 months ago, four devotional statues in the church have now been professionally restored after many years.

Parish Priest, Father Gerry Byrne, said: "This wonderful gift has brought joy to the parish especially at such a difficult time. We are extremely grateful."

Father Byrne said: "The statues of St Brigid, St Therese, the Little Flower, St Patrick and St Joseph have been in the church for as long as the oldest parishioner can remember and it had been in my mind for a long time to have them restored and placed in a more prominent position."

"I was quoted £2300 by a professional firm of restorers but clearly we could not

BY BRIAN SWANSON

afford that so I just left it."

But a phone call changed everything.

Father Byrne said: "Not long after I had put the statues' restoration on hold I received a phone call from a relative telling me that they had £2000 from Cathie's estate."

"It wasn't a will as such, but her family made sure we received the money to use as we saw fit and right away I knew the money would go to pay for restoring the statues."

"Cathie was extremely well known in the parish, she faithfully visited the sick for many years and attended Mass almost every day. She had a particular devotion to St Patrick and she would be pleased to see him restored."

A relative said: "I'm sure Cathie would be delighted to see all the statues restored. She was a woman who lived for her faith."

"But she was quite private so she'd be surprised at the fuss. She will always be in our prayers."

Picture: Paul McSherry



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News and views for FLOURISH:

flourish@rcag.org.uk

AGAP goes digital

WORKING our way through movie franchises has been a Godsend for my family over the past seven months.

From trilogies like "The Hunger Games" and "The Lord of the Rings" to sprawling epic series like the Marvel movies, my wife and I value that stolen hour or two at night when the kids are in bed and we can curl up on the couch with a good film.

My relationship with film goes all the way back to my childhood and developed in my adult life, as I came to study theatre, film and television at university. It was only natural that I should bring this enthusiasm with me to AGAP.

Since 2012, we've run a Film and Faith Club which met on the first Thursday of every month. Throughout those eight years, we've explored every genre of film and discussed the faith aspects within, sometimes obvious and sometimes not.

These days, our relationship with screens of all sizes – TVs, computers, tablets, smartphones – has become part of almost every experience. Perhaps, more than ever, we are all thinking like mini-movie makers, carefully considering what appears in the frame before we take part in a video chat or a virtual meeting.

This month, AGAP launches the second part of our online series of educational videos on Catholicism in the Movies. It focuses on fantasy cinema and continues some of the ideas developed in part one, which focussed on the horror genre. Part three, deals with action, drama and religious films, and will be released in December. All of these videos, along with several virtual art exhibi-

tions and theatre productions, are available to watch for free on our YouTube Channel at www.youtube.com/agapchannel

Unless things change very quickly, it looks like Lentfest 2021 will be a virtual festival. Looking at this positively, it might just enable many more people to take part. As such, we are looking for artists, musicians, poets and others to get in touch with us if they would like to take part in an online festival... which for the first time could have a worldwide audience! More details will appear on our new website soon.

Until we can all meet again safely, the work of AGAP will continue virtually, exploring our faith through the arts through by every available means...so I had better tidy that corner behind me before it shows up on your screen!

Clergy moves

■ Archbishop Tartaglia has made a number of clerical appointments: He has transferred Fr Augustine Abayomi temporarily from the Cathedral to St Peter's, Partick, while Canon McBride is on sick leave. Fr Charles Randall CSSR will serve as temporary Assistant at St Andrew's Cathedral.

Meanwhile Deacon Eddie McDonald has been appointed to St Thomas' and St Bernadette's Parishes. The Archbishop also thanked Fr Joseph McNulty for looking after St Joseph's Milngavie while Father Patrick Currie is recuperating from illness.



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St Nicholas Care Fund
A charity of the Archdiocese of Glasgow

The St. Nicholas Care Fund continues to offer grant assistance to charitable organisations and local groups supporting those in need particularly at this time of uncertainty. Applications will be being dealt with as soon as they are received. Information and guidance is available at pct@rcag.org.uk

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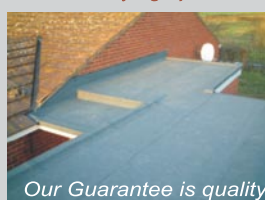
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Happy birthday to Radio Alba

THE birthday candles must remain unlit for now and the party can wait, but as Radio Alba reaches its seventh anniversary this month, there's still much to celebrate.

Formed as a volunteer-run online ecumenical Christian radio station, backed by the Archdiocese of Glasgow and Glasgow Churches Together, the station attracted impressive numbers of listeners from its inception but during and after lockdown, these figures have increased dramatically.

In response to listener demand it has also greatly expanded its news and music content while remaining true to its founding principle of bringing prayer back into the public domain - a need that has never been more apparent than during the current pandemic.

Radio Alba co-founder, Monsignor Gerry Fitzpatrick, parish priest of St Leo's, Dumbreck and director of music for the Archdiocese said: "Looking back over the past year our outreach was at its most effective during the first pandemic lockdown when we had over 8000 listeners weekly - clearly people were looking for support."

"The Covid crisis has certainly encouraged people to pray for healing but what many people may not know is that realise that in Glasgow we have our own traditional healer saint. St Roch's parish in Garngad is the successor to the medieval chapel in that area."

"He is identified with the sick and although he was arrested as a tramp and died in prison he is still revered the length and breadth of western Europe and so we include a prayer to St Roch as often as we can."

"Our resources for Morning, Evening and Night Prayer are very much based on the Prayer of the Church - but they are shorter and we are open to fresh material particularly from other churches and religious organisations working for the common good and social justice."

Working closely with other churches has always been at the heart of Radio Alba's broadcasts particularly in their recently expanded



WORDS **BRIAN SWANSON**
PICTURES **ROBERT WILSON**

magazine section.

A firm favourite with listeners is a section called Chatterbox presented by Methodist minister Rev Elizabeth Adam. She said: "During these dark days, many people feel weary and isolated. So it's good to be able to tune in to Radio Alba Christian Internet Radio at radioalba.org, and remind ourselves that we are not alone in our discipleship. The beauty of it is that you can listen anywhere: at home, in hospital, or maybe even during a break at work."

"Chatterbox provides a light-hearted safe place for Christians of all denominations to connect with their faith and each other. As the name suggests, it's a chatty show, interspersed with music, poems, stories, and trivia. Our most popular feature is the regular conversations with Christians who have something inspiring to share with us."

Monsignor Fitzpatrick, who stressed that Radio Alba depends on a small army of helpers working behind the scenes, added: "It has always seemed important to us to provide news of the progress made with the churches working together for the benefit of the whole community."

"For example Marian Palister of Justice and Peace,

Scotland gives us a regular monthly input and we make a point of keeping in touch with Pope Francis exercising his apostolic care. We cover news about the Holy Land, and many ecumenical enterprises."

"We were glad to publicise the statement against Nuclear Weapons by the Bishops Conference. Looking ahead to Glasgow's hosting of COP 26, the international climate change conference in November next year we hope to be able to sustain an informative preparation for such a vitally important event too."

Asked how he saw the future of Radio Alba Monsignor Fitzpatrick said: "We have come a long way since

the early days when an ecumenical online Christian radio station was just an idea talked about among a group of like-minded friends

"But now we are now very much part of life in the Archdiocese and among the churches but it is vital that we continue to receive support. There are more than 40 volunteers involved already but we need more with fresh ideas and enthusiasm to help us to keep the Gospel and the Christian life as a creative influence in the marketplace of the media."

"Meanwhile here's to the next seven years and beyond!"

■ For more information visit radioalba.org.

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POEM OF THE MONTH

This is William Shakespeare's Sonnet LXXIII, the Roman numeral indicating 73. The bard was not imagining some future event but, although only about 36 at the time of writing, he was aware of the onset of age, the autumn of his years. He would die at the age of 52.

That time of year thou may'st in me behold

When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang

Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,

Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

In me thou see'st the twilight of such day

As after sunset fadeth in the west;

Which by and by black night doth take away,

Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.

In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,

That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,

As the death-bed, whereon it must expire,

Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by.

This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,

To love that well, which thou must leave ere long.



Art of the month

Heaven is our destiny

CATHOLICS worth their salt know that this is the month of the Holy Souls. Our poem, written in days when the expectation of years was shorter than it perhaps is today, reflects an awareness that death comes to us all.

"When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang" - just as surely as the fading leaves are blown away and decay, so will come the day when we "must leave ere long."

We may think of November as the time when we "shake against the cold," but rather we should think of it as the particular month when we pray and offer sacrifices for the souls in Purgatory.

The name purgatory is derived from the Latin verb 'purgare,' meaning to purge or to cleanse.

BY MGR TOM
MONAGHAN

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, purgatory may best be thought of as a process, or state of purification. In our honest moments we know that while we may be in a state of grace and free of mortal sins, we are guilty of venial sins or we have failed to do full penance for sins already forgiven.

Purgatory is God's gift to us where we are purified of any attachment to sin. Following death, and after being prepared for heaven, purified souls will enjoy the fullness of the Beatific Vision.

For that reason, I have not chosen

a frightening or horrific work depicting Purgatory but one of Jesus who loves us as a father loves his children and who welcomes us in His name, wishing us to be with Him in Heaven.

