Parishes must be islands of mercy amid sea of indifference

POPE Francis has called on Catholics to use the season of Lent to tackle the “globalization of indifference” by practicing acts of charity and becoming “islands of mercy” for people in need.

Reflecting on the sense of communion within the Church, the Pope also said that the no one should be afraid to share their possessions with their brothers and sisters.

Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday 18 February, is a time of renewal for the whole Church, for each parish community and every believer, he said.

Cry out

“Indifference to our neighbour and to God represents a real temptation for us Christians,” Pope Francis confessed. “Each year during Lent, we need to hear once more the voice of the prophets who cry out and trouble our conscience.

“God is not indifferent to our world; he so loves it that he gave his Son for our salvation.

“In the Incarnation, in the earthly life, death, and resurrection of the Son of God, the gate between God and man, between heaven and earth, opens once for all.”

The Church, the Pope added, is like the hand holding open the gate, through the celebration of the sacraments and the witness of love.

“Do ecclesial structures enable us to experience being part of one body? A body which receives and shares what God wishes to give? A body which acknowledges and cares for its weakest, poorest and most insignificant members?

“A merciful heart does not allow him to be indifferent to what happens to us.”

Lent seeks a call to conversation through the formation of the heart.

“A merciful heart does not mean a weak heart,” he said. “Anyone who wishes to be merciful must have a strong and steadfast heart, closed to the tempter but open to God, so as to bring love along the roads that lead to our brothers and sisters.

“Ultimately, a poor heart realises its own poverty and gives itself freely for others.”

By Vincent Toal
Good news doesn’t overlook reality of evil

IT is 1400 years since the welcome sound of Mungo’s feet was heard as he came to announce the Gospel of Christ.

In each generation that message has had to be repeated.

From many centuries during the so-called dark ages we have little news of the progress of the faith, but with the coming of St Margaret a more peacefull time ensued. There is a new beginning for the Church which is consolidated under her son David. Even before his becoming King he had renewed the en-dowments of the bishopric which was centred on Mungo’s historic site, on a hillock by running water, the Molendin Burn.

The medieval achievements of the Church, in Glasgow alone, are evi-denced by the establishment of parishes, the foundation of religious houses, the erection of the University and the marvel of Glasgow Cathedral – Scotland’s finest surviving evidence of the faith which flourished in these parts.

St Paul’s words to Timothy – “Preach the word, in season and out of season” – described a duty which clearly was not neglected for 500 years, judging by this evidence.

But every generation needs evangelizing anew.

Hear again what St Paul said: “The time is sure to come when, far from being content with sound teaching, people will be avid for the latest novelty and collect themselves a whole series of teachers according to their own tastes”.

We may think that that prophecy was fulfilled at the Reformation, and we ascribe the resulting divisions to the Reformers.

But we need to see what the state of the Church, and of the country itself, was in the first half of the 16th century, and indeed whether that state was the result of earlier neglects in “refuting false-hood, correcting error and calling to obedience”.

The so-called Counter-Reformation within the Catholic Church was, despite the term, not against reform but the result of efforts at re-form which clearly indicate that it was needed.

Sadly, from our point of view, it was too late for Scotland, but it is pertinent to note the emphasis placed on preaching by the Scottish Protestant reformers.

This is not a history lesson; it is something more. It is a lesson from history!

We have been challenged by recent, yes reforming, Popes, relying on a Council as great as that of Trent, and providing the most excellent example of preaching and teaching, to launch a new evangelization, and your bishops have accepted the challenge – to launch out into the deep.

Our adversaries are not those of other forms of Christianity, but the large, some might say the majority, sector of our people who are ignorant of the ways of faith, of the very teaching which over the years nourished our people, and unknowing the very Head of our religion, Jesus Christ himself.

Not that we should count them as adversaries, but as those who are entitled to hear in all its profundity and beauty the Gospel, and to know the surpassing advantage of faith in the person of God’s incarnate Son.

Recent events in our city have revealed, at both the time of the Clutha Bar and the George Square disasters, the compassion and generous-ness of people at large, surely part of the harvest of Christian faith over the years.

The welcome given to those who came for the Commonwealth games and who volunteered to help their enjoyment of them is further fruit of the Christian spirit. So perhaps the fields are white for the harvest.

