

FLOURISH

Official Journal of the Archdiocese of Glasgow

October 2023

Synod meets in Rome: **'It's time to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit'**

It's time to listen, to pray, and to be brave in opening ourselves to the will of God...

Two years ago Pope Francis invited the world's 1.37 billion Catholics to take part in a Synod on the themes 'communion, participation and mission'.

After consulting with clergy, religious, lay people and all who felt moved to contribute, the Synod meets in Rome this month to LISTEN to the Holy Spirit, to find new and better ways of being present to humanity today and to discern how to bring God's presence to today's world.

This Synod will tackle some of the most controversial issues facing our Church today. Topics such as the role of women in the Church, how to care for the environment, and discussions on human sexuality will be at the forefront. These issues have sparked passionate debates among

Catholics worldwide.

The Synod will provide a platform for respectful dialogue, even when opinions differ and serve as a testament to our commitment to unity, dialogue, and inclusivity, even when the topics are tough.

The synod now underway has been described as the most important moment in the life of the Catholic Church this century. It isn't just for a few, it's for us all: lay, religious, young, old, daily Mass attenders, disenchanted lapsed Catholics, people from other faith traditions and of no belief. We're all invited to get involved.

The Bishops of Scotland ask all Catholics in Scotland, to pray for the Synod especially during the month of October.

All are asked to pray, every day of the Synod, the following prayer which has been invoked at Church Councils over the centuries:

ADSUMUS SANCTE SPIRITUS

*We stand before You, Holy Spirit,
as we gather together in Your name.*

*With You alone to guide us,
make Yourself at home in our hearts;*

*Teach us the way we must go
and how we are to pursue it.*

*We are weak and sinful;
do not let us promote disorder.*

*Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path
nor partiality influence our actions.*

*Let us find in You our unity
so that we may journey together to eternal life
and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.*

*All this we ask of You,
who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son,
forever and ever.*

Amen



Pope's plea to save the planet page 20



Mission Sunday special page 12



Sacred Heart anniversary pages 10-11



300 years of service by our priest jubilarians

APOSTLES of charity and sustained by faith, seven jubilarian priests were honoured for their devotion to God and His people at a Mass of Thanksgiving in St Andrew's Cathedral last month.

With more than 300 years of service between them and coming from a variety of backgrounds they deserved to be recognised for their devotion 'each and

BY BRIAN SWANSON

every day' as Archbishop Nolan, himself celebrating 46 years of the priesthood, put it in his homily.

The three longest serving priests, celebrating their Golden Jubilee, are Father John Twist SJ, of St Aloysius, Garnethill, Father Pat Currie, of St Joseph's Milngavie, and Father Brian McNaught, formerly of St Augustine's

Milton, now retired.

Father Frank Balmer, of St Paul's Shettleston, marked 40 years of ministry along with Father Michael Savage formerly of St Margaret Mary's Castlemilk but now retired and in residence at Nazareth House.

Father Anthony Ejikeme, of St Agnes Lambhill, and Father Thaddeus Umaru, of St Roch's Garngad, each celebrated 25 years of service.



Picture by Paul McSherry

New series of talks offers opportunity to explore faith

THIS year the Archdiocesan RE Department is offering a new series: *Understanding Our Faith*.

These online sessions will be led by theologians from a number of dioceses and will explore key areas of the Catholic faith at an adult level.

Although the series has already begun it is still possible to book for individual sessions.

On October 26 the topic will be 'Scripture' while on November 29 the focus will be on 'Tradition and Magisterium'. Sessions run 4.30-5.30pm and cost £10.

■ To book contact Christine.Burke@rcag.org.uk



Parishes prepare for changed days ahead

THE future shape of parish life in the Archdiocese of Glasgow is occupying the minds of priests and parishioners this month as discussions and reflections continue on the 'Looking to the Future' initiative.

The goal of the consultation is the creation of vibrant communities where faith is celebrated and shared, while making the best use of the resources available.

It is widely acknowledged that changes to parish structures, and thus church closures, are a sad but necessary step in the work of evangelisation. Fewer but more vibrant and active parishes are likely to emerge. Deanery groups have recognised that currently many

BY RONNIE CONVERY

parishes are geographically situated in areas where populations have moved away. And a decline in vocations means that the traditional model of every parish having one or two priests resident can no longer be sustained.

Archbishop Nolan created five large deanery areas earlier this year and asked each to focus on how best to prepare for the future in their zone.

Canon Andrew McKenzie, who has been co-ordinating the work told *Flourish* there was widespread acceptance of the need for changes and explained what will happen next.

He said: "Deanery Profiles

have been sent to the Deans to assist with the local discussion on the distribution of resources going forward.

"These profiles give an indication of the scale of change that is required offering a variety of statistics for consideration.

"The Deans have been asked to form Sub-Groups to look at which buildings we will need so as to provide appropriate pastoral care throughout the archdiocese. These groups are to be made up of priests and lay people who are being asked to work together to help make the decision appropriate to their area.

"These groups have to offer early feedback by the end of November."

FCJ Centre St Hugh's

Spirituality and outreach with the Faithful Companions of Jesus

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Events for Young Adults (20s and 30s) To find out more follow us on social media, or email us to join an event.

Vocations weekends (in person) 13 – 15 October

For women considering the vocation to religious life. Opportunity for shared prayer, input, discussion, personal reflection and Q&A with FCJ Sisters.

Week of Guided Prayer ONLINE 3-10 December

Give your prayer life a boost in Advent and join the online prayer week. Commit to 30 mins of personal prayer each day, join talks and workshops on spirituality.

Lindisfarne Pilgrimage 3 - 7 April

A walking retreat to the Holy Island of Lindisfarne of the coast of North East England. We will walk part of St Cuthbert's way and across the ancient pilgrim path to Holy Island. There will be opportunity for prayer, reflection, walking and lots of socialising! Young Adults (20's and 30's)

International Reading Group ONLINE

This is an opportunity to read some theology with other people – no prior study required, everyone is welcome!
We read a Chapter and then have some discussion and opportunity to ask questions about what we are reading.

The FCJ Sisters are an international congregation of Catholic religious sisters who live Ignatian spirituality. We have communities across the world and are involved in a wide range of ministries and mission. If you would like to find out more take a look at:

www.fcjsisters.org



Doors open at new Uni chapel

A NEW Catholic chapel has opened in the city centre and it marks a dream come true for the students and staff of Strathclyde University.

The new worship space opened last month...and has already attracted a steady flow of Mass-goers.

Fr Brendan Slevin, the Dominican chaplain at the University said: "I am overjoyed that the Catholic community at Strathclyde now has a spiritual home on campus. I am also grateful to all those who have helped create this beautiful chapel, in particular Rev Meg Mason the University chaplain and many others."

The Chapel boasts wonderful artwork by artists who have lived, studied and worked in Glasgow. The crucifix is painted by Kate Robinson. The Stations of the Cross are by Adrian Wiszniewski and were donated to the University by Helen Cargill Thompson.

Even the font was hewn out of rock by a former chaplain and students.

Perhaps most poignantly, the centrepiece altar and ambo come from the former private chapel of Archbishop Tartaglia.

Fr Brendan said: "To add the altar used by the late



BY RONNIE CONVERY

archbishop is a generous and humbling gift from the Archdiocese. Together the fittings tell a story of the Catholic Chaplaincy, of the creative arts in Glasgow but above all levels of stories about faith.

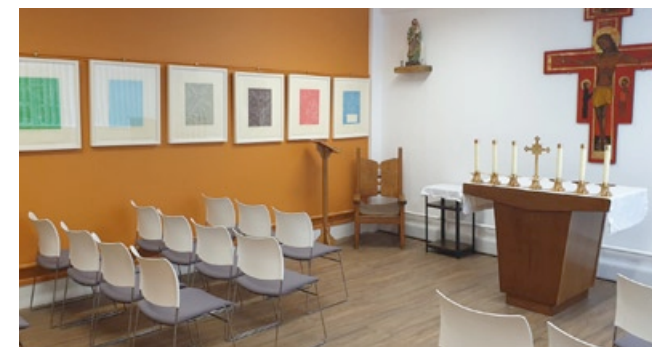
"But this is not an art gallery, the beauty points beyond itself and helps to establish a place that is holy and a font of grace. Already there are comments about the feel of the chapel.

"I look forward to the Catholic community mak-

ing this chapel their spiritual home at Strathclyde, whether at the 12.10 daily Mass or at other times during the day – alone or in groups – and so refreshed, take their faith with them

into the world."

■ The new chapel is situated in the Sir Graham Hills building, room GH216 at 40-50 George Street, Glasgow.



Archbishop backs call to halt new oil field development

ARCHBISHOP Nolan has joined church leaders from across the country in writing to the UK Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, urging him to reverse his decision to allow a new oil field to be accessed off the coast of Shetland.

The Archbishop joined former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams and hundreds of clergy and lay people in denouncing the decision as a retrograde step for the environment.

In the strongly worded missive they write: "As Christian leaders from around the UK, we call on you to stop the Rosebank oil field, which will not lower energy bills, provide energy security, uphold our obligations to care for our global neighbours or create sustainable jobs fit for the green energy future we need.

"Your government will know that both the International Energy Agency and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have been clear that we cannot afford to burn all the oil and gas from existing fossil fuel develop-

ments, let alone from new ones, and still limit global heating to 1.5°C.

"We have already seen the incredible damage that human-driven climate change has caused around the world; sadly, these impacts will only accelerate as we burn more oil, gas and coal.

Moral

"Rosebank could produce more than 300m barrels of oil, which, when burned, will emit the same amount of CO2 as the annual emissions of the world's 28 lowest-income countries combined – countries disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis with limited ability to adapt...

"As Christian leaders from around the UK, we do not take a partisan view on Rosebank, we take a moral view. It's time to show international and moral leadership – and stop Rosebank."

The letter from Church leaders echoes the concerns expressed by Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation on climate changes released early this month.

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Anniversary tree honours Archbishop Philip

PUPILS from Notre Dame Primary in the West End, many too young to remember him, have planted a memory tree as a lasting tribute to the late Archbishop Philip Tartaglia who blessed their school when it opened in its new location 10 years ago.

