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Official Journal of the Archdiocese of Glasgow

October 2025

Pope's plea to pray the Rosary for peace

THE Holy Father Pope Leo has asked Catholics across the globe to pray the Rosary every day this month to implore peace in the world.

As cruel conflicts continue in Gaza and Ukraine and in other parts of the world, Pope Leo asks that the traditional custom of saying the Rosary in October should be renewed.

He said: "The month of October is now here, and in the Church it is dedicated in a special way to the Holy Rosary. Therefore, I invite everyone, every day of the coming month, to pray the Rosary for peace: personally, in the family, in the community..."

"In particular, the evening of Saturday 11 October, at 18.00, [5pm UK time] we will pray it together here in Saint Peter's Square, during the vigil for the Jubilee



BY RONNIE CONVERY

of Marian Spirituality, also commemorating the anniversary of the opening of Vatican Council II."

Echoing the Pope's plea, Scotland's Bishops have called on all churches to be opened on October 7, the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, to allow people to



pray for peace.

In a letter from the President of the Bishops' Conference, Bishop John Keenan, the leaders of all eight Scottish dioceses write: "It is of course two years since the terrible massacre in Israel and now the continuing atrocities in Gaza.

"We invite our brother priests to open their churches on that day for as long as possible so that everyone has the possibility to visit their parish, especially the Lord Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament for a moment of prayer and to light a candle.

"Our world today is troubled by so many wars and conflicts; it is appropriate that we as Catholics pray individually and together on the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary for the Holy Land, Gaza and Israel."

Peace prayer

The Bishops recommend that the following prayer be said for peace:

"God of peace and justice, we pray for the people of the Holy Land: Israeli and Palestinian, Jew, Christian and Muslim.

"We pray for an end to acts of violence and terror. We lift up to you all who are fearful and hurting. We ask for wisdom and compassion for those in leadership.

"Above all, we ask that Jesus the Prince of Peace, establish lasting reconciliation and justice for the Holy Land and all nations. Amen."

Sacred Threads story to be told

BY BRIAN SWANSON

Alavishly illustrated book telling the story behind the Sacred Threads Embroidery Guild – the only one of its kind in the Scottish Catholic Church – has gone on sale in advance of an official book launch later this month.

The guild was founded by Netta Ewing, a parishioner of St Leo's, Dumbreck, after she was asked to design vestments for the first Papal visit in 1982.

Skilled

Since then, the guild members, a small group of highly skilled women, have used her designs to produce a treasure trove of liturgical works including the Four Seasons for Pluscarden Abbey, The Scottish Saints Vestments, and pulpit falls for St Leo's.

They are among 250 illustrations in the 'Sacred Threads in Scotland' book which Netta spent the last year putting together and which will be officially launched at St Leo's on Saturday October 25th, when several embroidered works will be on display.

The Guild's works have also been used in churches in Kirkintilloch, Dreghorn, Saltcoats, and Indiana, USA, and Netta also designed the ten murals at St Stephen's church, Dalmeir.

One of the first to receive a

signed copy of her book was Archbishop Nolan whom she acknowledges as giving her his support as she prepared the work for publication.

Monsignor Fitzpatrick, who has written the forward to the text, said: "Over

the years Netta and her colleagues produced such marvellous works – it's literally a labour of love which will be appreciated not only by us but admired for many generations to come."

■ **Sacred Threads in Scotland** is published by Spiffing Publishers and it can be bought from Amazon. Paperback £23.50 and hardcover £29.99. It can also be ordered online from Waterstones www.waterstones.com or from the distributor Ingram Spark www.ingramspark.com



Below: Altar frontal at St Leo's.
Right: Scottish Saints Vestments



Archbishop leads our Rome pilgrims



■ The Clyde flowed into the Tiber last month as Glasgow pilgrims visited Rome for the Holy Year.

Archbishop Nolan led the pilgrims on a Jubilee 'pilgrimage of hope', the highlight of which was passing through the Holy Door of St Peter's.

The Glasgow Archdio-

cese Pilgrimage also had the honour of processing along the Via della Conciliazione with the official Jubilee Year cross (see picture).

The pilgrims were also able to enjoy a trip to Assisi to visit the shrines and churches linked to St Francis and St Clare.

St Albert's turns the 'big 60'

A special day for the Parish coincided with a special day for its parishioners last month when Archbishop Nolan recently visited the community at St Albert the Great Parish in Pollokshields.

The Parish is celebrating its Diamond Jubilee this year marking the years 1965 – 2025.

Gratitude

The anniversary Mass saw the presentation of the Archdiocesan Medal to Bernard O'Donnell as a token of gratitude for his long service and dedicated commitment to the Parish life of St Albert's.

Worship

Newly married couple Bernard and his wife Anne were present at the very first Mass held in the new parish on October 3 1965 in the upstairs hall of the former Stockwell Free Church building.

Mass was held in the upstairs hall until renovations were completed allowing the space to be used for Catholic worship.



BY BRIAN SWANSON

PICTURES BY PAUL MCSHERRY

The first Mass was held in the church on Christmas Eve 1966.

Archbishop Nolan was joined by Parish Priest Fr Benneth Onyebuchukwu and clergy connected to the parish over the years.



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New outreach for deaf Catholics

APACKED programme of opportunities for people who have hearing issues or are deaf has been prepared by the team at the Archdiocese's Pastoral Ministry to the Deaf Community for the forthcoming autumn and winter period.

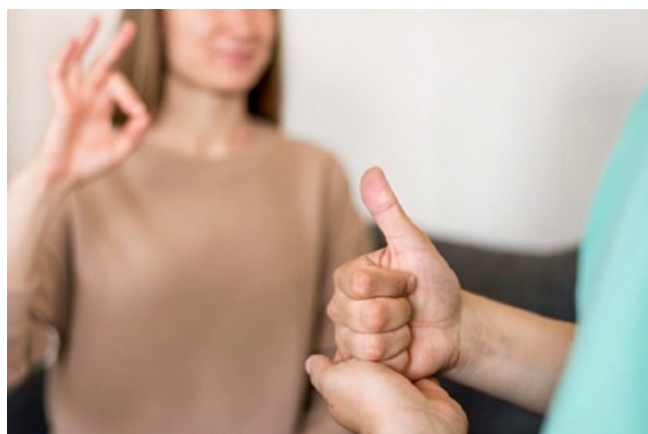
Weekly signed public Mass is celebrated at St Aloysius, Garnethill on Sundays at 10am followed by tea and biscuits and at St Augustine's, Milton on Sundays at 12pm followed by tea and toast.

Signed Confessions are available at both parishes on request.

There is also a special signed Mass for the deaf community on the last Tuesday of the month at 2.30pm at St Aloysius followed by a cup of tea.

Apart from Masses the team have put together a season of faith-based activities for people with hearing issues:

- A Remembrance Service at St Augustine's on Monday 3 November 2025 at 7pm.
- A Scripture course at St Aloysius' on 'The Lord's Passion' over three Tuesdays during Lent 2026.



- 3, 10, 17 March 2026 at 3pm in the Ogilvie Centre.

Meanwhile for those who belong to a deaf community and are 20 – 45 years old, a new project is up and running.

Fr Ladislav Sulik SJ at St Aloysius (above right), said: "I wish to learn about you, wherever you are, and sign together about how we can create a thriving Deaf Young Adult community. We meet regularly, we are a small circle and hope to grow."

"This is, perhaps, a unique opportunity for deaf, hard of hearing young adults in Glasgow who are interested in belonging to a faith com-

community. My aim is to create a space for you, just like anyone else who desires to immerse more fully in their faith.

"If you know of someone who is between the ages of 20 and 45 and interested in joining our group, please get in touch with me. Please, continue to talk to other deaf young adults to spread the word and come and join us to form a group of young adults to grow in faith and do things together. We meet once in a fortnight on Saturdays at 6.30pm in the Ogilvie Centre at 25 Rose Street, G3 6RE and we still have room



for you to join. Please do not hesitate to get in touch. Next meetings are on 11 and 25 October 2025."

■ For more information on the Ministry to Deaf Catholics contacts are: Fr Paul McAlinden at paul.mcalinden@rcag.org.uk; Fr Gerard Mitchell SJ, at stalloysiusgarnethill@rcag.org.uk, Fr Ladislav Sulik SJ at ladislav.sulik@rcag.org.uk; Joe Kennedy, PMDC Chair at joe.kennedy35@btinternet.com; Edward Laneres, Deaf Community Member at elaneres@gmail.com or Liz Ann O'Hare at laoh2@hotmail.co.uk or 07881208650



Joy for new head teachers

IN the presence of their colleagues, friends and families, Archbishop Nolan has commissioned new head teachers for Catholic schools in the Archdiocese during the annual Mass for teachers in St Andrew's Cathedral.

He told them: "Your challenge as Catholic teachers in our Catholic schools is to put the teachings of Jesus into practice so that those

in your care learn that they are children of God."

Commissioned

The five newly commissioned teachers, pictured with the Archbishop, are Seamus Scorgie, St Aloysius' College, Mark Young, St Charles' Primary, Matthew Traynor, St Denis' Primary, Colette Mullan, St George's Primary and Aidan Kerlin, St Angela's Primary.

Leo XIV – Pope of the Rosary

FROM the very beginning of his pontificate, Pope Leo XIV has shown a deep and heartfelt devotion to Our Lady, inspiring Catholics around the world to renew their own Marian faith.

He was elected on the feast day of Our Lady of Pompeii and mentioned the Madonna in his first address from the balcony above St Peter's just minutes after his election:

He said: "Today is the day of the Supplication to Our Lady of Pompeii. Our Mother Mary always wants to walk with us, to stay close, to help us with her intercession and her love. So I would like to pray together with you. Let us pray together for this new mission, for the whole Church, for peace in the world, and let us ask for this special grace from Mary, our Mother."

Shrines

Just a few days later, he visited several Marian shrines, including the famous Shrine of Our Lady of Good Counsel in Genazzano, where he entrusted his papal ministry to Mary's care.