This painting entitled "Suffer the little children come to me" dates from 1923 and is the work of Juliaan de Vriedt who lived in Belgium. The children gather around a loving Jesus intent on his tender words. The adults are pushing their children forward as pilgrims do nowadays in the presence of the Pope. There is such joy and happiness.

They have passed through the harsh desert pictured in the top left-hand side and are with the Lord who sits in front of the fruitful vine.

With your help we can give the gift of fresh water

WATER, water everywhere. It falls from the skies, it flows into our homes and runs between our fingers as we scrub away at our hands.

We've never been using more of it, according to Scottish Water. At points this year more than 200 litres a day per person in Scotland and that's just for household use.

When you have something 'on tap' there's a tendency to take it for granted. We are lucky. Around the world 1 in 10 people, hundreds of millions of people, do not have clean drinking water.

What a scandal that is!

What could be more basic than safe drinkable water, the thing most necessary for our survival.

The book of Genesis reminds of this when it says, in the beginning, the spirit of the Creator 'swept over the face of the waters'. We are each about 60% water and we are bound up with it for every moment of our lives. And when we're deprived of it, tragedy follows.

In Laudato Si Pope Francis spelt out just what that looks like:

"Every day, unsafe water results in many deaths and the spread of water-related diseases, including those



Alistair Dutton
Chief Executive, SCIAF

caused by microorganisms and chemical substances. Dysentery and cholera, linked to inadequate hygiene and water supplies, are a significant cause of suffering and infant mortality. Detergents and chemical products, commonly used in many places of the world, continue to pour into our rivers, lakes

and seas."

And it's getting worse. Climate change means extreme weather events and changes in rain patterns are making it more difficult to have safe drinking water, especially for the most vulnerable children.

I've been very fortunate to visit SCIAF projects all over the world and every-

where I've seen how hard clean water is to come by. Even the dirtiest water sources are often miles from people's home, and the greatest burden falls on young women and girls.

Their days are spent carrying colossal loads on their heads for hours to fetch water. It's grueling and it means women cannot do other work that provides for their families. It means that young girls cannot go to school and learn the skills they need to break the cycles of poverty and powerlessness.

At SCIAF we know that dirty water kills the poorest first.

That's why we are appealing to you this Advent to help us raise as much as we can to help as many people as possible have clean water. On the Cross, Jesus said, 'I thirst' and those words echo down the ages. Too many of our sisters and brothers live those words every day.

There is no doubt that this will be a hard winter, a hard Christmas. The hardest we've known in this country for many, many years.

Yet there are still so many, so much worse off than us.

We cannot forsake them.

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Email: theJerichosociety@gmail.com

AFTER months of Covid-enforced closure the Ozanam Centre in the Brig-gait has once again opened its doors to provide hot meals for those who desperately need them.

And although the St Vincent de Paul Society-run centre stays true to its 'welcome the stranger' philosophy, it has to be done with current restrictions in place.

The biggest change is that fewer clients can be accommodated because at the time of writing the centre is open for just a few hours on a Thursday evening.

Over the months, Our Lady of the Wayside Conference members and volunteers have made it their key mission to put the correct measures in place in order to reopen in a safe way – always considering the safety of those who come for help as well as the volunteers.

"It's all small steps but that's the way it has to be for now" said Carol Picken, a long serving volunteer with the society which has had a presence in the Saltmarket since the early seventies.

She added: "We provide meals for men on a Thurs-

WORDS **BRIAN SWANSON**
PICTURES **PAUL MCSHERRY**

day where normally we would have around 30 coming through the door but now we have to strictly limit numbers to no more than ten and of course we obey all the regulations and there are pages of them!"

That means that masks are handed out at the door, clients enter one at a time, sanitise their hands and take their places on seats placed two metres apart in a circle.

Carol said: "We also wear masks, gloves and aprons while we take their orders and then bring food to them. It's a shame they can't socialise afterwards but that's just the way it has to be and the guys understand that."

While the popular Sunday lunch club remains closed it is likely that the centre will soon once again provide meals for women on a Tuesday evening.

"It will take a lot of planning – everything is softly softly at the moment," Carol said, "but there's no question that we will close or stop providing for those who need it – we do what we do because we love it. It's as simple as that."

Through liaison with neighbouring charities and support groups, the Ozanam Centre was able to make good use of the essential supplies and clothing that



were already in stock before lockdown but is unable to accept donations meantime.

The Ozanam Centre began in Candleriggs in 1974 offering retreats on Friday evenings and 12 years later it moved to Parnie Street where it opened up to help men and women and serving food for 10 years. The

Ozanam Centre moved to its current location in 2006. The centre is named after Frederic Ozanam who founded the society in Paris in 1833.

■ To find out how to help contact the national office of the Society of St Vincent de Paul on 0141 226 8833.

HOSPITAL CHAPLAINS

All chaplains can be contacted through the patient's ward.

Queen Elizabeth University Hospital & Royal Hospital for Children

Rev. Ambrose Ohene CSSp
Rev. Thomas Wilberforce CSSp
Rev. Andrew McGowan
Rev. Deacon Michael O'Donnell

Royal Infirmary

Rev. Charles Randall CSsR
Rev. Desmond Agomuo SMMM

Stobhill Hospital

Rev. John McGrath

COVID-19

All chaplains should be permitted to visit patients in hospital where necessary, as long as it is safe to do so and all necessary hygiene measures are observed.

Measures are in place to enable the priest to pray with the patient by phone or by video-call if the priest is not able to attend. Each ward also has information on the Papal Indulgence and Prayer Resources which the patient can be given.

The declaration below can be given to nursing staff on admission. However, the patient or a family member or friend can also ask the staff to contact the priest on call.

For more information contact Deacon Michael O'Donnell at Michael.Odonnell@rcag.org.uk

ADMISSION TO HOSPITAL

The patient or a relative should give the declaration below to ward staff to ensure the patient can see a chaplain. This can also be arranged by a verbal request to staff. This is necessary due to confidentiality rules: the Catholic Chaplain is not informed of the admission of any Catholics so ward staff need to be asked to inform him by the patient or by someone close.

PATIENT'S RELIGIOUS DECLARATION

I am a Roman Catholic. While a patient in hospital, I wish to exercise my human right, as enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights of practising my Religion.

I request that the Roman Catholic Chaplain be informed of my admission to hospital, and that I receive a visit from the Roman Catholic Chaplain.

I give explicit consent for this information to be made available to the Roman Catholic Chaplain and I would request that this document form part of my personal case notes.

Signed:

Spanish College surprise

WHAT is thought to be the last play that Shakespeare wrote, lost for more than 400 years, has been discovered in the library of the Royal Scots College in Salamanca.

Entitled *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, it was written by Shakespeare and fellow playwright John Fletcher, and found by a researcher investigating the work of the Scots economist Adam Smith

Experts believe the play was written in 1613 and the Salamanca version, contained in a volume of numerous other English plays, was printed in 1634 making it one of the oldest Shakespearean works in existence. It is also believed to be the last play he wrote before retiring to Stratford-on-Avon where he died in 1616 at the age of 52.

Described as a "tragicomedy" the play features best friends, who are knights captured in a battle.

From the window of their



BY **BRIAN SWANSON**

prison they see a beautiful woman with whom they each fall in love and their friendship turns to hatred.

The play was discovered in the college library by Dr John Stone of the University of Barcelona, who said: "It is likely these plays were acquired around 1635 by an English or Scottish traveller who might have wanted to take these plays – all London editions – with him to the college which was in Madrid at the time."

"That small community of Scots was briefly the most significant intellectual bridge between the Spanish and English-speaking worlds."

College rector Father Tom Kilbride said: "It says a lot about the kind of education the trainee priests were getting from the foundation of the college in Madrid in 1627, a rounded education in which the culture of the period played an important part."

"To think that plays would have been read, and possibly performed at that time is quite exciting."

"There was clearly a great interest in Spain at that time in English literature."

The RSC no longer trains men for the priesthood in Scotland, but offers preparatory six-month courses for those expressing a vocation, and holds regular retreats and conferences for the Scottish Catholic community.

Honours for our local heroes

THE head of one of Scotland's largest Catholic schools and a restaurant owner who gave thousands of free meals to NHS workers and others at the height of the pandemic, have been recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours list.

John Docherty, 63, who has been head of St Ninian's

High School, Giffnock, for the past 15 years, was made an OBE for his services to education over a 41-year career.

He said: "I am absolutely humbled to be awarded with this amazing honour and it is a sense of great pride for me and my family.

"I love teaching and get

WORDS **BRIAN SWANSON**
PICTURES **PAUL MCSHERRY**

great satisfaction from seeing pupils develop and become confident individuals who are ready for the next stage in their lives. Throughout my whole career I have been fortunate to work with so many great colleagues, with many guiding me so wisely in the early part of my career.

"It is such a privilege to be the head teacher at St Ninian's and I am thrilled to have been recognised in this way for doing a job which I absolutely love."

Last year St Ninian's, which has a roll of 1800, was given the best ever secondary inspection report issued by Education Scotland.