Formed following a merger with St. Peter's primary which closed in 2013 the 10th anniversary of the move to the new building in Havelock Street has been celebrated with several fund-raising events to raise money to provide a defibrillator for the community.

In memory of the Archbishop, who died three years

BY BRIAN SWANSON

ago on January 13, St Mungo's feast day, the school chose a bay tree, which according to ancient tradition, represents strength and courage.

It was planted in the school garden alongside another bay tree to mark the anniversary itself.

Head teacher Tina MacDonald said: "The children had a great time taking part in the different events especially when it came to planting our two trees.

"We all have very fond memories of Archbishop Tartaglia whose passion for education was well known."



Remembering Archbishop Tartaglia at Notre Dame Primary School
Pictures by Paul McSherry



Archbishop's words of gratitude to our deacons ... and their wives

ARCHBISHOP Nolan set aside an evening last month to spend time in prayer and relaxation with the Archdiocese's permanent deacons ... and their wives.

And it was to the wives – whose consent is required before a husband can be ordained to the permanent diaconate – that the Archbishop had a special word of appreciation.

One deacon's wife told *Flourish*: "The Archbishop spent a lot of time with us over supper – he was very interested in how the diaconate plays out in our marriage and family life."

Another said: "As a wife of a student deacon, it was great to meet other deacons and their wives and realise they are all normal but lovely people!"

Normal

There are currently 19 permanent deacons in the Archdiocese with two more completing their studies and due to be ordained next year. Of these, 18 are married and three are single.

The age profile ranges

from about 40 to 75 years old, with the majority of men being in employment either in secular jobs or in various Chaplaincy posts.

Deacon Kenny McGeachie who oversees the Diaconate programme in the Archdiocese explained the importance of the role of wives in the vocational journey of their husbands.

Profound

He said: "The role of the wife in the decision for their husband to become a deacon is both formal and profound. Formal because the wife must give her written permission and consent to the Archbishop for her husband's ordination. If permission is not given, ordination cannot happen."

Journey

"Profound because their marriage is inextricably weaved into, and becomes part of, the deacon's ministry. Of course, it is the husband only who is ordained, but the wife and family provide the foundation, support and context for his ministry to flourish."

"It is not about being good at making cucumber sandwiches (as in the caricature of a minister's wife!) – but usually about married love and family life being interwoven with parish life and service – all mingled together and journeying in the same direction, united in love. It is a beautiful thing."

"The wife does not have any obligations placed on them whatsoever other than to support their husband. For example, deacons must pray the Divine Office every day, but not wives. It is their husband's vocation."

■ **There will be an information evening – 'Come and See' – for anyone thinking even remotely about the permanent diaconate on Friday 17 November at 7pm in Eyre Hall at the Archdiocesan offices. There will be the chance to chat about what's involved, meet the Archbishop and serving deacons and learn about the programme. For more information contact Deacon Kenny at [kennymcgeachie@rcag.org.uk](mailto:Mcgeachie@rcag.org.uk)**



Married and ordained – a deacon's vocation story



Flashback to ordination day for Deacon Kenny
Picture by Paul McSherry

I HAVE always had a sense of calling from God, not particularly to priesthood or the diaconate, but a vocation to 'help'.

In my younger days this vocation presented itself as a career in mental health nursing and healthcare management in secure hospitals and prisons, later to become prison chaplaincy.

My wife Sandra and I met on pilgrimage to Lourdes, both of us being members of St Margaret of Scotland Youth Group. Our relationship blossomed and we were married in 1994 and soon had two children, Ellen and James, who are both adults now.

Our involvement with the Church deepened and grew over time, especially with the music group in St Paul's Shettleton and going to Lourdes every year.

In 2003, over 50 men attended an information evening about the introduction of the permanent diaconate in Glasgow.

I was one of twelve eventually ordained as Glasgow's first permanent deacons, in 2009.

Bringing together the Sacraments of Marriage and Holy Orders are the most important moments in our married life and are true gifts from God.

BY DEACON KENNY MCGEACHIE

Sandra's generosity with looking after our two young kids is a remarkable demonstration of her love for me, allowing me to become a deacon and bring to fruition the original calling from God to 'help'. A deacon, as a servant, exists to help.

And what a gift it has been! To realise the graces contained in combining the Sacraments of Marriage and Holy Orders – like the mingling of the water and wine at Mass into a new reality.

It is true that our family life has changed dramatically over the near-15 years since ordination, but I often imagine those two Sacraments combined as an image of a small boat cast out for the journey ahead – containing us, sheltering us, keeping us afloat, steering us and taking us to new and wonderful places.

I am a better husband, father, brother, friend – a better person – because of the mingling of those two Sacraments.

It has been the privilege of our lives for God to combine those two Sacraments in us and allow us to live as family and minister as deacon in the Archdiocese of Glasgow, fulfilling the call to 'help'.



PAKISTAN CRISIS

Can you help?

In the worst incident of anti-Christian violence in Pakistan's history, up to 25 churches have recently been attacked and hundreds of family homes burned down.

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giftaid it

Jean swaps Glasgow for Middle East peace mission

A GLASGOW parishioner has spoken of her horror as violence erupted while she was volunteering as human rights monitor in the West Bank.

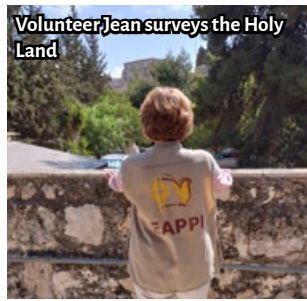
Jean (*Flourish* has chosen not to use her surname for her own safety), from Holy Name Parish, is a volunteer with the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine (EAPPI).

Jean said: "I was with some Palestinian shepherds out in the fields when we heard the first rockets come in. We had to hurry back with the shepherds and their flocks... All Ecumenical Accompaniers have now been moved to relative safety.

"I am now very fearful about what might happen. I can only condemn the awful cruelty and barbarity of the attacks on young people at a music festival and the kidnapping of civilians."

"On the other hand, I am very worried about what might happen to Palestinians. The living conditions for Palestinians are so bad that it is like a boiling cauldron of tension.

"People in Gaza are al-



BY RONNIE CONVERY

ready experiencing electricity and water shortages. One contact in a Gaza hospital has described how they are having to rely on solar power, generators and petroleum to look after their patients. In the West Bank, villages are cut off with cement blocks, earth mounds and iron gates."

Jean has long experience of the tensions in the Middle East. As an Ecumenical Accompanier she works alongside both Israeli and Palestinian nonviolent peacemakers. With her fellow volunteers they provide a protective presence for Palestinians against military and settler violence – they accompany farmers trying to access their land,

children going to school or workers passing through checkpoints and report on infringements of international law.

She said: "Since working on a kibbutz and then teaching in a West Bank university in the '80s, I became aware of how social conditions continue to deteriorate for Palestinians.

"I believe that every child has a right to go to school without fear, that families should be able to make a living off their land without harassment, that everyone is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. From a humanitarian and human rights perspective, I feel I need to uphold these basic principles."

EAPPI is an international programme, set up in 2002 in response to a request from church leaders in Jerusalem for a nonviolent international presence.

International teams are sent to various locations in the West Bank and East Jerusalem each year to engage with local Palestinians and Israelis in working for a peaceful way forward, in ac-

Pope Francis' prayer for peace

POPE Francis has pleaded for a halt to further violence in Gaza and Israel.

"Please stop the attacks and the weapons," Pope Francis pleaded, "and understand that terrorism and war do not lead to any solution, but only to the death and suffering of so many innocent people."

"War is always a defeat! Every war is a defeat!" he insisted.

Speaking after the Angelus prayer on Sunday, the Holy Father said he is following "with apprehen-



sion and sorrow," the latest news from Israel, "where violence has erupted even more ferociously, causing hundreds of deaths and injuries."

He expressed his sympathy to the families of

victims, and said he is praying for them and for "all those who are experiencing hours of terror and anguish."

The Pope invited everyone to pray for peace in Israel and Palestine.

Archbishop commissions new head teachers



THESE are some of the Archdiocese's new head teachers commissioned by Archbishop Nolan at a well-attended Mass for teachers celebrated at St Andrew's Cathedral on the Feast of the Adoration of the Cross.

BY BRIAN SWANSON Nolan spoke of the importance of displaying the cross in churches, homes and especially schools as a permanent reminder of God's love.

The new secondary head teachers are Patrick Doyle, St Aloysius' College, Laura Moreland, St Maurice's, and Megan Gardner, St Mungo's.

The primary heads are Jacqueline Daly, St Joseph's, Mary Moore, St Patrick's, Lynsey McLeod, St Paul's Shettleston, all Glasgow, and Maureen McHugh of St Patrick's, Dumbarton.

Earlier, in reference to the feast day, Archbishop

"Teachers here today recognise that it is not enough simply to have a cross in the classroom and elsewhere in our schools but to show by example what it means to be truly loved by God," he said.

This year's Mass was held earlier in the evening than in past years leading to a higher attendance than usual – a practice that is likely to be followed in the future.

Silent heroes who make peace a priority

HIGH on my list of heroines are the women who spent years protesting at Greenham Common.

We have our own peace camp at Faslane and the dedicated people living there hold vigils every week to protest against the presence of the nuclear submarines based on the Clyde, but I think those who protested at Greenham were subjected to greater hassle as they sought to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

Those women came to mind for two reasons: UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres' message for the United Nations Disarmament Week, which begins on October 24, in which he says "Disarmament must be brought back to the centre of our common efforts for peace and security"; and the frightening fact that the US air force has secured funding for a project that may allow American nuclear weapons to return to British soil for the first time in more than 15 years.

Will we see a new generation of women surrounding the perimeter fence of RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk, as the women did at Greenham Common?

As chair of Pax Christi Scotland, I attend online



Marian Pallister

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



meetings of what I call Pax Christi International's "No Nukes" group. For some months we have been hearing from Pax Christi representatives in Belgium, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands, who are all waiting for, or have already noted, the arrival of B61 bombs in their countries. Turkey, too, is planned as a storage base – and now this RAF base in England is preparing to take delivery of these updated nuclear weapons.