Pope Leo XIV speaks of Mary not only as Mother of



the Church, but as a personal guide and companion for every Christian. In one of his first addresses, he said, "As the mother never abandons her children, you must also be faithful to the Mother."

Central to Pope Leo XIV's Marian devotion is his love for the Holy Rosary. During a candlelit Rosary procession in the Vatican Gardens at the end of May, he called the Rosary "Marian in form but Christological in heart," reminding those present that each mystery draws us

deeper into the life of Christ through the eyes of His Mother.

He often encourages families to pray the Rosary together. Reflecting on his own upbringing, he shared, "My parents prayed the Rosary every day of their lives ... it's a wonderful thing."

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Mgr Hugh's fond farewell to Holy Cross

AFTER almost a decade as parish priest at Holy Cross, Crosshill, Monsignor Hugh Bradley has used a quote from one of his favourite movies to thank parishioners as he moves to St Gabriel's, Merrylee.

Monsignor Bradley, who is also the Vicar General of the Archdiocese, is one of several priests who moved to new parishes last month following clergy changes announced by Archbishop Nolan.

Writing in the Holy Cross parish bulletin he said: "As I take my leave of Holy Cross and its good parishioners, I want to share with you a quote from the film and book, 'The Shoes of the Fisherman'.

"Each of us has his own cross. Do you know what

BY BRIAN
SWANSON

mine is? To be rich and content and fulfilled, and to know that I have deserved none of it, and that when I am called to judgement, I must depend utterly on the Mercy of God".

"This sums up my life as a priest, and our lives as Christians. All that we have is by the grace of God. All we can do is to give thanks and respond as best we can to our good God".

Joining him at St Gabriel's will be the St. Andrew's Syro Malankar Catholic Mission who have been a presence at Holy Cross since 2017.

Its chaplain, Father Lukose Kannimel, also used the bulletin to thank Monsignor Hugh and the parishioners. He wrote: "Holy Cross



Church has been more than a building for us – it has been our home in faith. Monsignor Hugh, your kindness and pastoral generosity have been a steady

light for us. You saw our need and responded with the love of a shepherd.

Family

"And to the parish family of Holy Cross – your warmth, your smiles, and your quiet acceptance have been the hands of Christ stretched out to us. You did more than share your church – you shared your hearts.

"You will always remain a part of our story, and we will remember you with gratitude in our prayers. May the Lord, who is never outdone in generosity, bless you abundantly for the gift you have been to us".

Archbishop's words of praise for Holy Land book

ARCHBISHOP Nolan has written a commendation for a new book on the Holy Land.

The book, entitled 'Advent in Bethlehem' is written by Canon Nicholas Taylor.

Archbishop Nolan said: "It must be one of the most famous places on earth – Bethlehem. Renowned as

the place where Jesus was born. But beyond that, few people know of its history or of its association with other important characters of the bible.

"Canon Nicholas' book brings together the biblical stories and the significant people connected with Bethlehem. We are intro-

duced to Rachel, Ruth, David and Elijah, whose fascinating stories are told in the context of their time. He does not shy away from mentioning the sad situation in Bethlehem today and he is sensitive to the special place that Bethlehem and the biblical characters have in three religions, Judaism,

Christianity and Islam.

"This book can be used for group study, each section ending with points for discussion.

"Whether studied by a group or by an individual, there are also helpful prayer reflections which bring out the spiritual depth of the stories."



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Caritas: the journey begins



FINAL year pupils from Catholic secondary schools in the archdiocese began their Caritas journey with an inspiring message of encouragement from Archbishop Nolan at a commissioning service in St Mary's, Calton.

Pointing out that the event was taking place on the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, he reminded them that their life journey would 'inevitably' bring its own sorrows and disappointments but

BY BRIAN SWANSON

PICTURE BY PAUL MCSHERRY

added: "Everything you do by taking part in Caritas brings 'caritas' or God's love to others and that love enriches both you and the person who receives it."

Since Pope Benedict XVI famously urged young people to become saints of the 21st century during his Glasgow visit 15 years ago, almost 15,000 young people

from parishes throughout Scotland have been given awards for work with parishes, schools, local communities and individuals.

Awards

This year's cohort who filled St Mary's – one of the oldest churches in the Archdiocese and the only one big enough to accommodate all the pupils – who will be among those who will be honoured at the annual Caritas Awards Ceremony

in the Clyde Auditorium on May 26 next year.

After Archbishop Nolan addressed them and offered prayers for their journey ahead, they stood to make their commissioning promises responding with the words: "With God as my help, I will".

Individual pupils, accompanied by a staff member, then brought their Caritas badges to the sanctuary where they were blessed by the Archbishop.

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Latin celebration at Vatican

POPE Leo has signaled his desire for unity in the Church by welcoming a huge pilgrimage of priests and laity who are devotees of the old Latin (Tridentine) Mass to Rome for the Holy Year.

And for the first time in recent years the traditional Pontifical High Mass will be celebrated in the Old Rite in St Peter's Basilica.

Two high ranking cardinals will take part in the weekend of celebrations – Cardinal Matteo Zuppi, the President of the Italian

Bishops Conference, and the American Cardinal Raymond Burke.

On Friday October 24 Pontifical Vespers will be celebrated in Rome's Basilica of San Lorenzo in Lucina presided over by Cardinal Zuppi, who is the Archbishop of Bologna.

Holy Year

The next day participants in the Holy Year pilgrimage will process through the streets of Rome and walk through the Holy Door of St Peter's where Pontifical

Mass will be offered by Cardinal Burke in St Peter's Basilica.

Pope Leo has signalled in his first months in office that he wishes to heal some of the tensions which led to divisions in the Church in recent years.

Earlier this year he said to Archbishops gathered in Rome to receive the pallium, "Unity in the Catholic Church is nourished by forgiveness and mutual trust... If Jesus trusts us, then we too can trust one another, in his name."

Passionists plan a new move

GLASGOW'S Passionist Community are preparing for another flitting.. this time to take up residence in a former convent.

Recently the Passionists, who were traditionally based at St Mungo's in Townhead but also cover St Roch's in Garngad, received a long-awaited building warrant from Glasgow City Council, which will allow them to start on the adaptations needed at 1245 Royston Road, the convent previously occupied by the Franciscan

Missionaries of Mary.

This building – next door to St Philomena's church in Roystonhill, will soon become the new Passionist Community residence in Glasgow, taking the place of a house in Bishopbriggs which they had been using since the St Mungo's residence became unsuitable.

If everything goes to plan the community should be settled in some time before Christmas.

Fr Frank Keevins said: "We have liked our home

in Bishopbriggs, and it is a fine house which has served us well, but it was just too far away from our places of ministry and had its limitations as a religious house.

"The new house will be much more conducive to that, especially as the sisters had a lovely oratory, which was something we have been sadly lacking, having had to celebrate our prayer in common around a dining room table – perhaps, appropriately, nourished by the Word of God."

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Archbishop's Cathedral celebration for Talbot Association Mass will mark Talbot volunteers' quiet care for Glasgow's neediest souls

A MASS of thanksgiving will be held in St Andrew's Cathedral later this month to mark more than 50 years of care for the homeless in Glasgow by the Talbot Association as it begins a campaign to raise its profile and attract more supporters.

The Association takes its name, and inspiration, from Matt Talbot who went from being a hopeless alcoholic on the streets of 19th century Dublin to a revered man of deep faith who devoted his life to caring for the destitute.



■ Mass on October 25th in St Andrew's Cathedral, 1pm

The Talbot Association was formed in 1970 by a group of volunteers whose founding principles were to shelter the homeless and destitute, feed the hungry, clothe the needy, care for the sick, remember the forgotten and bury the dead.

Appalled by the growing number of homeless single men forced to sleep rough in the streets of Glasgow because of marital break

BY BRIAN SWANSON

ups, unemployment, and alcoholism they were determined to act.

Many of those who were homeless used an overcrowded men's hostel in the city centre but when it was destroyed in a blaze and two others forced to close because the buildings were unsafe the crisis deepened.

This was the trigger for the volunteers of the newly-formed Talbot Association to take to the streets to provide food and shelter in disused public buildings donated by supporters while others drove an elderly soup van which was also used to take the sick to hospital.

From these early works of charity the Talbot Association has expanded to provide care from a number of centres to meet the changing needs of society.

They are the Kingston Halls, in Paisley Road, near the city centre which provides emergency, 24-hour direct-access accommodation, Bob McTaggart House, Dunblane Street, Cowcadens and Dalhousie Street Centre, Garnethill both of which offer supported accommodation, Buchanan Lodge Residential Care Home, Rutherglen, a young



persons' supported accommodation unit in Govanhill, and a homeless mental health care unit in Govan.

In thanking Archbishop Nolan for agreeing to celebrate the Mass of thanksgiving on October 25th, Michael O'Neill, senior manager with the Talbot Association said:

"We have supported Glasgow's most vulnerable for 50 years and more inspired by the life and example of Matt Talbot whose work, like ours, is rooted in compassion, dignity and solidarity.

"We hope this Mass will not only honour him but raise awareness of our mission and help us raise much needed support for our services".

■ For more information on the charity visit www.talbotassoc.org



Scotsport Arthur was an early backer... with his jacket

LEGENDARY sports commentator the late Arthur Montford was an early supporter of the Talbot Association, often donating his own trademark sports jackets to the charity.

BY BRIAN SWANSON

But his kindness had unintended consequences that he had made a clothing donation.

Senior manager Michael O'Neill said: "People knew Arthur as a stylish dresser so the story goes that when the guys found out his clothes were available they almost came to blows to make sure they got the good stuff!"

He added: "Arthur was before my time but I'm told he was one of the nicest most unassuming people you could meet, who kept his donations quiet and actively encouraged others to support us as well."

Who was Matt Talbot, the Dublin docker who is now on the path to sainthood?

BORN in Dublin in May 1856, Matt Talbot was the 2nd of 12 children in a poor working-class family and from a young age he faced the harsh realities of poverty, instability, and widespread alcohol misuse.

