

FLOURISH

Official Journal of the Archdiocese of Glasgow

September 2023



The path ahead

A ROADMAP has been produced to set out the next steps in re-organising the Archdiocese into a more effective model of vibrant and evangelising parishes.

Archbishop Nolan launched the 'Looking to the Future' initiative earlier this year and put in place five new 'Deanery Pastoral Councils' to look at the situation in their local areas and offer guidance on the way forward.

This month new, smaller, 'Pastoral Areas' will be created – these will be clusters of parishes which will look at closer collaboration among themselves and opportunities for reaching out in their local area.

Later this autumn, attention will be focused on resources and how they can best be used.

Each deanery will be asked to form a sub-group including one person from each Pastoral Area to examine the distribution of resources –

BY RONNIE CONVERY

priests, buildings, and parishes – across the deanery. This group will be made up of equal numbers of priests and lay people.

Among the issues this body will tackle are:

- **How many parishes are needed to serve the priority task of evangelisation?**
- **How should priests be distributed?**
- **How many buildings are needed to serve the Church's mission locally?**

The results of these discussions are to be submitted by St Andrew's day this year.

In November Fr Stephen Wang, the Rector of the Venerable English College in Rome and founder of the Sycamore.fm programme will address the priests of the Archdiocese, offering new insights on how to encourage people to evangelise.

Sycamore is an informal

course about the Christian faith and its relevance for life today. It gives viewers space to meet other people, share ideas, explore their beliefs, and think about questions that really matter. Each session involves a short film and time for discussion.

Archbishop Nolan said: "It is clear from the first round of consultations of the Deanery Pastoral Councils that people recognise the need for change and the need to become more focused on evangelisation."

MIndset

"What we really need though is a complete change of mindset."

"As Catholics we have been used to keeping our heads down, focusing our efforts on keeping our own flock safe."

"But the Lord is asking us to do more than that. We are to go out to evangelise new territory, new people ...

"That means not just encouraging the lapsed to return, but reaching out to those who have never been to church, who have maybe not thought about the big questions of life, those who are searching ..."

"It means having the courage and the ingenuity to say to our friends and colleagues, when they ask what we are doing at the weekend, 'Well on Saturday we are visiting relatives, and then shopping. I'm going to Mass on Sunday...' Just letting people know that we go to Mass in a natural way is a real form of evangelisation."

"A simple, natural way of reaching out to people to bring them closer to God doesn't need a degree in theology."

"It needs sincerity, a wee bit of courage and an open mind. With these qualities we can become effective and convincing apostles in our own surroundings."

Mass marks Papal knighthoods for Glasgow couple

Picture by Paul McSherry



THE church of St Mark's Rutherglen was packed to capacity earlier this summer when Papal Knighthoods were bestowed on Lord Willie Haughey and his wife Susan for their outstanding service to the Church and wider community.

Bishop Joseph Toal was on hand to present the honours on behalf of the Holy Father while family and friends of the couple offered a spon-

aneous round of applause as the insignia were handed over.

Speaking after the Mass, Lord Haughey thanked parishioners, clergy, friends and family for their support over the years and had a special word of welcome to those who had come to the Mass from outwith the Catholic tradition.

Lord Haughey told *Flourish*: "I was amazed and

humbled to receive a call to say that the Holy Father had granted Susan and me Papal knighthoods. I have picked up a few honours over the years but this is very special to me and I have never made a secret of the fact that my faith is important to me."

The couple established the City Charitable Trust in 2002 and it has donated over £20m to worthwhile causes.

SCIAF challenges UK government to act speedily on world hunger

THE Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund is calling on the UK government to change its policies, as millions of people around the world continue to face the grim reality of famine.

And SCIAF wants Glasgow parishioners to take the lead in putting pressure on Rishi Sunak's government by signing a letter with three simple asks.

Ben Wilson, SCIAF's Head of Advocacy said: "Hunger is on the rise; a worldwide food crisis is spiralling quickly out of control. Across the world, and here in Scotland, millions of our sisters and brothers are facing hunger. This has to stop.

"We have launched a campaign focused on fixing the food system – we urgently need our political leaders to take their place in the global village, step up to the plate and deliver justice for our sisters and brothers across the world. There is enough food on earth to go round – it's just the system that's broken."

SCIAF's letter calls for:

- New and additional cash – Climate change has caused the worst drought in living memory for people in East Africa, destroying crops and livestock. Money is urgently needed to supply

food aid there.

- A critical change in policy – In 2020, the UK government scrapped their legal requirement to spend at least 0.7% of GDP on overseas aid. The devastating cuts mean the UK has given itself less room to help and lives are being lost. The decision to cut overseas aid must be reversed.

- The UK to promote sustainable forms of agriculture across the world and invest in systems that work for people and planet, not just profit.

Ben added: "It's wrong that while so many people across the world go hungry, others have too much food. It's a gross injustice. We must do better as one human family to make sure everyone, everywhere has the right to food. Governments like ours have to play their role in helping those in need here at home and all over the world.

"We need people to demand action on global hunger from Rishi Sunak and the UK government. It's time to serve up change."

■ **To add your name to SCIAF's letter to Prime Minister Rishi Sunak – just visit sciaf.org.uk/food-action**

All roads lead to Rome for Geraldine

A PARISHIONER of St Catherine Labouré, Balornock, is on her way to Rome to raise money for two charities close to her heart ... and she's doing it the hard way.

Not only is Geraldine McFaul, 54, undertaking the entire journey on foot but is doing so while pulling a trailer containing everything she needs for her long distance walk while raising money for Dementia UK and Mary's Meals.

Relying on the kindness of strangers she began her 1800 mile 'Home to Rome' trip in early May and is confident of reaching her final destination in late October.

The freelance risk management consultant, who is currently at the halfway point near Lake Geneva, told *Flourish*: "I have had no end of guardian angels appear just at the moments I needed help – whether I need directions, a camping spot, a meal or help over a fence or gate with my trailer! I have been 'kidnapped with kindness'.

Geraldine said: "People have offered me food, given me a bed for the night – I've slept in a Benedictine monastery, on church floors and on board a luxury barge.

"This journey is proof, if needed, that good people are around and more than willing to help."

She added: "I came up with the idea of walking to Rome as a random thought about six or seven years ago. I have walked long distances before but never more than

BY BRIAN SWANSON 300 miles."

These walks included Cardiff to London, a circuit of all seven of Scotland's cities, as well as through the West Bank in Palestine and in Jordan.

"I made a rule to myself that I would not carry a backpack – always too heavy – so I am travelling to Rome pulling a trailer. This means I need to stick with roads, cycle paths and pavements rather than footpaths and fields."

"I am unsure of my specific finishing date but I think it'll

be the end of October. After Lake Geneva I have the Alps to deal with! Hopefully it's downhill all the way after that."

Canon Anthony Gallagher, Parish Priest at St Catherine Labouré, said: "Geraldine is a very determined lady and I know she will be focused on completing her journey and raising money for her two charities. I'm sure the whole parish wishes her well."

■ **To find out how to donate via JustGiving look up Geraldine McFaul in your browser.**

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Geraldine at Reims Cathedral



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Deacon Elvis is ready to serve

THE newest permanent deacon in the Archdiocese, Elvis Arrey Etta, has been welcomed into his new role at a joyous Mass of Ordination in St Lucy's Cumbernauld with Archbishop Nolan as the main celebrant.

In front of a packed congregation including many families of African and Caribbean heritage, who came from different parts of Scotland to support the new deacon, the Archbishop's opening prayer set the scene for Elvis' ministry – to serve not to be served, to be effective in action, gentle in ministry and constant in prayer.

Disciple

In his homily, Archbishop Nolan said: "I ask you to recognise Elvis as a disciple of Jesus by the way he goes about these duties, serving others as Jesus did – doing the will of God generously, serving in love and joy ... not only listening to God's word but teaching it, expressing in action what he proclaims, and bringing the people of God to life by the Holy Spirit."

Father John Campbell, Parish Priest of Sacred Heart and St Lucy's said: "Deacon Elvis is the third permanent deacon to be ordained from our parish family recently



BY **BRIAN SWANSON**

PICTURE BY **PAUL MCSHERRY**

and we are praying that a fourth will be ordained next year'.

Deacon Kenny McGeachie who Archbishop Nolan recently appointed as Archdiocesan Director for the Permanent Diaconate, and who vested Deacon Elvis at his ordination, said: "It was a wonderfully solemn and joyous parish occasion that shone a light on the ministry of deacon and gave great cause for celebration.

"The Archdiocese of Glasgow needs more vocations and the permanent diaconate, especially for married men, is a truly wonderful and fulfilling vocation.

"We are hoping that more men come forward who sense that God may be calling them to becoming dea-

cons themselves."

Deacon Elvis, who converted from the Presbyterian faith 13 years ago, said: "I look forward to bringing the message of hope and understanding to as many people – Catholics and non-Catholics – as possible and help bring people to a greater understanding of the Catholic faith.

"I know that balancing family life, working full time and ministry will be challenging. I know there will be sacrifices to make for Christ and His Church. But I trust and Pray to God for the grace to serve Him in whatever capacity. The hard work has only just begun. Please continue to pray for me and my family."

■ **For more details on the diaconate programme contact Deacon Kenny on Kenneth.McGeachie@rcag.org.uk**

Friends cross city to evangelise

As enthusiasm grows in response to Archbishop Nolan's heartfelt plea to make evangelisation a priority throughout the Archdiocese, *Flourish* can reveal a remarkable story of faith being shared by two close friends.

For the past 13 years, quietly and without fuss, Bill Whiland, 70, and Tony Buesnel, 76, parishioners of St Ninian's Knightswood, have been delivering what they describe as a 'very simple but powerful' evangelisation project which they believe could act as a stimulus to others.

They decided to make their project public after reading *Flourish* stories about the Archbishop's vision as well as being inspired by the Holy Father's practical advice to keep evangelisation simple.

Bill said: "Our project involves three elements – The Cross, pilgrimage, and a first Saturday devotion.

"After early Mass, on every first Saturday, Tony and I set out on our pilgrim journey from our own parish to St Mungo's Church, Townhead where we pray at the beautiful statue of our Lady of Sorrows."

And as they walk, they

BY **BRIAN SWANSON**

carry with them a number of small olive wood Holding Crosses, sometimes called Comfort Crosses, carved by a Christian community in Bethlehem.

Unlike conventional crosses they are small with rounded corners and designed to fit in the palm of the hand.

Tony added: "We walk by different routes to St Mungo's and inevitably we meet people along the way, complete strangers, and if the spirit moves us to do so we would offer them a Holding Cross.

"We must have given away hundreds of crosses, and not just on our pilgrim journeys.