We could say, of course, that these weapons are illegal. The Treaty on the

Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons came into force on the 22nd of January 2021 – the first legally binding international agreement to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons with the ultimate goal being their total elimination.

When 92 countries signed up to it, those veterans of Greenham Common must have felt their hearts sing. Now, with the news of the B61 bombs coming to East Anglia, they, like me, can only feel bitter disappointment.

My mother and I once went to Greenham Com-

mon. It was an uplifting experience and one that impressed me all the more because my mother was not one for demonstration, public or private, and yet here she was – determined to be able to say she had added (however briefly) her voice to those of the Greenham Common women. It certainly confirmed me in a lifetime of protest against nuclear weapons.

Their peace camp opened on September 5 1981 as a protest against the Cruise missiles housed there. It didn't close until 2000. Over the years, thousands of women made human chains around the camp, chained themselves to the perimeter fence, and invaded the base. They were arrested, jailed, assaulted, and called foul names by the right wing media.

They wanted what the Catholic Church has advocated since Pope St John XXIII called for the scrapping of all nuclear weapons in his encyclical *Pacem In Terris*.

Archbishop Nolan will again add his voice against nuclear weapons at Scottish CND's Festival for Survival on November 4. I pray all our voices will succeed sooner rather than later in ridding the world of weapons of mass destruction.

Faith and fun mark St Augustine's big parish milestone

FATHER Paul McAlinden, Parish Priest of St Augustine's, Milton, proved he was game for a laugh last month when he queued up to have his face painted at a week end of celebration to

mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the parish.

Locals belonging to other faith communities joined with their Catholic neighbours at the event which

was designed to involve the entire community – and everything was free.

The young and not-so-young enjoyed face-painting, bouncy castles, beat the goalie, hot dogs, music, line dancing and free ice cream, all provided by the parish.

And that generosity also paid for a group of parishioners to lunch and a day out in Largs.

Father Paul, who has been parish priest at St Augustine's for the past nine years, said: "There has always been a really generous communi-

ty spirit in our parish which meant we were able to have our celebrations at little or no cost to the people.

"And if that wasn't impressive enough, when we counted the money in the donations buckets we found we had enough to cover our costs – now that's generous!"

Deacon James Ward, who was ordained to the permanent diaconate two years ago said: "From the start of taking up my post here I've been so impressed with the community spirit



here and a lot of that's due to Father Paul – not many parish priests would join in the fun by getting their face painted!

"I offered him £20 if he said Mass with the face paint on but I knew my money was safe."

The celebrations concluded with a Mass of Thanksgiving held on the Solemnity of St Augustine celebrated by Archbishop Nolan.

In his homily for the 70th anniversary he praised the strong faith of those who helped found the parish and whose great sense of community, both then and now, brought them not only closer to God but to each other.

But he urged them to remember that while celebrating the past they must also

look to the future and be prepared to face the challenges of a world that was now very different to that of 70 years ago.

During his visit to the parish the Archbishop was able to admire the first section of a newly commissioned stained glass window depicting the parish patron St Augustine.

The remaining section, to be installed later will contain the saint's famous quote: "Our heart is restless until it rests in you".

It is hoped that a stained glass window with an image of St Monica will be commissioned at a later date to mark the links with St Monica's primary school and the parish of the same name which closed in 2007.

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175 years of 'looking the poor in the eye'

Picture by Paul McSherry



Mass celebrates SSVP anniversary in the Archdiocese

FROM their very beginning 175 years ago in Glasgow the members of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul have, in the words of Pope Francis, looked the poor in the eye.

And the Holy Father's famous phrase was echoed by Archbishop Nolan during his homily at a Thanksgiving Mass in St Andrew's Cathedral to celebrate the anniversary of an organisa-

BY BRIAN SWANSON tion which has always put the needs of others at the forefront of every good deed its members do.

It was founded in Paris in 1833 and 15 years later the Glasgow conference was formed, making it one of the oldest outside France.

Archbishop Nolan said: "When Blessed Frederic Ozanam and his friends

founded the society they did so because they were appalled by the poverty on the streets of Paris.

"They wanted to show God's love and compassion by reaching out to the poor and what they did became a great inspiration to others as their ideas soon caught on.

"It is to the great credit to those who founded the first conference in Glasgow that

they did so just 15 years after it was founded in France.

"And of course it was not founded by archbishops, bishops or priests but by lay folk inspired by their faith who, like the founders in France, wanted to show God's love to the poor.

"Pope Francis tell us to look the poor in the eye, to see the whole person, and to recognise that person is made in the image of God."

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'Needs change – compassion doesn't'

Focus on the new challenges facing the St Vincent de Paul Society in future

IT'S the perfect metaphor for the low key charity work of the Society of St Vincent de Paul – an undistinguished building in the Bridgegate, next to one of Glasgow's oldest pubs, and marked only by the words 'Ozanam Centre'.

Named after Frederic Ozanam, who founded the society in Paris a few days after he turned 20, clothing is provided at the centre for those in need – just one of countless programmes run by the society in Glasgow and beyond.

And like everything they do for those living on the margins they follow their unwritten philosophy of doing good without fanfare.

No showy public appearances or elaborate regalia mark out the members of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, and that is precisely the way they want it.

But there's more to them than the blackened donation boxes we see every time we leave church after Mass.

Joe McGuire, the Glasgow Archdiocesan President of the society and parishioner at St Ninian's Knightswood, said: "The poor are always with us as they say, but nowadays poverty doesn't just mean having little or no food even although as a society we organise food banks, food parcels and things like that.

"But we recognise that loneliness is a terrible kind of poverty and a lot of what we do – and once again very confidentially I must stress – is visit people in their own homes because more often than not the best gift you can give people is the gift of time."

Generations back, and to a lesser extent today, the famous black boxes were used to alert the society that a friend or relative needed help. What better way of passing on that message than to quietly slip a discreet note along with a donation?

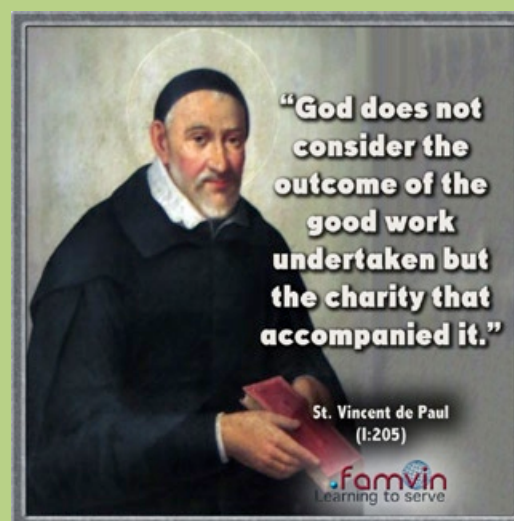
It's donations via these same boxes – often hand made by members and

handed down over several generations – plus the occasional legacy, that is the society's only source of income, enabling it to offer the services that they provide.

Many of the people they come into contact with nowadays – usually after a quiet word from a priest or family friend – may have drink, drug or mental health problems. Some are suicidal, or hiding from an abusive partner.

While members – around half of whom are women – may be qualified in their own fields, as doctors, teachers lawyers, trade unionists, local government officials and so on, they work very closely with social work departments and other agencies.

Joe McGuire, whose term as president is due to end in February said: "I think we are facing huge challenges over the next few years. There is a growing gap between those in society who are struggling and those who are succeeding,



yet level of government support to those struggling to make ends meet is faltering.

"Community projects such as food kitchens set up during the pandemic are now closing as their government grant expires.

"This means that charities like ourselves will be asked to pick up the tab in some shape or form and many like ourselves will do the very best to meet this

challenge.

"In Glasgow many conferences are turning their hand to new ideas and ways of doing things. Community cafes, community kitchens, foodbanks are now on the landscape. There are closer links with schools. Warm hubs are now in the conversation, whether supporting them or conferences might consider setting up their own if there was a perceived need.

"Recruitment is always an ongoing issue. A look across the conferences in Glasgow shows some have healthy membership while others are less so. The changes in society over the last 30 years or so has seen both parents working and consequently there is less time for involvement in charities like ours.

"Grandparents are now tied to looking after grandchildren. These are obstacles but we are continuing to find ways around these.

"One feature is 'Sign Up' nights where the local conference holds an information session for parishioners to find out what the society does. This has had some success and we can only continue to use such ways and others to attract more members.

"But one thing is certain – we will go forward doing God's work inspired by the same faith and compassion for the poor which guided our founders all those years ago."

St Mungo Singers reception marks 50 years of helping Glasgow flourish

THEIR signature song is 'Let Glasgow Flourish' and for the past 50 years the St Mungo Singers have been helping their city do just that.

An achievement which has now been marked with a civic reception in Glasgow City Chambers highlighting the choir's many achievements.

The choir was funded to promote the development of liturgical music and given its name at the suggestion of Archbishop Scanlan and over the years these included singing for the visits of Saint John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI to Bellahouston Park.

Speaking in front of guests including Archbishop No-

lan, Lord Provost Jacqueline McLaren, past and present choir members, their families and friends, Monsignor Gerry Fitzpatrick, parish priest of St Leo's, Dumbreck, and co founder of the Mungo Singers paid tribute to what has been achieved in half a century of service to the Church and the city.

He said: "The choir has been very glad to be able to support the city in events – very often with Glasgow Churches Together – since the Glasgow Garden Festival of 1988, and the City of Culture in 1990, whether it

was praying for South Africa before the transition from apartheid, or for peace or for the 'Health of the City'. We have also supported memorials marking the deaths of the Queen Mother, Princess Diana, or the 14th centenary of St Mungo, or the services marking the Clutha Vaults tragedy.

Love

"Our efforts have always been motivated by a traditional Glaswegian love of our city and with a sense that it is good for the Church to be associated with the City and for the City to be associated with the Church – after all we were for several centuries known as a "Bishop's Burgh."

lan, Lord Provost Jacqueline McLaren, past and present choir members, their families and friends, Monsignor Gerry Fitzpatrick, parish priest of St Leo's, Dumbreck, and co founder of the Mungo Singers paid tribute to what has been achieved in half a century of service to the Church and the city.



