

FLOURISH

Official Journal of the Archdiocese of Glasgow

November 2021

Pope's plea: 'In Glasgow let the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor be listened to'

HE may not be able to attend in person, but Pope Francis' image was very much in evidence as world leaders gathered for the COP26 conference on climate change in Glasgow.

During the conference the Pope's image is being beamed onto the façade of St Andrew's Cathedral in Clyde Street, as the first of a series of 'Changemakers' – individuals around the world who are playing their part in saving the planet from disaster.

And in his Angelus address as the UN gathering began at the SEC, the Pope issued a simple but powerful plea: "Let us pray that the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor be listened to and that this gathering might be effective in offering responses which give concrete grounds for hope to future generations."

The Holy Father has been a tireless campaigner on the issue and devoted one of the key documents of his pontificate (*Laudato Si*) to developing Catholic social teaching on ecology and the environment.

The illumination of the Cathedral initiative is the result of a collaboration between the Archdiocese, the City Council and the Changemakers Campaign.

Among the other 'changemakers' are dozens of 'ordinary' figures such as Eleanor Porter of SCIAF who works to raise awareness of climate change, and many 'local heroes' from round the world such as Mara Scollo, a volunteer in Italy who runs a project to get children to cycle to school,

and Kenneth Adjei Yeboah, a cocoa farmer from Ghana who is pioneering sustainable farming methods.

Across the city prayer vigils are being held led by the brothers from Taizé in France, a Mass for delegates is being celebrated in St Aloysius, and the 'host parish' of St Patrick's in Anderston is throwing open its doors to welcome delegates.

The Pope has made no secret of how important the climate emergency is for him. In a powerful appeal made via BBC Radio just before the Conference opened, he said: "The political decision makers who will meet at COP26 in Glasgow are urgently summoned to provide effective responses to the present ecological crisis and in this way to offer concrete hope to future generations."

"And it is worth repeating that each of us – whoever and wherever we may be – can play our own part in changing our collective response to the unprecedented threat of climate change and the degradation of our common home."



FULL COVERAGE ON PAGES 2, 3, 10, 11

SCIAF petition delivered to Downing St



JUST days before the opening of COP26, the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund's COP26 petition was delivered to the Prime Minister.

Over 4,000 people supported the charity's call on climate action ahead of the crucial conference.

SCIAF launched its COP26 campaign earlier this summer, which saw a costumed Boris Johnson race against time in front of the SEC, which is playing host to the event.

Young SCIAF supporter Olivia McKibbin helped launch the petition in August and is one of the 4,080 signatories.

SCIAF's campaign "3 asks. 2 weeks. 1 planet" calls on the United Kingdom Government to:

Pay to protect the poorest communities on climate change: Make sure financial support is given to those impacted by climate change so they can adapt and recover.

Act now to stop runaway climate change: Make sure world leaders commit to keeping rises in global temperatures below the disastrous 1.5°C threshold.

Listen to those on the frontline of the climate cri-

sis: Make sure that people worst affected by the crisis are at the heart of the climate talks.

Geraldine Hill, Advocacy Manager at SCIAF said: "The voices of over 4,000 Scots have been delivered to the Prime Minister, joining in a chorus of tens of thousands calling for action from around the UK.

"The poorest communities in the world have been hit hardest by the climate emergency. SCIAF's supporters have made their voices heard and expectations are now on Boris Johnson and world leaders to take action in Glasgow.

"We're calling for communities to be given financial support to adapt and recover from climate change, for those on the frontline of the climate emergency to be listened to, and for global warming to be stopped in its tracks."

Olivia McKibbin, SCIAF supporter, said: "If our leaders don't take urgent action on climate change then nothing else matters. The things that our governments deem important now will be worthless when we cannot breathe the air that's around us."

Pope's BBC radio appeal for COP26

As world leaders prepared to gather in Glasgow, Pope Francis took the unprecedented step of making a radio broadcast on BBC Radio 4's 'Thought for the Day' slot to urge all concerned to go the extra mile to build a better future. The full text of the Holy Father's broadcast is reproduced for Flourish readers below:

CLIMATE change and the Covid-19 pandemic have exposed our deep vulnerability and raised numerous doubts and concerns about our economic systems and the way we organize our societies.

We have lost our sense of security, and are experiencing a sense of powerlessness and loss of control over our lives. We find ourselves increasingly frail and even fearful, caught up in a succession of "crises" in the areas of health care, the environment, food supplies and the economy, to say nothing of social, humanitarian and ethical crises.

Crises

All these crises are profoundly interconnected. They also forecast a "perfect storm" that could rupture the bonds holding our society together within the greater gift of God's creation.

Every crisis calls for vision, the ability to formulate plans and put them rapidly into action, to rethink the future of the world, our common home, and to reassess our common purpose. These crises present us with the need to take decisions, radical decisions that are not always easy.

At the same time, moments of difficulty like these also present opportunities, opportunities that we must not waste. We can confront these crises by retreating into isolationism, protectionism and exploitation. Or we can see in them a real chance for change, a genuine moment of conversion, and not simply in a spiritual sense.

This last approach alone can guide us towards a brighter horizon. Yet it can only be pursued through a renewed sense of shared responsibility for our world, and an effective solidarity based on justice, a sense of our common destiny and a recognition of the unity of our human family in God's plan for the world.

All this represents an immense cultural challenge. It means giving priority to the

common good, and it calls for a change in perspective, a new outlook, in which the dignity of every human being, now and in the future, will guide our ways of thinking and acting.

The most important lesson we can take from these crises is our need to build together, so that there will no longer be any borders, barriers or political walls for us to hide behind.

Some days ago, on 4 October, I met with religious leaders and scientists to sign a Joint Appeal in which we called upon ourselves and our political leaders to act in a more responsible and consistent manner.

I was impressed by something said by one of the scientists present at that meeting. He told us: "If things continue as they are, in 50 years' time my baby granddaughter will have to live in an unliveable world". We cannot allow this to happen!

Essential

It is essential that each of us be committed to this urgent change of direction, sustained by our own faith and spirituality. In the Joint Appeal, we spoke of the need to work responsibly towards a "culture of care" for our common home, but also for ourselves, and the need to work tirelessly to eliminate "the seeds of conflicts: greed, indifference, ignorance, fear, injustice, insecurity and violence".

Humanity has never before had at its disposal so many means for achieving this goal.

The political decision makers who will meet at COP26 in Glasgow are urgently summoned to provide effective responses to the present ecological crisis and in this way to offer concrete hope to future generations. And it is worth repeating that each of us – whoever and wherever we may be – can play our own part in changing our collective response to the unprecedented threat of climate change and the degradation of our common home.



On pilgrimage... to Glasgow



AFTER more than 1,800 kilometres for some, a group of pilgrims walking to Glasgow for COP26 have arrived at the global climate summit.

The group of 30 people have brought their energy and tired feet into Scotland, with some having walked as far as Sweden, Poland and Germany.

The Ecumenical Pilgrimage for Climate Justice joins people of Christian faith with a common goal of holding those in power to account, and inspiring them to take action at COP26.

The Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF) is assisting the pilgrims on the final leg of the journey in Scotland, by helping arrange accommodation and food, with the support of local communities.

Gustav Fredriksson quit his job to join the pilgrimage and has walked over 1,800 kilometres since July 19 from Sweden. He said:

"I've been thinking more about what I can practically do and when you walk, you have more time to think. I thought, how could I have been so ignorant.

"I've become a vegetarian while on this journey and I've thought more about flying less within Europe, consuming less generally and living a simple lifestyle. We all need to think about changing our lifestyles.

"It's great to be in Scotland, the people are nice and friendly here, and there is so much beauty. The first day in Scotland was the best day so far of our journey."

Nikki Neesam, Community Engagement Officer, SCIAF, said: "We wanted to make sure we gave the pilgrims a Scottish welcome and help spread their message here. With the help of our supporters and local parishes across Scotland, we've been able to support the pilgrims with their stay on the way to Glasgow."

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St Pat's will be open to COP26 visitors



A GLASGOW parish is preparing to host the world's politicians, technical experts and campaigners by opening its doors to prayer.

St Patrick's in Anderston is the church closest to the COP26 conference and has put in place a special schedule of services for the duration of the event.

In addition the church will open every day from 7am to 7pm to allow delegates, officials and local people to pop in for a moment of prayer and reflection.

Parish Priest Canon Paul Gargaro said: "Obviously St Aloysius will host the COP26 delegates' Mass and there are the Taize vigils and other big events across the city, but we're offering some peace and quiet in the middle of the busyness of the conference that some people might like, or need!"

■ **Schedule of services here: <http://stpatsanderston.weebly.com/>**

Bishops opt for ethical investment

THE Archdiocese of Glasgow along with the other seven Catholic dioceses in Scotland has announced that it will no longer hold shares in fossil fuel focused corporations.