Also recognised in the

Honours list with an MBE is David Maguire, 62, owner of 1051 GWR restaurant, near Gartnavel Hospital, whose early response to the needs of frontline workers struggling families and the homeless, became a model for others to follow.

In partnership with local parishes, including St Gregory's, Wyndford and St Andrews, Bearsden, David and his staff worked round the clock to keep their food banks constantly stocked.

But what many did not know that while he was helping others his wife Veronica was shielding during the early part of lockdown and that he spent eleven weeks living alone in his garage.

David, whose uncle is well known Glasgow priest Monsignor Des Maguire, said: "A lot of our customers are



nurses from Gartnavel and we all knew the great work they were doing from the very start of the pandemic.

"When they came in looking exhausted and stressed we looked at each other and said ... 'we just can't charge them.'

"We're just making pizza and pasta but they were, and are, risking their lives to keep going with their patients, so we thought we'll just give it to them and it just went from there."

Over the next eleven

weeks, as he and his team served 800 meals daily, David set up a fundraising campaign with £10,000 of his own money, which eventually raised more than £68,000.

He said: "The GWR kind of changed from being a restaurant to a massive food production centre but this would never have happened without the team behind me.

"I'm very pleased with the MBE but it's not for me – it's for everybody involved."

Brother Walfrid: a story worth telling

As the world's first PhD into the life of Celtic founder Brother Walfrid nears completion, Stirling University postgraduate student, Michael Connolly looks back on his three-year journey to discover the man behind the myths

A WISE man once told me "the best PhD thesis is a completed PhD thesis".

As I sit here typing away in my makeshift home office – thank you Covid for forcing me to organise the books and countless bundles of articles – I can finally start to envisage that Holy Grail: a finished thesis on the life of Brother Walfrid.

Beginning in September 2017 I threw myself, more or less overnight, from working full time as a postman into this research project. The aim was and remains a simple one – to learn as much as is possible about the life and times of Brother Walfrid, known by many as the founder of Celtic Football Club.

After meeting with my supervisory team at the University I quickly set about first of all identifying what had – and hadn't – already been written about such a famous figure in the story of Irish Catholicism in this country.

Year one would be focussed solely on scouring this material and reading as widely as possible around the subject himself.

Exodus from Ireland following *An Gorta Mor* – 'The Great Hunger' – the subsequent revival of Catholicism in Scotland and the rise of football as the game of the urban working class were

three of the key themes to come out of that process.

The second year of the project involved more 'field work' – going out to the places so important to understanding the lived experience of Brother Walfrid.

Funded throughout my thesis by Glasgow Arts group Nine Muses, my travels took me to London, Sligo and eventually Lyon to begin filling out the picture we have inherited of the Marist teaching Brother who started that world-renowned football team in Glasgow.

The Celtic connection is, of course, inseparable from any discussion of Brother Walfrid – whether meeting with Marist Brothers in France or punters in a Ballymote pub in the West of Ireland or officials from Celtic and the Club's charitable Foundation, is the enduring legacy of Brother Walfrid's life.

But as I was to discover that life had much more to it than simply the creation of a football team...

Taking part in some of the Foundation's fund-raising events in recent years, especially, has driven home the fact that the memory of Brother Walfrid continues to have an important role today.

The previous academic year just finished saw me begin to piece together the



new pieces of information uncovered over the course of the research, sourced from archives in four different countries; the product of countless hours working at library desks with pen and paper.

Often hidden in dusty old registers and overlooked for so many years in most instances, it was from these sometimes-obscure locations that a fuller picture began to emerge of an extraordinary life.

So, with the end goal in sight, over the academic year of 2020/21 that completed story will be told, slowly but surely.

Brother Walfrid lived a life

unlike so many people of his time and the breadth of his historical insight in his life has been hugely eye-opening for me. I hope many more feel the same and I cannot wait to share what I've discovered!

Every day it seems I learn something more about him with many details coming from *Flourish* readers like yourselves.

So if you're interested in the research project itself, want to learn more or contribute some memories or information then feel free to contact me via Twitter @WalfridPhD or by email: michael.connolly1@stir.ac.uk

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St Matthew's is as good as new

HAD it been normal times every pew, you can be sure, would be filled to capacity. Who's not to say it would have been standing room only?

Certainly a number of priests would have gathered with great joy to say Mass and celebrate the completion of the £1m-plus refurbishment of St Matthew's, Bishopbriggs.

But although these are not normal times there was no disguising the delight behind the now familiar masks of parishioners celebrating with parish priest Canon Robert Hill at the first Masses in their newly opened church.

They might have been limited by numbers but their joy, and yes, pride, was boundless.

It could not be otherwise, as it was parishioners like themselves who had worked so hard fundraising over the years to turn a blueprint into a building now described by many as Bishopbriggs' beacon of light.

It has taken three years, but what a building, flooded with light and beauty, has been created inside the shell



of the original church built in the dark post-war year of 1946.

Today the new enemy is not Germany but a germ.

It delayed the refurbishment project by a good six

months, but once again, as in the past, the dedication and hard work of priest and parishioners combined triumphed.

In time St Matthew's will again see the faithful

file into the church in large numbers, celebrate Mass and listen to the Word of God, but for now who better than Canon Hill to give *Flourish* readers his personal social-distanced guide to the

striking new look church?

"You can appreciate at once why our refurbished church is already being described as an icon in the village – the outside is stunning with a combination of

WORDS **BRIAN SWANSON**
PICTURES **PAUL MCSHERRY**

modern architecture and the original 1946 design in perfect harmony. And from a practical point of view the area is much less cluttered!

Entrance to the church itself is, of course to your right as you go through the door, but take a look straight ahead first. There is a beautiful contemporary painting by local artist, teacher and parishioner Rosemary McAuley, of our patron, St. Matthew, the tax collector...

When you go through the glass doors, you will immediately see the new baptismal font, stationed near the main entrance and available for people to dip their hand in the baptismal water to make the sign of the cross – a reminder of our own baptism.

Around the font there is much more space than the church had before.

It is here that baptisms will be celebrated, while the space allows for more processions to and from the font during the celebration of the sacrament.



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We are delighted to complete the refurbishment of **St. Matthews church** in Bishopbriggs.

This project involved building an individually designed extension together with carrying out an extensive refurbishment of existing for which works included, new roof covering, floor tiling, updated mechanical, electrical and ventilation systems amongst other trades.

The new extension, which is fully glazed and designed to allow additional daylight into the building is now one of the church's biggest assets. As well as this, the refurbishment saw a new pedestrian access ramp added to the front of the extension to allow easier access. Internally, there was new toilets created at the rear of the church, new Bespoke Pews and updated altar furniture.

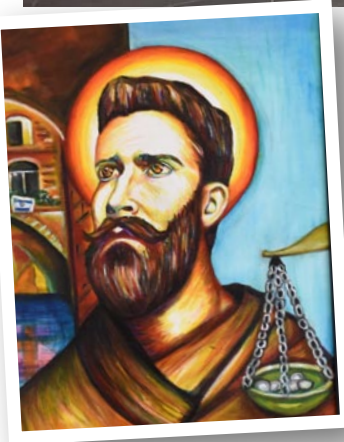
We are delighted to announce that as of July 2020, St Matthews Church is now fully operational for members of the local community to enjoy.

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Take a good look at the pews! They are new, clean, comfortable and you can kneel down without risking injury to life or limb.

We now have three aisles – one in the centre of the church, paved in such a way that the font seems to mark the beginning of a road which takes us to the altar. Dark paving stones create a path to the sanctuary, where the altar, the lectern and the

chair are all in harmony with each other.

Behind the altar and visible throughout the church, is a specially commissioned tabernacle, unique to St. Matthew's, and with a very large cross and crucified Christ figure above it.

The sanctuary and its various features help to remind us of the major parts of the liturgy – the lectern which is a fitting table of the Word

of God. The table of the altar itself, and the chair remind us of how the major parts of the liturgy are interconnected.

From the sanctuary, the sight of the font is that reminder that our lives as Christians, nourished at the Table of God's Word and the Table of the Eucharist, began in the waters of Baptism.

Our architects Page\Park

and Fleming Building of Kirkintilloch have worked very hard for us to create a fitting House for the Lord. Their truly lovely building is a tribute to all those who in 1946 began to bring to reality a dream that a Catholic church in Bishopbriggs

could be brought about.

Already we have heard from so many people that the results of all this work is a place of prayer and worship where people can feel very much at home as the faith journey of our community continues.

Page\Park Architects are proud to have delivered the recent refurbishment project at St Matthew's Parish Church.

We wish the parish well for the future in their new building, and hope it will offer sanctuary in these difficult times.

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Love and marriage in time of COVID

Young couples reveal the stresses of planning a 2020 wedding

EVERYBODY loves a marriage...but wedding bells have had to be silenced this year for couples across the Archdiocese as they faced agonising dilemmas about how to celebrate their big day.

With rules changing at short notice, some ceremonies were postponed while others went ahead under strict rules limiting both Masses and receptions.

For one family who are regular parishioners at St Peter's, Partick, it was a dilemma they had to face twice!

Mary and Martin McGinty had two weddings arranged for this year. Daughter, Rose was due to be married in July and son Danny, in October.