Archbishop Nolan, said: "Impressively the St. Mungo singers do not seek to replace the congregation but to inspire the congregation so that all are involved in the praise of God by singing a song to the Lord.

"On reaching this significant milestone, and in thanking God for the achievements of the past, I do hope that the choir continues to lead us in songful praise for many years to come."

Lord Provost adds her thanks to Mgr Gerry and Archbishop Nolan to mark the Singers' anniversary
Picture by Paul McSherry

Red hat joy for ex-nuncio

THE Papal Diplomat who represented the Pope in Glasgow last year at the installation of Archbishop Nolan had an installation of his own to attend last month – as he was named cardinal by the Holy Father, Francis.

Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti, who won many friends for his friendly style and engaging discourses while Nuncio in Great Britain, was one of 21 new cardinals given the red hat in St Peter's Square.

Cardinal Gugerotti is now the head of the Vatican department in charge with Eastern Catholic Churches and was clear that the new title would not change his priorities.

He said: "The priorities of the Church are always the same: To announce Jesus Christ, as the hope and saviour of the world. Naturally, every era has its way of expressing it, its own way of incarnating this reality.

"This era is especially difficult due to the fragmentation of the culture. So, simultaneously we must interpret and translate the Gospel into a multitude of different situations, and this requires a great flexibility of pastors; a strong participation of the laity, because they know their language better than anyone; and at the same time great patience in accepting everyone."

The Pope's pick of new cardinal continued to sur-



prise Vatican observers. While major dioceses such as Milan, Venice, Paris, and Los Angeles are left without a cardinal for the first time in centuries in some cases, red hats went to a bishop in Ajaccio (Corsica) and an auxiliary bishop of Lisbon (Portugal) and to prelates from the global peripheries. Among the new cardinals are churchmen from Tanzania and South Sudan.

Among the high-profile new cardinals is the papal ambassador, to the United States, France's Christo-

phe Pierre.

Top advisors to the Pope in the Curia were also recognised: Argentina's Victor Manuel Fernandez, recently named head of the powerful Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith; and Chicago-born Robert Prevost, a former missionary in Peru who leads the Dicastery for Bishops.

Another high profile choice was the Italian Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the first Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem to be made cardinal.

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Francesco remembered

Mystery of unknown name in Cathedral cloister solved

A FAMILY tragedy which is commemorated in the Italian Cloister Garden at St Andrew's Cathedral, has been recalled, and a mystery solved, more than 80 years after it happened.

On 20 August 1940, the body of an unknown man was found by a nine-year-old boy on the South Ayrshire coast.

Two days later, the unidentified individual was buried by two local priests – Fr O'Connell from Girvan and Fr O'Reilly of Irvine – in an unmarked grave in Girvan's Doune Cemetery.

Now detailed research has revealed the dead man's name – Francesco D'Inverno – and parts of his story have been put together during a project to find the life stories behind all the *Arandora Star* victims commemorated in the Cathedral garden.

And the young boy, Sandy Ferguson, who made the terrible discovery, finally learned the story of the man he discovered washed ashore all those years ago – just a few weeks before he himself died last month aged 92.



BY **RONNIE CONVERY** Francesco D'Inverno was one of hundreds of people who died in the sinking of the *Arandora Star* which was torpedoed by a U-boat on 2 July 1940 off the Irish coast.

The converted liner was being used to transport internees – mainly Italians – rounded up as “enemy aliens” across the UK after their country entered World War II. More than 800 lives were lost.

A few weeks after the sinking, Francesco's body was found near Lendalfoot – thought to be the only one



Far left: Francesco D'Inverno

Left: Italian Ambassador lays flowers at the memorial, 2018

Right: Francesco D'Inverno was buried before he could be identified

of the victims to have been washed ashore on the Scottish mainland.

It would be about 80 years later that efforts began, almost by accident, to identify who was in the grave.

Michael Donnelly of the Italian Garden Improvement Group (IGIG) had been working on a project to put together pictures and biographies of the men from the area who died and whose names appear on the marble plaque in the Cathedral Garden.

One of the names is that of Francesco D'Inverno. Michael said: “The thing that came up first was his death record, which is extraordinary. Given that very few bodies were ever found, I was really puzzled that here was a man with a death certificate in the Scottish system.

“And on the death record, when I called it up, it actually revealed that he wasn't Scottish, his last known address was London.”

Ritchie and Lorna Con-



ghan of the Girvan and District Great War Project were able to pinpoint the location of the burial site – on common ground – and establish that nobody else was buried in the same plot which would allow a gravestone to be put in place.

Genealogist and historian Raffaello Gonnella said: “We've actually put a whole history together, and after much work managed to find some of his family.”

Born in Villa Latina, between Rome and Naples, in 1901, Francesco D'Inverno was living in London – working in a hotel – during the 1930s.

In April 1939, he married Ginevra Tasselli but when Italy entered the war a year later he was arrested and deported on the *Arandora Star*. He was accidentally listed as

a Scottish victim because of the body washing ashore in Ayrshire.

Raffaello Gonnella knows the significance of the burial site discovery as his own grandfather also died in the tragedy but his body was never found.

He said: “That could have been my grandfather that was washed up. It's somebody's grandfather, it's somebody's brother – we wanted to find out what relationships were out there and were so delighted to trace some of Francesco's family who knew nothing of his burial site.”

It is hoped a proper gravestone can be put at the spot where Francesco D'Inverno is buried – a gravestone he never got more than eight decades ago when he was laid to rest.

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ANNIVERSARY

Sacred Heart marks 150 years of faith in action

East End church was a 'home from home' for generations of migrants from Ireland and the Highlands

FOR the Catholic descendants of both Gaelic speaking Highlanders and Irish families who were victims of the Great Hunger who fled their homes in search of a better life the Parish of Sacred Heart in Bridgeton became home.

To the new families who now live in the rapidly expanding area, Sacred Heart Parish, which this year celebrates its 150th anniversary remains a cornerstone of the community it so faithfully serves.

As a well-produced booklet compiled to mark the event notes: "Over the years, the parish has undergone many changes, but it has always remained a symbol of faith and hope and love for the people of Bridgeton beyond."

"It has survived wars, economic downturns and social upheavals, but it has always remained a place of peace and sanctuary."

And for the worldwide family of Celtic supporters it will be forever remembered as the place where the roots of their club were first planted.

While it is a matter of record that the club was formally founded at a meeting in St Mary's Calton, Church Hall on November 6th, 1887 even today parishioners of Sacred Heart are quick to point out that two years earlier Brother Walfrid tried out some of the ideas that would eventually lead to the beginnings of Celtic at Sacred Heart.

The first Mass in the parish took place in an original wooden structure and was celebrated in 1873 by the first parish priest Father Edward Noonan. A year later Sacred Heart School was opened next to the church with Andrew Kerins as its first headmaster – better known today as Brother Walfrid, the Marist brother whose faith, drive and determination led to the foundation of the football club whose stadium lies just minutes away.

When the school opened there were only 300 children who attended regularly even though Sacred Heart had 2,000 parishion-

BY BRIAN SWANSON

PICTURES BY PAUL MCSHERRY

ers and while the number of Catholics continued to increase, this did not lead to a corresponding rise in the school roll.

Brother Walfrid and Father Noonan realised that most Catholic families in the area were sending their children not to school, but to work, to supplement the family income. But the two men, who became close friends, came up with a solution.

Penny

Working alongside the St Vincent de Paul Conference from Sacred Heart parish they set up what became known as 'penny dinners' in a hall in nearby Savoy Street which provided children with a daily hot meal for a penny.

If parents could not afford to pay the meals they were provided free. The theory was that children would be more likely to be sent to school if there were meals waiting for them – and it worked.

However, the scheme soon however became a victim of its own success.

In its first year the SVP Conference in Bridgeton provided over 48,500 dinners and 1,150 breakfasts. By 1886 the school roll at Sacred Heart had quadrupled from its foundation 12 years earlier to over 1,200 pupils.

Clearly a new form of funding had to be found and in a stroke of genius Brother Walfrid began organising football matches using admission money to finance the penny dinners scheme.

It was to become the template which would eventually lead to the founding of Celtic.

The original Sacred Heart School building is long gone although Sacred Heart Primary is still next to today's magnificent church with its stunning Italianate marble interior which replaced the original building in 1910.

In the years before and after the Second World War, Sacred Heart Parish was at its zenith with a huge Catholic population and vibrant social life.

After the heydays of the 1950s, however, Bridgeton underwent significant changes in its housing landscape. The area saw the demolition of many tenement blocks and the construction of high-rise flats (many of which have also been demolished) to accommodate the growing population. There are stories of hundreds of families leaving the parish to go to their new modern homes in the housing schemes or new towns every week which must have been hard for the clergy of the day.

Over a few years the parish went from thousands at Mass on a Sunday to a hundred or so.

Redevelopment

Today, the area has undergone significant redevelopment, with a mix of social and private housing, community facilities, and green spaces. The focus is on creating more sustainable, modern and integrated housing solutions that meet the needs of a diverse population with recently many new housing developments bringing new families to the area.

Following the decline in population in recent years, the church has faced challenges due to declining attendance and financial constraints. However, the community remains committed to preserving the church's legacy and continuing its mission of serving the spiritual needs of the local Catholic community.

And while today's parishioners celebrate the past they also look to the future as summed up in the commemorative booklet: "We look to the future with hope and faith, knowing that the Sacred Heart here in this beautiful sanctuary will continue to bless us and be a source of countless graces and a secure refuge amid the storms and trials of life."



Pulpit cross came from WWI battlefield

BY BRIAN SWANSON

THIS small crucifix attached to the pulpit of Sacred Heart Church has been a fixture for so long that few parishioners give it a second glance while fewer still know the intriguing story behind it.

Its story begins in the trenches of the First World War when a young soldier from the parish and his colleagues unearthed a crucifix buried deep in the mud.

As the only Catholic in the digging squad, he quietly concealed it and for extra safety he sewed it into the breast pocket of his tunic.

Days later while going over the top he was struck in the chest by a stray bullet which had glanced off the metal leaving him badly shaken but uninjured.