By the age of 12, illiterate and with little formal education, his descent into alcoholism began at his very first day at work with a company which bottled beer when the young Matt started drinking the dregs from bottles he was meant to be cleaning.

By the time he was in his 20s he was spending all his wages on drink and was so desperate for money that one occasion he stole a fiddle from a blind man and sold it to buy drink.

Alcohol

Then at the age of 28, after being refused credit at the pub he drank for most of his adult life, penniless and ashamed, he made a quiet but life-changing vow: he would give up alcohol.

From that day onwards he began a lifetime of sobriety, supported by daily prayer, frequent confession, and a deep devotion to the Eucharist and Our Lady.

Matt taught himself to read and write in adulthood, devouring the lives of the saints and spiritual classics. He became a Secular Franciscan, attended daily Mass, and



The only known photograph of Venerable Matt Talbot

undertook personal penances inspired by the early Irish monks.

He allowed himself just four hours sleep a night, attended an early Mass before starting a full day's work in the Dublin docks where his foreman described as the hardest worker in Dublin.

His fellow workers knew nothing of his religious devotion, but they knew of his generosity – quietly and without fuss he lent or more often simply gave them money to buy clothes for their children or to settle overdue rent.

He died from a heart attack aged 69 on June 7th 1925, while on his way to Mass and was buried in a pauper's grave a few days later.

In 1972 his remains were removed to a tomb in Our Lady of Lourdes Church in another part of Dublin and three years later the Pope declared him Venerable which is the first step on the path to sainthood.

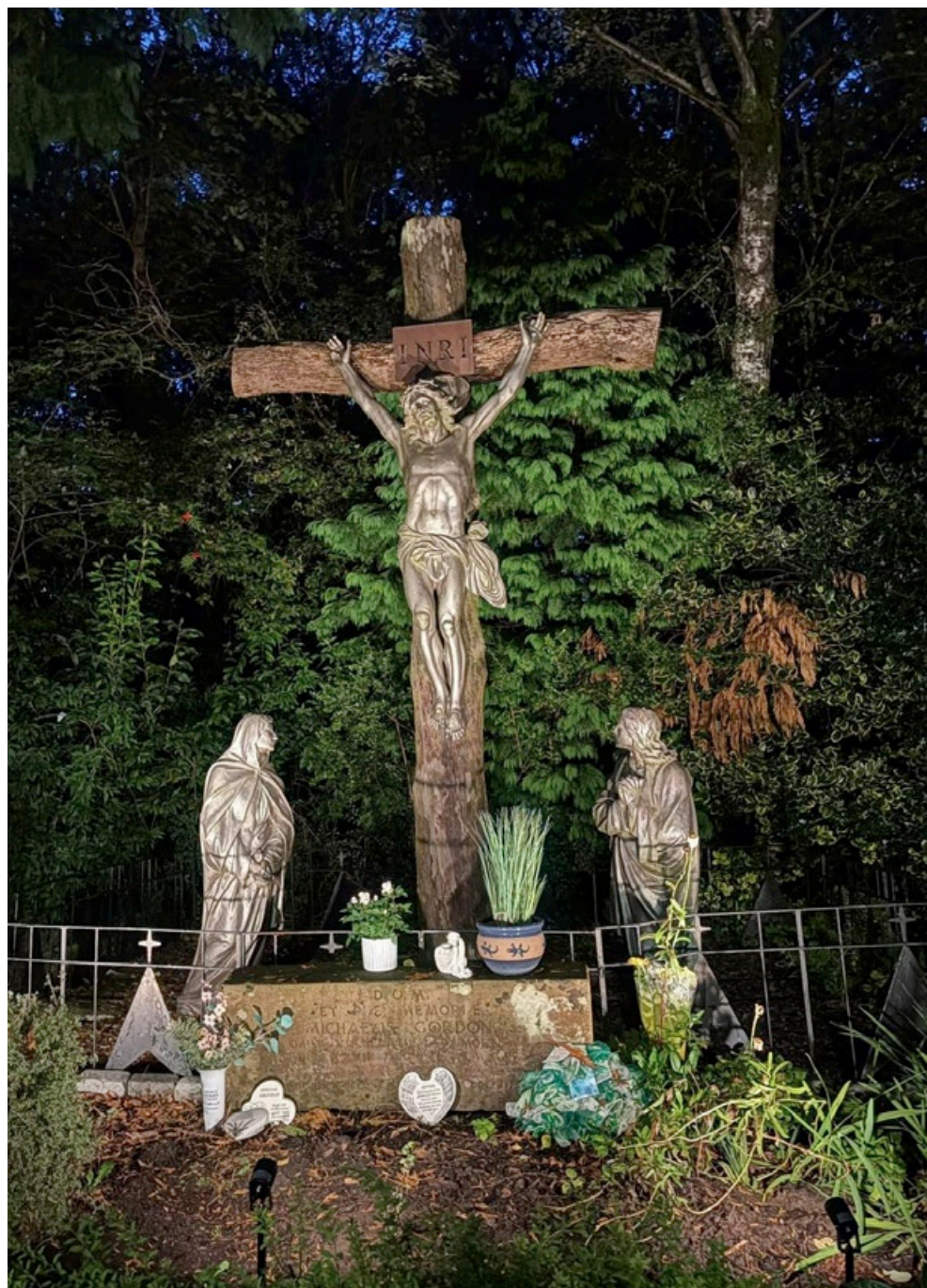
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Maryhill Calvary is restored for future generations

A DEPICTION of the Crucifixion in the grounds of Immaculate Conception church, Maryhill, erected in memory of the first Scottish priest to be killed in World War One, has been restored to its former glory after a year of hard work by parish volunteers.

BY BRIAN SWANSON

New spotlights have been installed in time for winter, the ground landscaped, and years of dirt and grime removed from statues.

Parish Priest Father Jim Lawlor said: "This is a very special place for us so it was a real labour of love to have it restored."

"We are asking folks to keep in mind that this is a place where many come to remember their deceased relatives and friends and so we are asking people to use the flower vases we have provided."

Remembrance

Described as a place of memory and remembrance, the Maryhill Calvary commemorates

town of Coxyde.

A second memorial to him, depicting St Michael the Archangel striking the serpent, is housed in St Patrick's church in Dumbarton.

born army chaplain Father Michael Gordon who was killed by an enemy shell in 1917 as he slept in his billet near the Belgian coastal

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Let's not forget that heroes come in all shapes and sizes

OUR heroes sometimes come from the most unexpected backgrounds, and perhaps unexpectedly have the power to make us see things from a different perspective.

A hero of mine came to mind again over this summer as the migrant situation simmered and in some places in the UK bubbled over into violence.

At a time when migrants, asylum seekers and refugees were tarred with the same toxic brush – as criminals, even rapists, out to destroy our way of life – I couldn't help thinking of Brendan Woodhouse (right).

Brendan who? I hear you ask. When I first came across him, he was a fireman whose holidays were spent in the Mediterranean helping to save refugees whose boats got into trouble. In 2022 he received a Solidarity Medal from his Fire Brigade Union colleagues for the rescue work he had been doing since 2016.



In all, some 8000 refugees were saved by the efforts of Brendan and the rescue mission he volunteered with. As he said when he received that medal, thousands more died, slipping from the grasp of those trying to save their lives.

He wrote a poem about migrants and refugees when Russia invaded Ukraine, and the UK opened its doors to those fleeing the deadly bombs and drones. He read

that poem at a Pax Christi Scotland online event.

It's called "If they were white..." and suggests that those leaving Libya and other North African countries in small boats, risking their lives to escape conflicts and persecution, would receive a more favourable welcome if the colour of their skin matched that of the Ukrainians.

Brendan also wrote a book called Doro, which



Marian Pallister

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

movingly charts the life of a refugee he befriended when he found himself aboard the rescue boat on which Brendan was volunteering. Doro's situation reflects that of thousands who traverse continents, are beaten up, imprisoned, trafficked, conned by people who demand cash they haven't got to sail dangerous waters in boats that are woefully inadequate.

Refugees

Doro now has a life in France. Brendan has left the Fire Service. But the refugees still cross the Mediterranean and the English Channel, and the reception they are given has become increasingly deadly.

Pax Christi organisa-



tions around the world seek nonviolent solutions to the situations that create migrants and refugees. Men and women like Brendan, who risk their own lives to save those who have experienced situations few of us can comprehend, deserve to be our heroes.

But so too do the thou-

sands trying to seek refuge – a word, lest we forget, which means "a place of safety", "protection", "safety".

And yet, as we have seen in the past few months, in the words of Brendan's poem, "If they were white..." too many want to deny people like Doro any safety, any protection, any refuge.

As a peace organisation, we can only echo Pope Leo's words, when he called migrants and refugees messengers of hope, encouraging communities to welcome them as brothers and sisters. Acting, in other words, like my hero Brendan, rather than like those taking to the streets with violence to deny them safety within our shores.

‘The sound of a child gasping for breath brings home the need for medical aid. Thank God Missio Scotland was able to help these poor people..’

THE words left a deep impression... “Whether you’re in Bolivia or Scotland, seeing a child in pain is one of the worst things you can witness.”

“We, as adults, generally know how to cope with life’s challenges, no matter how bad or hurtful, but when we see a sick child or one going through pain, that should provoke mercy in us.”

They were spoken by Fr Iver Copa, parish priest of St Pio X in Oruro, where Missio Scotland is supporting projects this year. As well as running a parish, Fr Iver supports the St John Paul II Clinic in the city, which provides much-needed medical care and medicines to some of the lowest-income families in the diocese.

Health problems in Bolivia are many and multi-faceted. Unhygienic water supplies, inadequate waste management and air pollution all contribute significantly to many illnesses. Medical centres, hospitals, doctors and nurses are scarce, but

BY GERARD COUGH

respiratory diseases and malnutrition are common. Many Bolivians also lack health insurance, making it hard for them to afford the necessary medical care.

The Church provides healthcare to around 10 per cent of Bolivia’s population – especially in marginalised urban areas and poor districts – but many health challenges still abound.

The situation for children in the country is particularly distressing.