Scottish bishops made the pledge as part of a multi-faith announcement that includes 72 faith groups with more than £3 billion combined assets.

Bishop Bill Nolan of Galloway said the bishops had decided to act now, days before the start of the UN COP26 conference on climate change in Glasgow, to show that the status quo is not acceptable.

"Given the harm that the production and consumption of fossil fuels is causing to the environment and to populations in low-income countries, it was not right to profit from investment

in these companies," he said. "Disinvestment is a sign that justice demands that we must move away from fossil fuels."

Alistair Dutton, Director of Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund said he was delighted at the news.

'Delighted'

"The announcement in the week before the COP Climate summit begins in Glasgow adds even more momentum to the groundswell of public opinion that we must urgently tackle the climate emergency," he said.

Jill Kent, Chair of Justice & Peace Scotland, said that the commitment would encourage 'Catholics everywhere to take action to protect the environment for future generations'.



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A life well lived: remembering Mgr Peter Smith

If a person was ever represented by his name it was Monsignor Peter Smith. Archbishop Conti summed it up as he recalled the day of a child's baptism when the priest asks the parents, "What name do you give to this child?"

In the Archbishop's words, the name Peter "was an inspired choice" for a man whose faith, strength, loyalty and reliability could be summed up by that word ... Peter - Petrus - Rock.

The death of Mgr Peter Smith brought expressions of sympathy from across the Archdiocese and beyond. He was a hugely familiar figure, at the side of two archbishops for over 20 years as Master of Ceremonies at countless confirmations, anniversaries, ordinations and parish visits. His own priesthood spanned the Archdiocese from north (St Augustine's) to south (St Gabriel's), from east (St Mary's) to west (St Paul's).

He served the Church further afield too, with a period of attachment to the Vatican's Nunciature to the

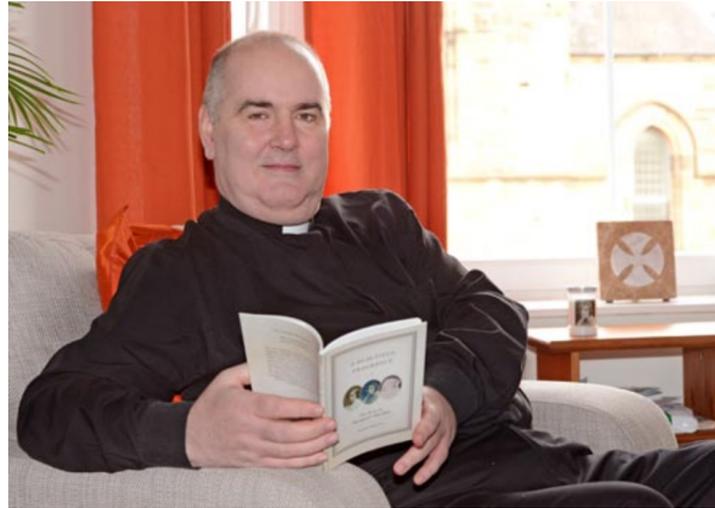
UN in New York, a city Mgr Peter loved.

His face was familiar to all, yet few really knew the behind-the-scenes work he carried out for so many groups and causes, ranging from young people in secure accommodation as Chairman of the Cora Foundation, to couples seeking annulments through his work for the Marriage Tribunal.

Devoted

Along the way he organised a Papal Mass, a Cardinal's funeral, an Archbishop's enthronement, royal visits ... and all the while remained a devoted parish priest who loved his people and was loved by them in return.

It fell to the Archdiocesan Administrator, Mgr Hugh Bradley to deliver the homily at the Requiem at a packed St Paul's church in Whiteinch, a church which was Mgr Peter's first appointment as a deacon back in 1983 and his last as Parish Priest until his death. It was, said Mgr Hugh, his pride and joy. "How proud



he was of this church and he loved to beautify it," said the Diocesan Administrator.

In an affectionate homily, Mgr Hugh paid tribute to Mgr Peter's family who had, he said, cared for him tenderly and faithfully throughout his long illness.

WORDS BY **RONNIE CONVERY**

PICTURES BY **PAUL MCSHERRY**

ness. "Family is special to a priest," said Mgr Hugh, adding that Mgr Peter's family were particularly special to him. Mgr Bradley also paid special tribute to Canon David Boyd, Mgr Peter's close friend since seminary days, who had cared for him faithfully throughout his long illness.

He recalled the late chancellor's legendary love of Christmas and spoke of a trip with his nephew and nieces to Lapland to see

Santa Claus. Was it for their benefit or his? Everyone who knew Mgr Peter smiled. Indeed one of his last posts on Facebook was entitled 'Your Christmas countdown'.

Legendary

Mgr Hugh recalled Mgr Peter's legendary appreciation of food - especially in large quantities - and spoke of the happy times at St Mary's Calton, where, with his friend and ultimately successor as Archdiocesan Chancellor, Canon Tom White, they would outdo each other in culinary extravagances and hospitality.

Mgr Hugh recalled too, Mgr Peter's total devotion to God, to the Church and to his people. He revealed how he had chosen to go and give evidence himself at the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry on behalf of the Bishops' Conference, despite the fatigue and stress of the experience on a man already terminally ill with cancer.

He spoke of Mgr Peter's great compassion, shown to so many people over the years, those who had suffered misfortune, illness or bereavement or those in need in any way.

Prayers

"If he could ask anything of you today it would be your prayers," said Mgr Hugh.

"He died fully expecting to share in the resurrection of the Lord he served so faithfully, and we should be quietly confident that he heard these words as he passed into eternity ... 'well done good and faithful servant.'"

It was fitting that the final blessing and commendation should fall to Archbishop Conti, whom he served as chancellor, MC, support and friend throughout the Archbishop's time in office.

Archbishop Mario said: "The solidity of his advice, his kindness which could always be relied upon, his sense of fun, his tireless work ... I was privileged to have his constant support during my time as Archbishop."

And in a poignant final memory he said: "That name ... Peter. So very appropriate to his personality... I was at his bedside in his final hours to say those lovely prayers for the dying when we ask Our Lord to take the person to Himself. He was in deep peace. And the thought of St Peter came back to me.

"Mgr Peter was lying in the hospice bed, his right arm stretched out, and it reminded me of that scene in the Gospel when St Peter, having set out to walk across the waves to reach the Lord, at the last moment stretches out his hand to catch that of Jesus who welcomes him safely into the boat.

"I am sure that is what happened too in this case."

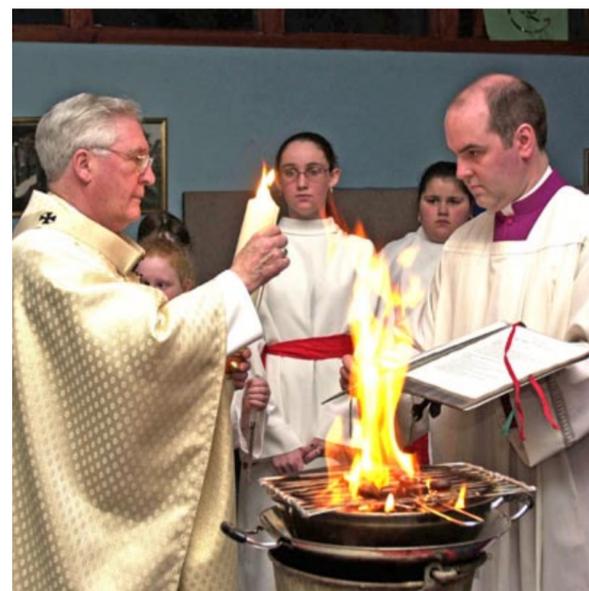
Right Reverend Monsignor Peter Canon Smith, December 21, 1958 - October 10, 2021.

Ordained priest June 29 1984.

Requiescat in pace.



Above: Archbishop Conti blesses the coffin



Left, right: Mgr Peter served faithfully as MC to Cardinal Winning and Archbishop Conti

"To me it was a miracle..."

MONSIGNOR Smith survived well beyond the expectations of his doctors, and he bore his illness with enormous bravery.

But he also credited Scotland's 'undeclared saint' Margaret Sinclair with interceding for him and remained convinced that he had defied death several years ago thanks to her prayers and intercessions.

As reported in the February 2017 edition of *Flourish*, he was already receiving treatment for aggressive advanced cancer when late in 2016 doctors discovered a blood clot on his lung and a deadly infection attacking his body tissue from his hips to his shoulders.

They decided not to operate as they would kill him and were convinced he would not survive for the next 48 hours.