Back home in Glasgow at the end of the war he brought the crucifix, with the mark of the bullet visible on the feet of Jesus, to Brother Ninian, head teacher of Sacred Heart School, where it is thought the young soldier had once been a pupil.

Brother Ninian, who later told the story in a brief history of the parish but without identifying the soldier, spoke with Canon Michael Hughes, parish priest from 1904 to 1921 who suggested that the centre panel of the pulpit would be the ideal place for it and it remains there to this day.



Archbishop's tribute to faithful generations

In his homily to celebrate the parish anniversary of Sacred Heart, Bridgeton, Archbishop Nolan praised Celtic founder Brother Walfrid (pictured left) as a man ahead of his time in his lifelong fight against poverty.

Acknowledging the close links between the Marist Brother and Sacred Heart parish, the Archbishop, whose firmly-held views on social justice are well known said: "It is interesting that Brother Walfrid who was the first head teacher of Sacred Heart School was a man ahead of his time.

"Nowadays throughout the world Mary's Meals feeds 2.4m children every day – but they

are just copying what Brother Walfrid did 150 years ago when he started up his penny dinners – providing meals for children so that parents would be encouraged to send their youngsters to school to be fed and educated.

Problems

"What problems our ancestors must have faced 150 years ago when they came down from the Highlands of Scotland to Glasgow and of course later many more Catholics from Ireland as well.

"They had to endure poverty, looking for work, and poor housing not to mention the

problems of discrimination and bigotry which were rife in those days and that of course was because of their faith.

"But it was that faith that brought those ancestors of ours together to form the parish of the Sacred Heart which was not just a place to worship God but a parish where they could support each other in their faith.

"The parish of Sacred Heart has a long and proud history – a parish where people of faith come together. That faith has not just brought them closer to God but closer to one another and a real community has been formed.

"A parish is not a church or a building – it's

the people.

"The celebration of this parish anniversary is a reminder that we do not go through life on our own but with faith in God which not only binds us to Him but to one another."

Earlier, in a church packed with families, friends and former parishioners, Parish Priest Father Liam McMahon welcomed distinguished guests, including politicians, local councillors, and members of other faith communities including the Church of Scotland whose own church in Bridgeton, St Francis in the East, is also celebrating its 150th anniversary.

Mission Sunday is a special occasion

IT'S safe to say that here in Scotland we enjoy our tea – Scots drink an average of four cups a day.

However, what most people might not be aware of is where their tea comes from or what the lives are like for those whose job it is to get it into our shops and our homes.

Sri Lanka is one of the biggest tea producing nations in the world and is also our focus country for this year's World Mission Sunday. The Missio Scotland team were fortunate enough to visit Sri Lanka this year and gain a greater insight.

A ban on the use of fertilisers has significantly reduced the production of tea and rice, two of the country's biggest exports. Tourism, which brings money into the country was affected by the 2019 terrorist attacks and the Covid-19 pandemic didn't help. As a result inflation has risen to 39.1 per cent, there are gas shortages and the cost of electricity has increased by 60 per cent.

In the midst of all this,

BY GERARD GOUGH

the tea plantation workers, whose daily income amounts to a meagre £1.57 per day, have to try and exist – feeding their families and educating their children – which is becoming harder and harder by the day. Many have ultimately decided to leave the industry to go and work abroad, the downside being a parental void is left in many of the families.

Sr Mary Thomas, a Comboni Sister based in Scotland, says her fellow sisters are actively engaged in providing an education to the children of tea plantation workers in Sri Lanka and she highlighted that the school in which they work in Talawakelle – St Patrick's College – might benefit from Missio Scotland's support.

The school was founded in 1937 and at that time boasted a mere 37 pupils. Today, there are more than 900 students – a mixture of Catholics and Hindus.

Approximately 65 per cent of St Patrick's pupils go on



to attend university, so there is no doubt that the school makes a difference in the lives of the children it caters for.

Some of the children travel far distances to get to school, which can take upwards of an hour. Transport costs are approximately £15.50 per month, which might not seem a lot, but it can account for a sizeable chunk of a family's monthly income. Teachers are only paid between £39 and £115 per month.

Sr Agnese Elli, a Comboni

Sister who teaches at the school, explained the challenges facing the school. "We don't have enough classrooms ... The children come from very poor families. Aside from having to pay school fees, travelling long distances and paying for transport too, at home they don't have enough space to study. Many students get up at 3 or 4am to study, while the other family members are still sleeping.

"Many children have a parent who works abroad... Some children have both

parents working abroad and this isn't good. So we have children who lack affection, and they'll say: 'Sister please give me a hug,' because they have no parental figures at home and that can't be replicated by anybody else."

Missio Scotland has worked with Sr Agnese to fund two projects that will have a positive impact on the lives of the children who attend St Patrick's—a nutritional programme and one offering extra tuition after school.

"When we heard that Missio Scotland was going to support these projects, we were really very grateful, because we need a lot of financial support right now," Sr Agnese said.

"I would like to thank Missio Scotland for supporting us and I know that they cannot do that without the generosity of its many donors."

You can follow Missio Scotland on Facebook or Twitter/X and Instagram. To donate visit: <https://www.missioscotland.com/donate> or call on: 01236 449774 or send donations to: Missio Scotland, St Andrews, 4 Laird Street, Coatbridge ML5 3LJ. You can also now donate to us via text. Text MISSIOSCOT to 70085 to donate £3 or MISSIOSCOT with any number between 1-20 after it to donate your desired amount (For example MISSIOSCOT 10 will donate £10).

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WE have, of course, seen this show before, but this time it's with a fairly big plot twist.

It was six years ago when a small cluster of conservative cardinals issued a set of 'dubia', or theological doubts, to Pope Francis in the wake of his controversial 2016 document *Amoris Laetitia*, which opened a cautious door to the reception of communion by divorced and civilly remarried Catholics.

In that case the Pope declined to ever respond, instead allowing various parties to speak in his name, though it was generally understood that Francis took a dim view of the initiative.

Given that precedent, it's hardly surprising that another handful of conservative cardinals, including two of the authors of the original 2016 dubia, are at it again, this time submitting a new list of five doubts ahead of the Synod of Bishops that opened last week.

In all honesty, such dubia are the ultimate in a rhetorical exercise. The cardinals aren't actually asking questions, they're making points – or, if you're so inclined, grinding axes.

The surprise this time is not that dubia arose, but that Pope Francis actually chose to answer...

Doubts

The five cardinals behind the new set of dubia, including American Cardinal Raymond Burke, published their queries on the Monday before the Synod opened, saying they'd submitted an initial set over the summer and got a reply from Francis, but because he didn't answer in the traditional yes/no format, they revised the dubia and resubmitted them.

Just hours after they went public, Argentinian Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, the Pope's new doctrine czar, published a September 25 letter to the Pope along with the pontiff's original replies to the cardinals, thereby rendering those answers public domain.

On the hot-button issues of blessing same-sex unions and women clergy, the



Caption

Pope takes critics by surprise by answering their questions

Pope issued a cautious "yes" and a seemingly firm "no," respectively, though his answers were qualified in both cases.

With regard to blessings, the pontiff said they're possible on a case-by-case basis, as long as they don't court confusion with the sacrament of marriage, and also said there shouldn't be any generalised norms or policies on the question, either from the Vatican or bishops' conferences, because it's a matter of pastoral prudence.

Scrutiny

On women priests, Francis reiterated Pope John Paul II's "definitive" rejection and said that teaching must be adhered to by all, but allowed that the question could be studied, comparing it to the issue of the validity of Anglican ordinations.

BY JOHN L ALLEN JR
EDITOR OF CRUX

Although the details of these replies will be subject to endless scrutiny, in some ways the most interesting point is that he commented at all.

Not only does it break with precedent, but it also seems at odds with the spirit of consultation and listening at the heart of the synod. One might have expected the pontiff instead to say something like the following:

"Thanks for raising these questions, which provide great food for thought. However, since the whole point of the synod is to listen to what the People of God have to say before making decisions, I'm going to wait for the results of the discussions before providing my own answers. Let's talk when it's all over in 2024."

On the other hand, synod organisers, papal acolytes, and the Pope himself have been insisting since the beginning of this process that the point isn't to address a narrow canon of contentious issues. Instead, it's to imagine a new style of being Church, a new way of forging a future by journeying together in a spirit of dialogue and openness.

Controversy

Doing so, they insist, has to involve a root-and-branch reexamination of ecclesiastical life on all levels, not simply rehashing fairly stale arguments on a few wearily familiar matters.

One could argue that by providing his answers on these matters now, Francis effectively has prevented synod discussions from being hijacked by controversy.

Presumably, should someone now inside the synod want to begin banging the drum either for or against the blessing of same-sex unions, or the ordination of women, the almost reflexive response will be, "Come on, guys, the Pope's already spoken, so let's move on."

That prospect leaves us to ponder the potential irony that by short-circuiting his own listening exercise, the Pope may have cleared a space to listen to other matters which are arguably more important for the long-term prospects of Catholicism.

However it plays out, one has to say this about any undertaking whatsoever in the Pope Francis era: It's never, ever dull.

About that, at least, there's no room for dubia at all.

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There's something deep inside all of us that longs for God

You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.

No single line, outside of scripture, has ever spoken to me as powerfully, as persistently, and as hauntingly, as that line from St. Augustine. In essence, it's Augustine's life story – and the story of each of our own lives as well.

As I read and study, I am often struck by a powerful line in some author which I immediately underline and copy.

Restlessness

I have a whole booklet of quotes from Shakespeare, Aristotle, Plato, Aquinas, Teilhard, Einstein, Albert Camus, Steve Hawkins, Doris Lessing, Milan Kundera, John Steinbeck, Karl Rahner, John of the Cross, Ruth Burrows, James Hillman, Anne Frank, and Ivan Illich, among others. Yet, Augustine's haunting line stands out among all these.