"We carry one or two wherever we go. In various ways the crosses have gone all over the world, to Canada, Germany, Russia, and other places. We were even requested to send some to a woman's prayer group in a small village in Malawi."

Bill said: "The simplicity is that the Cross carries its own powerful message ...I cannot tell you what happens to the people or the crosses once we give them away.



Bill (left) and Tony with their PP Fr Paul Milarvie
Picture by Paul McSherry

"But the few reports we do have tell of their power and importance to those who receive them. For example, in the last few weeks, we heard of a lady struggling with cancer, whose tears blessed the cross when she received it. Now she would not be without it.

"I know this power of the Holding Cross from my own direct experience. My wife Edith died at home after suffering a terminal illness. The cross offered comfort and strength to all of us through that whole terrible ordeal.

"She was holding her cross when she died.

"Some years later Tony had

the same experience when his wife was admitted to St Margaret's Hospice.

"The Holding Cross provides a very tangible and practical connection to Our Lord and Saviour, not only in times of crisis but as an everyday reminder of who we are and what we believe.

"I am convinced there is much more that can be done with this kind of evangelisation effort – it is not in anyway about us but I believe that Tony and I are being guided every step of the way so we would strongly encourage others to think about what they can do to spread the Good News."

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Net student Josh will spend a year spreading the word in schools and parishes in Scotland

A TEENAGE parishioner from St Peter's Partick has become the first Scot to be trained to work with NET Scotland – a decade after the American-based international missionary team for young Catholics first arrived in Glasgow.

In that time several young Scots became inspired to join NET and spend a year as missionaries in America but Josh Lal, 19, is the first Scot to join the National Evangelisation Team (NET) who will carry out his ministry in schools and parishes in the UK.

His appointment was hailed by Father Jim Duggan, NET chaplain in Scotland, and parish priest of St Charles, Paisley, as a mark of how successful the programme has become.

He said: "We are now recruiting from home so this is news definitely worth celebrating.

"Hopefully, Josh will be the first of many Scottish young people who will give a year of their lives to this great ministry here in Scotland.

"Jesus said that the harvest is rich. We know that to be true in our area of ministry and we are certainly praying

for the Lord to send more labourers, more young people to us, who desire to grow in their faith and to share the joy and hope of faith with others."

Josh, a student at Napier University who has taken a year out to work with NET, has begun training at the organisation's headquarters in St Paul, Minnesota.

But hours before his flight to America he delivered a heartfelt speech to fellow parishioners telling how he rediscovered his lost faith when he encountered NET.

He said: "I was close to losing my faith in God because I had gone down a really bad path.

"Back when I started high school I got into a with a bad crowd of people. I saw how they didn't care about God and all they cared about was other stuff like video games, money and all the other horrible stuff to distract you from God.

"I thought this was the right way to live, that this was heaven, so I shut God off. Going to church was a chore.

"Due to shutting God out I wasn't living a healthy life and I was doing stuff I re-



gret doing – I lost focus and I was constantly stressed.

"I never realised how horrible my life was until I met NET. I remember them coming to my school full of happiness and joy, which made me really jealous and I really wished I could feel whatever they felt.

"One day we went to Eucharistic adoration and I remember NET saying that they will be bringing out Jesus now. I got scared as to what Jesus would think of me!

"And I remember just seeing the Eucharist and everyone's eyes were shut so I did the same and started to pray from my heart, and let

me tell you this was something I had never felt before – it truly was God's presence.

"I felt His love, I felt His arms opened for me and letting me in."

"NET recognises the fact that 85 percent of young Catholics will have left the faith by the age of 17 so what NET did for me I also want to do the same for all the teens that may or may not be going through what I went through in high school and show them God's love."

Monsignor Paul Murray, parish priest at St Peter's said: "We are really proud of Josh as our first home grown

member of NET Scotland.

"In the past 10 years it has grown amazingly and the statistics of what it has achieved are impressive."

The parish is also following the Archbishop's evangelisation agenda which includes making the best use of church buildings.

Monsignor Murray said: "Last year we used the extra space in the presbytery to accommodate five women from last year's NET team and this year we will be hosting six so I am really pleased that we can make such good use of space in church houses that are really too big nowadays for our own use."

AGAP's artistic evangelisation

SETTING OUT on a national tour with a one-man show is daunting enough without offering to meet audiences in face-to-face conversation after each show.

"Oggie! Oggie! Oggie!", a solo show retelling the Confessions of Saint Augustine, was born out of necessity; circumstances brought about by Covid, meant that it wasn't easy to gather actors to rehearse.

As such, I set out to perform a show that I had written myself, offering a chance for people to reconnect with AGAP after the Pandemic or to discover it for the first time. I wanted this production to achieve something new, in terms of outreach.

So far, "Oggie!" has had twelve public performances across five Scottish dioceses, from Glasgow to the Highlands, reaching new audiences and eliciting some inspiring responses. Soon, after a five-show run at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, there will be performances in Glasgow secondary schools in the autumn, and possible further touring. Enquiries about performances have come from as far as Adelaide, Australia as well as throughout other parts of the UK.

Among these invitations is a strong interest in the play reaching university students, prisoners, young offenders and those in drug or alcohol rehabilitation. Such is the appeal of Saint Augustine's raw account of his journey to God from a life of hedonism and intellectual grappling.

This appeal is far from



BY **STEPHEN CALLAGHAN**

limited to Catholic audiences. "Oggie!" has attracted significant numbers from other Christian denominations, including Episcopalian and Presbyterian church-goers, as well as non-church-goers, with invitations to bring the play to these other churches as well.

Whilst it has been a privilege to play Augustine up and down the country, I feel even more privileged to have heard the testimonies of so many people after each performance. People young and old have had the courage to share their stories with me, inspired by this updated 4th Century tale of conversion.

Sometimes these conversations happen publicly during the Q & A after the show, but often they take place privately, in stolen moments as we are clearing up at the end, with people in tears as they relate to the story that they have just heard. Sometimes, people are challenged by the story or have questions about their faith or issues with the Church, but the play initiates a dialogue.



The NET story

THE first NET team came to Scotland in June 2013, during the Year of Faith, when a joint mission team from NET USA & NET Ireland worked for a month giving day retreats to senior pupils in the High Schools in the Diocese of Paisley.

From that autumn, a team of five young people from NET Ireland worked during the school year in St. Joseph's Parish, Clarkston. At the same time, a second team from NET Ireland worked in the Archdiocese of Glasgow based in Clydebank.

Father Jim Duggan, NET chaplain, who was instrumental in encouraging NET to come to Scotland, said: "Over the course of the past 10 years we have had 137 missionaries who have worked in 43 Schools with over 50,000 youth.

"In the past school year our team led 88 school retreats across 27 schools for 4308 young people.

"We also had four week Chaplaincy Support Team blocks in nine High Schools during which the team worked with a further 5742 young people. This is the first year in which we engaged with over 10,000 young people in a ministry year.

"We would love to train more teams of young people to be missionaries here in Scotland. We are also aware of the impact of a mission year in the life of each of our missionaries: in their faith, in their relationship with Jesus, in life skills and leadership.

"A mission year with NET is transformative. In the USA, Canada, Australia, Ireland, Uganda and here, former NET missionaries are becoming Priests, Religious, Teachers, Youth Workers, faith-filled parents and engaged parishioners.

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

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Vatican cyclists bring Pope's concern for vulnerable to the 'dear green place'

THE Pope's cyclists received a rousing Glasgow welcome when they visited the Dear Green Place last month to take part in the World Cycling Championships.

And even if gold medal glory eluded them, the Vatican team brought the closeness and message of Pope Francis to an event that made headlines round the globe.

The Vatican's main rider in the showpiece road race which ended in the city centre was Dutchman Rien Schuurhuis – the husband of the Australian Ambassador to the Holy See. He was allowed to start first and was even in the top group for the first part of the long ride.

The aim and purpose of Vatican participation in the world championships is the promotion of athletic values. Rien said: "We have a different objective from the others involved ... We go to promote, and not just in words, important values such as brotherhood and inclusion through cycling."

The team put the Pope's message of encounter and engagement into action by taking time out for a visit to the Ozanam Centre in Glasgow. There they learned of the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society in the Arch-

diocese, and the Centre's programme of offering clothing to those in need.

Former Archdiocesan President Bernice Brady welcomed the athletes who pronounced themselves 'moved' and 'encouraged' by the work that is carried out by volunteers throughout the year.

The Glasgow project gave them a small plaque of Our Lady of the Wayside to present to Pope Francis to assure him that his message of 'going to the peripheries' was being heard and put into practice in Scotland while the cyclists left a Vatican cycling jersey to the Project in memory of their visit.

Sure enough, a few days later the team presented the plaque to the Holy Father at an audience in Rome!

The Vatican visitors also attended Mass in the Cathedral after a stop off to visit the Italian Cloister Garden and admire the monument there.

■ The Athletica Vaticana team was supported by Arnold Clark's hire division which offered a van and a vehicle for their stay. The Archdiocese is deeply grateful to the company for their assistance.



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Reaching out to the homeless under patronage of Mary

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People can find themselves homeless or vulnerable for so many reasons.

As Catholics, we can all do something to help those

most in need.

We're now looking for a home of our own – a property (donated or rent-free) to use as a drop-in centre, for lunches, dinners, and for our weekly prayer meetings. We also need volunteers and donations.

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THE worldwide Synod – one of the most important gatherings since Vatican II – will take place in Rome in October.

Scotland will be represented by Bishop Brian McGee of Argyll and the Isles.

Bishop Brian asked each diocese to reflect on the synod's working document and the Archdiocese of Glasgow has now done so.

Fr John Campbell and a team of volunteers have summarised the views of individual and parishes. The summary notes that on the whole they were very pleased with the direction the Church is taking in the synodal process.

"The synodal process allowed people to speak of difficult areas of Church life, teaching and moral uncertainty. It did not brush problems under the carpet.



It was seen as refreshing to experience such honesty in our church".

However respondents noted that listening and discerning is a gift and a challenge, and many are not ready for it. It was noted that for some, listening in front of the parish priest may be possible but speaking may not be as welcome!

When considering what kind of Church could emerge from the Synod process it was pointed out that many Catholics have walked away

as they do not experience the church as loving as God loves.

The summary states: "A listening church knows it has to learn, to ask forgiveness for not listening, for the lack of trust and credibility we have brought upon ourselves. Listening is the way forward. Other communities can help us to learn. (Good Friday Agreement and South Africa's emergence from Apartheid.)

"The radical nature of a welcoming and inclusive church is very attractive. There is joy at this mood change in the church. But we must not be afraid to speak the truth in love and call everyone to walk the road of repentance and perfection. We must walk together beyond our differences".