On the broader horizon, the events of recent days in Paris reveal both an evil and the goodness of popular re-sponse to it, and, dare I say, the confusion which also ac-companies it. Even our lead-ers appear lost as to where we go from here.

Our task is not simple. We can easily identify evil in its grossest expressions, but not in its subtlest forms. We can too readily overlook its seedlings, and every gar-dener knows that that is where we start.

A while ago I was struck by a passage in a book on Pope Benedict’s Benedict of Bavaria by Brennan Pursell, and wrote it down and put it in my Breviary and came across it the other day. It strikes me as being even more relevant now than when I described it. The author is reflecting on the young Joseph Ratzinger’s experience as a teenager and young man in Nazi Germany.

He wrote: “The third les-son (from this experience) has to do with the reality of evil, something so obvious that it bears repeating in this day and age of moral relativ-ism.

“God exists; most of us see evidence of it every day and the same goes for evil. Evil need not be so spectacularly murderous in order for it to be real.

“Yet should reflect for ourselves about our popular media, entertainment indus-try, and culture. To what ex-tent does it glorify the commonplace, the base, the vulgar, and the puerile?

And to what extent do members of our society ape these examples? And how many of these behaviours lead to more destruction and misery than good?”

It is at this level that we should concern ourselves. A million and a half people on the streets of Paris can make a powerful statement, but can such a manifestation bring conversion? The catch is elu-sive – “We caught nothing”!

Jesus said: “Put out into deep water and pay out your nets for a catch!” – duc in alium.

The Latin root is ducere, to lead, from which we have educere, to draw out, giving us in English, ‘education’. Should we not be fishing in the profundity of the truth given to us by Christ?

It also appears in the verb introduce, to escort in, ‘to introduce’.

Our evangelization has the double task of ‘drawing out’ the truth, and ‘leading’ others to Christ.
Amid tragedy Church extends prayerful comfort

“My dear young friends, please do not let grief overwhelm you because what God has in store for Erin is unimaginable light and life and joy.”

With these reassuring, yet painful words, Archbishop Philip Tartaglia addressed the scores of young people attending the Funeral Mass of 18-year-old Erin McQuade at St Patrick’s, Dumbarton on Saturday 3 January.

Many stood outside the packed church where Erin’s remains rested alongside those of her grandparents Jack and Lorraine Sweeney – the three of them among the six people killed in the horrific bin lorry crash in Glasgow city centre three days before Christmas.

Archbishop Tartaglia expressed everyone’s “deepest sympathy to Erin’s parents Jacqueline and Matthew, her young brothers Liam and theies to Erin’s parents. They all came to Mass with their daughter and granddaughter. Asking if it was possible to make any sense of it, the Archbishop stressed the importance of faith. “Erin was a young woman who practised her faith, so were her grandparents,” he said. “They all came to Mass in this church.”

“We are here this morning not as a people of faith making an act of faith and trust in God, asking God to console broken hearts and to embrace Erin, Jack and Lorraine with love.”

Reflecting on the Gospel passage, “Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened, I will give you rest,” the Archbishop pointed out: “God created us for life and freedom. And in this life we are free. We move as we wish. We are not puppets on a string, not robots controlled from afar.”

“At the same time we are not indestructible, not immune from forces which are too much for us. Our bodies cannot survive everything here on earth. These are the limitations of the human condition.

“But we are not meant for limitations. We are meant for life and glory. And in the resurrection, neither random forces nor chance tragedy, nor serious illness, nor even death itself will have any power over us.”

“In the resurrection, our bodies will be glorified and will be filled with eternal life. This is the hope that Jesus Christ – and He alone – holds out to us. This is what awaits Erin, and Jack and Lorraine, and today we speed them on with our prayers and supplications.”

The Archbishop assured Erin’s brokenhearted young friends that she had not “dropped into nothingness” but has gone to God “who will love and protect her”.

To her grief-stricken parents, who “will always feel the searing pain of her loss and cry for her”, the Archbishop comforted: “In a way you will also welcome that pain and those tears because they will fill you again with the warmth of the wonderful daughter you will always love.”

Two days later, at the funeral of 29-year-old primary school teacher Stephanie Tait in St Thomas’, Riddrie, Archbishop Tartaglia extended similar words of comfort to her grieving parents Alan and Margaret, sister Pamela and boyfriend Martin.