Monsignor Smith wrote in that edition of *Flourish* what happened next:

"From Sunday's bright prospect of going home, Monday's mood had changed markedly. I would not be going to the Beatson on Tuesday ... and if I was going home on Wednesday it would be in the back of an undertaker's hearse.

"The next two days, Tuesday and Wednesday, are a blur to me. I slept through most of them, waking up to groggily acknowledge visitors and try to chat coherently with them. I received



Holy Communion each day and had been anointed.

"On Thursday morning, I am delighted to say, not only was I still alive but feeling so much better. Not nearly as dramatic a recovery as John Fagan, sitting up and asking for an egg, but I had some porridge! 'You're an enigma,' said the surgeon, as the morphine was stopped - well, the pain had gone - and simple paracetamol prescribed. Nurses admitted they were amazed I had made it through.

"Afterwards, I discovered that throughout the Monday and Tuesday, friends who had been alerted to my critical state spent whole nights praying through Margaret Sinclair's intercession. The Wednesday when my condition changed for the better was the Feast of St Margaret of Scotland.

"In mid January, seven weeks after being discharged and into a new year which no one expected me to see, I went

back to meet the surgeon. He is surprised at how well I look and how much progress I have made. My original surgical wound continues to heal and my energy levels are on the up. He is happy! Now comes my question: 'Do you know what happened to me?' His answer is simple: 'No.'

"He reiterates that someone with the condition I had is usually in ICU, in a coma, on life support, dialysis and heavy doses of drugs, with a life expectancy of less than 48 hours. I pointed out that I had people praying for me and asking that Margaret Sinclair intercede on my behalf.

"In light of that, he is happy to admit that my recovery has no medical explanation. And, of course, that is the very essence of a miracle, to which my mind returned.

"For me, Margaret Sinclair - for some reason I cannot understand - has interceded in asking God to cure me of that bug. In my book, it is a miracle."



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Right: Jeanne, Team Leader, Wellbeing Services

St Mary's Cathedral ABERDEEN

Parish Youth Ministry Coordinator

St Mary of The Assumption Cathedral, Aberdeen, is inviting applications from youth ministry leaders with a minimum of 2 years' experience in a youth support role for the position of Youth Ministry Coordinator.

The Youth Ministry Coordinator will be responsible for the development and training of a Youth Ministry team; bringing on emerging youth leaders; the delivery of the weekly Youth Group Programme & further development of youth ministry within the wider parish in alignment with the Parish vision.

This is a full-time post (35 Hours per week), including frequent evening & weekend hours with a salary from £18,000 - £25,000 per annum, commensurate with qualifications / experience.

Job Purpose

- To bring passion, vision, energy & knowledge to develop Youth Ministry in the Catholic Parish of St Mary of The Assumption, Aberdeen
- To focus on the 11-18 age range
- To assist young people in the parish to seek a personal encounter with Jesus in their lives, grow in the life of the Spirit and nurture Christian values for the benefit of themselves, their local Church & the wider community
- To empower young people to become visible and active in the Parish

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Celebrations African-style for Fr Francis' 25 years

BY BRIAN SWANSON

PARISHIONERS of St John Ogilvie and St Jude's in Barlanark joined parish priest Father Francis Okereke in a memorable African-flavoured Mass of thanksgiving to celebrate 25 years of priesthood.

Father Francis arrived on loan to the Archdiocese soon after being ordained on the August 24 1996 for the diocese of Orlu in his native Nigeria and has remained in Glasgow ever since.

Over the years he has served in a number of parishes including St Charles, St Andrew's Cathedral, and St Patrick's Anderston.

A former chaplain to the athletes competing in the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, he was appointed Parish Priest at his present church in 2017 and more

Picture by Paul McSherry



recently administrator at St Maria Goretti, Bellrock Street.

He said: "It was wonderful to be able to celebrate my anniversary among parishioners and friends. I would like

to thank them all for their kindness and support over the years and for making the celebrations so memorable.

"I would like to use this opportunity to thank the two parishes of St Jude's and

St Maria Goretti that I serve for organising the thanksgiving Mass. I pray that the Lord will bless and reward them abundantly."

Ad multos annos!

St Joseph's jubilee joy

ONE of the busiest churches in the Glasgow area marked a special anniversary last month.

St Joseph's, Clarkston welcomed back former parish priest, Brian McGee who is now Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, and Paisley's Bishop John Keenan who celebrated Mass with the current parish priest Fr Stephen Baillie.

St Joseph's current building was opened in 1971 and has had to be extended over the years to cope with the fast-growing Catholic population in the area.

Parishioners were joined by representatives of the local schools – St Joseph's, Our Lady of the Missions and St Ninian's for the Mass and celebrations afterwards.

Parishioner Angela Gow has fond memories of the church over the last 50 years. She told *Flourish*: "The building was opened in June 1971 and in the October the Clarkston disaster happened. I was at primary school at Our Lady of the Missions, and I can remember the driver of the school bus coming in saying, "If anybody lives in Clarkston it will be hard to get there as there has been an incident and no traffic is allowed round the toll".

"I remember thinking something had happened to the church and was concerned but no, it was worse than that as the explosion cost many lives.

"The church building has been well used over the years and during Father Brian McGee's (now Bishop McGee) time the church had a further extension added on as



the numbers were growing in the parish.

"While the original building had its difficulties on the extension there was also problems. We knew there was asbestos and it was removed properly and they thought they had got all of it. But further into the build they discovered more and the build again was longer than anticipated.

"Over the 50 years our parish has had many special events and none more than ordinations. Over the years we have been blessed with five priestly ordinations and two permanent diaconate ordinations.

"The priests are Canon Desmond Berry, Father Martin Houlihan (deceased), Mgr Victor Boyle (Rome, Father Gerry Hastie MHM, Father Joe McGill and the two deacons are Rev Pat Dougan and Rev Paul Graham.

"Our parish has been blessed with all these ordinations and the parish grows in numbers year on year."



Bishop John Keenan with former parish priest Bishop Brian McGee and current parish priest Canon Stephen Baillie

Pictures by Paul McSherry

Safeguarding appeal



THE Catholic Church in Glasgow is issuing an extraordinary appeal during the month of November to anyone who may have been affected by any kind of abuse at the hands of clergy or church officials ... 'tell us where we went wrong and how we can do better'.

During the designated month, The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) is conducting an external, independent review of the Archdiocese of Glasgow to hear from people with first-hand experience of how the Archdiocese has responded to reports of abuse.

A spokesman for the Archdiocese said: "This is a genu-

ine attempt to listen and learn. The Social Care Institute is a totally independent body which will conduct this month long audit. The Archdiocese will have no role except to help to publicise that the audit is taking place, and that the external team want to hear directly from abuse survivors.

"The Social Care Institute wants to understand what is happening today and what has gone wrong in the past. They are looking at the responses of people in diocesan roles to knowledge of abuse by clergy or risks posed by clergy and others in Church-related roles, paid or voluntary.

"While the audit will con-

centrate on the last 5 years, we recommend that anyone who has experience of how we have dealt with abuse claims should speak to SCIE staff directly. Nobody at any level in the Church will be told that they are taking part. What they you? tell SCIE will be confidential and will not be shared with the Archdiocese except as part of an overall report which will absolutely not identify any individual."

Dr Sheila Fish, SCIE Head of Audit and Review, said: "We want to understand what is working well and where there are problems. We want to hear from people with first-hand experience of how people in diocesan roles have responded to disclosures of abuse or sharing of concerns."

When the work has been completed the Archdiocese will publish the report and copies will be made available to survivors.

Anyone who may wish to report on their experience should contact SCIE directly by email at learningtogether@scie.org.uk or by phone on 07921 251614. SCIE will then get in touch to arrange a time to report to the auditors in a way that suits each individual.



Pope artist Jim's gift to St Augustine's

VETERAN artist Jim Jeffrey, 90, known as the man who paints Popes in his living room, has gifted a portrait of Pope Francis to St Augustine's Church in Milton to the delight of priest and parishioners.

Jim, a parishioner of St Dominic's Bishopbriggs, has already donated portraits of Saint John Paul II and St John XXIII to his own church and has now gifted his Pope Francis painting to St Augustine's where his daughter is a parishioner.