It was noted that many people have not yet 'bought

in' to the synod process: "As we welcome this synodal method, we know it has not engaged the whole people of God, we must guard against a small elite walking to far ahead of others. This could be another form of clericalism. The youngest voice, the marginalised voice, the uncomfortable but prophetic voice must also be heard".

Many of those who responded alluded to the need for adult formation and education not just in the synodal way but in adult faith – we need to understand the faith we are being called to proclaim, they said.

"From prayer and understanding symphony needs to occur. This is the biggest challenge of the synodal way, convincing sceptics that it is not going to be a parliament where the loudest voices win".

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Pope plans new teaching document

POPE Francis is preparing a new major teaching document to insist on the need to take better care of the planet.

Speaking off-the-cuff to a delegation of lawyers from member countries of the Council of Europe on Pope Francis said he was writing a second part of his *Laudato si'* encyclical to update it on "current issues".

The Pope said: "We must never forget that the young-

er generations have the right to receive a beautiful and livable world from us, and that this implies that we have a grave responsibility towards creation which we have received from the generous hands of God."

Climate

The new updated version of *Laudato si'* will focus in particular on the most recent extreme weather events and catastrophes af-



Pope Francis' prayer for creation

Powerful God,

You hold us and everything you have made in your loving care.

You are in the whole universe and in every tiny creature.

Pour out on us, God, the power of your love.

And teach us to care for life and for beauty.

Fill us with peace, so that we do not harm others,

but love them all like sisters and brothers.

God, we know that people who are poor are very special to you

and you want us to love them too, so they are not forgotten.

We ask you to change us so that we protect your world, not destroy it.

Change the hearts of people who only care about themselves and money,

instead of caring about people and the Earth.

Show us how even small things matter,

help us see that we are all connected to each other and to the earth.

We thank you God for being with us each day,

fill us up with wonder and light,

and help us to bring peace to our beautiful world.

Amen.

fecting people across five continents.

Laudato si' was Pope Francis' second encyclical letter. It was published on 18 June 2015. The document on the "care of the common home" draws its title from the start of St Francis' Canticle of Creatures and opens with these words:

"Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. 'Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs'".

Shortly after its publication, the Pope sought to clarify the meaning of this encyclical: "This culture of care for the environment is not simply a 'green' – I say it in the true sense of the word – attitude, it's much more than that. Taking care of the environment means having an attitude of human ecology.

"We cannot say that mankind is here and Creation, the environment, is there. Ecology is total ... For this reason, in response to a question I was asked I said: 'No, it's not a 'green' encyclical, it's a social encyclical'. For in society, in the social life of mankind, we cannot forget to take care of the environment."

And he heavily criticised climate change deniers: "Many efforts to seek concrete solutions to the environmental crisis have proved ineffective, not only because of powerful opposition but also because of a more general lack of interest.

"Obstructionist attitudes, even on the part of believers, can range from denial of the problem to indifference, nonchalant resignation or blind confidence in technical solutions. We require a new and universal solidarity. All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents."



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Special guest for Glasgow priest's Peru anniversary

A GLASGOW priest marking his 40th anniversary of ordination got a happy surprise when he heard that the Archbishop would join him for the celebrations.

What makes this story different is that Fr Michael Sharkey is serving in a parish in Lima, Peru, almost 7000 miles away from Glasgow!

Encourage

Archbishop Nolan made the trip to visit and encourage the priest, who works in some of the poorest areas on the periphery of the Latin American capital, where he has responsibility for several communities in poverty-stricken shanty towns.

Communities

Fr Sharkey, a native of Christ the King parish in King's Park, was ordained by Bishop Renfrew back in 1983 and after initial appointments on the southside of Glasgow he spent much of



BY **RONNIE CONVERY**

his ministry in the forces, eventually retiring from service as a Royal Navy chaplain.

After a life on the ocean wave he volunteered to work with the St James Missionary Society and took on re-

sponsibility for several communities in Lima.

Archbishop Nolan said: "I was able to visit Fr Sharkey for a week to mark his 40th anniversary of ordination. He seems very happy in his ministry there, living in very vibrant and happy communities even though they lack

many of the basics of what we could consider normal life.

"He has had to get to grips with Spanish quite quickly but he is understood by the people and very popular with his parishioners who wanted to make sure his anniversary was marked with a big celebration."



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Food, friendship and faith

Picture by Paul McSherry



If you want to make friends, then inviting them to gather for food is a tried and trusted method.

That was the thinking behind an enjoyable evangelisation effort by parishioners at St Joseph's in Helensburgh as they held an 'international barbecue' last month.

The event was preceded by hand delivered invitations to those who had become less regular in their attendance at Sunday Mass, and a special welcome was extended to the various foreign communities living in the area.

Mgr John Hughes, Parish Priest at St Joseph's, said: "The nationalities who contributed traditional fare

included Filipino families, Italy was represented by Filippo Madonia (formerly of the Mira Mare restaurant) who provided enough Italian food to supply a small army – naturally, all consumed, while a Spanish/Scottish family provided tortilla and paella.

"The youngest group contributing was a Vietnamese family and the oldest contributor was an Austrian lady who made a tray of *Punschkrapfen*. Our exuberant Nigerian family also hosted a table; the children 'infectiously' cheerful and out-going! Our Irish parishioners were represented by traditional soda bread (and

Irish butter!)

"England and Scotland were also very much in evidence, mainly in the confectionery department, not to mention the actual barbecue fare!

"We also have Polish families, and a group of young Indian post-grad students (who did not have the facilities to be able to provide Indian food, but make a very cheerful, youthful presence at Mass).

Finally, the newest arrivals – a young French family from Brittany who were delighted with the warm welcome shown to them – they were among the last to leave the event!"



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Special days for Glasgow priests

PARISHIONERS of St Dominic's Bishopbriggs bade a fond farewell to Father Nicholas Monaghan, their parish priest for 13 years, as he left to take up a new role as a member of the formation team at the Pontifical College Josephinum, Seminary in Columbus, Ohio.

His farewell Mass in a packed church was testament to his relationship with St Dominic's which dates back to 1995 when he was on his first pastoral placement as a student from Rome.

After his ordination in 2000 and serving his apprenticeship in Our Lady and St Helen's in Condorrat, he was appointed as curate to St Dominic's by Archbishop Conti in 2005 and became parish priest five years later.

Father Monaghan was joined in the sanctuary by several priests who had played a part in his ministry over the years including Fr Gerard Byrne PP at St Brigid's Toryglen, Fr Scott Deeley PP at St Patrick's Kilsyth who were both altar servers alongside Father Monaghan in their youth at St Mary's Duntocher.



Father Monaghan said to parishioners: "I would like to thank all those who organised the Mass and reception for my last Mass in Bishopbriggs, a great and memorable celebration. I would also like to thank all those who have given cards, gifts and good wishes and most of all your prayers for me as I depart the parish.

"I will never forget my time spent at St Dominic's, with gratitude for your welcome and support over the years. I ask that you continue to remember me in prayer as I will all of you. Our Lady of Grace, pray for us. St Dominic, pray for us."

And he concluded his

homily with this quotation from St Ambrose: "Christ is everything for us. If you are fearing the darkness, he is the light. If you crave food, he is your banquet. Taste then and see that the Lord is good."

Father Monaghan, who has a specialist degree in the theology of marriage and family from the John Paul Institute in Rome, received special permission from Archbishop Nolan to take up his new post which will be initially for two years.

Father Chiedozie Ezeribe, who formerly assisted at St Andrew's Cathedral, has succeeded Father Monaghan as parish priest at St Dominic's.

Fr Nicholas to take on new US role in memorable month for Glasgow clergy

Words by Brian Swanson · Pictures by Paul McSherry

Fr John is on the move



AFTER what he described as 18 'happy and contented' years at St Aloysius, Springburn, Father John McGrath is settling into his new role as parish priest at St Joseph's Cumbernauld.

He succeeds Canon Harry McKay who has retired making him one of the few priests in the Archdiocese to have spent more than 30 years faithfully serving the same parish.

Fr McGrath said: "These are big boots to fill but I know that I am moving from one vibrant welcoming parish to another.

Welcoming

"I want to thank everyone at St Aloysius who make it the welcoming parish it is and for the farewell gifts they gave me – it was quite overwhelming really and I will remember them always in my prayers."

He added: "Many of the parishioners here had families whose parents moved from Springburn to Cumbernauld so I'm finding a lot of connections with my former parish already and I couldn't have had a warmer welcome."



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Fr Pat's 50 golden years

FATHER Pat Currie, parish priest of St Joseph's Milngavie and one of the few priests in the Archdiocese to have studied at St Peter's Seminary, Cardross, has celebrated his Golden Jubilee.

He was ordained by Archbishop Scanlan on June 29, 1973, the feast of St Peter and Paul, in the chapel at Cardross and has spent the last 11 years at St Joseph's and was honoured with a framed blessing from Pope Francis to mark the occasion of his anniversary.

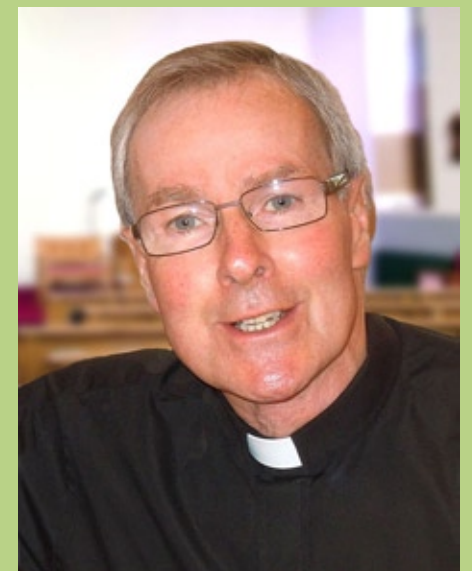
Brought up in Dumbarton as one of one of a family of 14 who regularly worshipped in the town's St Michael's Church, Father Currie spent six years studying at St Peter's and after his ordination his first appointment was assistant priest at St Mary Immaculate, Pollokshaws.

Speaking of his time in formation at St Peter's, Father Currie said: "There were some criticisms that the design was all wrong but I must say the six years I spent there were very happy indeed."

Over the years he served as an assistant priest at a number of parishes including St Catherine Labouré, Balornock, Christ the King, Kings Park, Immaculate Conception, Maryhill and St Conval, Pollok.

His first appointment as parish priest was at Holy Cross, Croy.

He said: "Looking back I must say I have had a very happy life as a priest and the one thing that sticks out for me is that



in every parish I have served – how welcome everybody made me from the first day and I'll always be grateful for that."

St Peter's Seminary, regarded at the time as the 'finest modern building in Scotland', was commissioned by the Archdiocese in 1958 and completed in 1966, but closed just 14 years later. Kilmahew Education Trust are now the new legal owners.

New start for Scots College students

IT will be all change for Scots students for the priesthood this month when they return to Rome to continue their studies.