As teachers, Rose and her fiancé Tom Kearns were keen to marry in mid-July, leaving them time for a month-long honeymoon in Mexico. When it became apparent the wedding would be able to go ahead, albeit with much reduced numbers, they agreed to proceed as planned although the honeymoon would have to be a staycation.

In early July they postponed for another week from 18th to the 25th in the hope there would be an easing of restrictions allowing them to have more guests. Their hopes were dashed though as no easing of restrictions came.

On the day many of those who would have been invited gathered outside St Peter's, Partick, to see them into the church as fiancés and congratulate them as they stepped out as a married couple. With only their immediate families present they exchanged their vows before celebrating with a small marquee reception.

Rose told *Flourish*: "Despite all the upset and frustration in the months leading up to it our wedding was an amazing day from start to finish. We couldn't believe the amount of people outside the church. Family, friends and colleagues really made a special effort for us which was so moving. And I can thoroughly recommend Arran for a honeymoon!"

Brother Danny and his fi-

WORDS MARY MCGINTY
WEDDING PICTURES CARLO PALONI

ancée, Jen O'Neill, managed to exchange their vows on their original date of October 10 at St Robert's, House-hillwood but not without some last minute stress regarding the reception...including a police presence to make sure the rules were being kept!

Their honeymoon in Rome and the blessing for newlyweds by the Holy Father at the Wednesday Papal Audience was cancelled due to the pandemic. Instead they managed to travel to Ireland for a few days.

Anxious

"We made the decision in March that if at all possible we would be getting married in St Robert's on the original date regardless of what obstacles we might face. We ended up going through several rearrangements of what we had planned and definitely didn't count on the local constabulary calling late on the eve of the wedding to tell us they wouldn't allow what we had planned to go ahead," said Danny.

"It was a really anxious hour until we were able to confirm with them that our arrangements met all the criteria," he added.

"Everyone we came across in the final stages of planning the day did whatever they could to help us out and make sure we could go ahead with as good a celebration as possible, so we have a lot to be grateful for in how everything went, although there are certainly easier ways to get married."

Fr Jim Dean, who officiated at the wedding, said: "I think we had seven or eight weddings in the diary for this year with most couples opting to postpone until next year but I was delighted when Jen and Danny went ahead. I have been a priest for only three years so celebrating marriages is still relatively new for me and I love it, especially when it is a Nuptial Mass."

Teacher Maria Convery, and her fiancé Jamie McFadden had an added complica-

tion in making their decision earlier this year. Maria had planned to marry Jamie in Italy where she had spent many happy family holidays.

Bergamo, the lovely northern city near Milan, seemed like an ideal choice before the pandemic. The city's cathedral was booked and arrangements made. Within months, though, Bergamo became synonymous with the Covid outbreak – the city bearing the heaviest death toll per capita in Europe in spring.

"At first as we watched how Covid was taking hold in Italy we didn't want to think too much about how it would affect us. It wasn't long before we had to face the fact it couldn't go ahead," said Maria.

"With just four months to our date most of the wedding had been paid for so we rescheduled for the same date next July although there is also the anxiety that we don't know what next year will look like. We are realistic enough to accept we maybe won't have as extensive a guest list as we had hoped but we'll just be happy to be married. Whatever happens next year we won't postpone again!"

Alternative

As it happened, restrictions in Italy were lifted in early July so Maria and Jamie and their wider family turned the wedding-day-that-was-no-more into an alternative celebration with a visit to Verona. Maria said: "Lots of my friends are in the same position, having had to cancel their weddings, so I didn't feel alone!"

A spokesman for the Archdiocese said: "People have had to endure some really rough times this year. Priests and engaged couples have done everything they could to reschedule weddings or arrange much-reduced ceremonies to comply with public health rules."

"Neither is an easy choice but we hope and pray that whichever option they went for the brides of 2020 and 2021 will still have happy memories of their wedding day."



Spare a thought for the couples due to be married

As the disruption caused by the coronavirus continues to take a toll, spare a thought for the couples who were due to be married this year.

All the celebrations of the church have had to be changed, postponed or cancelled and this affects those wishing to marry in a particular way.

I, like other parish priests, have been working with couples who have been suddenly faced with a completely changed set of circumstances that makes it difficult to complete marriage preparation and reorganise the celebration hoped for.

Of course, marriage is about more than just a day.

Encouraging

In the months leading up to the wedding the Archdiocese offers a catechesis day as part of the preparation, this gives couples a chance to come together and receive some encouraging input as they approach married life.

Obviously, this has also been a casualty of the restrictions on gatherings that have been introduced.

Going forward it is sure to be a challenge to establish how couples can be prepared as limitations remain in force.

In recent years newly married couples have also been invited to join the Archbishop for a Mass together to highlight their



BY FR NICHOLAS MONAGHAN

new role in the church and the world as spouses; this too has had to be cancelled.

As the disruption has continued couples have been responding in various ways, with parish priests helping them complete their preparation. Some couples have opted to go ahead with their weddings even in a more limited form where they can celebrate with immediate family.

Celebrations

Having celebrated these, I can testify they too can be beautiful celebrations, while others have understandably opted to postpone to a later date.

While the future arrangements for those wishing to marry remain uncertain, I would always encourage couples thinking of marrying to come forward to talk to their parish priest.

Sacrament

Even if the form of the celebration on the wedding day is more modest the grace of the sacrament is undiminished and the power of God to strengthen your love and bless you endures.

If God is calling you to marry trust in his call and to quote the great teacher of marriage and the family St John Paul II: "Be not afraid!"

Cumbernauld resilience heads to bright new future

As soon as the pandemic hit us hard in March 2020. The people of Cumbernauld gathered together to see how we could help each other. From our first meeting in Sacred Heart Hall on March 16th the "Cumbernauld Resilience Group" was born.

With the help of over 100 volunteers we delivered groceries, medicines, pens and pencils to assist home schooling and much cheer and encouragement. With government funding, grants from local businesses, donations from local traders and people within our community we have gathered and supplied over £120,000 worth of food and essentials to people, families and the vulnerable in our local area.

During this time we discovered just how many people, families, pensioners and single households were really quite vulnerable for a variety of reasons.

As volunteers shared their experiences and their socially-distanced doorstep chat, we recognised that cooked meals would be a valuable addition to our efforts. So Peter and Paul came early to wash and prepare the vegetables, Pat, Maureen, Isabel and many others came after Mass to begin the cooking. Tilda organised distribution and as the volunteers began to drift back to their work places, undaunted they began to arrive just after work on their way home to pick up their deliveries and visit their clients with their pre-cooked food.

Since lockdown we have



Fr John Campbell reflects on the amazing response of parishioners and local residents in Cumbernauld which has seen the birth of a new local charity

cooked over 65,000 meals and distributed them free of charge to those in need.

We have been supported so well, by our driver volunteers, our admin team, the cooks and preparation team. Local businesses have been outstanding and generous in their continuing support.

The Caritas group from Our Lady's High have also been a great addition to our efforts and indeed one of them is now a trustee.

The community has rallied so well and so compe-

tently to assist each other in these trying times and to see to it that "something good comes out of it".

We began under the wing of "Cumbernauld Together" which is a multi-faith group, born from a mapping exercise conducted with "Faith and Community Scotland" and the Parish Council of Sacred Heart and Saint Lucy's.

We are now in a position, to learn from our discoveries during lockdown to give "Cumbernauld Resilience" a more perma-



nent profile and as we apply for charitable status and have formed a board of Trustees and advisors from our parishes and local traders, Cumbernauld Resilience will continue serving the people of Cumbernauld with cooked meals, human interest and a feeling of us all pulling together to help one another, not just in tense times but hopefully as the restrictions and tensions lessen and we get on with our lives.

Something good has definitely come out of it.



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Indulgences extended for the month of November

THE Vatican has extended the availability of plenary indulgences for those who have died, amid concerns about avoiding large gatherings of people in churches or cemeteries during November.

The decree was signed by Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, major penitentiary of the Apostolic Penitentiary in Rome, after bishops around the world had requested an extended timeframe for the plenary indulgence which is usually confined to November 1-8.

Cardinal Piacenza said that, although the availability of livestreamed Mass was good for the elderly who cannot attend the liturgy in person, "some people have gotten a little used to celebrations on television."

This "can mark a certain disinterest in being present at celebrations," he said. "There is therefore a pursuit by the bishops to implement all possible solutions to bring people back to the Church, always respecting

everything that needs to be done for the particular situation in which we unfortunately find ourselves."

With the penitentiary's new decree, those who cannot leave home can still obtain the indulgence, and others can have more time to attend Mass, to receive the sacrament of confession, and to visit a cemetery, while still following local coronavirus measures on crowds.

The decree also encouraged priests to make the sacraments as widely available as possible during November: "This penitentiary earnestly prays that all priests endowed with the appropriate faculties offer themselves with particular generosity to the



celebration of the sacrament of Penance and to administering Holy Communion to the sick," the decree said.

A Catholic who wishes to obtain a plenary indulgence for the dead should fulfil the ordinary conditions which are sacramental confes-

sion, reception of the Eucharist, and prayer for the intentions of the pope. Sacramental confession and reception of the Eucharist can occur within a week of the indulgenced act.