Bolivia is the second poorest country in South America and this affects the youngest in society greatly. One child in 37 dies before their fifth birthday. A quarter are engaged in child labour. A third suffer from malnutrition.

Approximately 20 per cent of girls are married before the age of 18 and in some areas 50 per cent of girls under the age of 16 are pregnant. Pollution in the country can also have long-term

consequences for children’s health and wellbeing.

Having been on various mission trips with Missio Scotland I have seen poverty up-close but in Oruro, when my colleague Andrea and I were being shown around the St John Paul II Clinic, the sight and sounds of a nine-year-old boy struggling for breath in one of the treatment rooms, highlighted those medical needs in a very stark and heart-breaking manner.

Suffering

Mercifully, Missio Scotland – thanks to our benefactors and Fr Dominic Quinn of St Leonard’s in East Kilbride putting us in touch with priests and religious in his former diocese – has been able to provide some assistance to the clinic and children suffering from respiratory illnesses by purchasing medicines to treat such ailments.

“There’s an economic crisis in Bolivia, so medicines are two or three more times



expensive than they were even a short while ago and people now can’t afford them.” Fr Iver said. “So, Missio Scotland helping to cover the cost of the medicines that children need for respiratory infections is a grace from God during such difficult times.”

The impact Missio Scotland will make via its support for healthcare projects in Bolivia, however, won’t simply be restricted to children, but will also support the needs of women there

too. Fr Dominic, he told me: “South Americans have a huge devotion to Our Lady and I think it’s connected to the cultural value they place on motherhood in general.”

In Bolivia, there is also a lack of access to quality gynecological care.

Missio Scotland helping us with the ultrasound machine is truly a blessing, because it will not only help women who are in dire need, but also anyone else who needs to avail of it.”

As if to emphasise the im-

portance of witness and the universality of the Church, the clinic has received a second new ultrasound machine. A retired parishioner of Fr Dominic’s – a former NHS professional – was moved by the story and used his contacts to secure the extra equipment.

Clinic

In addition to this, tentative moves are afoot to establish a link between the clinic in Oruro and the Glasgow University School of Medicine, which, it is hoped, will bear much fruit for years to come.

Fr Iver said: “Missio Scotland’s visit and support is providential and has allowed me to see the hand of God in your work. You are like the Good Samaritan who has reached out to us and offered his help. Your visit motivates me in my priesthood, to understand that the Church is universal and no matter how far apart we may be, it is Christ who unites us.”



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SCIAF AT 60

This year represents a tipping point for the planet

THE world feels like a very scary place at the moment. Wars are breaking out across the world, causing so much heartache and suffering, and creating scars that will stretch far into the future.

In parallel, there seems to be a stepping back from global responsibilities to one-another – a collective forgetting that we are called to love all people, near and far, neighbour and stranger, as our sisters and brothers.

At a time when tensions between nations are rising, the international legal system created to prevent war is being tested as never before. Each day, we witness violations of international law in Gaza and in conflicts across the world.

Yet instead of strengthening the tools of peace, governments are cutting aid budgets to boost defence spending, reviving military parades, and choosing to rattle sabres rather than extend olive branches.

The sad reality is that whilst all of this is going



Ben Wilson

Director of Public Engagement,
SCIAF

on, the climate crisis has not gone away. We've just come through the hottest summer ever recorded in the UK. Scotland has seen unprecedented flooding devastate homes and farmland. Across Africa and Asia, cyclones, droughts, and crop failures are driving hunger and displacement.

Crisis

Unfortunately, the crisis of global peace and the climate crisis are deeply intertwined.

I saw this first-hand earlier this year in Tigray, northern Ethiopia, where I visited projects supported by SCIAF. The conflict there has many causes, but the competition for scarce resources is undoubtedly

sharpening the violence.

Drought and desertification, driven by climate change, make that competition even fiercer. This is the grim reality: climate breakdown will drive more wars, more mass displacement, more territorial disputes.

The link is clear: there can be no peace without climate justice, and no climate justice without peace. That's the message in the statement, Pilgrims of Hope for a Just and Peaceful World, published by SCIAF's international networks Caritas Internationalis, CIDSE and Pax Christi International.

The statement makes a crucial point: the roots of war and the roots of climate destruction are the same. A



system built on short-term profit, on exploitation of people and planet, will keep producing both violence and environmental collapse.

The answers, too, are collective. Tackling climate change depends on a rules-based international system, just as securing peace does. Safeguarding smaller nations from the dominance of the powerful is central to both. And in each case, we

need leaders willing to look beyond the immediate – to act in the interests of the common good, the most vulnerable, and the generations yet to come. What we cannot afford are leaders who fuel division for the sake of short-term political gain.

This year feels like a decisive moment in recent human history. I fear we may come to see 2025 as a tipping point for the planet —

when atrocities went unchallenged, when leaders turned their backs on the world's poorest, and when the global community stopped planning for peace and instead prepared for war.

It was also the year, of course, we lost Pope Francis, such a champion of the poor and the planet. However, his legacy lives on amongst all of us, not least through his successor Pope Leo, who has in his early days reaffirmed Pope Francis' calls for peace and care for our common home.

Both remind us that love for the planet and love for one another are intertwined, and that these are at the heart of our mission as Catholics.

And so, in this Jubilee Year, we are called to hope. If we let that hope drive our actions, we can keep believing that a better world is possible: that when history looks back on 2025 in fact, we see instead a low point from which we turned towards a better future for all.

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SCIAF is the official relief and development agency of the Catholic Church in Scotland and a proud member of the Caritas family, 196 Clyde Street, Glasgow, G1 4JY. Tel: 0141 354 5555. Scottish Charity No: SC012302. Company No: SC197327. Photos by Colin Hattersley and Taban Killion.

Making a better world possible for the last 60 years



THE world has been through a lot over the past 60 years... climate change, conflict, chaos in our politics. But where there has been injustice, where there has been pain and suffering, SCIAF has been there, standing side-by-side and supporting the most vulnerable communities.

Since 1965 SCIAF has given millions of people around the world a hand up out of poverty: empowering the hungry to grow more food, uplifting women and girls out of op-

pression, opening up education for those whose are excluded and offering hope in the darkest of times.

And it all started in a classroom in Rutherglen...

Last month a very special celebration of all the love that SCIAF has brought to the world over the last six decades took place in the same parish in which the charity was born – St Columbkille's in Rutherglen.

SCIAF Chief Executive Lorraine Currie said: "They came from far and wide – SCIAF supporters, staff past and present, so

many of our amazing volunteers and of course the good people of Rutherglen, where it all began.

"SCIAF, and everyone associated with it believes that a better world is possible – and it's their mission to bring that vision to life.

"From Rutherglen to Rafah, Aberfeldy to Ad-dis, Benbecula to Bogota, the SCIAF family is there, building a better world. The Mass was truly a joyful day where it was clear that SCIAF has a special place in the hearts of many."

The Mass was celebrated

by Bishop Brian McGee, SCIAF's current Bishop President, and concelebrated by past president Bishop Joseph Toal, Parish Priest Father Bernard Mornian and many other priests who have been associated with the charity over the years.

Children and young people from local schools were also represented – St Columbkille's, St Mark's, Trinity High, Holyrood Secondary and Fernhill School – welcoming people, taking part in the Mass and singing in the choir.

Over time, SCIAF also became part of Caritas Internationalis – a family of 162 national Catholic relief and development agencies working across the world. Using the Latin word for 'love' or 'charity' Caritas Internationalis (CI) is based in the Vatican, and SCIAF is a 'small but mighty' part of this humanitarian network.

Lorraine added: "It's being part of this amazing Caritas family that allows us to be able to help almost immediately when disasters strike. We work

through these partners to bring relief where and when it's needed. It happened when Ukraine was invaded in 2022. It's also happening right now in Gaza, where we're providing support when the conditions allow, amid the tremendous suffering there.

"SCIAF has also produced two CI Secretary Generals – firstly Duncan McLaren and also the current head Alistair Dutton – proving that SCIAF is truly small but mighty in the world of humanitarian work.

Let's hear from Lorraine

An interview with SCIAF Chief Executive Lorraine Currie

What are your own first memories of SCIAF campaigns as a child?

When I was in primary school, a Scottish missionary priest gave us a talk about his work in El Salvador with street and disabled children that was funded by SCIAF. The passion he had for his vocation and the love he had for these children really came through. Some of these children went on to become teachers, priests, doctors and advocates for their communities.

His visit showed me that a better world is possible. For me, the seed was planted that day and when I was 22, I had the great privilege to go out as a volunteer to the Middle East for one year. Twenty years on I was still there, living and working with poor and marginalised communities who despite their human fragility had such great love for Christ and each other. They embraced me as one of their own, forgave my many mistakes, taught me about resilience, and enriched my life and faith enormously for which I will be forever grateful.

What project/individual story of a person helped has struck you most over the years?

A little girl called Bakhita in South Sudan comes to my mind regularly. Bakhita is paralysed after a scuffle trying to flee from armed militia with her mother.

Through working with our local partner in South Sudan, SCIAF provided her with a package of care and as a result was living her life to the full, going to school in a wheelchair, playing outside with her friends, going to Church and taking part in community life. When we visited her village, she joined in a tribal dance. An inspiring and humbling experience.

SCIAF has used many celebrities over the years to support its campaign. Any anecdotes?

I remember with great fondness when Susan Boyle visited us in our office to present us with a very generous donation for our Lent appeal. When she visited, she was so kind, had time for everyone and was so interested in our work. She even broke into song with a beautiful hymn at one point!

SCIAF's work is not only to feed the hungry but to CAMPAIGN against injustice. This can be misunderstood for 'wasting money' on political causes. How do you respond?



At SCIAF, our mission is not only to respond when people are hungry or in crisis, but also to change the systems that keep people poor. We don't just give food to the poor, but ask why they don't have enough food in the first place? Project work is vital – and we're proud of the difference it makes – but only through advocacy can we achieve the structural changes needed to build a better world.