For the home of the Scots College in Rome has moved from its site on the north of the Eternal City on the Via Cassia to a temporary base in the Beda College (the seminary for late vocations from the English speaking world) nearer the city centre.

For Glasgow student Patryk Solik, it will be just the latest in a series of changes of address. Born into a Catholic family in Silesia in Poland, where faith played a big part in everyday life, he had an early notion of becoming a priest, but as he entered his teenage years, while his commitment to his faith never wavered, his desire to enter the priesthood faded somewhat.

Instead, he had his sights set on becoming an aeronautical engineer and so headed to Scotland to begin his studies at Glasgow University. However it was at university that the seeds of his vocation started to sprout.

He said: "During my time at university, I had chances to lead various projects and help some friends or other

students with their studies or with other life situations. After reflecting you sometimes get this feeling that it wasn't only me doing this good work, but it was the Holy Spirit working in me and you want to be more open to this work and do it all the time.

"Living in student halls was a great experience, because it offered me the chance to help students with all possible sorts of problems – some trivial like fixing a fuse in someone's kitchen and some more serious like helping someone who felt homesick or broken-hearted."

Reflecting on his choice to offer himself for the priesthood Patryk says: "I am just responding to the call. It shows that God has a plan and I can work within the plan. I also have the freedom to tell God that I do not like the plan. What I cannot do is to tell Him what His plan should be. This teaches me humility and the realisation that I am not doing things for myself.

"It is crucial to be open to change," Patryk said. "If someone is close-minded it will be difficult for God to act and mould them into a priest but if someone is open to change, then all other

traits can be fixed. God leads me, pushes me to do new things, to change me and to teach me.

"In the secular world, people are lost and crying out for God, even if they refuse to admit it. Being willing to respond to that cry is a major part of my vocation."

Returning to Rome to study will be a privilege for the seminarian from Poland with Glasgow ambitions.

"The biggest positive about seminary life is the closeness to God," he said. "The spiritual opportunities provided such as daily Mass, communal prayer of the Divine Office, retreats and so on are a great tool in developing a good spiritual life. Having access to Pontifical universities, but also all the basilicas, churches and historic places is excellent too. Rome is just a place of extraordinary multi-dimensional formation.

"I catch myself sometimes taking for granted that I can just show up for morning Mass at St Peter's Basilica as if it was a local parish or just popping in for confession in Santa Maria Maggiore, a church that has so much history relating to the



Popes and art for instance. And there are many other churches where I just go to spend some time before the classes and, as well as meeting with Jesus there, I can see the artworks of Caravaggio, Bernini, Michelangelo and many more!

"Seminary life has helped me greatly," he added. "I am a naturally quiet introvert, but now, through grace, I find it much easier to speak to people, spend time with them and simply be there for them."

The seminarian is in no doubt that being a priest today means being first and foremost a missionary. He says: "To be able to 'sell' holiness to the modern world I need to live it and strive for it myself, and holiness is the primary and ultimate goal. Mission can be undertaken in many ways, it's not specific, but in my case if I follow the Lord, He will show me the way.

"Getting back to holiness though, that should be eve-

rybody's mission and to be a witness to that holiness. These days we often speak too much and do too little. It is not enough to just talk about Jesus, we need to give an example. It was the example of holy priests that attracted me to priesthood and it will be the example of holy Catholics, lay and religious, that will bring people back to God and to the Church.

"The work of Missio Scotland, for example, helps us to become more sensitive to the needs of different Churches and different people. Helping the Church in other parts of the world by prayer, fasting and almsgiving makes us more open to be missionaries at home."

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**Friday 6th October - 7pm – Saturday 7th October 2023 6am
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Confession will be available after Mass

8pm – Sung Night prayer with Sisters

10pm – Rosary – Sorrowful Mysteries, Litany of the Sacred Heart, Litany of St Joseph

11.30 Consecration to the Sacred Heart, Act of Reparation to the Sacred Heart

12.30 – Stations of the Cross

2am – Rosary – Joyful Mysteries, Litany of Loretto, Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Act of Reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Fatima Prayers, 15 minutes meditating on the Mysteries of the Rosary

3.30am – Rosary – Glorious Mysteries, Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus

5.30am – Nocturns

6am Closing Mass

Please note all are welcome until midnight.

**After midnight the Vigil is for men only this is due to the Benedictine Rule on all night Adoration. (Women only Vigil on the 3rd Friday)
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For further information please contact Liam Coyle – email: liam.coyle1@ntlworld.com phone: 07806517383

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WORLD YOUTH DAY LISBON

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BY MAIRI-CLAIRE MCGEADY

AFTER a year of preparation and getting to know pilgrims, it is surreal to think World Youth Day 2023 is over. I suppose this is because, in part, it is not finished...

The event, the gathering of 1.5 million young Catholics from around the world with Pope Francis, has concluded. However, World Youth Day is really a new beginning and a fresh start in the lives of so many pilgrims, not least those who travelled with our Archdiocesan group.

Our World Youth Day experience was one of deep encounter, great hilarity, and a genuine fostering of friendship amongst the young pilgrims.

"I made some incredible new friends who inspired me to realise my own strength and value as a person, deepen my personal relationship with Christ and seek out opportunities to share my faith with others. World Youth Day showed me faith is not a journey you have to walk alone."

Chloe, 26, Glasgow

Ahead of the trip, there was a growing excitement in the group for the pilgrimage to the National Stadium, where Celtic became Champions of Europe in 1967.

However, whilst this was enjoyed by some, the pilgrimage to Fatima really stole the show, with our 5K prayer walk to the Shrine being noted as a highlight for many. Upon reflection, it is not too surprising given that the experience would have been, for most, a first.

It is doubtful that more than a handful of the group would have marched in prayer behind a Saltire flying proudly ahead of them, armed with their Rosary beads, encountering other 'armies' of youth from across the world before happening upon a Marian Shrine filled with thousands of pilgrims and a sea of flags for Holy Mass.

Picture: Imago Mundi



"I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to Fatima as it was the first time I had been, and it was incredible to walk the path with the fellow pilgrims in my group, while praying, then spending the day with other pilgrims from all over the world, talking to them and experiencing Mass with them."

Glasgow Pilgrim

This journey, although brief, was a summary of our 10 days and we assumed that formation for the rest of our time in Lisbon.

We walked together, flag at the front, as we made our way to and from Parque Eduardo VII to gather with other pilgrims, to attend Mass and to welcome the Holy Father. Our flag, the point of reference for our group of 74, also led us many times along the narrow streets of Lis-

bon to the Church of St. Catherine, that became like our little parish, for Mass and Eucharistic Adoration.

"This trip has shown me that there's more to being a practising Catholic than waking up at 9am on a Sunday, going to Mass then going back to bed. I've started to remember that God is always there for me, even when it doesn't feel like it."

Glasgow Pilgrim

The flag also had to be lowered at times, once to board a ferry across the Tagus to visit the massive statue of Jesus that looks over Lisbon (Santuário de Cristo Rei), and at another point, to get into taxis as the trains were too full for us to reach the City of Joy for the Sacrament of Reconciliation (a delightful hindrance!)

"The messages from the Pope about not being afraid, getting up when you fall, and going with haste as Our Lady did, inspired me to live out the Gospels more openly. Having Confession, Adoration and daily Mass also allowed me to feel closer to God."

Glasgow Pilgrim

Then, the flag, at times collapsed, was extended as high as possible for our long and slightly fraught yet blessed journey to Campo da Graça. It was here that we spent a Holy Hour with Pope Francis, slept under the stars alongside 1.5 million Catholics and had our concluding Mass, at which the Pope urged the young pilgrims to shine, to listen and to be unafraid. This was a really powerful experience for many in our group.

"The overnight Vigil and Mass with the Pope was my favourite part because it felt good to be part of a large crowd of young Catholics. It makes me realise that we are not alone in being young and Catholic and gives me hope for the future of the Church."

Glasgow Pilgrim

This pilgrimage was a tremendously blessed experience for everyone who took part, pilgrims, and leaders alike and we are excited to continue this journey of faith together, encouraging one another on the way through monthly gatherings of prayer and formation and friendship. Lisbon really was just a 'new start', and we are ready to see what God has in store!

■ RCAG Youth, the Archdiocesan Youth Office, would like to say a massive thank you to all Flourish readers for your partnership on this journey, both in the prayers that you have offered for us and in the donations that you have made. We are inspired by your generosity, and we prayed for you each day on our pilgrimage.



Unforgettable words from Pope Francis

Adoration

How do I pray? Like a parrot? "blah, blah, blah," half asleep before the tabernacle because I don't know how to talk to the Lord.

Do I pray? How do I pray? Only in adoration, only in the presence of the Lord, do we truly rediscover our taste and passion for evangelisation.

Oddly enough, we have lost the prayer of adoration; and everyone, priests, bishops consecrated men and women, need to recover it, this ability to be quiet in the Lord's presence.

Mother Teresa [of Calcutta], busy about

so many things in life, never neglected adoration, even at times when her faith was shaken and she wondered if it was all true or not. A similar moment of darkness was also experienced by St Therese of the Child Jesus.

In prayer, we overcome the temptation to carry out a "ministry of nostalgia and regrets".

Once, in a convent, there was a nun – this really happened – who complained about everything. I forget her name, but the other nuns called her "Sister Lamentation". How many times do we turn our frustrations and disappointments into complaints! Once we abandon those complaints, we find the strength to put out once more into the deep, without ideologies, without worldliness.

Our Lady

As soon as she heard that her elderly relative – although already advanced in years – was pregnant, Mary ran out.

That is a somewhat free translation, for the Gospel says she "went with haste"; yet we could say she ran out, ran eagerly to help, to be present.

Mary has many titles, but we can think of another that we could add to them: "Our Lady who runs", every time there is a problem; whenever we seek her aid, she

does not delay, she comes to us, she hastens. She is "Our Lady of haste".

Do you like that? Let us say it all together: Our Lady of haste. She hastens to be near to us; she hastens because she is our Mother.

Our Lady of haste and Our Lady who accompanies. She always accompanies, never taking pride of place! Mary's gesture of welcoming is twofold: she first welcomes and then points to Jesus

These are the two gestures of Mary, let us reflect on them well. She welcomes all of us and she points to Jesus, and she does this in something of a hurry, with haste, Our Lady of haste, who welcomes us all and directs us to Jesus.

Archbishop's joy at signs of vitality

ARCHBISHOP Nolan was in no doubt about the central message of Pope Francis to the world's young people ... "The Church is for all, not just for the good, not just for the devout. For all!"

The Archbishop, who accompanied the young people throughout their pilgrimage to Lisbon, returned deeply impressed by what he saw.