In the month of November, the Church usually offers a plenary indulgence to those who visit a cemetery and pray for the dead

during the Octave of All Saints' Day, which is November 1-8. This year, the plenary indulgence can be obtained on any day in November.

Emergency

The Vatican also said that, because of the health emergency, the elderly, the sick, and others who cannot leave the house for serious reasons can obtain the indulgence from home by reciting prayers for the deceased before an image of Jesus or the Virgin Mary with the intention of fulfilling the ordinary conditions as soon as possible.

The Vatican's decree offered examples of prayers that homebound Catholics can pray for the dead, including the rosary, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, other prayers for deceased among their family or friends, or performing a work of mercy by offering their pain and discomfort to God.

Views from the pews

Lay Catholics reflect on what lessons we should learn from the experience of parish lockdowns



Heidi Fawcett

LOCKDOWN made me slow down! Slowing down was new for me, as it was for most of the country.

As I was shielding my mother, I hardly went out. Again this was new for me. I think I was channelled into reflecting on the essentials of life and relationships with only diversionary WhatsApp cartoons to keep me amused.

I am, by nature, very wary of social media, aware of how it can be abused and cause division. But I realised I'd have to adopt and adapt if I was to take advantage of swift changes as parishes went online and we could attend Mass and benefit from other prayer and pastoral opportunities.

We could attend Mass and join other prayer and pastoral opportunities. Virtual coffee mornings where we chatted with people to whom we'd previously have given a polite nod also increased our sense of community and reduced isolation.

I was amazed and encouraged at how well our bishops, priests and deacons, and not just the techie ones, responded to making sure we could stay connected!

In a strange way, this made for a more intimate and personal experience. Attending Mass at home, seeing the priest and the altar up close, hearing our priests talk about the joys and challenges we all experience as we keep afloat in the Covid storm, brought the parish family into sharper focus.

This was beneficial not just for our spiritual but also our mental health. I noted one comment "Thank you for giving me a reason to be up, dressed and ready for Mass at 10am every day."

Numbers attending Mass online have exceeded those who may have attended physically and people were able to participate online anytime – and numbers viewing a specific service continued to grow throughout the day and into weeks.

While we increased opportunities to pray and to develop spiritual communion in this way, it was disconcerting that as we returned to church there were 50 people rattling around in space for 500 when others were able to meet together in pubs and restaurants. The volunteers who support parishes with diligent observation of the rules have allowed recognition from the government that churches should continue to be open.

This being positive, I am aware that some people could not and some have not engaged digitally, even when telephone access was provided. The Bishops Conference Survey identified the challenges of staying in touch and the opportunities



provided by increased use of IT for communication as well as signposting resources for mental and spiritual health.

This challenges us to re-connect and grow. One example ... My mother became friendly with a Jehovah's Witness who had visited her regularly in the "Pre-C" days. We talked recently on speaker phone about how God is sustaining us through this pandemic. We were even invited to a Bible study Zoom meeting. I wonder if our community needs more explicit evangelisation strategies such as this?

Throughout this period, I have been heartened and, as a Catholic Christian, proud, of Pope Francis' regular statements of hope and love for humanity and the earth. He connects directly with current human concerns, our intimate & personal needs, the needs of the displaced and marginalised, those who are socially and economically excluded and our responsibilities to reach out to each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Reaching out across cultures and boundaries to other religions and communities including those who are LGBT could be a challenge for some. His call for increased important leadership roles for women is encouraging and must be translated into action. He does not duck serious issues and yet shares the Gospel with love, joy and peace.

His encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* is very accessible as well as profound, "By acknowledging the dignity of each human person, we can contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity... between all men and women. Here we have a splendid secret that shows us how to dream and to turn our life into a wonderful adventure. No one can face life in isolation... We need a community that supports and helps us, in which we can help one another to keep looking ahead. How important it is to dream together..."



Leonard Franchi

WHO could have foreseen this time last year what the following months would bring?

The effects of the pandemic are known to all, sadly. It is now important to start a process of serious reflection on the liturgical implications and consequences of COVID and to what we can do to repair any damage caused.

By speaking of the liturgical implications and consequences of COVID, we are dealing with how we speak of and participate in the Mass.

Of course, the responses of parishes in the Archdiocese to the shutdown of parishes in March was mixed. It was always going to be like that! Some parishes made very impressive moves to offer support online to parishioners while others, for a host of reasons, were not able to offer such levels of pastoral presence.

Since the easing of lockdown and the re-opening of churches, we have much to consider. Midway through the period of closure, I was part of a conversation in which somebody suggested that people would be knocking the doors down to get back in when public celebration of Mass returned. Has that happened or are our church doors still largely intact?

In recent years, it has been increasingly clear to me that we lack robust statistical data on Mass attendance, including the age profile of practising Catholics. There

are studies from other Anglophone countries which paint a troublesome picture, not least regarding the religious practice of our young people.

Stephen Bullivant's recent book, *Mass Exodus: Catholic Disaffiliation in Britain and America Since Vatican II*, only brings to the fore how important it is to have good data in order to respond to the new situation in which we find ourselves.

In the years to come, sociologists will study patterns of religious practice post-pandemic: what they uncover should be of interest to us all. What is already available is the anecdotal evidence which suggests that many people, for whatever reason, have not returned to Mass since the re-opening and, moreover, seem satisfied with 'attending' Mass online. Will they return?

This is a genuine concern but presents an opportunity for a re-set of our approach. The new Directory for Catechesis should be a primer for this Church-wide endeavour.

Allied to this, there is a need for an effective and practical communications effort from parishes and deaneries. Now that Zoom and other platforms are part of the Church scene, let's make a commitment to sharing expertise across the Archdiocese, learning from each other, and seeking professional help where necessary.

Ideally this would mean:

- every parish should aim for a good-quality and up-to-date website, not just a Facebook page;
- parish bulletin should be both online and printed and be a mix of parish information and signposts to life in the local community;
- help available to parishes to simplify booking systems for Sunday Mass for as long as we need to;
- cross-parish /deanery formation in Catholic doctrine being made available via Webinars or such like. The local element is part of drive to forge stronger local bonds;
- renewed impetus to the promotion of suitable literature to help people participate authentically in Mass. I think here of Magnificat, the Universalis app and standard Sunday and Weekly Missals;
- A more long term ambition might be an App for the Archdiocese which had daily Mass times and indications of where there is spare capacity on Sunday.

We can use the pandemic as a platform for reclaiming Catholic culture. However, if we fail to stress the importance of authentic participation in the Mass we will have indeed missed the mark.

Heidi Fawcett is a Glasgow teacher with a special interest in scripture. Leonard Franchi is a Lecturer at Glasgow University with a special interest in Religious Education. If you have ideas for future Views from the Pews let us know. Drop a line to Ronnie. Convery@rcag.org.uk

Do not forget the poor

PRAYER to God and solidarity with the poor and suffering are inseparable. In order to perform an act of worship acceptable to the Lord, we have to recognize that each person, even the poorest and most contemptible, is made in the image of God.

Time devoted to prayer can never become an alibi for neglecting our neighbour in need. In fact the very opposite is true: the Lord's blessing descends upon us and prayer attains its goal when accompanied by service to the poor.

The decision to care for the poor, for their many different needs, cannot be conditioned by the time available or by private interests, or by impersonal pastoral or social projects. The power of God's grace cannot be restrained by the selfish tendency to put ourselves always first.

Keeping our gaze fixed on the poor is difficult, but more necessary than ever if we are to give proper direction to our personal life and the life of society. It is not a matter of fine words but of a concrete commitment inspired by divine charity. Each year, on the World Day of the Poor, I reiterate this basic truth in the life of the Church, for the poor are and always will be with us to help us welcome Christ's presence into our daily lives.

Encountering the poor and those in need constantly challenges us and forces us to think. How can we help to eliminate or at least alleviate their marginalization and suffering? How can we help them in their spiritual need?

In order to help the poor, we ourselves need to live the experience of evangelical poverty. We cannot feel "alright" when any member of the human family is left behind and in the shadows. The silent cry of so many poor men, women and children should find the people of God at the forefront, always and everywhere, in efforts to give them a voice....

The Church certainly has no comprehensive solutions to propose, but by the grace of Christ she can offer her witness and her gestures of charity. She likewise feels compelled to speak out on behalf of those who lack life's basic necessities...

Bad news fills the pages of newspapers, websites and television screens, to the point that evil seems to reign supreme. But that is not the case. To be sure, malice and violence, abuse and corruption abound, but life is interwoven too with acts of respect and generosity that not only compensate for evil, but inspire us to take an extra step and fill our hearts with hope.

A hand held out is a sign; a sign that immediately speaks of closeness, solidarity and love. In these months, when the whole world is prey to a vi-

To mark the fourth World Day of the Poor which is to be marked on November 15 the Holy Father Francis has released a message to the whole Church, urging Catholics to focus this winter on supporting those in need. An abridged version of the Holy Father's message follows



Pictures: Imago Mundi



rus that brought pain and death, despair and bewilderment, how many outstretched hands have we seen!