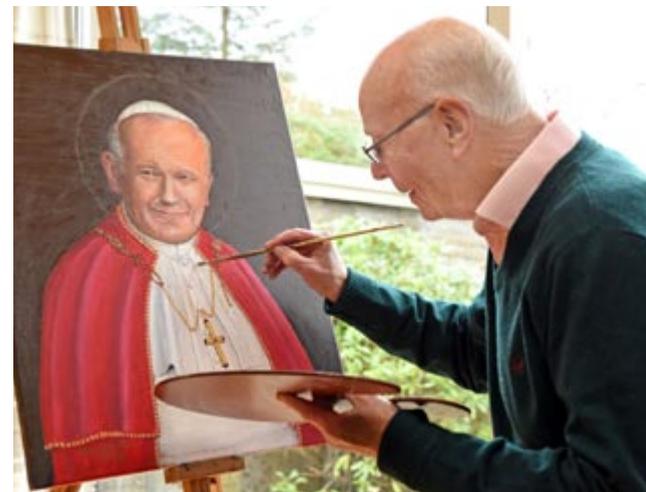
Parish priest Father Paul McAlinden said: "We are grateful to Jim for his gift – it was a very thoughtful gesture which has brought lots of positive reactions from parishioners and visitors."

And while St Augustine's has the original, Jim has also sent a photocopy to the Vatican with a covering letter in Spanish from his daughter Diane Stokoe, a principal teacher of modern languages at St Ninian's Kirkintilloch.

Jim said: "I don't really expect a reply from the Vatican because I know that Pope Francis receives literally thousands of messages every day.

"But you know what they say... if you don't ask you don't get!"

Jim, a former St Mungo's Academy pupil, spent his working life as a chartered accountant, working for some of the best known companies Gin Glasgow and



WORDS BY **BRIAN SWANSON**

PICTURES BY **PAUL MCSHERRY**

painting which he studied part time at Glasgow School of Art.

His recent portraits, created in his living room studio, feature such diverse subjects as Saint Jeanne Jugan, foundress of the Little Sisters of the Poor, which now hangs in the order's nursing home in Robroyston; Field Marshall Montgomery and Laurel and Hardy.

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Faifley parish celebrates rising from the ashes

WHEN parishioners gather at a Mass of Thanksgiving later this month to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the newest church building in the Archdiocese it will be an occasion of both joy and sadness.

It could hardly be otherwise, since St Joseph's Faifley rose from the ashes, literally, of the previous church of the same name which burned to the ground shortly before Christmas 1993.

Parish Priest, Father Paul Milarvie, said: "Many parishioners will tell you how they stood in the Faifley Road to see their church on fire and watched helplessly as it was destroyed.

BY BRIAN SWANSON "So for the people of St Joseph's the anniversary Mass will be an emotional and emotive occasion because many of them came here in the late fifties and early sixties – they saw the first church built, and it was central to their lives.

"So as you can imagine they were overjoyed when Cardinal Winning announced that very shortly after the disastrous fire a new church would be built on the same site making the celebrations this month a very significant and poignant occasion for this parish community."

Cardinal Winning laid the foundation stone for the new church on Monday November 15, 1996, and the thanksgiving Mass will be celebrated on the 14th at 12 noon.

The Faifley housing scheme was established just after the Second World War to provide new housing following the widespread destruction of Clydebank during the Blitz.

St Joseph's parish was created in 1957 although it was to be six years before the first church was built, with parishioners first using Faifley Public School hall, later the hall in the new St Joseph's Primary and finally the Oratory, built before the church and which still stands today, to celebrate Mass.

Building work on the original St Joseph's church,



designed by the renowned architect Jack Coia, began in 1961 and the church opened for worship in 1963.

The first parish priest was the highly popular Canon Thomas Glen who served from 1957 until 1980.

Who could have forecast

that 30 years later, the much loved church, created by the deep faith and hard work of priests and people alike, would be reduced to ashes in a disastrous fire?

A passing taxi driver raised the alarm shortly after 8pm a few days before Christmas,

1993 and then helped pensioners, who were enjoying a game of bingo, to escape from the nearby hall.

It later emerged that the vandals had been responsible for fire which took hold in minutes largely due to the amount of wood inside. Thankfully no one was hurt.

With typical decisiveness Cardinal Winning lost no time in announcing that, given that adequate insurance was in place, a new church would be built to replace it. And as if to underline his commitment the site was cleared within a matter of days.

The new church, built at a cost of £1m, was designed by Nicholson Jacobsen Architects, who were chosen after winning a design competition organised by the Archdiocese.

The "new" St Joseph's
Pictures by Paul McSherry



November memories and resolutions



Mary's musings

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

THIS month I'm finally going to begin to do something I've been promising myself for years. For the first time since my mother died, nine years ago, I am going to fully embrace her November custom.

After my dad died many years ago my mum, and my dad's cousin, would visit the family graves after morning Mass on the feast of the Holy Souls. Walking the mile from church to cemetery, the two women recited the Rosary before praying at the graves and recalling family stories.

Afterwards they walked back into town for lunch together and then they went their separate ways. Often that was the afternoon my mum would start her Christmas shopping. Looking back, I realise she would have been looking for a reason to delay her return to an empty house.

On my dad's anniversary, or whenever I visit his grave, I think of him dying just short of his 70th birthday. I think of how he wasn't yet old and how he could have had many more years watching his grandchildren grow, especially the one he didn't live to see. The great consolation is that, sudden as his death

was, he died quickly and peacefully in his own bed with my mum at his side.

That next day my mum and I agreed that, heartbroken as we were, we wouldn't want him back. He had been called home to the Lord and we could not regret that. It was his time; he was never a greedy man and he'd almost had his three score years and ten.

Baroness Meacher's Bill was heard in House of Lords last month, going unopposed at this reading. It's at times like this in the assisted suicide campaign that the media is awash with first-person testimonies from people wanting the right to end their lives, if and when the conditions they suffer from should progress, and the accounts of families who have accompanied loved one to a suicide facility usually in Switzerland.

Carefully crafted testimonies in slickly orchestrated campaigns would have us believe their promise of a peaceful and dignified passing. Would these families who travel to Switzerland tell us if the death didn't quite go to plan? Of course not. We're now hearing stories countering the peaceful, dignified death argument with ac-



counts of long, drawn-out and distressing deaths.

Being in control is seen as a positive thing. If you're in control, if you have a plan, everything will work out. But it's far from that simple and the full impact of assisted suicide is not known.

With assisted suicide the emphasis is on the physical, while palliative care puts the focus on the whole person – the emotional, physical and spiritual.

Palliative care specialists recognise the manifestation of spiritual and emotional suffering as well as physical pain. They see better than most of us that it is wholly inaccurate to define pain as physical suffering. End of life care can be transformative – for the patient and their loved ones.

Proponents of assisted suicide argue there we should be allowed a choice in how we want to die. They argue, those who want to

engage with palliative care support should do so and leave those who want to end their lives to get on with it without interference.

The reality is if assisted suicide become legal, palliative care, which is already grossly underfunded, will suffer even more. We only have to look at how Covid was first framed in early 2020. It would only really affect the elderly and those with underlying conditions, we were told. The message was loud and clear – they are expendable, they matter less.

At the end of life with the best care, whether at home, in hospital or hospice there is a much kinder alternative to choosing death because you can no longer face life.

Sometimes it is in those last, sad and sacred days and hours that healing takes place and all manner of suffering is resolved.

We need to rewrite the prevailing narrative around death and dying.



St Nicholas Care Fund
A charity of the Archdiocese of Glasgow

Grants to provide cycling equipment for refugees; to support young mothers facing childbirth alone; and to purchase football equipment to encourage physical activity in the Somali community are all good causes the Care Fund has supported recently.

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Kevin's day of joy at Scottish parliament: MSP Kaukab Stewart, Kevin's daughter Elli, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and Kevin

St Aloysius volunteer Kev hailed as local hero

A LOCAL hero from St Aloysius Church, Garnethill, joined politicians and dignitaries when the Queen and Prince Charles officially opened the new session of the Scottish Parliament.

Kevin Wyber, group co-ordinator of the ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) programme in the city centre parish, was nominated to attend the ceremony by Kaukab Stewart, the SNP MSP for Glasgow Kelvin, in recognition of his work with refugees and asylum seekers.

And when he was introduced to the Duchess of Rothesay, (as Camilla is known in Scotland), he lost no time in telling her of the successes achieved at the classes which have benefited over 3000 students since they began.

Admiration

He said: "She expressed her admiration and thanks for the work of all our volunteers with our New Scots and I was impressed with her genuine interest."

"Kaukab later introduced me to Nicola Sturgeon, who said she was familiar with the work we do and her deputy John Swinney who was also impressed with what we have achieved."

Kevin, who brought his daughter Elli as his guest, was among 129 other local heroes, all nominated by their MSPs and representing every constituency in Scotland, who attended the state opening.

He added: "I'm delighted to have been nominated and given the opportunity to attend the state opening but really this award is for all the volunteers at St Aloysius ESOL School. They are all heroes too."

MSP Kaukab said: "I am incredibly proud to represent such a diverse and welcoming city. Now, more than ever, this warm welcome is needed by people who have had to leave their homes, often in the most distressing of circumstances, before travelling considerable distances in the hope of finding safety."