What he asserts is that there is an incurable restlessness inside each of us that keeps us perpetually dis-eased. I have always felt this strongly in my own life and, while still in my twenties, wrote a book, *The Restless Heart*, in which I tried

to articulate a spirituality for the restless (and perhaps mostly for myself) on the basis of this line from Augustine. Through the years, I have kept my eyes open for comparable and complementary expressions of Augustine's famous axiom. Here are some:

Karl Rahner, a renowned theologian of the late 20th century, in writing to a friend who feared he was missing out on too much in life, offered this counsel: *In the torment of the insufficiency of everything attainable, we learn that in this life there is no finished symphony.*

The biblical author, Qoheleth, expresses it this way. In a passage familiar to most of us ("there is a season for everything") he lays out for us the rhythm of nature as God set it up. He tells us there's a beautiful rhythm to time and nature and that everything has its proper time and place. However, he then ends with this stunning statement: *God has made everything beautiful in its own time, but God has put timelessness into the human heart so that we are out of sync with time and the seasons from the beginning to the end. We never peacefully fit into the rhythm of things because something inside us is outside of time.*

Scribblings of the spirit

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



And who can forget the haunting words of Anne Frank, writing as a teenager locked away in an attic, hiding from the Nazis, jumping out of her skin with the restlessness of an adolescent and the anxiety of an artist, sharing that she simply can never be fully in the moment because *I want to be everywhere all at the same time.*

Energy

Doris Lessing, the British novelist, asserts that inside each of us there's a powerful, relentless energy ("1000 volts") which keeps us perpetually dis-eased. Writing outside of a faith perspective, she asks, what is this energy for? Her answer: *For everything and for anything – creativity, love, sex, justice.* Nobel prize winning writer, Albert Camus, also writing outside of any faith perspective, had this interesting way of understanding

the human spirit. He compared being inside human nature to being a prisoner trapped inside a medieval prison. Medieval prisons were designed to break the prisoner's spirit by putting him in a room too small for him to ever fully stand up or to ever fully stretch out. The ceiling was too low and the room was too narrow. The intent was that eventually this would break a prisoner's spirit. For Camus, that's how we experience ourselves inside our own nature. The world is simply too small for us to ever really stand up or to ever really stretch out, and this wears away on our spirit.

These are some poignant expressions of this dis-ease, but there are expressions of it everywhere. Hinduism speaks of a certain "nostalgia for the infinite" inside us; Plato speaks of a "divine madness" at the center of

the soul; Shakespeare speaks of our "immortal longings"; Ruth Burrows opens her autobiography by confessing that she was born with a pathological complexity which has made her life a struggle; James Hillman, in a brilliant book, *Suicide and the Soul*, submits that most suicides occur because the soul is not being heard and consequently kills the body; and Philip Roth speaks of the blizzard of details that constitute the confusion of human biography.

Literature, philosophy, poetry, art, psychology, biography, theology, and spirituality are replete with expressions of this insatiability inside the human soul which ultimately cannot come to full peace with anything in this world.

But this is as it should be. For Augustine, writing some 1700 years ago, this restlessness, this timelessness, this homesickness, this divine madness, these 1000 volts of energy inside us, this pathological complexity, and this confusion of human biography which keeps us perpetually restless, is at the end of the day, our greatest attribute; it's God's gift to us of immortality and divinity as a constitutive part of our soul.

OASIS

Nourish your soul with our monthly spirituality supplement

Reading the news that matters

Mary's musings

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



I'm high on life and not even because it's my favourite month of the year.

Who couldn't love October with its glorious gown of gold and red, and the promise of roaring fires with Christmas on the not too distant horizon. Being the month of the Holy Rosary gives it a special place in our hearts.

I'm basking in the joy of good health after being felled by a grim, albeit short-lived, virus. That feeling when the aching bones subside and the brain-numbing fatigue washes away is almost worth the misery. Well, maybe not quite.

In the couple of days when I had all the energy and usefulness of a limp lettuce there wasn't much to do to pass the weary hours when I wasn't sleeping except scroll through my phone

Not up to tax cuts, fiscal spending, and world affairs I wallowed in the celebrity gossip columns. For what it's worth, and I accept that's very little, I'm now fully up-to-speed with the goings on of the royals, the partying ways of celebrities and the marital troubles of hitherto golden couples.

From famous actors who have found love after heart-break to minor celebrities

who have been duped in financial scams, I am embarrassingly knowledgeable.

I read of a Hollywood star's 4-point plan for the maintenance of her teeny-weeny figure. Drinking water, moving her body daily, eating healthily and sleeping well. I'm putting my money on weight loss drugs, or a surgeon's scalpel being somewhere in that mix!

When the brain fog began to lift and, before what was left of the old grey matter became well and truly addled, I made a grateful return to the news that matters.

Picking up on the story of Sudiksha Thirumalesh, the 19 year old girl who died after suffering a year-long battle with a rare mitochondrial disease, a gagging order on public naming her had been lifted. At a point where she was severely ill, the hospital moved to

transfer her to palliative care, against her wishes and those of her parents, who instead wished her to undergo experimental nucleoside therapy in Canada.

Although the NHS trust responsible for her care was named, the hospital itself remains protected by anonymity. Being referred to merely by her initials left her feeling dehumanised. Her erosion from society and from life was gathering pace.

The unedifying nature of the case was shown into sharp relief when her refusal to accept the doctors' judgement that her death was inevitable and imminent resulted in their branding her 'delusional.'

Neither condition nor her treatment affected her brain, yet she was traduced so easily.

Her devoutly Christian family thanked the 'few' doctors who fought for

her while speaking of their forgiveness for those 'who seemed only to care about Sudiksha's dying'.

Her father said: "We did not look for this fight, this fight came to us from a 'system' that too readily gives up on life. We were brutally silenced, intimidated, and take to court in our hour of need."

Those fighting for the girl who said she wanted to 'die trying to live' urged a thorough examination on how critical care decisions are made in healthcare and the legal system. Arguing for more openness and transparency with justice being done 'in the light and not behind closed doors' they want this to serve as a wake-up call.

Human life on both ends of spectrum and anywhere has long been under attack. Cases like this show it's far from safe anywhere in between.



Blessed Virgin by Mantegna.
Milan, Brera Museum.

Pope's advice: Praying the Rosary is good for you

FOR many Catholics the Month of October is not so much the 'season of mists and mellow fruitfulness' described by Keats but rather the month of the Holy Rosary in which 'we gather to thine honour buds white, and red, and gold...'

That devotion to the Rosary which seemed to be in danger of being swept away in the 1970s and 80s by some in the Church, has withstood the test of time and today is a regular feature in Catholic schools, homes and parishes across the land.

Part of that resurgence is due to the constant encouragement of the Popes.

This month Pope Francis devoted his first tweet of October to the Rosary ... "Today begins the month of October, the month of the Rosary and of the missions. I encourage everyone to experience the beauty of pray-

ing the Rosary, contemplating the mysteries of Christ with Mary and invoking her intercession for the needs of the Church and of the world."

Encouragement

It is just the latest of a series of encouragements by the Holy Father to rediscover the devotion of saying the Rosary which have marked his pontificate. Earlier this year he spoke of three ways the recitation of the Rosary assists us in the spiritual life.

First, he said that the Rosary is a "compendium of the entire history of our salvation."

For many centuries the Christian faith was spread to many parts of the world through the Rosary, a completely biblical prayer.

Without access to the printing press or readily

available Bibles, the Rosary became the primary means of communicating the essence of Christianity. It was a method of evangelization for many missionaries.

Then, the Pope noted, the "Holy Rosary is a powerful weapon against evil."

The Rosary's power against Satan is something that many saints have claimed, including Padre Pio and St. John Bosco.

Power

Finally, the Pope said, it is "an effective means of obtaining true peace in our hearts."

The Rosary is one example of prayer that successfully incorporates both body and soul, involving many of the senses with its repetition and rhythm it resembles some oriental forms of prayer which are designed to put body and spirit in perfect harmony.

ART OF THE MONTH



So much can be learned from this famous image of St Francis of Assisi

AMONG the most celebrated works of Giotto di Bondone, commonly known as Giotto, is his exquisite painting "St Francis Preaching to the Birds," which can be seen in the Basilica of Saint Francis in Assisi.

Simplicity

St Francis stands with arms outstretched, seemingly conversing with the birds that surround him. St Francis had a connection with nature and with simplicity. The painting demonstrates Francis's belief in the inherent sanctity of all living beings and reflects

BY MGR TOM
MONAGHAN

his role as the patron saint of animals and the environment.

The slightly grumpy brother behind Francis looks unimpressed by Francis, who is painted with a halo while he is not!

The tree, with its lush green foliage and sturdy trunk, emphasises the harmony between the saint and the natural world. The birds, all lined up, seem to be paying attention to the words of the saint, teaching us, perhaps, to listen to the voice of the Lord.

Giotto's use of vibrant col-

ours lends an atmospheric quality to the scene as his skilful blend of light and shadow demonstrates both the saint's spirituality and human emotion.

Expression

This masterpiece paved the way for the Renaissance artists who followed as can be seen in the works of later artists, such as Michelangelo and Raphael, who were inspired by the works of Giotto. The emphasis on individual expression and the exploration of naturalism would become hallmarks of the Renaissance movement.

PRAYER OF THE MONTH

God our Father, we come before you in reverence and awe inspired by the humble and compassionate soul of Saint Francis.

You have bestowed upon each creature a unique purpose and significance. Grant us a spirit of reverence and stewardship for Earth and all its inhabitants and the courage and compassion to speak your message of peace and love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Climate change is destroying lives – but there is something you can do to help

FOR millions of people across the world, the climate crisis is not something they are worried about in the future – it's a daily lived reality for them in the here and now.

We at SCIAF see every day the impacts that global warming is having across the world.

Cyclones are devastating communities, destroying homes, roads, schools, health centres and vital infrastructure.

Heatwaves and droughts are scorching the land rendering it infertile and uninhabitable for flora and fauna, devastating the livelihoods of people who rely on the land to feed themselves and their families.

Wildfires are tearing through our natural environments, destroying so many different parts of God's creation. Warming seas are devastating marine life with serious human consequences for fisherfolk

BY **BEN WILSON**
SCIAF HEAD OF ADVOCACY

and the communities they serve, and rising sea-levels are threatening the very existence of some nations.

This is what is known as "Loss and Damage" – the impacts of climate change, the losses and damages, that are already experienced, especially in the world's poorest countries by people with the world's lowest carbon footprint.