The outstretched hands of physicians who cared about each patient and tried to find the right cure. The outstretched hands of nurses who worked overtime, for hours on end, to look after the sick. The outstretched hands of administrators who procured the means to save as many lives as possible. The outstretched hands of pharmacists who at personal risk responded to people's pressing needs. The outstretched hands of priests

whose hearts broke as they offered a blessing. The outstretched hands of volunteers who helped people living on the streets and those with a home yet nothing to eat. The outstretched hands of men and women who worked to provide essential services and security. We could continue to speak of so many other outstretched hands, all of which make up a great litany of good works. Those hands defied contagion and fear in order to offer support and consolation.

The present experience has challenged many of our assumptions. We

feel poorer and less self-sufficient because we have come to sense our limitations and the restriction of our freedom. The loss of employment, and of opportunities to be close to our loved ones and our regular acquaintances, suddenly opened our eyes to horizons that we had long since taken for granted.

Our spiritual and material resources were called into question and we found ourselves experiencing fear. In the silence of our homes, we rediscovered the importance of simplicity and of keeping our eyes fixed on the essentials. We came to realize how much we need a new sense of fraternity, for mutual help and esteem. Now is a good time to recover the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world...

We have been unable to be close to those who suffer, and at the same time we have become more aware of the fragility of our own lives...

The command: "Stretch forth your hand to the poor" challenges the attitude of those who prefer to keep their hands in their pockets and to remain unmoved by situations of poverty in which they are often complicit. Indifference and cynicism are their daily food. What a difference from the generous hands we have described!

If they stretch out their hands, it is to touch computer keys to transfer sums of money from one part of the world to another, ensuring the wealth of an elite few and the dire poverty of millions and the ruin of entire nations... Other hands are outstretched to deal doses of death in dark alleys in order to grow rich and live in luxury and excess, or to quietly pass a bribe for the sake of quick and corrupt gain. Others still, parading a sham respectability, lay down laws which they themselves do not observe...

"In everything you do, remember your end" (Sir 7:36) These words can be understood in two ways. First, our lives will sooner or later come to an end. Remembering our common destiny can help lead to a life of concern for those poorer than ourselves or lacking the opportunities that were ours.

But second, there is also an end or goal towards which each of us is tending. The "end" of all our actions can only be love. This is the ultimate goal of our journey, and nothing should distract us from it. This love is one of sharing, dedication and service...

Even a smile that we can share with the poor is a source of love and a way of spreading love...

FRANCISCUS



WHEN he was the Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio was infamous for rarely giving interviews.

An Argentine reporter told me in 2013 that he once went out to a site where Bergoglio was saying Mass to cover the event, and then spotted him heading for the subway afterwards. From the window of his car, the reporter told Bergoglio he was heading back towards the center of town and asked if he wanted a ride, and Bergoglio reluctantly got in.

On the way, the reporter said, the future Pope laughed and told him he was the lone journalist who'd ever succeeded in "trapping" him like that. He then proceeded to refuse to answer any questions on the record.

Those days, clearly, have been over for a while. Indeed, papal interviews are now so commonplace that his latest such exchange, with the Italian news agency Adnkronos, wasn't front-page news even here in Italy.

Yet there's much of real interest, beginning with the Pope's words on corruption in the Church. In a nutshell, Francis said the problem goes back centuries, that he's doing his best to root it out, that more action is coming soon, but he's "honestly not very optimistic" it will succeed and there's a constant danger of backsliding because corruption is "cyclical."

"It repeats itself, then someone comes along to clean and tidy up, but then it starts again waiting for someone else to come and put an end to this degeneration," the pope said.

Though Francis didn't mention the case of Italian Cardinal Angelo Becciu, dismissed by Francis last month and linked in media reports to a widening series of alleged financial and personal scandals (all of which he's denied), most observers here situated the Pope's words in that context.

Francis is unquestionably right about the one-step-forward, two-steps-back dynamic of most recent Vatican reform efforts.

St Paul VI created the Prefecture for Economic Affairs to rationalise Vatican finances, yet his papacy ended in debt and with the Vatican bank scandals about to explode. St. John Paul II attempted to clean things up by bringing in hard-nosed American Cardinal Edmund Szoka, yet we now know the way money was used during his papacy... Benedict XVI launched a series of reforms, and yet he resigned amid a whole series of meltdowns.

Talkative Pope reflects on age-old problems affecting the Church



BY **JOHN L ALLEN JR**
EDITOR OF CRUX

(Indeed, Francis spoke in the new interview about a large dossier Benedict gave him back in 2013 with the results of his own investigations of those scandals, telling his successor it was now his turn.)

Though the jury is still out on the Francis reform, certainly the pontiff must have reflected on why those earlier efforts failed. One possibility worth considering is that the Vatican is a classic example of how culture beats policy every time...

What might it be about the culture of the Vatican that impedes reform efforts? A comprehensive would take way too long, but here

are just three points worth considering.

First, Vatican personnel aren't generally a terribly empowered lot. No one goes out of their way to demonstrate interest in their personal or professional development, and, for the most part, workers are treated as cogs in a machine, reflecting a 19th century assembly line concept of production.

(That's one of the great ironies about the Vatican, actually – it's obsessed with defending tradition, yet in many ways its current organisational model not only isn't "traditional," in the sense of reaching back into earlier layers of history, it's not even really Catholic. It owes more to Henry Ford than to Gregory the Great.)

In such an environment, personnel often feel little investment in institutional wellbeing, and are less likely to consider it their

business to report wrongdoing.

Second, the hyper-compartmentalisation of the Vatican not only generates a spectacular duplication of resources and breakdowns in communication, but it also means that the pool of people with the knowledge to be able to spot possible problems is radically limited.

In an environment in which you can work 50 feet away from an official in a different department and go years without even speaking to him or her, how are you supposed to know what that person is really up to?

Third, Vatican personnel are conditioned to defer to authority, which means that even if a midlevel staffer were to suspect something may be amiss, they're often not inclined to flag it because that's seen as the role of the superiors. Very little in the system creates incentives for taking initiative or challenging the status quo.

None of those points have anything directly to do with corruption, but they may help explain why the culture of the Vatican seems so stubbornly resistant to reform efforts.

In other words, perhaps the trick to overcoming the pessimism Francis voiced in his new interview is taking a broader view of what an "anti-corruption" campaign really means. Finding ways to empower employees, giving them a greater investment not just in personal job security but the overall health of the organization, might be a place to start.

■ **Follow John Allen on Twitter:**
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The pain of bereavement in time of pandemic

SADLY, I have coined a harrowing and horrible word over the past months, 'covidcide' – death arising directly from historical Covid.

It is recorded on a death certificate. The number of deaths however may never be known. It is pandemic death.

Nevertheless, Covid 19 has other repercussions. INDIRECTLY, and the effects of covidcide can be

BY FR MICHAEL CONROY

the psychological atmosphere arising from the daily death-like anxiety and angst created for all of us: we hear of people dying in hospital, in a hospice, a care home, at home. Added to this is the number of people who have been bereaved, saddened, traumatised, shielding, recuperating, recovering from 'long covid'.

The number of people who

have been immobilised by its ripple-like effects is unquantifiable. Indirectly, it has permeated our living life and nightmares. Covidcide is existential and universal. Covid 19 has infected the fabric of society: employment, finance, physical/psychological/spiritual health and politics. Covidcide is direct and indirect, visible and invisible, conscious and unconscious.

What does our Christian faith have to help us, and tell us?

Perhaps the shortest verse in the Gospels is John, 11:35, "Jesus wept." It is the story of Jesus at the home of Martha and Mary at the death of Lazarus, their brother, and Jesus' friend. It is a story of his compassion.

At a deeper level, 12 times in the Gospels, we hear Jesus 'feeling compassion' for others. The biblical Greek word, 'splanchnizomai', is, and sounds, more physically raw-sounding. It translates as 'bowel churning'. Let us be really visceral, and translate it as 'gut-wrenching'.

The word is used in the story of the Widow of Nain's son. Her only son had died, and was raised up by Jesus. Yes, Jesus is weeping for the world he came to bring close to the Father. It has been posited that Jesus, spiritually speaking, was affected in sensing how his mother

would feel at seeing his death. Yes, he was human and divine. The Gospels are about Jesus, the Word made Flesh. He felt for others. And why not?

Covidcide: I do not have

any answers, only reflections. At times I am lost for words. I am terrified when I hear the word, and the ravaging effects of the virus.

I can keep the emotions at bay by denial and dis-

traction. I can use prayer, psychological techniques and the use of social media. But it haunts me. On talking with people regarding the death of someone whom they knew, terms like de-

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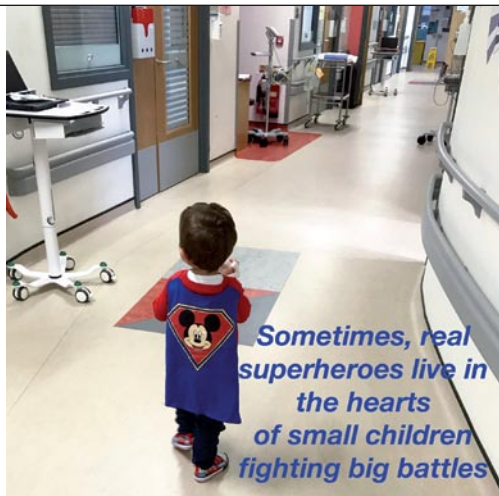


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laid grief, prolonged grief, not being able to be present at the death are mentioned ... There was no body to view, touch and hold. Mourners can feel paralysed and lost in time and space. No connectivity.