"The work by groups such as ESOL at St Aloysius is vital in not only welcoming people to our city and country but in assisting them to integrate and thrive in their new community. It was therefore a pleasure to welcome Kevin as my 'Local Hero' to the State Opening of the Scottish Parliament. As the Group Co-ordinator

BY BRIAN SWANSON

of the ESOL programme at St Aloysius, I can think of few who have had such a pivotal role in supporting these new Glaswegians gain their independence as Kevin has. "These classes do fantastic work and are a precious resource. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank those who run the classes and also the attendees who put in the hard work."

For almost four years dedicated volunteers based

at the Ogilvie Centre at St Aloysius have run language classes for refugees and asylum seekers.

The programme which has expanded to include the provision of donated bicycles, laptops and mobile phones, regular donations of food, clothing and household items as well as access to college and university places.

■ **To find out more contact Kevin Wyber, ESOL School co-ordinator on: esol.staloysius@gmail.com**

Cumbernauld parish wins top award

A CHARITY started by parishioners from Sacred Heart and St Lucy's in Cumbernauld has won a top award at the 2021 Scottish Charity of the Year Awards, run by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO).

Cumbernauld Resilience saw off competition from four other shortlisted charities from across Scotland to win the 'Community Action' category for its work providing food and other support to residents in need during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Since it was formed at Sacred Heart Church in Cumbernauld at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Cumbernauld Resilience has delivered more than 110,000 meals to local residents; provided Christmas dinner and a gift for 600 people and put on outdoor mini concerts for retirement complex residents.

Cumbernauld Resilience Chair and 4th year Diaconate student, Tony Murphy, who collected the award on the charity's behalf said: "As a relatively new charity, we



Fr John Campbell

BY BRIAN SWANSON

are humbled and delighted to have been recognised in this way. We are especially delighted to have won in the Community Action Category as, from the outset, Cumbernauld Resilience's ethos has been about mobilising the wonderful community spirit that exists in our town to help those in need."

Tony added: "All the trustees would wish to thank our parish priest Father John Campbell for his tremendous and unwavering support and without his input and valued help this would not have been possible."

"In our own special way we all firmly believe that we ensured that the beating heart of Sacred Heart continued to beat loudly during the pandemic as we reached out to those most in need."

Father John Campbell told *Flourish*: "As parish priest I am very proud of our people – they were quick to respond to the Covid crisis recognising that many in our community were isolated and in need. They recognised that need and quickly mustered over 100 volunteers from our parishes and wider community to help as best as they could – as Jesus said to the young man who asked, who is my neighbour?"

"Anyone in need is our neighbour. Our people have truly put faith into action and despite our doors being locked during the pandemic the church was still very much alive and active."

■ **To find out more about Cumbernauld Resilience, or to donate to support ongoing work, visit: [Facebook.com/CumbernauldResilience](https://www.facebook.com/CumbernauldResilience)**

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



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To JESUS through MARY!

CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

Our moral duty to care for creation



Pope Francis' prayer for the earth

All powerful God, you are present in the universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with your peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it...

That we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light. We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle, for justice, love and peace. Amen.

THE Church's teaching on the environment is best expressed in Pope Francis' encyclical letter, *Laudato Si* which means "Praise be to you" taken from the first line of the canticle of creation by St. Francis of Assisi which praises God and all of creation.

From the outset, Pope Francis states the goal of the document: "In this Encyclical, I would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home."

Normally, papal documents are addressed to the bishops of the Church. But, like Pope Saint John XXIII's *Pacem in Terris*, Pope Francis address his message to 'all people' irrespective of rank, race, creed or colour.

"I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation that includes everyone, since the environment challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all."

Pope Francis also has a strong message for those in the Church who downplay environmental issues.

"It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent.

"So what they all need is an 'ecological conversion', whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience."

The Pope's letter first asks, "what is happening to your common home?" His response is clear: "The degree of human intervention, often in the service of business interests and consumerism, is actually making our earth less rich and beautiful, ever more limited and grey, even as technological advances and consumer goods continue to abound limitlessly. We seem

to think that we can substitute an irreplaceable and irremediable beauty with something which we have created ourselves."

Then the Pope turns to the links between faith and care for the planet. He says: "Why should this document, addressed to all people of good will, include a chapter dealing with the convictions of believers? I am well aware that in the areas of politics and philosophy there are those who firmly reject the idea of a Creator, or consider it irrelevant... Nonetheless, science and religion, with their distinctive approaches to understanding reality, can enter into an intense dialogue fruitful for both."

"We are not God. The earth was here before us and it has been given to us... Although it is true that we Christians have at times incorrectly interpreted the Scriptures, nowadays we must forcefully reject the notion that our being created in God's image and given dominion over the earth justifies absolute domination over other creatures."

The Pope goes on to expose the human role in creating the looming climate emergency. He writes: "It would hardly be helpful to describe symptoms without acknowledging the human origins of the ecological crisis. A certain way of understanding human life and activity has gone awry, to the serious detriment of the world around us. Should we not pause and consider this?"

To counter the slippage towards disaster the Pope proposes an 'Integral Ecology'.

"Since everything is closely interrelated, and today's problems call for a vision capable of taking into account every aspect of the global crisis, I suggest that we now consider some elements of an integral ecology, one which clearly respects its human and social dimensions."

"Today, the analysis of environmental problems cannot be separated from the analysis of human, family, work related and urban contexts, nor from how individuals relate to themselves,

which leads in turn to how they relate to others and to the environment."

Next, he proposes some concrete ways forward: "Interdependence obliges us to think of one world with a common plan. Yet the same ingenuity which has brought about enormous technological progress has so far proved incapable of finding effective ways of dealing with grave environmental and social problems worldwide. A global consensus is essential for confronting the deeper problems, which cannot be resolved by unilateral actions on the part of individual countries."

"Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change. We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone. A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal."

"In calling to mind the figure of Saint Francis of Assisi, we come to realize that a healthy relationship with creation is one dimension of overall personal conversion, which entails the recognition of our errors, sins, faults and failures, and leads to heartfelt repentance and desire to change."



Ten insights from Pope Francis's *Laudato Si*

ON PRACTICAL CHANGES IN OUR LIFESTYLE

"Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us, such as avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of other practices. All of these reflect a generous and worthy creativity which brings out the best in human beings. Reusing something instead of immediately discarding it, when done for the right reasons, can be an act of love which expresses our own dignity." (#211)

ON THE FREE MARKET ECONOMY

"Once more, we need to reject a magical conception of the market, which would suggest that problems can be solved simply by an increase in the profits of companies or individuals. Is it realistic to hope that those who are obsessed with maximizing profits will stop to reflect on the environmental damage which they will leave behind for future generations?" (#190).

ON TECHNOLOGY

"There is a tendency to believe that every increase in power means an increase of progress itself... as if reality, goodness and truth automatically flow from technological and economic power as such. The fact is that 'contemporary man has not been trained to use power well', because our immense technological development has not been accompanied by a development in human responsibility, values and conscience. Each age tends to have only a meagre awareness of its own limitations." (#105).

ON GLOBAL WARMING

"A very solid scientific consensus indicates that we are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climatic system. In recent decades this warming has been accompanied by a constant rise in the sea level and, it would appear, by an increase of extreme weather events, even if a scientifically determinable cause cannot be assigned to each particular phenomenon. Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it." (#23)

ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE POOR

"The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation. In fact, the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet." (#48).

ON CONSUMERISM

"When people become self-centred and self-enclosed, their greed increases. The emptier a person's heart is, the more he or she needs things to buy, own and consume. It becomes almost impossible to accept the limits imposed by reality. In this horizon, a genuine sense of the common good also disappears." (#204).

ON SOCIAL MEDIA

"Real relationships with others, with all the challenges they entail, now tend to be replaced by a type of internet communication which enables us to choose or eliminate relationships at whim, thus giving rise to a new type of contrived emotion which has more to

do with devices and displays than with other people and with nature" (#47).

ON OVERPOPULATION

"Instead of resolving the problems of the poor and thinking of how the world can be different, some can only propose a reduction in the birth rate. At times, developing countries face forms of international pressure which make economic assistance contingent on certain policies of 'reproductive health'.... To blame population growth instead of extreme and selective consumerism on the part of some, is one way of refusing to face the issues." (#50).

ON ABORTION

"Since everything is interrelated, concern for the protection of nature is also incompatible with the justification of abortion. How can we genuinely teach the importance of concern for other vulnerable beings, however troublesome or inconvenient they may be, if we fail to protect a human embryo, even when its presence is uncomfortable and creates difficulties?" (#120).