He said: "World Youth Day is a great expression of the universality of the Church. At the end of the trip some of the group spoke of how they had been changed by what they experienced. They took it seriously. They weren't always living in easy conditions, but they got on well together and took part willingly in all the activities.

"I could see their wonder and amazement as we started out in a crowd of 5000 or so walking to Fatima, then a crowd of

400,000 for the opening ceremonies and finally 1.5 million young people at the concluding vigil and Mass.

"I watched with great admiration as they took part in every activity that was offered to them. Some queued for two hours for confession during the day devoted to that sacrament. To see that is both humbling and inspiring."

Now the Archbishop hopes they will return and transmit some of the energy of the WYD experience to their parishes.

He said: "We want them to go back to their local communities and share what they saw. There will be follow up activities to support them in the months ahead too. I hope and pray that the great positivity of these summer days in Lisbon will endure 1 the months and years to come."

Time to wake up to dangers in new bill on assisted suicide

ASSISTED suicide and euthanasia are firmly on the political agenda for Scotland in 2023.

Assisted suicide is when a doctor prescribes lethal drugs for someone who asks for it.

Euthanasia is when the doctor gives a lethal injection to someone who asks to die. Both are currently illegal.

Liam McArthur MSP lodged a Bill in Holyrood in 2022 to allow assisted suicide for those who are terminally ill, mentally competent and wish to die. We expect to see the detail of the Bill before Christmas and then it will be debated by MSPs in Parliament likely in 2024. MSPs will have the final vote – it is expected to be a free vote (not by party lines).

This is hugely concerning for all of us. It would undermine the value of life of those who are ill and frail, and disadvantages those who are most vulnerable. Some may feel pressurised to take their own lives to stop being a burden to their friends and family.

Scottish palliative care doctors are very troubled by these plans and do not want to participate. It is dif-

BY FRANCES BURNISTON

icult for doctors to determine who has capacity and who doesn't, for such crucial decisions. Sometimes people improve unexpectedly, sometimes there are new treatments. But most importantly, we must care for people who are dying, not help to kill them.

However, many of us are not aware of these plans in the Scottish Parliament. Local parishes can play an important role to inform and educate us all about what is happening to equip local people to speak to their MSP.

We can all speak to our MSPs. We all have our constituency MSP but also seven other regional or List MSPs who also represent us in the Scottish Parliament.

The Public Life Group in St Aloysius', Garnethill, organised three meetings in June to discuss euthanasia in Scotland. We had representatives from Care not Killing, St Margaret's Hospice and Our Duty of Care to discuss the current political situation, concerns from palliative care doctors and other clinicians.

We also watched video



presentations from countries such as Canada where euthanasia has been legalised. The systematic dismantling of safeguards in Canada has been breathtaking over recent years. Euthanasia is now available for those with chronic disability and approved for mental illness but not yet implemented.

We watched a powerful presentation from Dame Tanni Grey Thompson about her concerns for the disabled community in the UK if this were to be legalised. The Care not Killing Scotland website has these presentations available for anyone to watch at www.carenotkilling.scot

These meetings were well attended with lots of helpful questions and comments from the floor.

We would strongly encourage all local parishes to organise similar meetings to enable local people to speak to their MSPs with their concerns backed up by up-to-date information.

We need to act quickly as the legislation is expected before Christmas.

More info from: Care not Killing Scotland
ceo@carenotkilling.org.uk
Our Duty of Care (for health care professionals)
info@ourdutyofcare.org.uk

New course offered to parishioners with hearing problems

St Aloysius plan special outreach evenings of food and faith

ST Aloysius' Church in Garnethill is to be the venue for a new course aimed at those with hearing problems living a life of faith.

The 'Deaf Sycamore Course' is for Deaf people and friends who are asking questions about life and faith.

Why the name "Sycamore"?

In the Gospels, Jesus comes to the town of Jericho. A man called Zacchaeus is so curious about Jesus that he climbs a Sycamore tree to get a better view. When he finally meets him, they begin a conversation, and his life is changed forever. The Sycamore tree seems to be the perfect image of something that helps others to get a wider perspective on life and faith.

Fr Gerard Mitchell SJ, Parish Priest at St Aloysius, said: "We start with a welcome and a hot meal and you can meet other Deaf people and friends on the course. Every week we learn different topics and then break into small groups to talk, ask questions and share from what we have heard."

"The Sycamore Course

is a 7 week evening course and welcomes anyone who is Deaf and Hard of Hearing and friends. All are welcome.

"Sycamore is an informal course about the Christian faith and its relevance for life today. It gives you space to meet other people, share ideas, explore your beliefs, and think about questions that really matter."

Week one of the Sycamore Course will take place on Wednesday 4 October. It will run each Wednesday evening from then until Wednesday 15 November.

The Sycamore evenings will take place in the Ogilvie Centre of St Aloysius' Church, 25 Rose Street, Garnethill, Glasgow G3 6RE.

Enter by 25 Rose Street and take the lift to the second floor.

If you would like to take part in the Deaf Sycamore Course at St Aloysius or you have got any questions or want to find out more about the Deaf Sycamore Course, contact stalloysius.garnethill.rcag.org.uk or telephone 0141 332 3039.

Poverty is a threat to peace

WHEN one of your neighbours at the other end of the street has a letter bomb thrown through their front door, it seems uncaring and self-centred to complain that you're worried about the draught blowing across your own threshold.

That draught, however, is significant. As more of us share anxiety over the chill wind of poverty puffing its way into our lives, we are beginning to experience our own version of conflict.

The letter bomb that Russia flung through Ukraine's front door is a tragedy for that country's people and even Pope Francis is sounding less sure that the damage can be rectified any time soon. Meanwhile, it aggravates the draught that we are feeling, even though the rising food and fuel prices are only in part the



Marian Pallister

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

result of that conflict.

Pope Francis hasn't given up on negotiation, of course. He has urged Russia to change its mind on abandoning the Black Sea grain deal that allowed Ukraine to export grain from its seaports.

But the effects have already been felt in so many parts of the world and add to other existing causes for rising prices. Here in the UK, cuts in benefits and low wages make it almost impossible for the most vulnerable to pay their bills.

According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, people are using credit cards and taking out loans to pay for every day household costs.

Archbishop Nolan has said, "For many decades the UK prided itself on providing a reasonable measure of social security to its citizens who had fallen on rough times – be that through illness, old age, unemployment or poverty." Today, however, we have a low-wage economy and benefit cuts that are, he



says, "immoral".

For those of us with long memories, this is a replay of the 1980s when loan sharks were preying on the most vulnerable and the stress of meeting criminally mounting lenders' interest costs saw whole housing schemes downing Valium to blot out the crisis.

Today, the Rowntree re-

port says that 2.3 million low-income families have taken out loans to meet essential bills and nearly 6 million owe money on credit cards, and overdrafts or have personal loans from their bank or credit union. Worst of all, the payday lenders are back in business big style.

These debts already

amount to £14.2 billion, and each struggling family is going to have to find around £675 this year to meet their debts and arrears on debts.

Pax Christi Scotland's politics are not party politics, but that doesn't mean we won't hold politicians to account for their failures – and benefit cuts have marginalised so many.

A definition of 'peace' is 'a stress-free state of security and calmness that comes when there's no fighting or war'. We may not face bombs here in Scotland, but surely peace – certainly peace of mind – can also only come when people are able to feed their children and heat their homes.

It's time for us to join Archbishop Nolan in seeking peace of mind for all our brothers and sisters.



URBI & ORBI
NEWS FROM THE VATICAN AND THE CATHOLIC WORLD
In association with **Crux** – taking the Catholic pulse

TALY is a county that reveres artists and intellectuals, in part because since antiquity, culture has been its leading export.

Thus the recent death of a 51-year-old novelist and essayist named Michela Murgia, after a long struggle with cancer, has been a national drama here, even amid the traditional mid-August doldrums.

To be sure, Michela was not everyone's cup of tea.

Although she professed herself to be a believing Catholic, her strongly progressive positions on issues such as women's liberation, LGBTQ+ rights, abortion, euthanasia and artificial reproduction – expressed, for instance, in her 2002 manifesto *God Save the Queen: A Feminist Catechism* – generated both admiration and consternation in roughly equal measure.

Despite being at odds with official Catholic doctrine on many points, Murgia was laid to rest during a church funeral at the Basilica of Santa Maria in Montesanto in Rome's Piazza del Popolo, better known as the "Artists' Church" since every Sunday for more than 70 years a special liturgy has been staged there for people from the worlds of art and culture.

During the liturgy, the priest read out a message from Cardinal Matteo Zuppi of Bologna, president of the Italian bishops' conference and currently serving as Pope Francis's special envoy for the conflict in Ukraine. As it turns out, Zuppi and Murgia had a longstanding friendship, and Zuppi wanted to pay tribute.

"The book of her life is not finished, and its pages will continue to be written with letters of love, in that universal language of the spirit that reveals the greatness of every person and the eternity that's hidden in all of us," Zuppi wrote.

In that context, not every Catholic here was pleased with Zuppi's demonstration of affection.

In many ways, the scenario is reminiscent, in a sort of equal-and-opposite fashion, of what happened in 2007 when another celebrated female Italian writer died, only in this case one whose appeal was more on the right: Oriana Fallaci, whose best-known work is *La rabbia e l'orgoglio* (The Rage and the Pride), in



Oriana Fallaci



Cardinal Matteo Zuppi



Archbishop Salvatore Fisichella



Michela Murgia

Pope's closest aides are not afraid to reach out

which she railed against the rise of militant Islam and calls on Europe to defend its cultural identity.

Like Murgia, Fallaci died of cancer, though in her case at the age of 77.

For Fallaci, her break with Catholic orthodoxy came not on a specific policy point but something far more fundamental: The very existence of God. In a word, she was an atheist, who once defined Christianity as a "beautiful fable."

Nevertheless, she saw Catholicism as a cornerstone of Western culture and defended its values strenuously, helping to coin the term "Eurabia" to describe what she saw as a creeping Islamicisation of Europe, transforming the continent from the cradle of Christian civilisation into an outpost of the Arab world.

In that context, like Murgia, she also carried on a friendship with a senior Catholic prelate despite rejecting the belief system

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

he represented. In her case, the prelate was Archbishop Salvatore "Rino" Fisichella, a former chaplain to the Italian parliament who, at the time, was rector of the Lateran University in Rome, and who today serves as Pro-Prefect of the Vatican's Dicastery for Evangelisation.

The friendship developed over the final years of Fallaci's life, after she wrote a letter praising an interview he had given on Islam and religious freedom to the Italian paper *Corriere della Sera*. Towards the end, Fisichella said, the two would talk on the phone sometimes three or four times a day. (Fallaci was in New York, where she had lived for decades, undergoing treatment at the Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.)