In the current crisis the priest/people relationship (attachment, availability, accessibility) which were a taken-for-granted part of a Catholic liturgy have been put on hold.

According to legal protocols and obligations churches have had to be refashioned and restricted to accommodate safety and security over the planning of funeral services for both covid, and non-covid deaths.

The coming-to-terms process with death and bereavement has to be carried out at-a-distance using Zoom/phone conversations in arranging times and offering prayers to express compassion and arrange services.

The collateral damage of Covid is beyond estimation in terms of grief and loss. Many people have been on a spectrum of self-isolation in space and time. It can be like walking through a 'vale of tears', alone and lonely.

Yes, there are models for working through bereavement – shock, denial, de-

pression, re-engagement, and eventually finding meaning. But like all models of compassion, grief models are not like straight lines to health and resolution. Grief does not operate according to a fixed timetable of beginning and ending. Grief is a hauntingly personal story needing to be told person-to-person. Some people may need medical help and counselling assistance.

To restore health some people have taken to journaling, music, dance/exercise and writing stories. Some have created their own rituals of grief (a memory album, a table with mementoes, memorial/prayer cards).

Sometimes we have to find new and different 'languages' to express unresolved sorrow and loss. There shall come a future when grief will be spoken out and memorialised. For some people, just now, there is a therapeutic phrase: which may offer life and hope: 'what is shareable is bearable'.

I have often wondered what Jesus and Simon of Cyrene spoke about on that journey to Calvary carrying the cross together. In psychospiritual terms they must have shared emotions and thoughts of mutual concern and cooperation. Words like 'blood, sweat

and tears' make human sense on describing that journey. Besides emotional expressions like exhaustion, sorrow, empathy, agony, bewilderment, let us add 'bowel churning'.

There is a 'Simon' in all of who may be asked to walk the Way of the Cross with others by offering help and assistance amidst Covid-cide. We need each other.

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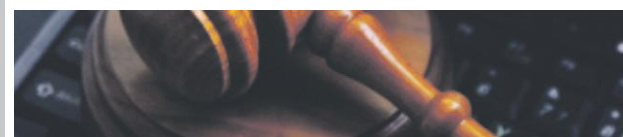
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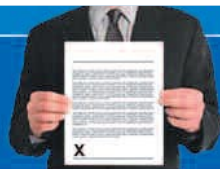
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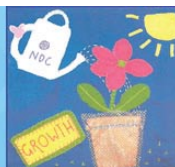
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Liturgical year comes to an end and it's time to take stock of our lives



Canon
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NOVEMBER each year brings to an end the gospels for the Ordinary Sundays of one liturgical year, and it introduces us to the First Sunday of the New Year.

This year we have four gospels from the final Sundays of Year A, culminating in the Solemnity of Christ the King, which is the Final Sunday of the liturgical year.

A new Liturgical Year begins of course on the following Sunday, – but not always – falling on the last Sunday of November, the First Sunday of Advent.

This year the new season and liturgical year begin on 29 November. There's a lot of ground to cover before we head into Advent.

8
NOV

Sunday 32 Year A.
Matthew 25:1-13

This Sunday we engage with Jesus' final Sermon out of a total of five, (mirroring the five books of the Law given by Moses), we reach the final one which consists of three parables about the coming of the kingdom of God at the end of all things. The first is the famous parable about bridesmaids who fall foul of the groom at his wedding.

This parable has nothing to do with wedding customs. It is of course about bridesmaids, but these are attendants to the groom: not the bride as we would expect today. Their role was to provide light for the bridegroom arriving at the wedding feast.

Weddings were often held at night. Reasons for this were: a) it was cooler at night, and b) the groom was often in last minute discussions with the bride's father regarding the amount of the dowry!

The point here is that of the ten bridesmaids in the story, only half prepared adequately to perform their task. If these bridesmaids could not provide light, then they did not function as bridesmaids, and therefore they lost their place in the wedding party.

This parable is clearly aimed at disciples in all ages. If we cannot be identified as disciples by our living out the gospel, then we do not deserve to be called disciples, and therefore we might find we have forfeited the right to enter, not so much the wedding, but the kingdom of God itself. The beatitudes summarise



Michelangelo,
*The Last
Judgement*
(1536–1541)

neatly for us those qualities which should be the defining actions for the would-be disciples of Jesus.

15
NOV

Sunday 33 Year A.
Matthew 25:14-30

A man goes away on a journey: a figure of speech for Jesus' death. It can also indicate Jesus' return at the end of all things and the final judgement of all by him. This parable causes many readers problems, so we need to look carefully at its details.

First, we should remember that parables are not carefully crafted stories. They are more like a series of loosely related concepts offered to make us ask questions rather than seek answers. This parable is one of extravagance on a scale that we can scarcely imagine.

The man going on a journey entrusts his property to his servants. We are only told about three of these, each of whom is given a fantastic sum of money – five talents, two talents and one talent.

It's not easy to calculate how much a talent was worth. It referred to a weight of gold or silver, rather than a sum of money. One conservative estimate is that a talent could be worth 10,000 denarii. A denarius was the

basic daily wage of its time. 10,000 denarii would be around 30 years' wages.

Therefore, the man given five talents receives 150 years' wages. Two and one talents would be worth 60 years' wages, and 30 years' wages respectively. So, those given the talents go and trade, each doubling the money he was given.

When the master returns he is delighted to find they've been so productive, and he tells them both exactly the same thing: "well done... come and join in your master's happiness". They are treated equally despite the fact that their returns are not equal; it's their effort which is being rewarded.

There's a third person in the story however. When the master returns this man bleats out that he was afraid and he decided to bury the talent to keep it safe. He offers it back to its owner. The master is furious, but we might not immediately understand why! Parables do not describe real situations; they pose questions which prompt readers – us – to consider them in relation to our own lives.

This parable is a challenge for all disciples to take risks for the sake of the kingdom of God – a risk the man

with the single talent was not prepared to take. In other words, we really are required to take chances to make the presence of Christ apparent in our world.

How do we do this? Well, it will involve first and foremost keeping Jesus' commandments – think of the beatitudes. It certainly will involve our bearing witness to the humanity of every human being, because we are all made in the image and likeness of God.

Perhaps above all it is about each of us identifying ourselves with the kingdom of God.

22
NOV

Solemnity, Christ the King Year A.

Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus' first sermon began with the beatitudes: "Blessed are... the poor in spirit, the merciful, the pure of heart, the peacemakers, those who hunger and thirst for what is right..." His final sermon begins with what sounds like a version of the beatitudes, but with consequences. When Jesus pronounces, "I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and gave me something to drink" etc., he is making explicit the aspirations of the beatitudes.

The way to be poor in spir-

it and merciful, to be peacemakers is now boiled down to the practicalities of responding to those in need. It is very noticeable that in both the beatitudes and in the Last Judgement parable, Jesus does not tell us what to do for the good, the grateful, and the religious.

In fact, if his ministry is anything to go by, it must be assumed that Jesus' preferential option concerning the recipients of what he offers are most likely to be the outcasts of society.

After all, his own ministry was to lepers, Samaritans, gentiles, tax-collectors, shepherds.

It's worth remembering that shepherds were classed as sinners – not because their behaviour was bad, but because they were outside of the conventions of decency and respectability as decided by the religious great and good of the day, and were therefore excluded from synagogue and Temple, and that the first human beings to see Jesus, apart from Mary and Joseph, were shepherds – sinners by definition!

The adult Jesus touched lepers, he cured the blind and so on. So the Last Judgement parable seems to display features we should not ignore. Above all, the hun-

gry, thirsty, sick, and imprisoned in Jesus' time were without doubt considered to be outcasts, technically sinners.

These were almost exclusively the recipients of Jesus' ministry to bring the Good News to the poor.

Another liturgical year comes to an end. Before the week is out and Advent begins, we might like to reflect on how the coming year might be one in which we all become more aware of the needs of our brothers and sisters.

29
NOV

1st Sunday of Advent,
Year B

Mark 13:33-37

The first Sunday of Advent always seems to surprise. Advent is the start of a new liturgical year, as well as a new season, so it seems strange when the gospel is invariably from the end of Jesus' ministry, and about the return of the Son of Man at the end of everything.

And yet, a moment's thought helps us realise that the gospel for the First Sunday of the Year is setting out for us the goal which we should keep in sight throughout the year – the promise of the fullness of life in the presence of Christ with his Father and the Holy Spirit for all eternity.

The message is summed up in the final words of the gospel – Stay Awake! This does not mean be terrified that something terrible will happen.

It is about setting our lives at the beginning of a new liturgical year toward the reward for which Jesus gave his life – eternity in utter happiness and total fulfilment of life in the presence of God. It is that place in the Father's house which Jesus spoke of preparing for us in John's gospel, at the last supper.