ON HOPE

"All is not lost. Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start, despite their mental and social conditioning. We are able to take an honest look at ourselves, to acknowledge our deep dissatisfaction, and to embark on new paths to authentic freedom. No system can completely suppress our openness to what is good, true and beautiful, or our God-given ability to respond to his grace at work deep in our hearts. I appeal to everyone throughout the world not to forget this dignity which is ours. No one has the right to take it from us." (#205)"

Art of the month

Be still, my soul, the Lord is at your side

THE virus causing Covid may well be seriously contagious and infectious but our faith is even more contagious and infectious. So the Church must spread hope and not fear.

The 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) is upon us. We are being sent on a mission to clean up our planet and have an awareness of how easy it is to destroy the world we love and cherish.

In the Joy of the Gospel (*Evangelii Gaudium*) Pope Francis teaches us that every Christian is a missionary of a different kind. One who goes out to proclaim the Good News. We can give witness to Christ in the things we do for other people and for our care of nature.

When did you last say hello to a person living in

BY MGR TOM MONAGHAN

the streets? When did you last pick up a plastic bottle someone had dropped and put it in the bin? The sanctification of little things...

The world leaders may accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. But we can start now in little ways caring for one another and for our planet.

Environmentalists have directed our attention to the disorder of the universe and are pointing to a better way of treating our God-given resources.

Henry Adams, Harvard graduate and historian whose father was appointed by Abraham Lincoln as

Ambassador to the United Kingdom, summed it up well. "Chaos was the law of nature; order was the dream of man."

Our painting, *The Storm on the Sea of Galilee*, by Rembrandt, depicts chaos and disorder. Nature against human vulnerability but still Jesus is calm and untroubled. Jesus calms the waves and saves the lives of the fourteen men aboard the vessel.

Why fourteen? The Golden Age painter, Mr. Harmenszoon van Rijn, included himself next to Jesus and his 12 disciples!

By the way, you lovers of art, do you have an alibi for 18th March 1990? On that day, the painting was stolen and has never been recovered. The empty frames await their discovery.



PRAYER OF THE MONTH

Let us Pray: Dear Lord, help us to be enlightened by the foundational truths of our Faith that, in all charity, we may be drawn closer to God and be filled by your peace. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

POEM OF THE MONTH

This is an excerpt from "The Passionate Man's Pilgrimage" by Sir Walter Raleigh, a man of war who in this instance asks only the emblems of peace.

Give me my scallop-shell of quiet My staff of faith to walk upon, My scrip of joy, immortal diet, My bottle of salvation, My gown of glory, hope's true gage; And thus I'll take my pilgrimage. There will I kiss The bowl of bliss; And drink mine everlasting fill Upon every milken hill: To him that made heaven, earth, and sea,	That, since my flesh must die so soon, And want a head to dine next noon, Just at the stroke, when my veins start and spread, Set on my soul an everlasting head. Then am I ready, like a palmer fit; To tread those blest paths which before I writ.
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In its most recent survey of American Catholics, the Pew Research Centre found virtually no change in the broad support Pope Francis enjoys among American Catholics.

For those who say they attend Mass at least once a week, 83 percent also said they have a favourable view of the Pope in late September, virtually unchanged from the last such poll in March.

The lowest such mark Francis ever got, in 2018 at the peak of the McCarrick and Pennsylvania Grand Jury revelations, was about 70 percent, which, among other things, makes one wonder how the narrative of “Americans v. The Pope” has managed to prove so enduring.

In all likelihood, it’s a classic case of never allowing facts to get in the way of a good story.

Those numbers, however, weren’t the most interesting aspect of the Pew results. That came when pollsters asked American Catholics for their reaction to the clamp-down Pope Francis recently imposed on the Tridentine Latin Mass, which generated an avalanche of commentary and protest in Catholic media circles and dominated internet discussion for weeks.

In response to the question, “What have you heard about the Pope’s new restrictions on the traditional Latin Mass?”, two-thirds of American Catholics reported that they’ve heard nothing at all – nada, jack, zip, zilch.

Such a finding has to be deeply galling to those of us who live and move and have our being in the Catholic press, who spent hours reporting stories or preparing analyses or lining up guests for prime-time broadcasts about the Latin Mass and the repercussions of the pontiff’s historic decision to effectively reverse the liberalization granted by his predecessor Benedict XVI.

We treated the decision like it was the Battle of the Bulge, and, in Catholic terms, it sort of was, meaning a decisive turning point in a long-running war, in this case between traditional advocates of the old Mass and progressive champions of the new.

The first take-away from the Pew study, therefore, should be a note of humility for those of us who imagine ourselves shapers of Catholic opinion, because we clearly don’t have the reach or impact we sometimes imagine.

The bigger picture to be gained here, however, is a measure of realism about the

For most Catholics liturgy wars don’t count. It’s the Mass that matters



BY **JOHN LALLEN JR**
EDITOR OF CRUX

importance of “issues” when it comes to forming the perspectives of average Catholics about the Church and its leadership.

All journalists are, at heart, political reporters, and we tend to presume that policy is always king. We think everyone must have an opinion about immigration, or climate change, or Afghanistan, or whatever, and that everyone’s attitudes towards a leader or an institution are determined by their positions on such issues.

In Catholic terms, reporters thus imagine the typical Catholic parish as a cauldron of competing opinions on Pope Francis, on the Latin Mass, on women in the Church, on blessing gay unions, or whatever the issue du jour may be. Further, we unconsciously assume that a given Catholic’s attitude toward the Pope, or their bishop, or the Church in general, ought to be based on whether they share that Catholic’s policy agenda.

The raw truth, however, is this: most Catholics get enough of political rancour Monday through Saturday. When they come

to Mass on Sunday, they’re not looking for a debating society or an episode of “Meet the Press.” What they want is a welcoming community in which people are kind to each other, a pastor who seems to care, and a liturgy which, for a moment, lifts them out of their day-to-day concerns and puts them in a different space, one in which they can encounter God and try to feed the better angels of their natures.

In other words, they don’t really care what the Vatican just said about GMOs, or what the bishops’ conference is doing about the empowerment of laity, or any of the other matters that populate news sites and blogs. Of course, enough Catholics do care about such issues that those news sites and blogs stay in business, but they represent a fairly small fraction of the overall total.

Here’s a quick personal anecdote to make the point.

A number of years ago, I was on my first trip back to the States after having moved to Rome to cover the Vatican. I headed out to Hill City in rural western Kansas to visit my grandparents over a weekend, and thus it

was that on a lazy fall Sunday I found myself in their living room, sitting with my grandfather. He had a football game on the TV, as a pretext for falling asleep in his beloved Barcalounger.

I was an eager beaver back then, full of enthusiasm for Vatican controversy and intrigue. I’d taken a couple of papal trips, met the man himself, and written probably a couple hundred thousand words about the various debates and fault lines at the time. Yet it occurred to me that I had no idea where my own family stood on any of those things, so I decided to ask.

“Hey Grandpa,” I said, “what do you think of this Pope?”

He slowly roused from his pre-slumber, and then looked over at me with a mixture of confusion and disdain.

“What do I think of the Pope?” he said. “He’s the Goddamn Pope, that’s what I think.”

With that oracular declaration, he was off to the Land of Nod.

His point, of course, was that he didn’t spend any time pondering what to think of John Paul II or any other Pope. In that regard, my grandfather, a garage mechanic by trade who hated watching the news, who went to Mass every Sunday largely because my Grandma rode herd on him, but who died with a prayer to Jesus on his lips and a rosary in his hand, was undoubtedly far more representative of the ordinary Catholic than I or any of my inside-the-beltway friends.

Memo to reporters everywhere, therefore: When it comes to religion, policy does matter, but it’s hardly king.

■ Follow John Allen on Twitter:
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I'll be holding back the floodwaters from Patience's village... long after I'm gone.

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Patience Peter aged 1, Malawi. Photograph by Thoko Chikondi.

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Forgiveness of a Glasgow mum is inspiration for new book

THE moving story of a Glasgow mother who, through the strength of her Catholic faith, forgave the Loyalist gunman who killed her only son is told in a new book to be published later this month in the 20th anniversary year of the murder.

Gorbals-born Michael McGoldrick, a 31 year old mature student who had just graduated but was working part time as taxi driver, was found dead in his cab after going to pick up a fare in remote countryside outside Lurgan, County Armagh, on July 9 1996.

In 2003 Clifford McKewen, 47, a member of the Loyalist Volunteer Force was jailed for 24 years for Michael's murder.

But as the new book, *A Mother's Love*, by Glasgow-based author Lorna Farrell reveals, his mother Bridie, now a 75 year old widow, and her late husband Mick chose the path of forgiveness not hate following the murder of their son.

Tears streaming down his

WORDS BY **BRIAN SWANSON**

PICTURES BY **PAUL MCSHERRY**

her mind wandering into those dark, desperate places of the imagination, but whatever evil has been done to her, God's goodness and grace have overcome it.