At SCIAF we do our best to respond to these disasters. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our supporters we are able to help people recover from floods, rebuild after cyclones, feed themselves and their families at times of drought, and to make sure they have the tools they need to weather the next storm.

At COP26 in Glasgow, the Scottish Government became the first in the world



to commit funds for Loss and Damage. Working with our local partner Trocaire Malawi, SCIAF has been proud to help deliver £800k of this cash to people in Malawi over the past year.

And, this September, we launched a brand-new doc-

umentary about this first of its kind initiative, called 'Not Do Nothing', with the aim of visually showcasing both the devastating impacts of Loss and Damage, and also the positive impacts that finance can make.

However, charities like

SCIAF and governments like Scotland's can only do so much in the face of this crisis. The long-term solution requires world leaders from across the globe to step up.

At COP27 in Egypt, a breakthrough deal was made to establish a fund for Loss and Damage. This fund would see countries pay in, based on their emissions and others receive vital funds based on their exposure to loss and damage.

The talks about how this fund will be organised have been happening throughout 2023. But there are now serious concerns that they won't deliver what was promised – that big polluting countries won't pay in to it what they owe, it won't start funding projects quickly enough, and that too much of the money will be wasted on bureaucracy. It's vital that this doesn't happen, and that the fund is fit for purpose, quickly

getting cash to the people who need it.

That's why we are launching a campaign to get the message to world leaders that they must keep their promises on Loss and Damage. As part of a global initiative, we are asking our supporters to write to their MP today asking them to raise their voice on this issue, and add their name to a global pledge on Loss and Damage.

At SCIAF we believe passionately in tackling poverty and the causes of poverty. The long-term change we need to see in the world requires our leaders to step up to the plate and help build the Kingdom of God here on Earth. We hope our supporters will join us in this call, raising our voices in the name of those who are so unjustly enduring a climate crisis that they did not cause.

■ sciaf.org.uk/lossanddamage

First Minister of Scotland
Humza Yousaf

Enifa Milembo

President of Malawi
Lazarus Chakwera

NOT DO NOTHING

The Loss and Damage Doc
sciaf.org.uk/lossanddamage

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SCAN FOR MORE INFO

Be prepared! These Sunday Gospels will be very challenging

WE have been listening to Matthew's Gospel now since Advent last year, and to Jesus teaching us about the Kingdom of Heaven, the righteousness and justice it looks for from us, and the ways in which our response to it should draw us closer to God and to each other.

For Matthew, being a disciple is not just a lonely following of Jesus, but something we do together, as Church. Nor is it simply a state of mind: it calls for a way of behaving too.

Over the next few Sundays, we will hear some passages in which Jesus is being challenged by the religious and social leaders of his time, and in which he challenges them in reply, aware that they are not giving the response to God's call that



Fr Tom Kilbride

they should.

If the first part of the Gospel brought us positive responses (the call of the apostles, the joy of the crowds), these later chapters speak to what a negative response might be like – and how to avoid it!

Twenty-Eighth Sunday A

This Sunday, we hear the third of three parables over these weeks which Jesus addresses to the "chief priests and elders". He clearly sug-

gests that their response to the Kingdom is not what it should be.

They are the ones who claim to lead the people in their faith and worship, yet they are represented in these parables by those who refuse the offer being made to them. Indeed, far from simply being indifferent to it, they actively reject the message, even killing the messengers sent to them (certainly Jesus but also his missionary disciples).

Others will embrace it, as the message goes far and wide, while they miss their opportunity. The poor fellow at the end, thrown out for not dressing properly, is there to remind us that hearing the message isn't enough: there has to be a proper response as well.

The seed may be sown, but it needs good soil in order to take root; one son said "yes" but didn't do his father's will in the end. All these parables point to the same lesson: we have to take seriously the message of the Kingdom and act on the demands it makes on us.

Twenty-Ninth Sunday A

An important message from today's First Reading comes so early on that we might miss it: the prophet calls Cyrus, the pagan king of Persia, God's "anointed".

This is startling if you think about it! How can a



Jacob Jordaens (1593–1678),
Christ among the Pharisees, c.1660

pagan king be God's "Messiah"? But in the history of God's people, it was Cyrus who sent them back from exile to their homeland and encouraged them to rebuild God's Temple in Jerusalem.

God made use of Cyrus's power and position to build up his People and King Cyrus cooperated with that.

In the Gospel, Jesus refuses to be drawn into the manipulative questioning of the Pharisees. Perhaps God can use Caesar as he used Cyrus, or perhaps Caesar will be an obstacle. Either way, God's will and God's word is what should matter most, rather than judging the motives of others we do not know.

Am I truly giving to God what belongs to him, or am I more concerned with what others may or may not be doing?

Thirtieth Sunday A

The first answer Jesus gives to the question he is

asked is not really a surprise. After all, the Pharisees who ask him would have had the words "love God with all your heart and soul and strength" written in little scrolls on their doorposts and strapped to their arms. They would have recited the words many times in prayer each day.

However, Jesus does as many a Rabbi would have done, and adds another text from the Torah to explain it, showing them that the Law also requires that you "love your neighbour as yourself", as the First Reading today outlines especially in relation to justice towards the poorest.

To understand the first commandment you have to look at the second. That is how the Law and the Prophets "hang" together: love of God and love of neighbour can't be separated.

Thirty-First Sunday A

For the past few weeks, we have heard Jesus speak to the chief priests and elders and then answering the Pharisees, who have been trying to trick him. This week, we get a little extract from the harsh words Jesus uses against those same Pharisees.

They have tried to obstruct, to challenge, and to undermine his proclamation of the Kingdom. Their successors in the time of Matthew's Church are probably just as bad. Matthew doesn't shy away from aiming at them the harshest possible challenge (the rest of the chapter after this week's Gospel is very hard on them!).

But it's not just diatribe: they should have known bet-

ter! They "occupy the chair of Moses": they are the experts in the Law and the Prophets. They claim to teach others about God's ways but have shown themselves to have fallen short of the responsibilities they have and the wisdom they have been given.

Jesus isn't saying anything new, really, since the Prophets before him regularly challenged the leaders to do better and to live up to their calling (Malachi in the First Reading is a powerful example of this, but we can find similar things in Jeremiah, Ezekiel and others).

There is a constant challenge to those who would teach others about God, that they must also listen to God's word. There is no teacher who is not first and foremost a disciple, following Christ the true Teacher.

His word is at work, a "living power" (Second Reading), "God's word and not some human thinking". When we hear that word, when we share that word, do we also live that word?

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MURRAY

Patrick James

In loving memory of our dear and much loved father who died October 29 1987.

Rest in peace, Dad.
We love and miss you.
Leo, Paul and Angela

Rediscovering the joy of letters

I HAVE found myself, this month, lamenting the demise of letter writing.

It was sparked off by my relief that, for the daily Masses, the first readings have moved away from a period of long extracts, taken from the earlier books of the Old Testament, from Genesis through to Judges, and have now returned to the Letters of St Paul.

Wonderful though these Old Testament readings are, at 10 o'clock in the morning, with a relatively sparse group of people in the church, and with lots of unpronounceable names in the text, they can be a bit exhausting.

St Paul's letters are much more palatable. Apart from St Paul, many of the saints were prolific letter writers, e.g., Catherine of Siena, Ignatius of Loyola, and Teresa of Avila. So too was St Paul of the Cross, the founder of the Passionists. There are about 3,000 of his letters that have survived, and a collection of these, from 1720-1775, the year of his death, have been collected into a three-



Fr Frank's log

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

volume work, imaginatively entitled "The Letters of St Paul of the Cross".

In 1992, when I was transferring to Minsteracres in County Durham, I realised that the monastery was only 10 miles from Consett.

In the mid to late 1950s, when my father was made redundant from the Anchor Line shipyard on the Clyde, and after a short spell working on the Clyde Tunnel, which has just celebrated the 60th anniversary of its opening, my father took a job in the steelworks in Consett, which I think at that time was called the Consett Iron Company.

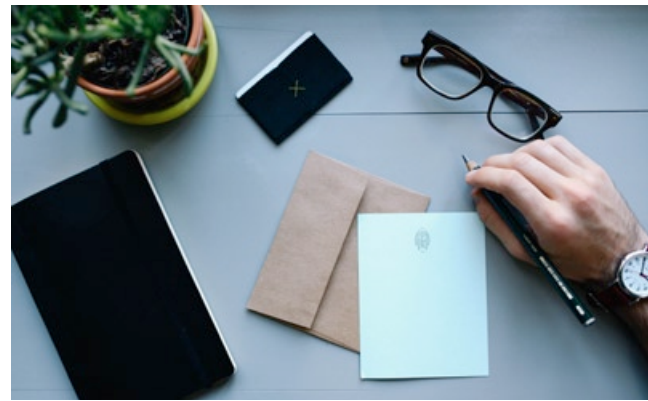
It meant that he was away from a Sunday night to a Friday night, living in digs, and we only saw him at

weekends.

That only lasted about a year, however, as he sadly suffered a heart attack cycling to work one morning, 8th April, 1960, and died almost instantly.

It transpired that he had written many letters to my mother during that time, and she still had them all wrapped up in a bundle in a tin box.

I didn't ask if I could read them, they would have been too personal, but, from these letters, I was able to discover the address of his digs and so, shortly after I moved to Minsteracres, and got settled into my work with the North European Passionist Novices, I made my way to Consett, for the very first time, to see where



my father had lived, worked and died, during that short period from 1959-1960.

The steelworks of course had shut down for good in 1980, by Margaret Thatcher, ironically known as the Iron Lady, and there was precious little for me to see of what they once were.

I did, however, find the place where his digs had been, and, close by, there was still the remnant of a working men's club that he may have frequented, but that was about it.

When my mother died in 2001, and I was doing a bit of a clear out of stuff, I dis-

covered that she had also kept the letters that I had written to her after I joined the Passionists in 1975, and had moved to Enniskillen.

We had no access to phones at that time, even though on occasion, during our half-day off on a Saturday, I would surreptitiously find a phone box and call home, having to reverse the charges, because we had precious little money either.