Take our work on climate justice as an example. Through our advocacy on 'loss and damage', we and our partners helped secure a breakthrough at the UN that unlocked a global fund worth around £700 million. That money is supporting countries hit hardest by climate change – an impact far beyond what we could ever deliver through individual projects alone.

This is what campaigning achieves: it's about justice, not politics. It's about making sure that millions of families across the world have the chance not just to survive, but to thrive.

How have the needs of the world's poorest people changed in the 60 years of SCIAF's existence?

Over the last 60 years, the needs of the world's poorest communities have moved from an emphasis on just meeting basic needs such as food, water, shelter, to a demand for opportunities, human dignity, climate and social justice, and sustainable living.

What are the greatest challenges facing SCIAF over the next decade?

The greatest challenges facing SCIAF in the next decade are the increased humanitarian disasters caused by climate change, increased political instability and conflict such as in Gaza and Ukraine, increased migration, and the continuation of unequal systems that keep them poor.

This is against a backdrop of a global financial recession, massive aid cuts globally while defence spending grows, the rise of xenophobia leading to hate crimes and the declining number of Catholics going to Mass.

The need for SCIAF to continue to work in solidarity with the poorest and most marginalised across the world, caring for our common home, and opposing oppression and injustice wherever we find it is essential if our planet and its people are going to survive and flourish.

Looking back over SCIAF's sixty years

BY DR DUNCAN MACLAREN

It was the first full-time employee of SCIAF after it had been organised for 25 years by a Committee.

I was initially employed to go round parishes and schools to inform them of the agency's work and advocate on behalf of the poor of what we in those days called 'The Third World'. I remember that my first call was from a primary head teacher who asked me to visit to talk to the children "about the wee black babies". I realised a lot had to change.

I had a good relationship with the co-founder John McKee, and with our then Bishop President, Bishop Mario Conti of Aberdeen. I knew we had to set up a small professional team, move away from doing solely missionary projects, promote partnership, embrace Catholic Social Teaching and become more professional.

For the rest of my 13 year tenure, I saw the emergence of the butterfly from a chrysalis as we built a small but brilliant staff team, and became, in the words of the very supportive Cardinal Thomas Winning, "the jewel of the Scottish Church".

Sixty years on, SCIAF is an internationally respected aid, development and advocacy agency cherished by the Scottish Government, its peers in Caritas Europa, CIDSE and Caritas Internationalis, by our Bishops' Conference and the Catholic community – priests, religious and the laity – and including the youngsters in our schools whose enthusiasm keeps us all going.

Above all, our staff are our main witnesses to our professionalism by acting in close, effective solidarity with our partners around the world, trying together to transform the lives of some of our world's poorest people.

Everyone who has worked for or supported SCIAF over these sixty years has contributed to this, being in solidarity with the marginalised, caring for our Earth, our common home, and opposing oppression and injustice wherever we find it. Happy birthday and God bless all of you!



Dr Duncan McLaren was the first SCIAF Director. He went on to become Secretary General of Caritas Internationalis and spent 12 years working in the Vatican.

1965



Founded in a classroom in Rutherglen.

1968

Catholics in Scotland gave over £3,000 to people affected by famine in Biafra (now south-eastern Nigeria).



1983



SCIAF Sunday was moved from September to the 4th Sunday of Lent, which remains a key date for our WEE BOX Appeal.

1989

We launched a postcard campaign urging the UK government to stop propping up the apartheid regime in South Africa.



1995



We reached out to people devastated by an earthquake in Iran, a cyclone in Bangladesh and the genocide in Rwanda.

1999

SCIAF supported the Labour Government with its international development policy.

2001



Our WEE BOX Appeal brought together Tommy Burns and Ally McCoist to launch our 24-hour fast.

2004

Following the Boxing Day Tsunami in Asia, you gave an astonishing £2.2 million to our Emergency Appeal.



2005



We joined Make Poverty History and campaigned to 'Make Aid Work' at the G8 Summit in Gleneagles.

2014

We launched an urgent appeal for refugees fleeing conflict in Syria, supporting over 43,000 people. In the same year, we also strengthened our Board by creating new positions for lay people and three expert sub-committees.



22 specific COVID-19 relief projects were developed, providing over £210,000 to protect the most at-risk groups.

2021

By raising your voice, you helped convince the Scottish Government to become the first in the world to commit funding for Loss and Damage, making a huge impact at COP26 talks in Glasgow.

2022



You donated more than £1.2 million to provide shelter, food and medicines to the people of Ukraine.

2024



We provided emergency relief in the Holy Land and welcomed the only Catholic Priest in Gaza to Glasgow.

2025



Thanks to your generosity and the support of our institutional funders, we delivered projects totalling more than £9 million.

'To see ourselves as others see us...'

As a Norwegian Catholic who is married to a Scot and has been living in Scotland for over a year, I offer a perspective that readers may find helpful – or at least interesting.

I write with a great love for Scotland and its people, its epic history and its natural beauty. My countryman, the poet A.O. Vinje once said of the Highlands that 'you might, standing there, dream that you were at home' in Norway.

I am inspired by the witness of Scottish saints, such as the monks of Iona and Saint Margaret. We even have some saints in common, namely Saint Magnus and Saint Ragnvald, since Orkney was under Norwegian rule until the 15th century.

Scotland and Norway share more than just the North Sea. Our histories are intertwined, and many aspects of Catholic life and culture are similar.

In both countries, the Church was outlawed after the Reformation, only to be restored in the 19th century. In both, immigration has been the main driver of Catholic growth, yet Catholics remain a minority today:



OYVIND EVENSTAD of the Diocese of Oslo, Norway, offers a reflection on Catholic life in Scotland

main differences. The most striking contrast lies in the relative size of the Church. Scotland's larger Catholic population is reflected in the number of dioceses (eight compared to Norway's one – plus two territorial prelatures), parishes (383 compared to 41) and Catholic schools (360 compared to five).

13 per cent in Scotland and 3 per cent in Norway, with a total population of about 5.5 million in each country.

Precisely due to our similarities, it has been interesting to observe some of the

I was surprised to learn that a Scottish town of 25,000 people has seven parishes, while Norway's capital city of 700,000 has only three. In Scotland, the Catholic population has declined since 2011, while in Norway it has more than tripled over the past two decades – from 45,000 in 2005 to 170,000 today.

Naturally, different circumstances call for different pastoral responses. In Norway, Bishop Bernt Eidsvig of Oslo had to establish new parishes and acquire additional church buildings.

By contrast, the Church in

Scotland may need to merge or close parishes in order to consolidate resources.

A far more important measure, however, is whether the Church is growing spiritually. In Norway, recent years have seen an increase in Eucharistic adoration, processions and pilgrimages. I am happy to witness similar signs of devotion in Scotland, where this past Easter saw a rise in the number of people entering the Church – as well as an increase in Mass attendance.

Smaller, more everyday differences give colour and variety to the Church in our two countries but we are united in diversity: the same Mass, the same sacraments and the same faith, expressed in different ways across cultures. To me, this is a reminder that the Church truly is Catholic – a home that is both familiar and ever new. As I continue to become more and more a part of the community, I look forward to seeing where the Spirit will lead the Church in Scotland.



Crowded Mass in Oslo's Catholic Cathedral

Milton healing service

THERE will be an ecumenical service focusing on recovery and spiritual healing for anyone who has been caught up in alcohol or drug addiction later this month.

All those who are in recovery, those still afflicted by addiction and family members who support those who are suffering are very welcome to attend.

The service will take place at 3pm on Sunday 12th October in St August-

tine's Church Hall, 393 Ashgill Road, Glasgow, G22 7HN. The service will be led by Rev Laurent Vermet and Fr Paul McAlinden and there will be testimony from people in recovery as well as those who support them.

For anyone using public transport, the number 75 bus from Castlemilk, which passes through the city centre, has a stop just outside St Augustine's Church.

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The plight of persecuted Christians remembered at ACN youth rally

BY PETER DIAMOND

THE 10th annual Scottish Youth Rally held by the charity Aid to the Church in Need attracted over 600 pupils from 16 Catholic secondary schools throughout Scotland... making it one of the largest gatherings of its kind in the organisation's history.

It opened with a Papal Blessing from Pope Leo XIV read by William More, Manager of Operations in Scotland for Aid to the Church in Need.

The Pope praised the Scottish Youth Rally for its mission to inspire the next generation and offered prayers for every young person gathered at the Hamilton event.

Speakers at the event included North Korean defector Timothy Cho, who shared his moving story of converting to Christianity after escaping from the repressive regime where even owning a Bible can



bring the death penalty.

Today, Timothy lives safely in Britain, a devout Christian who campaigns tirelessly for human rights, shining a light on the persecution of believers around the world.

The rally was compered by Fr James Anyaegbu (centre of picture), Parish Priest of

St Mary's in Beaulieu, nicknamed the "TikTok priest" whose viral videos have made him a social-media favourite among young Catholics.

With his trademark humour, warmth and songs he kept the packed hall buzzing between powerful witnesses of faith, prayers and music.

In the afternoon of the Youth Rally the Archdiocese's own FireCloud team led a time of Eucharistic Adoration, guiding hundreds of young people in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

With gentle words, music and song, the team invited pupils to lay down their wor-

ries, and encounter Christ in the stillness. Other features of the day included a 17-strong African choir, who had travelled from Aberdeen, to bring their soaring harmonies and booming voices.

Aid to the Church in Need has long been a lifeline for persecuted Christians

worldwide, working in 140 countries, with over 5000 projects.

Peter Diamond is community fundraiser Scotland for Aid to the Church in Need. For more information call 01698 337470 or visit www.acnuk.org

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Busman Hugh's trip down memory lane

A NEW book by former Flourish writer and Christ the King parishioner Hugh Dougherty is just the ticket.

It tells the story of the 74 year-old, retired press officer's time as a conductor and driver on the old Western SMT buses, between 1969 and 1972.

Holiday's Busman tells what it was like for the then-18 year-old Hugh, who came from a douce, traditional Glasgow, Irish Catholic home, and with both parents teachers, to take his place in the hard world of the bothy at Mearns and Thornliebank garages, and to tussle on the platform with passengers who weren't always the most co-operative.