“As Mick was saying goodbye to Michael in the coffin, he had been reminded of God losing his own Son, Jesus. He also remembered that God was quick to give his grace and forgiveness to those who needed it and realised he couldn't withhold these things from others.”

Bridie who was brought up the Gorbals and was a parishioner of the old St Francis Church in Cumberland Street, met her husband Mick, from Portadown, while on holiday in Ireland. They were married in 1963 and Michael was born two years later.

The couple left Glasgow for Northern Ireland in the early nineties to join Michael, his wife Sadie and their 18-month-old daughter Emma.

Bridie and Mick learned of their son's killing in a TV newsflash while on holiday

in their caravan in Warrenpoint and the book gives a detailed account of the devastating effect it had on their lives.

Yet they both took strength from their faith even in the darkest of times and, remarkably, went on to

form a charity called United Christian Aid to help poverty-stricken children in Eastern Europe.

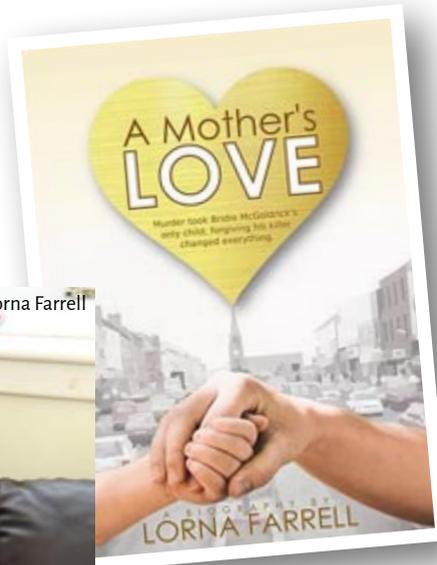
Tragically Michael died in April 2006 while on a mercy trip to an orphanage in Moldova, testing Bridie's faith yet again.

Lorna said: “When I first met Bridie McGoldrick I didn't know her name or her story, so I didn't really have any preconceptions. However, over the years of getting to know and love her she has become one of my heroes.

“She has endured the most profound heartbreak imaginable, in the most brutal circumstances and for the most inexcusable reasons, yet still she chooses to forgive. Then she lost the love of her life, soul mate and best friend, yet still she chooses joy and hope.”



Author Lorna Farrell



“A Mother's Love is available to buy from www.lornafarrell.com”

Mgr Hugh's Rome visit



GLASGOW'S Rome-based seminarians got a welcome visit last month from Monsignor Hugh Bradley, the Administrator of the Archdiocese until a new Archbishop is appointed.

Mgr Hugh met up with the students staying at the Pontifical Scots College during a

short break in the eternal city before heading off to greet the two Glasgow students currently studying at the Beda College near the Papal Basilica of St Paul outside the Walls.

“It was lovely to be back in Rome and good to catch up with our students and see them make such good progress,” said Mgr Hugh.



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Making a will in advance can be an act of charity

Where there's a will there's a way ... that ancient piece of advice referred to the virtue of determination – a "will" to succeed.

But it can also be applied to the other kind of "will" – the document which lays out your wishes for what should happen to your property, assets and personal effects after you die.

Every lawyer can testify that life for surviving relatives is rendered so much simpler – and often cheaper – when a will has been drawn up.

Indeed preparing such a document (which can be done very simply and often free) could be described as an act of charity towards those who will be left when you enter eternity.

Despite the importance of Wills, more than 50% of people still don't have them.

A will can provide the following benefits among others:

- Provides financial security for loved ones;
- Avoids inheritance disputes
- Appoints guardians where appropriate for your children

It is probably true that the main obstacles to carrying out this act of charity (and justice) for your relatives are superstition (it's somehow unlucky), procrastination (putting off until tomorrow what can be done today) and misunderstanding (not realising the complications and costs of dying without a will).

The truth is that a will can be drawn up simply and cheaply by your local solicitor – it won't take long, and if you don't have a vast wealth to divide among branches of the family tree, at least you will have the satisfaction of knowing that treasured items will reach the people you want them to reach, that children will be cared for and that awkward family arguments will be avoided in advance.

Wills can be amended so don't worry that what you say can never be changed. If circumstances change just let your local solicitor know and the will can be updated.

Remember ... where there's a will there's a way ... a safer way!

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Worship is the focus for Education Week

MY dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Each year at this time, we celebrate Catholic Education Week. During this week we:

- celebrate the God-given talents and achievements of our young people;
- acknowledge the hard work and faith witness of the staff in our schools;
- mark the unique contribution that Catholic Education makes to our families, our parishes and to wider Scottish society; and reflect on the mission of the Catholic school for the future.

This year, the theme of Catholic Education Week is Celebrating and Worshipping. This theme reflects the vision and aim of Catholic education that Catholic schools, as believing communities which celebrate faith in Jesus through prayer and liturgy, invite all to participate and to develop their spiritual capacities.

In doing this, they strengthen the bonds with their local diocese and parish communities, which can enhance the school's own efforts with pastoral support and sacramental ministry provided by local clergy.

Our Catholic schools are communities where Jesus is the 'driving force' behind the school's planning and actions. Pope Francis has said that "you cannot speak of Catholic education without speaking about humanity, because the Catholic identity is precisely that God became man".

Catholic schools in Scot-

land are inclusive communities which welcome, value, affirm and support all pupils, parents and staff to fulfil the potential of their God-given talents, with Jesus Christ as our model, and his teachings as our sure foundation. As such, they naturally become communities of celebration and worship, as we recognise and offer thanks for the many gifts given to us as members of God's family.

For celebration and worship is such a part of what we do and of who we are. For all of us, some of our happiest, most poignant and most beautiful memories are linked to times when we have joined with others in celebration and worship; no doubt, we hope to make many more such memories.

In the 4th Common Preface for weekday Mass, we find these beautiful words:

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For, although you have no need of our praise,

yet our thanksgiving is itself your gift, since our praises add nothing to your greatness but profit us for salvation, through Christ our Lord.

There is never a wrong time to turn to God in prayer and worship. There is never a wrong time to celebrate his unfailing love for us. Indeed, in so doing, we strengthen our relationship with our Father and with our brothers and sisters in Christ, and we realise our humanity. We are made to know, to love and to serve Him; it is here that we find our purpose, and our schools – pupils and staff - grow and thrive through joining together in celebration and worship.

This is why the prayer and sacramental life of our schools is absolutely central to who we are and to how we grow as a community.

In particular, it is in the celebration of the Eucharist, and in Eucharistic Adoration, that we find a special and precious way to pray and worship.

Time spent in the true presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament reminds

us, in the words of Pope Francis, that "life's greatness does not consist in having, but in loving." This is a vital message for our young people, and in underlines the importance of home, school and parish working together with a common vision. Learning to pray is at the heart of a Catholic Education.

I encourage you then to give thanks for Catholic Education and to pray for our schools, just as they pray for us. Let us continue to be a people who, united in Christ and moved by the Holy Spirit, turn naturally to the Father in celebration and worship.

Yours devotedly in Christ,
+Hugh Gilbert
 Acting Bishop President for Catholic Education

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November's message: let's help those who have died *and* those who are alive

ON talking with someone about the repercussions of the Covid 19 pandemic on their life, the person used the words that he felt "hollowed out".

The comment disturbed me: it was quite scary. It was as if its effects – physical, emotional, and spiritual – had hollowed him ... to the core.

His comment reminded me of the poem by T S Eliot called "The Hollow Men". In the poem "The Hollow" are described as having "shape without form", "shade without colour" and "gesture without motion". Their daily life, in short, is depicted as being nondescript, monochromatic and robotic.

I am wondering if these words may have resonance and sensitivity for some people, maybe you, in the past year. Many people's lives, and the lives of their loved ones have not just been disrupted but maybe shattered by Covid death, and death from non-Covid illness.

Grief

Grief is grief; Sorrow is sorrow. "Griefland" knows no medical terms only expansiveness. Dreams have been broken, put on hold or dismissed. The ordinary rules and regulations regarding behaviour have been altered; routines of travel, shopping and lifestyle choices are lost to memory; relationships of face-to-face conversation have morphed into the world of the Internet. The word "normal" means just living in the here and now.

Covid has numbed us. At times recalling past reality is difficult. Last November, the number of deaths was 60,000 in the UK. Now it is 137,000. Worldwide, it is 5,000,000. Undeniably, without the covid vaccine there would be viral genocide. In societal terms, the accelerator effect of the virus has created illness, sickness, unemployment, suicide, emotional illness, fear of our NHS being overwhelmed and other serious problems. We all have personal testimonies. There have been moments of some sunny Summer respite, vaccination calmness, a cautious easiness about going out but always with a wary, backward glance to a horrid past, and an anxiety amidst



future bursts of localised outbreaks, and "firebreaks" to control them.