After her death, Fisichella paid tribute to Fallaci, saying that despite her atheism and anti-clericalism, he saw signs of

vestigial Christianity. At the end she returned to Florence, not wishing to die in exile, and Fisichella revealed that the day before the end came, he visited Fallaci offered a blessing despite her non-belief.

"I did it because Oriana Fallaci loved life, and because the God of Christians is the God of life," Fisichella said. "I did it because, even though Oriana Fallaci said that she didn't believe, she had great hope."

Then as now, some Catholics objected to Fisichella's outreach, in part because of Fallaci's atheism and in part because it might be construed as an endorsement of her strident anti-Islamic views.

Putting together the Zuppi/Murgia friendship and that of Fallaci/Fisichella, here's the thought that comes to mind.

In principle, there's nothing surprising about clergy from a Church that espouses traditional faith and values being close to conservative thinkers and writers. Equally, for a Church with a strong social justice emphasis, there's nothing unusual about its clerics being friends with liberal intellectuals and activists.

The glory of Catholicism, however, is that it can do both at once. As Pope Benedict XVI once famously said, the historic genius of Catholicism is that, where other traditions tend to be either/or, the Catholic instinct is both/and. It's not that the Church endorses one extreme or the other, but rather that it has the capacity to embrace both.

For partisans who insist on seeing the Church as the terrain upon which zero/sum ideological battles are fought, this both/and dynamic will always be puzzling. For others, however, it's the basis for faith that those sterile battles don't have to be the last word.

CRUX
Taking the Catholic Pulse

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CRUXNOW.COM



OASIS

Nourish your soul with our monthly spirituality supplement

Don't panic if your belief in God comes and goes

THE 13th century Persian poet and Sufi mystic, Rumi, once said that this is how faith moves in our lives: We live with a deep secret that sometimes we know, then not, and then know again.

New York columnist David Brooks says something quite similar. In his book, *The Second Mountain*, he shares how he is trying to live out both a Jewish and a Christian faith. For the most part, he says, it can work. After all, Jesus tried it. However, the hard question he is sometimes asked is: Do you believe in the resurrection of Jesus, believe that Jesus' body was gone from the tomb three days after his crucifixion? His answer: "It comes and it goes. The border stalker in me is still strong."

If most of us who profess ourselves as Christians were really honest, we would, I submit, give a similar answer to the question about the reality of Jesus' resurrection. Do we believe it actually happened? It comes and it goes. Perhaps not intellectually, but existentially.

Well, Brooks' answer straddles the two, a border stalker. In truth, we are both sons, saying yes, then no, then yes again. John Shea, commenting on the ups and

downs of Jesus' first disciples and their vacillation between enthusiastic following and abandoning their faith dream, calls this a struggle (for them and for us) between divine invitation and human response, between great assurance and great vacillation.

And nowhere is this more evident in us than in how we vacillate vis-à-vis whether we truly believe in the central invitation of all within Christianity, that is, do we take the resurrection of Jesus seriously enough to actually redefine ourselves, redefine the meaning of life, and make it a prism through which we shape how we should be living? Do we believe strongly enough in the resurrection of Jesus to take radical, common sense-defying risks in our lives? If we truly believed Jesus was resurrected it would reshape our lives.

Most of us, I'm sure, are familiar with the famous lines from Julian of Norwich. Reflecting on what the resurrection of Jesus means for us, she says that, if it is true, if Jesus actually rose from the dead, if God actually brought a dead body out of a grave, then we have the absolute assurance (and the confidence that goes with

Scribblings of the spirit

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



that) to believe that In the end, all will be well, and all will be well, and every manner of being will be well.

Here equation is right, if the resurrection actually happened; the rest follows, the ending to our story of and that of the world itself has already been written, and we have absolute assurance that it's a happy ending.

But, do we believe it? For the majority of us, if we were as honest as David Brooks, our existential answer would, I believe, be the same as his: it comes and it goes. Granted, it can be humbling to admit that, but that admission can free us from denial, help us understand better some of the dynamics of faith, and point us towards where we need to be going in terms of an on-going conversion.

Once at a religious conference, I heard this comment

from one of the keynote speakers, a woman who, like Dorothy Day, had been working with the poor on the streets for many years. She shared words to this effect: I'm a Christian and I work on the streets with the poor. Ultimately, Jesus is my reason for doing this. But I can do this work for years and never mention Jesus' name as I work because I believe God is mature enough that he doesn't demand to be

the center of our conscious attention all the time. You can guess that comment was met with some very mixed reactions.

But, at the end of the day, she's right, and what she's sharing isn't an unhealthy straddling of anything, or even exactly Brooks' or Rumi's experience of how faith works in our existential lives. It comes and goes. What she's sharing can help free us from some of the false guilt we feel when faith seems to have let go and we feel the earthy reality of our lives so tangibly and existentially that, for that moment, we seem not to know the secret of faith and appear to be vacillating in the face of a great assurance. It comes and it goes. Indeed. We live with a deep secret that sometimes we know, then not, and then know again.



Young folk remind us to count our blessings

Mary's musings

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



COMPLAINERS, party poopers, killjoys, wet blankets, whiners, and all manner of mood hoovers take a day off. Please, I beg of you.

Life can be tough enough without negative people sucking the lifeblood out of you. I say this having just come off an hour-long phone conversation with a person who was a right old prophet of doom.

He must have been last in the queue for the can-do approach. If Job's comforters had been in need of an assistant, he was the very

man.

It's not that I'm walking around all day in a state of unadulterated bliss. I can moan and gripe with the best of them as Himself will testify. We all have our down days.

Habitual doom and gloom and pessimism isn't a great look. I'm not talking about people who have real problems to deal with, rather the attitude of mind that permanently looks on the bleak side of things.

Studies tell us being grateful benefits our health and adds years to our life,

possibly to those around us, too. It is often those in the most trying of circumstances who have the sunniest outlook.

So, before I drag you down with all the negative chat let me share with you the things that have uplifted me recently.

Some people like to share photos of puppies, kittens, and goofy pandas to lift the mood. If that works for you, go for it. If my emotional equilibrium is unsettled, it takes more than a screenshot of a cute-looking animal to lift my mood.

World Youth Day did it for me. The photos and videos of the crowds of young people in Lisbon were truly edifying. An enduring image will be of the young boy raised aloft in his wheelchair.

That hoisting up of his wheelchair was surely a metaphor for those incredible days. What he could not

do for himself others did for him. His beatific smile elevated us all. Bumping into a young friend from my own parish, who had attended with the archdiocesan delegation, she was radiant with happiness.

A visit to Nazareth House reminded me of the how the worst of times can indeed be the best of times. When my mother and aunt were cared for there the sadness of witnessing their decline was set against the certainty they were being gently and respectfully accompanied in their journey.

Walking in the door was like being wrapped in a warm blanket of love by the Sisters and staff. When my aunt had been there two years my mum recognised it was time to join her. In was soon clear how much of an effort my mum had been making to keep going at home.

Although 11 years sepa-

rated the sisters in life, they died within 13 days of each other. I could talk all day about how grateful I was to those kind and gentle Sisters. Always knowing the right thing to say – a humorous quip or a profound and heartfelt expression of understanding, they got it right every time. I could talk all day about their loving care, yet I always say the same thing: Those three years were among the best of my life.

Another joy I've got at the moment is the Carfin Grotto novena to the Little Flower which is taking place ahead of St. Therese of Lisieux's feast day. Each week my heart is filled with recollections of childhood visits to our national shrine and memories of the visitation of the relics to Scotland four years ago.

As the saying goes, count your blessings not your troubles.

Pope's words of very practical advice to live the season of creation

To mark the month of care for the planet the Holy Father reflects on our duties of care for nature and responsibility for the environment

“ON a beautiful summer day in July 2022, during my pilgrimage to Canada, I reflected on the shores of Lac Ste. Anne in Alberta. That lake has been a place of pilgrimage for many generations of indigenous people.

Surrounded by the beating of drums, I thought: “How many hearts have come here with anxious longing, weighed down by life’s burdens, and found by these waters consolation and strength to carry on!

“Here, immersed in creation, we can also sense another beating: the maternal heartbeat of the earth. Just as the hearts of babies in the womb beat in harmony with those of their mothers, so in order to grow as people, we need to harmonise our own rhythms of life with those of creation, which gives us life”.

During this Season of Creation, let us dwell on those heartbeats: our own and those of our mothers and grandmothers, the



heartbeat of creation and the heartbeat of God. Today they do not beat in harmony; they are not harmonised in justice and peace. Too many of our brothers and sisters are prevented from drinking from that mighty river. Let us heed our call to stand with the victims of environmental and climate injustice, and to put an end to the senseless war against creation.

How can we contribute to the mighty river of justice and peace in this Season of Creation? What can we, particularly as Christian communities, do to heal our common home so that it can once again team with life? We must do this by resolving to transform our hearts, our lifestyles, and the public

policies ruling our societies.

First, let us join the mighty river by transforming our hearts ... During the liturgy and personal prayer in “the great cathedral of creation”, let us recall the great Artist who creates such beauty, and reflect on the mystery of that loving decision to create the cosmos.

Second, let us add to the flow of this mighty river by transforming our lifestyles... With the help of God’s grace, let us adopt lifestyles marked by less waste and unnecessary consumption, especially where the processes of production are toxic and unsustainable...

In this Season of Creation, as followers of Christ on our shared synodal journey, let us live, work and pray that our common home will team with life once again. May the Holy Spirit once more hover over the waters and guide our efforts to “renew the face of the earth” (cf. Ps 104:30).”

ART OF THE MONTH



God's gift of mercy is revealed in the art of the priesthood

DURING this month when we traditionally have marked Vocations Awareness Week, *The Confession* by Giuseppe Molteni sheds light on an important aspect of priesthood.

The artist portrays a crucial moment in a priest's life and in the recipient of priestly ministry as the woman opens her heart and soul to her Confessor.

The confessional is a place of sanctuary and the dimly lit environment creates an atmosphere of solemnity.

The facial expressions of both the confessor and the penitent reveal raw emotions – doubt, vulnerability, and ultimately, the yearning

BY MGR TOM MONAGHAN

for enlightenment.

As the penitent lays bare her innermost thoughts, we witness the power of an examination of conscience and the pursuit of a higher calling.

Giuseppe Molteni who lived in the first half of the 19th century was known for his exceptional skill in capturing the essence and emotions of his subjects. He became a much sought-after artist among the elite and aristocratic patrons of his time.

This masterpiece, encourages us to kneel unafraid

as we seek forgiveness and peace at last.

Vocations Awareness Week encourages everyone to seek purpose, meaning, and fulfilment in their lives. It is a reminder that we all carry a unique set of skills and passions that can be channelled into a vocation that brings joy, impact, and contentment.