"It was baptism by fire," recalls Hugh. "I had to learn not just how to work the ticket machine, know all the fares, and keep my feet on a swaying bus. Most of the regular crews I worked with were great people and I learned more from them about life in general than I did at university.



"I was very struck by just how many lapsed Catholics there were in the garage, and that's when I decided to do something about it. I'd read about worker priests, all very socialist and in the spirit of the times, who worked on the production line in the Renault factory in Paris as industrial chaplains, saying Mass for the workers and bringing the faith on to the factory floor. I wanted to be a worker priest at Thornliebank garage! Talk about the idealism of youth!"

The book also tells of Hugh's tussles with Orange

walks, matrons from Newton Mearns out for a cheap fare, battles with the inspectors who were just like Blakey from 'On the Buses' and driving buses which weren't well maintained.

Hugh, who never did become a worker priest (!), is also author of *County Donegal Railway Bus Services*, *Seeking the Swilly*, *Rail Ramble Round Ireland 1969* and *Trolleybuses, Glasgow's Silent Service*.

■ *Holiday's Busman* is published by Stenlake at £12.95.

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AGAP begins new countrywide tour

As the dust settles after a successful run at the Edinburgh Fringe, AGAP Theatre embarks upon a national tour with the hit show "Pilgrim of Hope", bringing the message of the Jubilee Year from Glasgow to the Highlands.

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is a gigantic hotch-potch of nearly four thousand shows, transforming everything from halls and bars to storage containers and street corners into performance spaces.

For AGAP, it is an opportunity to bring faith-inspired theatre to the world's largest international arts festival, reaching new audiences and meeting other artists. Following the sell-out success of last year's Fringe show, Gaudi: God's Architect, which earned a laurel from the Fringe Society, AGAP returned with two productions for the Year of Hope.

AGAP has been performing at the Fringe since 2016, when The Margaret Sinclair Story premiered at St Patrick's Church in the Cowgate before audiences of up to 300 people, with Maryfrances Jennow capturing hearts and critical acclaim as the factory girl who could be Scotland's next saint.

BY RONNIE CONVERY

Marking the centenary of the death of the Venerable Margaret, AGAP revived the production with Rachel Callaghan in the role and the response was no less appreciative this year with capacity audiences. "Outstanding performance – captivating from start to finish, excellently performed," said one review on the Fringe website.

Among those in attendance was the grandson of someone who had worked alongside Margaret Sinclair as a french polisher.

Pilgrim of Hope premiered during the final week of the Fringe with a seven night run, following two previews in Glasgow parishes. The solo comedy play, written and performed by Stephen Callaghan, is a contemporary fable that sees everyman character, Scott, embark on a journey in search of Hope.

"Portraying fourteen different characters was a brilliant challenge," said Stephen. "But perhaps even more challenging was the task of writing a play that encapsulates the ideas in Pope Francis's letter for the Jubilee Year in a way that would draw a broad

spectrum of theatre-goers without compromising our values. I went through six drafts!"

The Edinburgh Reporter commented, "This is a funny and thought-provoking show...there is plenty to enjoy for those with other beliefs or none, and AGAP is to be commended for continuing to follow its motto 'Have Faith in the Arts.'"

The performance also received multiple plaudits from audience reviews, such as: "I was really impressed by this show! The actor was outstanding – able to switch between different accents and expressions effortlessly, making each character feel unique and alive. Beyond the great performance, the show carried a meaningful message while still being fun and completely family-friendly. It's rare to find something that's both entertaining and thought-provoking, but this show managed it perfectly. Highly recommended!"

■ **Pilgrim of Hope will now visit parishes and secondary schools across the country. To book tickets and to see a full list of upcoming performances, visit: www.agap.org.uk/pilgrimofhope**



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PILGRIM OF HOPE

A comedy about life, death, air-fryers and one man's search for hope

Written & Performed by Stephen Callaghan

Scott is taking a day off work. A quest begins that will take him through an array of quirky characters and situations as he attempts to answer the question: where does one find hope today? Inspired by the Jubilee Letter of Pope Francis, 'Hope Does Not Disappoint', *Pilgrim of Hope* is an uplifting story of an everyday man who goes in search of hope. Trouble is – where does one find hope today? A funny, poignant fable about life, death, air-fryers and one man's search for hope. A third Fringe solo show from versatile writer-performer Stephen Callaghan (*Pew With a View* 2018, and *Oggie! Oggie! Oggie!* 2023) following the sell-out success of last year's Fringe show, *Gaudi: God's Architect*.

'A superb piece of new writing. This is a dynamic piece that will delight audiences from the start. A hidden gem of this year's fringe'

★★★★★

The Derek Awards
Gaudi: God's Architect
Fringe 2024

'Flawless and energetic... a real treat'

★★★★★

The Mumble Theatre
Oggie! Oggie! Oggie!
Fringe 2023

'The response of the audience lining the pews...is undeniable'

The Scotsman
The Margaret Sinclair Story
Fringe 2016

'Callaghan is a charismatic stage presence, fluent, beautifully expressive and with a wealth of elasticity in his performance'

Tycho

Gaudi: God's Architect
Fringe 2024

'Acting is strong throughout...engrossing'

AllEdinburghTheatre.com
Gaudi: God's Architect
Fringe 2024

'Tackles faith-based themes head-on...with sincerity and relatable passion'

Broadway Baby
Oggie! Oggie! Oggie!
Fringe 2023

National Tour Dates and Venues

Thu 2 Oct @ 19:30 St Bernard's, South Nitshill, Glasgow
Fri 3 Oct @ 19:30 St Helen's, Shawlands, Glasgow
Fri 24 Oct @ 19:30 Holy Family, Mossend, Bellshill
Sun 2 Nov @ 15:00 St Bernadette's, Motherwell
Fri 14 Nov @ 19:30 Sacred Heart, Cumbernauld, Glasgow
Sat 15 Nov @ 19:30 St Mary's, Lochee, Dundee

Sun 16 Nov @ 12:15 St Mary's, Lochee, Dundee
Mon 17 Nov @ 19:30 St Columba's, Culloden
Thu 20 Nov @ 19:30 St Mirin's Cathedral, Paisley
Fri 21 Nov @ 19:30 St Paul's, Ayr
Sat 22 Nov @ 19:30 Star of the Sea, Leith
Sun 23 Nov @ 14:30 St Paul's, Glenrothes

Pupils hear the story of religious callings Vocations Awareness Week

To mark the recent Vocations Awareness Week, Lourdes Secondary School held a Conference on Vocations.

Pupils and staff were joined by Sister Andrea from the Sisters of the Gospel of Life, Patryk Solik, a seminarian for the Archdiocese, currently on a pastoral year in St Ninian's Knightswood, Deacon Kenny McGeachie, the Archdiocesan Director for the Permanent Diaconate, and Fr Paddy Boyle, the Archdiocesan Vocations Director.

During the day, sixth year pupils were able to question

BY BRIAN SWANSON

the panel on all aspects of their vocations. It led to a great discussion around important questions such as forgiving people as a Priest, living your vocation among people with opposing lifestyles as a Religious Sister, choosing to serve God as a Deacon, and the typical day in the life of a Seminarian.

Vocations Director Fr Paddy Boyle said: "It was a great event. The panel was really made to think and help the young people to get a deeper understanding of the joy of their vocations."



For more information on priesthood, contact Fr Boyle: vocations@rcag.org.uk or 01419521108. For more information on the permanent diaconate, contact Deacon Kenny McGeachie – kenny.mcgeachie@rcag.org.uk or 07772392682. For more information on the Sisters of the Gospel of Life, contact gospeloflifesisters@googlemail.com

Power of the Rosary

'THE Power of the Rosary' is the theme of a special evening of prayer and healing planned for the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary (October 7) in Cardonald.

International speaker Joe Livingston (right) will join Parish Priest Fr Joe Mackle for an evening of prayer and reflection. Confessions will be available – 'it's in the confessional that the real miracles take place' according to Joe, who will also pray over and lay hands on anyone in need of spiritual, medical or emotional healing.

The event is scheduled for 6pm at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish and all are welcome to come along.

Joe told *Flourish*: "I have experienced some amazing things at these services ... recently someone went back to confession after 40 years away from the practice of the faith."

Joe, who had a massive conversion experience himself in April 1993 now travels extensively preaching and teaching the Word of God. He has travelled to Lithuania, Zimbabwe, the United States and Germany for healing service and talks.

He will be leading a healing service in England in February and next year, on the Feast of St John Ogilvie, he will lead another healing service in St Helen's in Shawlands.

■ **More information on the work of Joe Livingstone at www.foundationoftruthministries.org.uk**





S I S A O

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Could it be that you are a mystic?

TEACH a course on the renowned mystic John of the Cross. Since this is never a required course for any student, I usually begin the first class by asking each student why he or she is interested in this course.

The answers vary widely. One night however a woman gave this answer: I'm taking this course because I'm a practicing mystic. That raised some eyebrows. Really? A practicing mystic?

Can someone be a practising mystic?

That depends upon how you understand mystical experience. If you equate mystical experience with the extraordinary, with supernatural phenomena (religious visions, religious ecstasies, radically altered states of consciousness, or the miraculous appearance of Jesus, Mary, an angel, or a saint) then you cannot be a practicing mystic.

While such extraordinary phenomena can in fact be mystical experience (and indeed do mark the experience of some classical mystics), normal mystical experience is not characterized by any extraordinary religious phenomena. Indeed, it generally distrusts anything extraordinary and asks that it be discerned with extra scrutiny.

A renowned contemporary



Scribblings of the spirit

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

mystic, British Carmelite Ruth Burrows, defines mystical experience this way. Mystical experience is being touched by God in a way that is beyond what we can articulate, picture, or even consciously feel. It is something we know more than think.

In essence, a God beyond concepts, touches us in a way that cannot be put into concepts; a God beyond language touches us in a way that can never be adequately put into words ...