In the past year we have all been historians with memories of what-was. professional social historians, Parliamentary Committees and TV commentators will soon be reporting on it for its repercussions as well as debateable topics, like what levels of death and infectious cases are considered as "acceptable" for society. But until then we go on with hope...

Hope is a major theme of the gospel of St John. In the gospel, Jesus uses the title "I am" several times. It is a definition of his identity as the Holy One of God. It is good sometimes to reflect on some of these titles to give us a sense of hope so we don't end up feeling "hollowed" out in personality: body, mind and soul.

In John, chapter 6, the whole chapter is devoted to the title of Jesus, "I am the bread of life". Having an emptied, scooped out stomach does happen. Images of children in Yemen, Afghanistan and Darfur are hauntingly familiar. In parts of Scotland hunger is not unknown. It is enough to make you screen your eyes lest you cry. Starvation is pain.

In the time of Jesus people have been accustomed to hunger. Palestine was an occupied country, and a historical breadbasket for the Roman Empire. When Jesus fed people, they literally did follow him and word got



BY FR MICHAEL CONROY

around that the wonder-worker was here. Who could blame them? Jesus was neither ignorant nor unconscious of starvation. He saw its effects all around him. In John, 6:34, he declares: "I am the bread of life." Yes, he was speaking in a eucharistic way similar in meaning to the words of the Last Supper in the gospels of Mark, Matthew, and Luke. There was a spiritual, transcendent meaning within his words. But also, he was talking about the starving in soul, mind, and body. Can we identify at times how those words affect us now? In the work we do, in the life we live ... what do we need for nourishment? How do we "feed" others to nourish their "hollowed out" personality?

Nourishment

Later in John's gospel, a man called Nicodemus comes by the dark of night to see Jesus. This itself is evidence of something not well about him but beyond his insight. At first glance though he appears as someone grounded in faith. As a leading Pharisee he has been taught the Way to God. Sadly, as the story moves on it emerges that he is "hollowed out" in Faith. He is a

lost soul seeking and searching for God. Ever been there in the past year?

His encounter with Jesus, appears to give him hope. Jesus' words are life-giving for him as if he is filled with a developing and embryonic faith-in-the-meaning-of-life. Self-truth, self-honesty amidst duplicity surrounding us, or worse being "fed" to us by conniving others ... What does it bring up for you? What has the last year looked like for you? Directionless, dullish, moving on automatic pilot?

You, I, us ... we are not alone. Jesus says, "I am the light of the world; anyone who follows me will not be walking in the dark but will have the light of life."

It is spiritually consoling to have not just clarity but wholeness and well-being

ily who have been "hollowed out". Lazarus is physically raised; Martha and Mary are given a sense of completeness and recovery beyond words. The Lazarus story is a future sign of Eternal Life. Eternal Life is resurrection forever on account of Jesus' resurrection from death by the Father.

The Christian faith is lived amidst "hollowed out"-ness all around us, but we must not forget Jesus' fulfilled words and promise to Martha who represents us all: "I am the resurrection and the life". His words are Embodied Hope. In the month of November let us pray for our dead. And let us pray for our living.

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Fr Tom
Kilbride

NOVEMBER can be a lovely month in Church life.

We begin it with the joyful feast of All Saints, and then on All Souls' Day we remember and pray for our departed loved ones, a commemoration we extend across these November weeks, as we hold those we have known and loved close in prayer. Then, before November ends, we have entered Advent, with its atmosphere of hope and excitement, beginning a new liturgical cycle and looking towards Christmas (not forgetting our own patron, St Andrew, whom we celebrate at the month's end!).

That our attention is drawn to saints and to Holy Souls, is no coincidence. Our Sunday readings over these weeks always point us forward, to the "end times" and to all that means to us. While at times a little odd to our ears, their overarching message is one of hope.

Thirty-Third Sunday B

We've journeyed through the Gospel of Mark this year, from the wilderness with John the Baptist to Jerusalem with Jesus, and today we hear from Mark for the last time. It's a strange passage, one in which Jesus talks like an Old Testament prophet foretelling the "Day of the Lord". In those texts, the 'Day' is one of judgement, one in which the pagan nations are destroyed and faithful Israel is saved. It is always the action of God.

Here, however, Jesus is both prophet and protagonist. That is, he announces the coming Day and is the one who will come to "gather his chosen". There's actually less of judgement

here, but more emphasis on salvation, less upheaval and more hope.

For Mark, it's important that we know that it is the "Son of Man" who is coming on the clouds. This is the same "Son of Man" whom Jesus has been telling us will suffer and die. His path to suffering is not the end: the end is glory. So it will be for his chosen ones!

Christ the King B

Mark has studiously avoided calling Jesus a "king" (even though the Kingdom of God is the key concept for him), so we turn to John's Gospel to end Year B on this feast day. Curiously, however, the First Reading offers the very text from Daniel that Jesus quoted in his prophecy about the Son of Man coming in glory last week.

Mark doesn't want us to separate that vision of glory from the Cross which the Son of Man will embrace, for he also shows Jesus quoting this text before the High Priest – for which he is condemned to death for blasphemy. John fixes our eyes instead on Jesus before Pilate, revealing himself as a king of a kingdom "not of this world".

In fact, John wants to say the same thing as Mark, but comes at it from a different angle. Rather than avoid calling Jesus a king - in case we think of power and forget the Cross - John's stress on Jesus as a king, only comes during the Passion chapters, and he repeats it over and over as Jesus goes to the Cross. So, Jesus is for John a Crucified King, a Pierced King.

The Cross proves God's love for the world: Jesus is raised up therefore as King



of Love. Pilate will write that he is "King of the Jews", but anyone who has been listening carefully will know he is so much more. Mark would definitely agree!

First Sunday of Advent, Year C

We end November entering Advent, and a new liturgical year, the Year of Luke. Oddly, we experience a little déjà-vu this Sunday, since we hear basically the same text as we heard only two weeks before, but this time it's Luke's version.

Luke is a story-teller and he loves sharing the colours and textures of Jesus' words and actions. Hence, he offers more detail, more drama, than Mark's brief account. Also - typical of Luke - there is more in the way of practical application. Luke wants us to be clear

what Jesus' words mean for us in action: avoid debauchery and drunkenness; stay awake and pray; be bold!

The picture of the end-times might be dramatic, but we should have no fear. Again, it is a message of hope, this time mixed with a call to action and perseverance. Maybe as we face relentless stories of floods and fires, pandemic and volcanoes, this call not to be afraid but to be confident in our faith seems quite timely and encouraging. (Spoiler: note his insistence that we "pray at all times". We are going to hear a lot about prayer over the next year with St Luke!)

Second Sunday of Advent, Year C

As each year, this Sunday introduces the figure of John the Baptist, preparing the way for the coming of the Messiah. It is one of the few Sundays in which Jesus doesn't appear in the Gospel reading. Advent is about patience, waiting and preparing for his coming, after all.

When we compare this passage to the other gospels, we spot two things. First, as John the Baptist appears in the wilderness, Luke locates him also in time. The list of emperors and rulers with which he begins is intended to tell us that this is no myth, no fairy tale or allegory. This is a story of real people in real time.

Writing for people who would have been used to hearing myths of gods and heroes, Luke is clear from the start that this is real his-

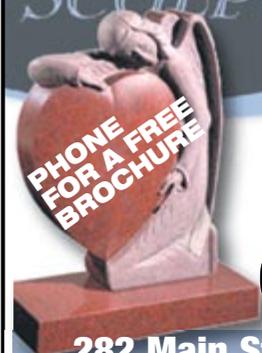
the Old Testament prophets like Amos, Isaiah or Jeremiah. He does this by the saying that in this moment in time "the word of God came to John", just as it had to them.

John closes the time of the promises as he now points to the time of their fulfilment. The last line ("all mankind shall see") gives us a glimpse into Luke's understanding of the Gospel too. We will think about this as the year unfolds but, for now, we know it is about life in the real world, touched by the presence and power of God. And it is for everyone.

November's Gospel readings, then, lift our eyes to the future – to the glorious future that awaits beyond this world and to the fulfilment of God's promises in Jesus. Through readings that speak both of Jesus' final coming and those which point to his first, the guiding thread in the readings is that November is our month for hope.

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O'HARE



7th Anniversary

Please pray for Esther (Murray) a cherished wife to the late David, Mum and Gran & adored Great-Gran, who sadly died November 7, 2014.

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Advertising and origination: MSC Publishing & Design · Telephone 0141 956 2051 · email gary@flourishnewspaper.co.uk

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