The Confession prompts people considering a priestly vocation to prayerful time to examine their lives, values, and aspirations. By delving into the depths of their souls and honestly evaluating their talents and passions, they can pave the way for a fulfilling life.

PRAYER OF THE MONTH

Loving Father,

Help me find my voice, to confess the mistakes I have made, my struggles and my sins with bravery and honesty. Let your unwavering love lead me through darkness and your truth be my guide. Forgive me that I may be renewed by your boundless grace and your tender mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



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Making a will can be a true act of charity

Why make a will? Surely that's only for rich people with lots of assets? I have nothing of value to leave behind ...

If that's how you see the idea of a will, you are not alone. Many people make the mistake of imagining that somehow things will take care of themselves when they die. Alas that is not usually the case.

Here are five good reasons to make a will now and not leave things until it's too late:

1. Save time, money, and stress for your loved ones.

Without a will, the court may have to get involved to name an administrator to divide up your estate. And this can be time-consuming, expensive, and even contentious for your loved ones. When you have a will, you can choose the person you want to handle your estate, making it easier for your loved ones.

2. Decide who gets your assets and property — and who does not. Most people know that a will lets them decide who will get their property. That may be your house, your jewellery, sentimental items you have treasured to hand on ... with a will you can name people as beneficiaries for specific assets.

3. If you're a parent, you can

use your will to nominate a guardian for your minor children. The surviving parent will usually get sole legal custody if one parent dies. But if both parents pass, this is one of the most important reasons to have a will.

4. Lower the potential for family disputes. If you die without a will, your family will have to guess at what your final wishes were. And chances are, they won't always agree. This ambiguity can create friction, and

even fights, which sometimes lasts a lifetime. Creating a will solves the problem by eliminating the guesswork.

5. Support your favourite causes and leave a legacy. Many people want to leave a positive impact on the world after they pass. And a great way to do this is to support the charities or causes you love most. When you write a will, you can preserve your legacy by leaving a part of your estate to a charitable organisation.

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Providing support for children, young people and their families



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Please consider The Notre Dame Centre when you are making a will or leaving a legacy.

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Contact us at info@fertilitycare.org.uk
0141 221 0858

University wedding was a real challenge!

I HAD a new experience over the summer when I was asked to officiate at a wedding in the Glasgow University Memorial Chapel.

The couple were both Catholics but, even though the University Chapel is non-denominational, it is permitted for Catholic weddings to take place there and, as the bride is a graduate of the university, that was a good enough reason to agree.

As it turned out, during that time, much of the West End of Glasgow was closed off due to road works, and also in preparation for the UCI World Cycling Championships, which has just finished.

For that reason, I intended to travel by public transport, as I had done for the rehearsal a few days before.

However, as I had to bring with me absolutely everything that would be required for the wedding: altar linen, liturgical books, sacred vessels, bread and wine, real-ink pen for the civil documents, and vestments, I thought I'd best bring the car.

I had been advised that the university would be open for parking on a Saturday, but I decided to get there early, just in case, knowing that I could easily pass the time wandering around the



Fr Frank's log

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

West End, which of course is where I was born and grew up.

For whatever reason, when I arrived at the university, the barrier was down and there was no one around to open it. After frustratingly driving around in circles, confronting one road closure after another, I ended up driving to Drumchapel, leaving the car outside of my brother's house, where I was intending to go to after the wedding anyway, and getting the bus back into Partick, carrying all my wedding stuff, and then getting the bus back out to Drumchapel after the wedding, still bearing the load.

Talk about the best laid plans going astray!

As I began to prepare for the wedding, I was well warned to mind the many steps, at different levels, leading to and from the altar area, which had no clearly defined separation.

Even so, I managed to fall up one of the steps, having previously almost fallen

down the same step. Thankfully, no damage was done, except to my dignity, and to the nerves of the few people who witnessed it.

Eventually, everything was ready, and the wedding began, and, I have to say, everything went beautifully. I thoroughly enjoyed it, and so, it seemed, did everyone else.

The groom's family had come over from Ireland and fully appreciated the beautiful surroundings of the Kelvingrove Park which, as a Partick boy at heart, filled me with pride.

During the first week of August, I took a break from St. Mungo's. It was a staycation in Bishopbriggs.

Each day I would try and do something different. I had long walks along the Forth and Clyde Canal, and in the Campsies. I went to see the film *Oppenheimer*, which was a 3-hour marathon, but I enjoyed it nonetheless. I took a train from Bishopbriggs to Stirling, a city I like very much, es-

pecially the Church of the Holy Rude next to the castle, a truly beautiful church that I think is particularly sensitive, and does justice, to its Catholic roots.

In the middle of the week, I met up with some old friends whom I have known since the late 1960's and early 1970's, when we all attended retreats at the Passionist Retreat House at Coodham in Ayrshire, now sadly closed.

The five stalwarts whom I met up with all met their good lady wives at Coodham as well, while I entered the Passionists. I don't meet up with them as often as I'd like but, as I keep telling them, they are all old retired men now, while I am still a full-time working man!

We had a great catch-up and I resolved to make more of an effort to meet with them more often. As my free time drew to a close, I took in the first match of the new football season, which had a happy ending.

I also did a lot of enjoyable reading during that time, but then, in the blink of an eye, the week was over, and I was back at the church. All the brethren in Bishopbriggs are well. This weekend Father Gareth will travel to Ireland for the 1st Profession of Cian Hennessy, a young man from Cork, who has recently completed his Passionist Novitiate. We pray for him, and we welcome him into the family.

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

It's not enough to receive mercy: You have to show mercy to others too!

As things pick up again after the summer, the Sunday Gospels give us a lot to think about.

In the second half of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus challenges his disciples to reflect on how they are going to make good on their response to the call they have heard. It's not enough to say "yes", you have to show your "yes" as well. It's not enough to receive mercy: you have to give it too!



Fr Tom Kilbride

that such is the way of all who speak God's word, as it was for Jeremiah too (First Reading).

There will be crosses to bear for those who follow him. There may be much asked of us, but loss is gain in this case.

Love, service, sacrifice and giving are what he models for us: this, then will be the judgment made of us. Peter can't see that ... at least not yet.

Twenty-Second Sunday A

The first half of this week's Gospel takes us from Peter's act of faith and Jesus' response in honouring him to his failure to understand Jesus and Jesus' stark rebuke to him. Peter can't or won't accept that Jesus' way is the way of suffering and sacrifice. Jesus, however, knows

Twenty-Third Sunday A

This Sunday and next, we hear from another of Matthew's teaching chapters, this time one where Jesus speaks about life in the Church. It's one of the few places in the Gospels where we hear Jesus use that word (translated as "the community" in our Lectionary).

For Matthew, being a disciple is not a lone path but a shared one: to be a disciple is to belong to the community of disciples, the Church.

Today, Jesus gives advice about dealing with breaches in unity: first, reconcile quietly. If that doesn't work, bring others to help reconcile and heal, even the whole community. We are part of something bigger than ourselves, and more than just a group of fellow-travellers. We are the People of God (Jesus uses words here that remind us of that).

So, among the practical resolution, and the exercise of authority, there must be prayer. And where the community prays, Jesus is there. After all, he is (Matthew has told us) "Emmanuel", "God-with-us"!

Twenty-Fourth Sunday A

The teaching on the life of the Church continues with the question of forgiveness and reconciliation. Again, Peter is the spokesperson, the one who was called the



Georg Cornelius, Jesus Christ, 1888

labourers to be sent into the vineyard, the mission of bringing the Kingdom of God to the world. Now we hear a parable about that vineyard and its workers, the mission to which we are called.

Some labour long and hard, some come later to the story, but nobody's efforts go unnoticed or unrewarded. All have something to give. God is generous in his rewards: we ought to be generous in our appreciation of others too.

How often am I tempted to compare how much I do with how little others do? Instead, there is a challenge here both to invite others to join us and to affirm them for what they do. As St Paul says today, Christ will be glorified in all of it.

Twenty-Sixth Sunday A

This Sunday is the third of five parables over these Sundays, all of which teach us about our response to God's call to us. This week (and over the next few weeks), we hear that some will refuse the call. One son honours his father, the other does not. But which is it? Even the Pharisees see that the real honour is done by the son who actually does what his father asked, even though he had initially insulted his father by his refusal.

The second seems to be the good son, but it is only words: he has no intention of carrying out his father's wishes. So, Jesus says, the Pharisees talk the right way, but fail to carry out the real work asked of them. Sinners, on the other hand, who seem to have turned their backs on God, have come round and are now taking up the task in hand, responding to God's will.

For Matthew's way of thinking, words and actions always have to go together. Professing faith is only the start: we have to live it out too. Paul in the Second Reading today links that way of living with the mind and actions of Jesus himself. Note that the parable is again talking about working in the vineyard, Jesus' image for proclaiming the kingdom in the world.

What is our part in that mission? Are we 'all talk', or do we actually put it into practice? That is the question Jesus really asks in this parable.

"Rock" on which the community would be built.

The famous parable of the man whose astronomical debt is cancelled (the sums are eye-watering!) gives us hope that nothing is beyond God's mercy when we beg it of him, and challenges us to make such mercy our practice too.

The debtor cannot overlook the comparatively paltry sum his fellow-servant owed him, despite the overwhelming freedom afforded him by the king. We don't deserve God's mercy, but he lavishes it upon us anyway. How much more, then, should we be forgiving of each other.

Jesus taught us to pray a few chapters earlier: "For-

give us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us". The parable picks up on that challenge and reminds us that our relationships should be based on mercy, compassion and the joy of being forgiven, rather than on resentment, anger or grudges.

Twenty-Fifth Sunday A

God's generosity towards us – a generosity we don't deserve – is at the heart of this week's parable too. If last week's centred on forgiveness, this time the context is the work in the vineyard, the response we make to the call God gives us.

A few weeks ago, we heard Jesus invite us to pray for

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O'HARE

ANNIVERSARY

Please pray for David O'Hare, a cherished husband to the late Esther, and much loved dad and Papa, who sadly died February 13 2002. Our Lady Of Lourdes and St. Thérèse, pray for him.

Jesus, I trust in you.
He will be forever in our hearts.
Our Mother Esther O'Hare would have celebrated her 100th birthday on August 7th.

Inserted by their ever loving family.

+ Requiescant in pace +

Fr Willy was a champion of social justice

Our Lady and St George's Church, Penilee, was packed to capacity last month for the funeral Mass of Father Willy Slavin, who died aged 83.

The Mass was celebrated by Monsignor Gerry Fitzpatrick, parish priest of St Leo's Dumbreck, a contemporary and long-time friend who was joined in the sanctuary by clergy from throughout the Archdiocese with Monsignor Hugh Bradley, Vicar General, representing Archbishop Nolan who was attending the World Youth Day in Lisbon.