In her autobiography, *Before the Living God*, Ruth Burrows (who died in 2023) shares the story of how, just as she was finishing her initial education and making plans for university, a mystical experience marked her and radically changed her life.

At that time in her life, she was not particularly serious about her faith, but she was on a retreat with a number of other young women her

age. One of the things she was asked to do on that retreat was to sit in a chapel in silence for an hour several times a day. Those hours of silence wore heavily on her and she dreaded them.

However, one day, during one of those hours, sitting in silence, she had (what she later calls) a mystical experience.

Moment

There were no supernatural visions, no religious ecstasy, no appearances of angels, but only a moment of extraordinarily graced clarity; a moment within which she knew herself clearly for the first time, beyond what she could think, put into concepts, or articulate.

It was a moment where stripped of all pretense, stripped of all ideology, stripped of all false self-images, stripped of all posturing to others, emotionally and morally naked, she just



knew – knew who she was and how she stood before God and others.

Her mystical moment was a moment of complete sincerity, a moment without wax, as the Latin roots of that word suggest (sine-without and cere-wax). Like all mystics, she struggled to put into words something which is largely ineffable, but which branded her soul in a way that radically changed her life.

Given that definition of mysticism, we are all invited to be practising mystics, that is, we are all invited in the silence of our hearts, or perhaps in an experience of being lifted up in soul or crushed in soul, to stand or kneel before God in complete sincerity, without wax, morally naked, stripped of all pretense, stripped of all

that's false, so that in that moment we can know in truth who we are and how we stand before God, others, and our true selves. We need to pray for that clarity and make that an explicit intention in our prayer.

How do we do that? We do that by trying very intentionally in prayer to center ourselves in sincerity and nakedness of soul, by asking God to see through all that's false in us so that we can know how we are known by God.

Dag Hammarskjöld, in his prayer, used to ask God, "allow me in clarity of mind to mirror life and in purity of heart mould it, and to have a conscious self-scrutiny that sets me on a path towards mirroring the greatness of life." To ask that in prayer is to be a practising mystic.

Evangelisation starts with mothers and toddlers

ONE of the highlights of my week is the Monday morning playgroup I attend with my two-year old grandson and my granddaughters aged 18 months and almost three.

To be clear, I'm not super-Gran. Far from it. The two wee girls are firmly in the care of their mother. Tearing round the church hall in pursuit of one toddler is as much as I've got to give. I've learned you need to keep a dose of energy in the bank for your average toddler incident.

Toddlers live by their own rules. Essentially this means no rules or breaking rules that anyone has the temerity to impose on them. Mostly, though, a run-of-the-mill toddler tantrum doesn't amount to much. The wee man is still adjusting to having a baby sister, so he gets a pass.

With the ratio of two adults to three children and, given the two adults are of the Gab for Glasgow variety, we know our limitations. When an antici-



Mary's musings

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

pated appeal was made for new volunteers for snack duty we were ready with our cunning plan.

Keep your head down and don't make eye contact – with anyone. Either that or quickly leave the hall, bewildered toddler in tow, on the pretext of an urgently needed nappy change.

If that fails, just brazen it out. But no, my daughter's conscience got the better of her. I was dealing with a genuine nappy-related incident when the call went out. The pre-rehearsed drill went out the window and she volunteered us.

I'm hard-wired for certain activities, of which kitchen duties rate highly. I can cook, clean and tidy with the best of them. Simultaneously even.

How hard could it be? One to watch the children and one to dish and serve. It's not that we were asked to provide hot sausage rolls and sandwiches of meats of mixed origin. Unwrapping, decanting and tidying up would be all that was required.

I'll be honest, when our turn came round I was a little anxious because the Women's Guild were in next and I'd had a tip-off. Stray kitchen cloths or any manner of toddler detritus wouldn't be appreciated. Fair enough.

Ever mindful of little windpipes I sliced carrots into batons and cut blueberries in half. I tossed industrial quantities of Wotsits into the biggest bowl I could find because, while

you can offer wee ones the finest array of fresh produce, processed carbs full of puffed air will always win the day.

Two hours later and a fair bit of help from the more experienced volunteers, and we were signed up on the rota for regular duty.

It's only in the last year I've been attending playgroups and I've got to hand it to all the churches who participate in playgroup schemes.

The one we attend has been going a long while and is run in a Church of Scotland hall. When I had a wee look at their website I learned that a total of more than 21 million children under 5 have attended church-based toddler groups in the UK.

The C of S facilitate an impressive number of groups and it seems our own parish halls are hosting more and more groups.

In the last group we attended the walls were adorned with evidence of the activities of the Youth

Church and groups such as Scouts and Guides. While the groups are not tied to the church, there is a keen sense of investment in the future through the Christian values that they imbued.

Like our own Children's Liturgy they provide valuable opportunities to embed values, encourage the flourishing of spiritual growth, and support parents as they nurture their children in faith.

In safe spaces, groups are run by committed and caring volunteers. Playdates are organised and friendships are fostered among parents, childminders and grandparents.

This is an active ministry which, in a hostile society, can be a form of soft diplomacy. Perhaps those who are lapsed or have never considered attending Mass might think more warmly of the Church if they encountered it in a social setting. More power to those who are making this happen.

ART OF THE MONTH

Poems, paintings and prayers to Our Lady

BY MGR TOM MONAGHAN

DURING October as we celebrate the Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary, I am reminded of the poem, "Lovely Lady dressed in blue," much loved and popularised by Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen which was written by Mary Dixon Thayer.

Every time I say it, something stirs deep in my heart. With great simplicity it speaks with the innocence of a child, yet carries a depth of faith. The pure trust of a child asking for guidance.

Mary, being the perfect mother and teacher, is the one we turn to when we need to learn how to pray more deeply, just as she herself prayed with unwavering faith during her earthly life.

The poem speaks plainly, like a child speaking to their mother. In an age where many people struggle with stress, uncertainty, and doubt, this prayer provides a moment of peace. It invites us to slow down, step away from complexity, and approach God with trust.

"The Annunciation," painted by African-American artist, Henry Ossawa Tanner in 1898 portrays Mary as a very young girl, humble and approachable, which makes her seem so close to us. He paints her, not wearing a blue mantle, but as a teenage girl with dark hair and Middle Eastern skin tones, dressed in the clothes of a poor person.

Serenity

She sits on her simple bed with its rumpled sheets, in a room with rough plain walls and a cracked, cobblestone floor. She has almost no possessions, with the exception of a lamp and three jugs. She does not even have sandals for her feet.

Mary seems anxious in the presence of the Angel, but not afraid. With her hands folded in her lap in prayer, she gazes at the angel with peace and serenity, listening intently to all that he has to say to her. The Angel Gabriel appears, not as a realistic human being, but as a Bright Light symbolising pure spiritual energy.

The prayer and the painting beautifully capture a childlike intimacy as we speak to Mary as an earthly mother who will always point us toward Our Lord with love and humility.

Both make Mary approachable yet majestic, humble yet radiant.



Henry Ossawa Tanner,
The Annunciation (1898)

Lovely Lady dressed in blue
Teach me how to pray!
God was just your little boy,
Tell me what to say!
Did you lift Him up, sometimes,
Gently on your knee?
Did you sing to Him the way
Mother does to me?
Did you hold His hand at night?
Did you ever try
Telling Him stories of the world?
And, Oh, did He cry?
Do you really think He cares
If I tell Him things
Just, little things that happen? And
Do the Angels' wings
Make a noise? And can He hear
Me if I speak low?
Does He understand me now?
Tell me, for you know.
Lovely Lady dressed in blue
Teach me how to pray!
God was just your little boy,
And you know the way.

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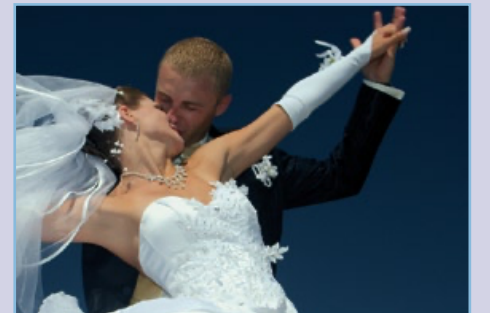


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October's Sunday readings can be seen as an encyclopedia teaching us how to pray



Fr Tom Kilbride

Parish Priest of Christ the King, Glasgow

OCTOBER offers a lot to ponder in prayer. It is traditionally the month of the Rosary and of Mission, as well as marking the feasts of some heroes of prayer: St Francis of Assisi, with his detachment from the world and love of God's Creation, and St Therese of Lisieux with her "Little Way".

Mid-month we celebrate St Teresa of Avila, the great teacher of prayer, for whom it can be both profound contemplation and God "among the pot and pans"! It will be a common thread across these October Sundays too, inviting us to deepen our prayer as an act of trust, of thanksgiving, and of humility as we consider how unworthy we are of God's goodness!

Twenty-Seventh Sunday C

It's hard to know why you would uproot a mulberry tree and plant it in the sea! With their deep roots they are incredibly difficult to dig up and they would have been highly valuable – nice fruit, good shade, leaves for animal feed and rot-resistant wood prized by carpenters (a carpenter's son would certainly have known that!).

It's deliberately dramatic, however: even a little faith can achieve great and sur-

prising things in our lives. Enough that we trust in God! In the mini-parable of the ploughman and his employer, Jesus reminds us that faith is not a question of quantity, nor should we consider ourselves entitled to any reward – that could lead to the attitude of the Pharisee we'll meet in a couple of weeks, being "puffed up" as Habakkuk suggests (First Reading).

Rather, when we act in faith, it should be because it is what faith demands – mercy, forgiveness, justice, the very things we've been hearing about over the past weeks and months. Paul reminds us that living by faith means allowing the Holy Spirit to work through us, whatever our situation, and that can bring dramatic results!

Twenty-Eighth Sunday C

As we begin this week's Gospel, we are reminded that Jesus is on a journey. He's now passing from Galilee into Samaria, potentially a place of tension. However, not only is it a place of healing rather than conflict, but we are also told that at least one of those healed was a Samaritan, a "foreigner".