It is the culmination of the invitation of the king in the parable we heard a couple of weeks ago on the feast of Christ the King "Come, you whom my Father has blest; come and take possession of the kingdom prepared for you..."

A new liturgical year begins, Advent begins, we are encouraged to get very excited – not at the prospect of Christmas, but at the prospect that Jesus prepared for us a place in his Father's house.

Let's use the coming year to prepare well for that.

WE waited with bated breath early this month to see if Father Gareth would make it back from Merthyr Tydfil.

Having received the official go ahead to travel, and being satisfied that his mum was in a good place, he made his plans to travel by train one Tuesday. Of course, with Covid-19, anything can happen in the space of a few days, and so we weren't taking his anticipated return for granted.

Then came Storm Alex with torrential rain and warnings of floods and travel disruption. Wales was badly hit and, of course, on the list of the worst affected places, covered by an amber warning, was Merthyr Tydfil. We wanted the return of Storm Gareth, not the disruption of Storm Alex.

Then on the Monday we had a text to say he would see us the following day and, lo and behold, sometime after 8 o'clock on the Tuesday night, he swept through the door as if he had never been away. Great to have him back.

For myself, it was a cheering end to what had been quite a stressful day. Most of the day had been spent in Zoom meetings involving our Passionist Provincial Council; our Local Superiors throughout the Passionist Province (Ireland,

Back to full strength



Fr Frank's log

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

Scotland and Paris), and the Province Chapter Commission. With the Chapter having been cancelled last June because of Covid-19, we had to discuss how the Province should continue to function, and what issues had to be addressed, and how, during this interim period.

The Chapter has now been rescheduled for next July but, of course, there is no certainty that it will be able to take place even then.

In between times that day I was being contacted by various newspapers and other media outlets. You will no doubt be aware that there was a high-profile incident involving someone who had attended Mass in St. Mungo's, and read at that Mass, a couple of Sundays ago.

I had no wish to comment on the specific situation except to confirm that this person did attend Mass and that she did read, but also to say that St. Mungo's takes the safety and protection of all its parishioners and all who attend very seriously whenever the church opens for any reason, and that we apply all the protocols meticulously to that end.

As most of you will be aware our website clearly says that anyone feeling unwell, or who has any Covid symptoms, should not come to the church, and that there is no obligation to attend Mass during this time. We follow all the guidelines to the letter.

At the same time, we appreciate how important it is

for people to be able to come to the church for prayer, for adoration, for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and for Mass, during this difficult time, and the great comfort and consolation this can bring to people.

It's a reminder that we are all in this together, co-operating with one another, to keep each other safe, and to protect each other as best we can, and complying with these protocols, and heeding the guidance of our wonderful volunteers, is essential to that.

One Saturday last month we celebrated First Holy Communion with 10 children from both St. Mungo's and St. Roch's Primary Schools. Once again, it was a very different Holy Communion celebration from any other year. With the church being restricted to 50 people, each child could only have three people with them, and the rest of the number was made up of teachers and volunteers.

The children were not able to sing, read, say prayers or bring up gifts, and yet, somehow, by God's grace, it was a very prayerful, simple, and moving celebration,

and this was commented on by the parents and others who attended. The children had waited a long time for this, the Communion having been postponed from last May, but, at the end of the day, they were very, very happy, and it showed on their faces. This weekend I will have another wedding to celebrate and then, the following weekend, another Baptism.

Church life goes on, one way or another, and God is

still at work in the lives of us all. Out at Bishopbriggs, as mentioned, we have Father Gareth back with us; Father Justinian is well, and Father Anthony and myself look forward to piling as much work as possible on to Father Gareth's big shoulders which, from experience, we know he will be all too willing to bear.

So, more than ever; protect yourselves and your loved ones, and protect Christ in your lives.

Alex Black

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Pax Christi: pray for peace

LATE on October 24, social media was awash with messages congratulating Honduras on being the state that would change the world.

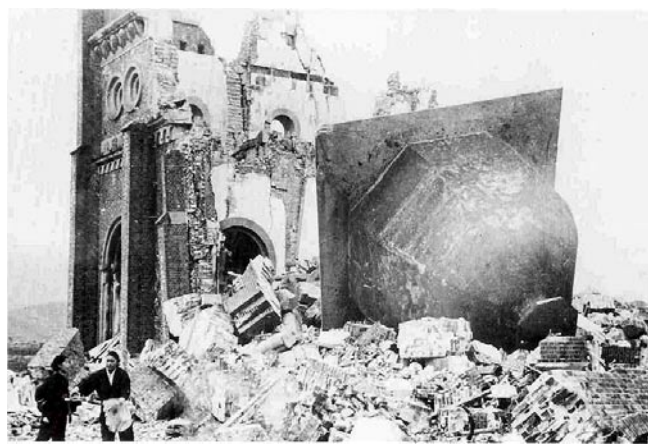
Because their ratification – the 50th – triggered elements in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) that will make the manufacture and possession of nuclear weapons illegal in 90 days.

As chair of Pax Christi Scotland – a member Pax Christi International and a partner of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons – it was a bittersweet moment.

Scotland's name could not on the list. That is the Westminster government's entitlement and it seems determined not to sign the treaty.

Yet the Scottish government stated its opposition to nuclear weapons in 2017. Our Scottish Bishops' Conference has condemned their possession and use since their decisive and historic statement issued in 1982.

But the Trident nuclear submarine base sits just 25 miles from Scotland's most populated area and the Westminster government is



BY **MARIAN PALLISTER**
CHAIR, PAX CHRISTI SCOTLAND

determined to renew it at a cost of around £205 billion.

The day before the 50th ratification was deposited, I attended a UN-ICAN webinar and heard Setsuko Thurlow speak movingly about what this treaty means to her. She was a 13-year-old schoolgirl when an atomic bomb was dropped on her city – Hiroshima.

A witness to what such weapons were capable of then, she knows how much more powerful today's nuclear weapons are and desperately wants a future without them.

The South Pacific nations that have ratified the treaty saw their people, environment and economy devastated when the West tested its nuclear weapons there in the 1950s. Their suffering continues.

And so, Pax Christi Scotland joins with Pope Francis, who asks "for prayer and commitment to a world completely free of nuclear weapons".

Our prayers are being answered. Our commitment now is to campaign for divestment from the manufacture of nuclear weapons, and to persuade the Westminster government to join the modern, nuclear free world.

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 SCIAF is the official overseas aid and development charity of the Catholic Church in Scotland and a proud member of the Caritas family. We work to serve the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world, irrespective of their race, religion and background. 7 West Nile Street, Glasgow G1 2PR. Tel: 0141 354 5555. Scottish Charity No: SC012302. Company No: SC197327. Photo: Barnaby Skinner.

Walk to the Vatican to aid local children

FUND raisers will 'walk' to the Vatican this month...without ever leaving Glasgow.

Teams of students and staff from Glasgow University's Student Pastoral Planning Team and School of Education plan walking a minimum 10 km per week until they reach their target of 2350km (1460miles) – the walking distance between Glasgow and the Vatican.

A crowdfunding page has been opened for donations which will go to support the Glasgow Spirit of Christmas charity which provides Christmas presents for children living in poverty.

But it will also be an opportunity for those taking part to raise awareness about the environment, according to Father Stephen Reilly, Co-ordinator of Spiritual and Pastoral Formation at the University and one of the organisers of the event.

He said: "The Catholic Teacher Formation students at the School of Education at the University of Glasgow have been reflecting on their experience of Covid in light of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si*, and generating an amazing array of ideas for personal change

"Bringing these together, I'm so pleased that they chose to pledge to

BY BRIAN SWANSON

walk, and in that way to enjoy God's beautiful creation, whatever the weather.

"We decided to walk to the Vatican to show our support and love for Pope Francis – who knows, he might even retweet our efforts?

"Our campaign seems to have caught the imagination, as people seem to have rediscovered nature, as well as focussing on what is important in life, and looking out for those less fortunate."

Another organiser, lecturer Dr Clare Smith, added: "The challenge was deliberately timed to take place during the week of 4th–11th November, which is Just and Green Recovery for Scotland Week of Action which is a coalition of 80 organisations calling for Scotland's recovery from Coronavirus to put people and the planet before profit.

"For the second year running, we are also supporting the fantastic work of Glasgow Spirit of Christmas, which tries to ensure that every local child living in poverty in Glasgow will have a gift to wake up to on Christmas morning."

■ To donate visit: <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/vaticanvirtualwalk>



Deceased clergy remembered

THE Archbishop will celebrate the annual Mass for the Deceased Archbishops, Bishops and Priests of the Archdiocese of Glasgow in St Andrew's Cathedral at 1.00pm on Friday 13th November 2020.

The Mass will be live-streamed at www.mcnmedia.tv/camera/st-andrews-cathedral

Due to the pandemic this year there will be no concelebrants at this Mass.

The priests who have died since the 2019 Memorial Mass are the following: Canon Bernard Devine and Fr Dominic Doogan, who were well known around the Archdiocese, and also Fr Gerard O'Meara an Irish priest who was ordained for the Archdiocese in 1956, served in the Immaculate Heart of Mary until 1963, was thereafter incardinated in the Archdiocese of Boston.

May they rest in peace.

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