The following tribute to Father Slavin was paid by Rev John Miller, former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, a close friend for almost 50 years.

ONLY once in a generation do you meet someone like Willy Slavin.

With a wide-ranging intellect and with boundless energy, Willy was to be remembered by everyone who met him.

The second of the three children of his parents Johnny and Sadie Slavin, Willy was born in Bristol where his father had moved from Glasgow to work as an aircraft engineer. War-time saw Mr Slavin return to Glasgow, to work with

Rolls Royce in Hillington, and Willy grew up here in St George's parish with his sister Anne and brother Michael. In the family Willy was always known as John.

His abilities took him to be a boarder at Blairs College, Aberdeen, setting foundations for the life of a priest. He was head prefect in his last year. From there he went to the Scots College in Rome.

At that very time Vatican II was introducing the possibility of huge and radical change in the Church. This fuelled Willy's own questioning mind as he was ordained and returned to Glasgow and began work in parishes.

I first met Willy 50 years ago among ministers and priests who met regularly to talk, in what was known as 'The Soup Group'. Willy was always ready to grasp every nettle.

He had trained in Psychology, and was by then the full-time Chaplain at an East End Junior Secondary School, St Mary's in Boden Street. In the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Willy invited about 10 Church of Scotland ministers to St Mary's, and each

was given a class to address – a new experience for everyone!

Willy's questions challenged his own Church, and the Reformed Church too. It seemed that Willy moved and changed his setting every five years. But like an entrepreneur he initiated new ways of working wherever he went.

He went to work in Bangladesh for five years, writing masterpieces of reflection which were distributed to friends back home.

On returning to Scotland in 1980 he was appointed the first National Secretary of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Scottish Bishops. In 1986 he became the Coordinator of the newly established Scottish Drugs Forum, set up by the Scottish Office of the UK Government.

During these 10 years he was a Chaplain to Barlinnie Prison, and he also lived in a lay community in Ruchill. Latterly he was also Chaplain to Ruchill Hospital for Infectious Diseases at the height of HIV/AIDS.

In 1992 he returned to parish work in St Alphon-



sus beside the Barras in the Calton. He resumed his psychology career working as a consultant on drug problems to Notre Dame Child Guidance Clinic's Adolescent Unit known as Fern Tower.

In 1998 Willy was made Chaplain to the Yorkhill Hospitals, and in 2001 became parish priest at the historic parish of St Simon's in Partick. He established there a cafe for the homeless, and the following year he established Glasgow Emmaus, a self-sufficient Homeless Charity which he chaired for ten years.

In this parish setting, the uniting principle of all his ministry was again displayed: wherever he went he was always concerned for the poor, the outcast, and the invisible ones, the un-noticed.

While undertaking such a work-focused life, Willy nevertheless made time to climb all 303 Munros in Scotland, England, and Wales, and undertook several long cycle journeys.

And he was instrumental in bringing to Glasgow the statue of 'The Homeless Jesus', the first one in the UK and situated in Nelson Mandela Place.

I kept in touch with Willy through all the years, and he invited me to work with him on several projects. I observed Willy's kindness to people, his generosity, and his ability to hear people's concerns and understand them.

I also saw the hard side of Willy. One freezing day south of Inverness my bike slid on ice and I crashed and broke a finger. When Willy cycled over to me I was leaning over the crash barrier in some pain. 'I've broken a finger,' I explained. 'Well you've got nine more that are OK,' said Willy. 'Just get on with it!'

When Willy retired from St Simon's he left the parish house carrying all the possessions he required in a single hold-all. The time had come for him to sim-

plify his life, and he retired to a hut in the forest near Falkland in Fife.

Remote, quiet, no electricity, no running water. He kept weekly contact with the Men's Group he had started when he was at St Simon's, and he visited his sister Anne and her family in Hillington. And Willy and I recognised the significance of our friendship. We enjoyed each other's company. We were individuals who had come from very separate parts of the Christian Church. But we had reached beyond the historic antagonism which so many accept as the relationship between the Churches.

In 2019 Willy wrote his remarkable memoir, *Life Is Not A Quiet River* which witness to the astonishing range of activity and thinking in which he engaged.

And he crystallises his thoughts on life in a sentence on the final page: 'In the end of the day, it all has to be how we were loved and how we loved others.'

May the Lord grant us grace and peace, as with love we remember Father Willy Slavin, in his family 'John', to the rest of us, 'Willy'.

Fr Carlo blessed so many lives

I first met Father Carlo in 1987 in Saint Ninian's in Knightswood. He was a very open minded man and remained so, all his life.

He encouraged us in Knightswood to use the Office of the Dead when receiving the mortal remains of parishioners into the church, the evening before their funeral. A practice he pioneered in Saint Thomas in Riddrie – a practice we adopted in Saint Ninians Knightswood, a practice I introduced to Saint Paul's in Shettleston and which we now use in Sacred Heart and Saint Lucy's in Cumbernauld.

Carlo had a big effect on people, in all sorts of ways, and that effect, in many ways is lasting.

Of course his story has many chapters before he came to Glasgow as one of the many Irish (or was it Italian) priests that we needed so much then. We could never work out if he

was an Irish Italian or Italian Irish!

He was born on 4th April, which that year of 1926 was Easter Sunday, a fact that he would love, the most important day of the year – the day of the Resurrection. For Carlo's faith was very much a Resurrection faith – he knew we live in the age of the Spirit and the Spirit filled Carlo to the brim.

His spirituality was fed by his love of scripture and his involvement with the Neo Catechumenate which he loved and inspired every fibre of his being.

He was the youngest of a family of seven. He grew up by the seaside, and was very fond of the beach, swimming in the sea, searching though the rock pools, looking for shrimp. He loved outdoor activity and was totally enthralled with the natural world and life around him.



From a young age, he was so taken and uplifted by sacred music he realised that this could only come from a divine source. He took the choir in Saint Paul's Shettleston and in Saint Patrick's Dumbarton though when he conducted he was known as 'Father quick quick slow'.

He is still very fondly remembered in Saint Paul's Shettleston where he worked for a long time after a short appointment in Our Lady of Lourdes Cardonald. It was to there he returned often in retirement and went out visiting every evening as he would

say, to see "all the people I grew up with."

When he arrived back to the chapel house in time for the 10 o'clock news he often had a 'wee shine' on him, that you knew it wasn't only tea he'd been drinking! I used to have to hide and put the light out on the night there was a programme on the radio about philosophy. Or he would have me up all night talking about Descartes or phenomenology or such like. He really was an erudite wee man, open minded and keen never to stop learning.

He loved company, debating and the cut and thrust of differing opinions.

At Saint Thomas, Riddrie, as PP he was ever the gentleman pastor, the good shepherd, the innovator and took on reordering Saint Thomas after the design of the Neo Catechumenal way. He took very seriously the words

addressed to the founders, Kiko and Carmen on the presentation of the statutes of "the Way", by Saint John Paul. "You priests have an indispensable role in the communities you care for by sanctifying, teaching and pastoral guidance."

These he did generously, seriously, and effectively. As we can witness by the members of "The Way" who are leading the music today and who hold Carlo in very high esteem.

It was a shock for Carlo to be then asked to move from Saint Thomas to Saint Gregory's in Wynford. But again his love for people – which was the very point of his priesthood – meant he threw himself in to deepening the parish's spirituality, liturgical life and also their social life which he knew only too well is so central to building community and preventing a parish being simply a Mass station.

He worked hard all his days at building parishes

as evangelising communities of faith, rooted in Baptism and full of vitality. He enjoyed a well-earned rest from Glasgow when he came home to Ireland to retire, 23 years ago. But I know he helped out at parishes, he celebrated Mass in the Nursing Home, he joined scripture sharing groups, a philosophy group, he thought priestly company was vitally important and so he helped keep a group of retired priests from all over the world together, by sharing a weekly meal.

Like Matthew, the tax collector, Carlo heard the call of Christ and followed. Like Matthew, he rose up with a generous spirit and followed wherever the Master would call him. Like Matthew he saw, he knew, that sinners were welcome at this Master's table. May Christ welcome Carlo to the table of the heavenly banquet and to the joy and life of His eternal home.

Warnings ignored... now African nations face desperate hunger crisis

HERE in Scotland and across the world, many families are struggling to put enough food on the table.

Despite progress in recent years, the numbers of people suffering from hunger and malnutrition across the world remains tragically high, especially in the Global South.

Over 820 million people globally are still suffering from hunger according to the UN, and numbers are rising, despite the goal to eradicate hunger by 2030.

The past year has thrust our broken food system into the spotlight, magnifying a global food crisis that is rapidly spiralling out of control.

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, this crisis predominantly impacts essential workers such as farmers, fishers, herders,

BY **LORRAINE CURRY**
SCIAF DIRECTOR OF INTEGRAL
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

and foresters, whose survival mechanisms have been shattered by conflict, extreme weather events, pests, diseases, and economic instability.

As a result, over two billion people now lack regular access to sufficient food, with tens of millions teetering on the edge of famine.

This devastating reality hits hardest in some of the poorest countries in the world, where SCIAF operates.

Even before the 2022 conflict in Ukraine, food prices were already reaching decade-high levels due to the economic impact of the COVID pandemic. The war only exacerbated the existing problem, leading to prohibitive costs for food



aid. The poorest nations suffered the most.

Another significant contributor to global hunger is the climate crisis, altering weather patterns and

affecting agricultural productivity. Increasingly frequent and severe floods and droughts destroy crops and farming infrastructure.

The urgency of the situ-

ation is evident in SCIAF's Emergency Appeal for Ethiopia, where East Africa faces its worst hunger crisis in living memory. Approximately 29 million people in Ethiopia alone require external financial assistance.

Despite early warnings, the international community failed to prevent this catastrophe due to insufficient funding and action.

Broken

However, perhaps the greatest tragedy of this situation is that the world produces enough food for everyone. This was true before COVID, the war in Ukraine and recent climate impacts. The reality is that we have a broken global food system that prioritises feeding the greedy not the needy: putting profits over people. This approach to global food production has failed to feed the world,

and it is time for an urgent rethink.

SCIAF is launching our new campaign to demand the UK government plays its part in this issue. This means the UK urgently getting cash to help our sisters and brothers in East Africa suffering from the worst drought in decades. This also means reversing the UK's cuts to international aid; vital aid which prevented crises from happening in East Africa as recently as 2017.

And fundamentally, this also means pledging the UK will play its full role in supporting global food system reform through the promotion of sustainable approaches which serve both people and planet.

■ **Join us in the fight against hunger by demanding action on the global food system at sciaf.org.uk/food-action.**

It's time for action on global hunger. It's time to serve up change.

Ask the UK government to commit to fixing the food system.

Sign SCIAF's letter now at sciaf.org.uk/food-action

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