He is the one who praises God for what has happened. Perhaps the other nine were about to head off to Jeru-

salem to offer a thanksgiving sacrifice as the Law required, but the Samaritan's actions suggest he sees God at work in Jesus himself.

Naaman the Syrian in the First Reading is touched by God's healing and becomes a believer. Jesus had used the story of Naaman as an example of outsiders receiving grace and coming to faith when he spoke in Nazareth, although the people there couldn't see in Jesus what this Samaritan leper does. It is a story about faith overcoming fear, about recognising God at work right in front of us and about giving thanks for it. Maybe this is what it means to "increase our faith" (last week) – recognising and celebrating God's power in our lives and trusting in it.

Twenty-Ninth Sunday C

Today we hear a parable about an unjust judge and a widow persistently demanding her rights.

The healing of the ten lepers last week began with a plea to Jesus: "Master, have mercy on us!" Their appeal is, of course, heard and they are healed. However, we are reminded that the answer to our prayers is God's doing and not simply a response to our demands. We should trust that God always responds in the way that is right for us.

If the lazy, dismissive judge in the parable eventually gives an answer for the sake of some peace and quiet, how much more will God in his love and providence give what we need, Jesus suggests. God is not unconcerned even if things seem to take time. Keep praying



and don't lose heart!

The parable comes after a section in which Jesus has been speaking about his return in glory, so the closing question implies that keeping the faith even in difficulties is an important quality for the disciple who will be found worthy to enter the Kingdom.

Thirtieth Sunday C

Luke talks a lot about prayer throughout his Gospel. He has framed the lepers' cry for mercy as a prayer, leading to thanksgiving. Last week's parable taught us about trust and perseverance in prayer. This week, prayer is linked with humility.

The Pharisee is a caricature of self-righteousness, with his sense of entitlement ("puffed up" was the phrase from Habakkuk a few weeks ago!). He rhymes off his virtues, almost as

though demanding recognition and praise from God (when it should be the other way round!) and he looks down on the other man.

Meanwhile, the tax collector prays with a repentant and humble heart, aware of his sinfulness. He can barely lift his eyes to God, never mind look down on anyone else. He simply asks for God's mercy – and his prayer is heard.

The Pharisee has made an idol of himself; the tax collector knows his need of God and of mercy (like the lepers) and goes home "justified". It is this humble prayer that "pierces the clouds" (First Reading). In a similar way, Paul ends his letter to Timothy giving glory to God who has "stood by"

him in everything.

After all, God already knows us thoroughly, knows our needs, and loves us despite ourselves! Why try to impress him? The best prayer is honest and humble, an expression of trust in God's mercy.



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*

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A month of news, novenas and new challenges

ST Mungo's last month celebrated our annual novena to Our Lady of Sorrows. This novena has, for well over 50 years, been a special time in St Mungo's.

It started off very simply, all those years ago, with just a short reflection on each of the seven sorrows, once a day, at the altar of Our Lady of Sorrows. This took place after the evening mass. The Novena would then close with the celebration of Masses for the feasts of the Exaltation of the Cross and Our Lady of Sorrows.

In later years the novena would have a much bigger feel to it, almost like a parish mission, with two sessions a day, and guest speakers, mostly Passionists, giving lengthy sermons for the nine days. I was a guest preacher myself about 25+ years ago. At some point, a period of



Fr Frank's log

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

adoration of the Blessed Sacrament was added after the weekday evening sessions, culminating with the night prayer of the church.

Now, in recent times, it has returned to a much simpler format again, with the realisation that, what lies at the heart of the novena is really the setting, the atmosphere, the prayerfulness, the quiet, the petitions, and the very beautiful statue of Our Lady of Sorrows being brought from the side altar to take a prominent place

on the sanctuary – Mary drawing near to us in our sorrows, as we draw near to Mary in hers.

All of these elements remain, except that we don't go seeking guest speakers any more as, especially with regard to Passionists, we are too thin on the ground and far too stretched. Now, instead of big sermons, we have simple reflections, and we just do them ourselves, followed by the Novena Prayers. Since it has become simplified, I find myself en-

tering more into it, and I find it an enormously grace-filled experience.

Last June we Passionists held our Provincial Chapter in Larne, which unfortunately I missed because of poor health. Following on from that Chapter there are a number of changes afoot in St Patrick's Province, including St Mungo's.

As a result of my health concerns, the Provincial has asked that I take a step back from responsibilities for now to focus on, hopefully, getting my health sorted out, and then, at an appropriate time, to take a sabbatical for rest and renewal, and, just in case anybody asks, I am definitely not retiring.

For one reason or another, after 50 years in religious life and 42 years of priesthood, I have never had a sabbati-

cal, and so I appreciate the Provincial's genuine concern and compassion, and it is probably something I need, although I never really expected it to happen, given how stretched we are in terms of numbers to sustain our present ministries, and so, I appreciate the sacrifices made by other province members to facilitate this break.

Father Gareth, once he is approved by the archbishop, will become the new parish priest of both St Mungo's and St Roch's. Father Gareth breaks the mould in most things, and no doubt he will break the mould in being a parish priest as well. I have no doubt he will do a great job.

Father Tom Scanlon will come from Crossgar to be the new rector of the Passionist community. Father

John will move on too, and his replacement will be announced in due course. Brother Conor will return to Ireland to prepare for his pending ordination as a deacon.

I expect to be still around for some time, with Father Gareth and Father Tom's blessing, to continue medical treatment, and also to help see through the essential works here in St Mungo's, and the house move for the Passionists from Bishopbriggs to Provanmill. Both of those things are well down the line.

I ask your prayers for God's blessing on these changes and on the two parishes going forward. I'm sure everyone will give Father Gareth and Father Tom their full support, but, as I say, I look forward to being around for a good while yet.

Remembering the Glasgow priest who was inspired by a Spanish saint, ordained by an Austrian cardinal, and who brought Opus Dei's message to Scotland

A GLASGOW boy who found success as a scientist, conversed with a saint, was ordained by a Cardinal and brought Opus Dei to Scotland has died at the ripe old age of 92.

Fr Robert Farrell passed away in Manchester and was brought home to be buried in St Conval's Cemetery Barrhead.

Robert Casimir Farrel was born on 9th June 1933, the youngest of six children born to Francis, a slater's labourer, and Gertrude. He went to St Mungo's Primary School and then St Mungo's Academy, where he developed his lifelong passion for Celtic football club.

Fr Robert enrolled at Glasgow University in 1951 and graduated with a BSc in 1955. In the same year he became an Associate of the Royal College of Science and Technology at what is now the University of Strathclyde. When National Service came round his talents were spotted by the RAF where he became a Flying Officer.

After National Service and further studies in London he was appointed

external examiner for the University of London to Kumasi University in Ghana. His time in Ghana coincided with the Queen's visit in November 1961. He met the Queen with the Duke of Edinburgh, and remembered especially Prince Philip's sense of humour.

He returned to the UK via Israel, and spent Christmas Eve of 1961 in the Holy Land. He went to Midnight Mass in Bethlehem, but was unable to return to his lodgings in Jerusalem afterwards as all the buses had finished. He ended up spending Christmas night in a cave!

Faith

Back in London he found a spiritual home in Opus Dei and joined as a numerary on 15th July 1962. He was present at the last visit of the Founder, St Josemaría Escrivá, to London in the summer of 1962.

For the next 15 years he spent his time combining his work as a lecturer at Chelsea College with apostolic tasks for Opus Dei.

In the autumn of 1977 he entered the Roman College of the Holy Cross to



prepare for the priesthood. He had been pursuing ecclesiastical studies in his spare time before entering the Roman College. This meant that he had already completed the philosophical and theological training undergone by seminarians by the time he moved to Rome, and needed very little time to complete his training.

He was ordained on 15th August 1978 by Cardinal Franz König of Vienna, at the Shrine of our Lady of

TorreCiudad in Spain along with 61 other deacons of Opus Dei. His first public Mass was celebrated on 26th August 1978 at his old parish church of St Philip in Ruchazie, Glasgow.

After ordination, he remained in Spain to complete his doctorate (STD) at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Navarre. His thesis was entitled "The virtue of charity according to Saint Cyprian" and he was awarded his doctorate with the grade *sobresali-*

ente cum laude on 17th June 1980.

Fr Robert returned to Britain in the summer of 1980 and immediately started making visits to Scotland to meet the one member of Opus Dei who was living in Glasgow at the time.

On the eve of St Andrew's Day in 1981 Fr Robert and Paul Hayward (who himself was ordained later) drove up from London to start work in Glasgow and less than a year later set up Dunreath in the west End – the first centre of Opus Dei in Scotland.

He found himself like a fish in water in the dear green place. He ministered for a few years in the West End and also helped out at the Cathedral, especially hearing confessions. Among those he came to know and befriend was Tommy Burns, who told him his life was dominated by the "three Fs" — Faith, Family, and Football — in that order. Fr Robert always had a very high regard for Tommy, and was a strong supporter of starting his cause of canonisation.

From 1987 until 1998 he ministered in London and

then moved to Manchester. He exercised his ministry by saying Mass and hearing confessions in the Centres of Opus Dei, preaching meditations, days of recollection and retreats, and in teaching philosophy and theology.

Direct

He was renowned for his very direct approach in the apostolate, and would immediately ask anyone he met: "Are you a Catholic?" If the answer was no, he would reply "Why not?"

He gave spiritual direction to many people, — lay people, priests, and religious — and always stressed the importance of the sacrament of confession.

Fr Robert's health slowly declined as he got older, but his mind remained clear right to the end. He remained lucid until his last day. He always had his rosary in hand and a copy of Tanquerey's *The Spiritual life: a treatise on ascetical and mystical theology* by his bedside. He very gladly received Holy Communion every day when he was well enough to do so.

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Editorial: Flourish Publications (Scotland) Ltd, 196 Clyde Street, Glasgow G1 4JY · Telephone 0141 226 5898 · email flourish@rcag.org.uk · Charity no SC015900

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

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