So, mostly, I wrote letters. There would be later letters from Dublin, Crossgar and Rome, as I pursued my studies towards priesthood. After ordination, with more

opportunity to make phone calls, my letter writing eased off, and only resumed again when I spent a year in South Africa and Botswana in the mid-1990s.

All my letters were there, in her tin box. I had been quite a good letter writer to friends as well in those earlier years, and really looked forward to getting a reply.

When I look back on it, my writing then was quite neat and legible. Now, with the proliferation of the internet, email and texting, not to mention all the other social media stuff I don't use or understand, personal letter writing has become a thing of the past and, if ever I do have to write anything longhand, as, for example, in greetings cards, it's so scrawly I can't even read it myself, never mind anyone else.

So, as I mentioned at the beginning, I am lamenting the demise of this beautiful art form of letter writing, which I think is a great loss.

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

Actor John was a man for all seasons

LEGENDARY Scottish actor John Cairney who became synonymous with Robert Burns has died aged 93.

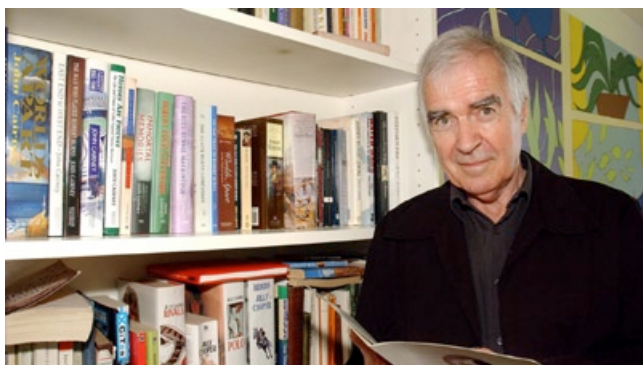
Not only was he an iconic star of stage, TV and film he was also a prolific writer, lecturer, raconteur and in later life a talented artist who worked enthusiastically with the Archdiocese of Glasgow Arts Project.

He had a long and varied career. Author of 23 books about the theatre, football – he was an ardent Celtic fan and his younger brother was professional player Jim Cairney – and his hometown Glasgow and its "dear green places".

He also wrote books and scripts on leading Scottish icons including Robert Burns, indeed he became synonymous with Burns, even having a bust of himself as the poet by sculptor Benno Scholtz in the National Museum of Scotland.

Born on 16th February 1930 in Baillieston, his education at St Mungo's Academy was interrupted by the war and he was evacuated to the countryside. A far cry from Glasgow's East End he was firstly sent to Sir Malcom Campbell's home in the south west and then to that of the Earl of Cluny in Perthshire.

He considered becoming a priest and was accepted for the junior seminary at the



BY **RONNIE CONVERY** Marist College at Dumfries in 1942. However, his mother

changed her mind and refused to let him go!

In his 80s he returned to painting, developing the talent that had been nurtured in his youth when he went to the Glasgow School of Art in 1947, winning a gold medal but failing to finish the course as he was called up for RAF National Service in Germany 1948-50. His Glasgow Stations of the Cross and Marian Way were much appreciated during LentFest in recent years.

Cairney's first film was the wartime 'Ill Met by Moonlight' in 1957 with Dirk Bogarde, followed by 'Miracle in Soho' and 'Lucky Jim'. Significant films were 'Cleopatra' and 'Jason and The Argonauts' both made in 1963. His favourite was 'A Night to Remember' about The Titanic made in 1958.

He returned to the Citizens' Theatre several times, notably as a popular Hamlet in 1960 with crowds queuing around the block to get tickets.

Amongst many television parts were Edgar Allan Poe and Robert the Bruce. TV series included 'The Master of Ballantrae', (1962) 'Dr Finlay's Casebook' (1962), 'Danger Man' (1964), 'The Avengers' (1961), 'Elizabeth R' (1971), and even a role in 'Taggart' (1983). He achieved great success as schoolteacher Ian Craig in BBC2's 'This Man Craig' (1966-8).

He met his soulmate, New Zealander Alannah O'Sullivan, in 1978 whilst playing Burns at the Edinburgh Festival. They married in 1980 and formed Two for Theatre company, and Shanter Productions, touring the world performing shows they wrote. They settled in New Zealand for 17 years and he resumed painting,

winning an award for 'Man in the Image of God'.

Returning to Glasgow in 2008 Cairney resumed solo shows on Burns and wrote and performed solo performances on Robert Stevenson, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Ivor Novello and others.

He painted a number of religious subjects including his significant contemporary Glasgow Calvary, Stations of the Cross in 2013 and in 2018 the egg shaped 'Life of Mary' series of seven paintings. These were exhibited widely in the Archdiocese and filmed by Stephen Callaghan, director of Archdiocese of Glasgow Arts Project with meditations written by John Cairney. Booklets of these can be obtained from www.AGAP.org.uk

A regular Massgoer at Holy Cross Church in Crosshill, he was even commissioned to paint the iconic southside church. Depicting the sanctuary, 'Silence is Golden' the image is much appreciated by parishioners.

He had become increasingly frail in recent years and was devotedly cared for by Alannah.

His funeral took place at Holy Cross where PP and Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Mgr Hugh Bradley, offered the Requiem Mass

May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

St Nicholas Care Fund

During this year, St. Nicholas Care Fund has awarded a total of £37,528 to schools, churches and community groups supporting the most vulnerable in communities throughout the Archdiocese. Applications are invited for our next deadline of 6 Nov. Forms etc. available on our website – www.rcag.org.uk

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— APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION —

LAUDATE DEUM

— Of the Holy Father Francis —

To all people of good will on the climate crisis

Pope's new exhortation calls on world to redouble efforts to halt climate change

The world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point... that's the stark warning at the heart of Pope Francis' new exhortation on the environment.

The Holy Father states bluntly that climate change is undeniable, and its effects are becoming more and more evident, and despite attempts to minimise or ridicule them the danger is pressing.

He calls for politicians to commit to a green future in powerful terms: "The transition to renewable forms of energy, properly managed, as well as efforts to adapt to the damage caused by climate change, are capable of generating countless jobs in different sectors. This demands that politicians and business leaders should even now be concerning themselves with it."

Pope Francis goes on to state that it is no longer possible to doubt the human origin of climate change... "The overwhelming majority of scientists specializing in the climate support this correlation, and only a very small percentage of them seek to deny the evidence. Regrettably, the climate crisis is not exactly a matter that interests the great economic powers, whose concern is with the greatest profit possible at minimal cost and in the shortest amount of time."

And he pointedly rebukes 'climate change sceptics' within the Church. "I feel obliged to make these clarifications, which may appear obvious, because of certain dismissive and scarcely reasonable opinions that I encounter, even within the Catholic Church.

"We can no longer doubt



that the reason for the unusual rapidity of these dangerous changes is a fact that cannot be concealed: the enormous novelties that have to do with unchecked human intervention on nature in the past two centuries."

The Pope says each of us must make an examination of conscience: "What is being asked of us is nothing other than a certain responsibility for the legacy we will leave behind, once we pass from this world."

He calls for new forms of international governance to oversee the protection of the planet: "Our world has become so multipolar and at the same time so complex that a different framework for effective cooperation is required. It is not enough to think only of balances of power but also of the need to provide a response to new problems and to react with global mechanisms to the environmental, public health, cultural and social challenges... It is a matter of establishing global and effective rules that can permit this global safeguarding."

Pope Francis expresses disappointment that the

COP26 in Glasgow produced limited fruits: "Over the decades, international conferences have been held to address the climate crisis, but they have often fallen short in implementing agreements due to the lack of effective monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms. It is crucial to overcome the selfish posturing of countries for the sake of the global common good..."

Glasgow

"Following several Conferences with scarce results, and the disappointment of COP25 in Madrid (2019), it was hoped that this inertia would be reversed at COP26 in Glasgow (2021). In effect, its result was to relaunch the Paris Agreement, put on hold by the overall effects of the pandemic. Furthermore, there was an abundance of "recommendations" whose actual effect was hardly foreseeable. Proposals tending to ensure a rapid and effective transition to alternative and less polluting forms of energy made no progress."

The Pope condemns the tendency to portray environmental campaigners as extremists. "Once and for

all, let us put an end to the irresponsible derision that would present this issue as something purely ecological, 'green', romantic, frequently subject to ridicule by economic interests.

"In Conferences on the climate, the actions of groups negatively portrayed as 'radicalised' tend to attract attention. But in reality they are filling a space left empty by society as a whole, which ought to exercise a healthy pressure, since every family ought to realise that the future of their children is at stake."

The Pope calls on everyone to react, people of all religious confessions. "I cannot fail in this regard to remind the Catholic faithful of the motivations born of their faith and he urges everyone to play their part.

"I cannot deny that it is necessary to be honest and recognise that the most effective solutions will not come from individual efforts alone, but above all from major political decisions on the national and international level. Nonetheless, every little bit helps, and avoiding an increase of a tenth of a degree in the global temperature would already suffice to alleviate some suffering for many people."

"Efforts by households to reduce pollution and waste, and to consume with prudence, are creating a new culture. The mere fact that personal, family and community habits are changing is contributing to greater concern about the unfulfilled responsibilities of the political sectors and indignation at the lack of interest shown by the powerful.

"Let us realise, then, that even though this does not

Key points ... in the Pope's own words

Our responses have not been adequate, while the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point.

It is no longer possible to doubt the human origin of climate change

I feel obliged to make these clarifications, which may appear obvious, because of certain dismissive and scarcely reasonable opinions that I encounter, even within the Catholic Church.

To suppose that all problems in the future will be able to be solved by new technical interventions is a form of homicidal pragmatism, like pushing a snowball down a hill.

We must move beyond the mentality of appearing to be concerned but not having the courage needed to produce substantial changes

What is being asked of us is nothing other than a certain responsibility for the legacy we will leave behind, once we pass from this world

immediately produce a notable effect from the quantitative standpoint, we are helping to bring about large processes of transformation rising from deep within society.

And he ends with a stark warning for the future: "Praise God" is the title of this letter. For when human beings claim to take God's place, they become their own worst enemies."