Canon Peter McBride was principal celebrant of the Funeral Mass at which some 800 mourners participated. Among them were Stephanie’s colleagues from St Philomena’s Primary, Provannal, along with pupils for whom she was an inspirational and admired teacher.

Canon McBride described Stephanie as “a modern woman with strong principles and values, she felt we were worth handling on to others”.

She was “very much at home” in St Thomas, having been in the church twice on the day before her tragic death for Sunday Mass and returning in the evening for a carol service. On the day she died, she had intended being at the parish penitential service. It was her strong faith, nurtured within a loving family and supportive school and parish community, which engaged her to dedicate her life to teaching children – offering a personal witness and “directly helping them to understand and feel God’s personal love for each of them.”

Canon McBride said her life had a “tremendous impact” on many people and enriched the lives of others.

“She dedicated and service as a teacher, and her ability to engage and inspire all of us with an intimacy we normally only associate with family or special friends, is a blessing we shall cherish for the rest of our lives.”

The funeral of the other two victims Gillian Ewing, 52, and Jacqueline Morton, 51, were held in Edinburgh and Glasgow, respectively.

Lourdes remembrance

ALTHOUGH their paths had never crossed until cruelly struck down by the runaway bin lorry, the two youngest victims of the Queen Street tragedy shared much in common.

Erin McQuade was in her first year at Glasgow University studying English, while Stephanie Tait had graduated with her teaching degree from the same seat of learning. The university is to name its first year poetry prize in honour of Erin.

Both young women practised their faith, going regularly to church and setting a good example among their friends and peers.

And it was through their faith commitment that each had been drawn to the shrine of Lourdes – going there to help their fellow pilgrims. Stephanie made the trip with Group 212 of the HSP who take part in the exhilarating Easter Week pilgrimage each year. Erin and her cousin Jane went via Disneyland Paris in 2008, on the threshold of their teenage years, under the wing of their aunt Arlene, and were welcomed by the Glasgow Lourdes Hospitalite.

From slightly reluctant recruits, the girls have grown themselves into the life of the Archdiocese of Glasgow pilgrim community and are looking forward to returning someday under their own steam.

In memory of Stephanie and Erin, and the other victims, people are invited to mark the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes (11 February) by praying especially for those still recovering from their injuries, the grieving families, and those who helped in any way following the tragedy.

The Glasgow Pilgrimage welcomes applications to join us in July 2015 in Lourdes.

Don’t let disability, age or infirmity stop you. Help is at hand. Every case is considered by our medical team.

A former pilgrim said: “Being part of the pilgrimage can be a very different experience of Lourdes please contact: Arlene Burns at arlene.burns@glasgow.ac.uk or on 0141 330 3486.

Terms and conditions apply.

Cardinal Winning Lecture
February 14 2015 • Sir Charles Wilson Lecture Theatre • 1 University Avenue

Archbishop Rino Fisichella
President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelisation

Lecture title: The Church in Contemporary Society
9.45 Arrival. Refreshments available.
10.15 Introduction (Professor Anne Anderson, Vice Principal)
10.30 Cardinal Winning Lecture (Archbishop Rino Fisichella)
11.20 Questions from the floor
11.45 Vote of Thanks (Rev. Dr. John Bollan)

NB. Fr. Ross Campbell will celebrate Mass at 9 am in Turnbull Hall, the Catholic Chaplaincy of the University of Glasgow.
Fresh look at events leading to martyrdom

TUESDAY 10 March marks the 400th anniversary of the death of Scotland’s only Catholic reformation martyr, St John Ogilvie SJ.

To mark the anniversary, Mass will be celebrated in St Andrew’s Cathedral on the Tuesday evening with representatives from all eight Scottish dioceses expected to attend. Two people from each of Glasgow’s 93 parishes have been invited.

On the evening before the Feast, Vespers will be offered in St Aloysius Church, Garnethill – home of the national shrine to St John Ogilvie – with members of other Christian churches and faith communities invited to attend.

To mark the anniversary, the Catholic Truth Society has published a pamphlet about St John Ogilvie, sub-titled A Jesuit in Disguise.

Born in Banffshire, John Ogilvie was raised in the then fledgling Calvinist tradition and was sent abroad to be educated. During a period of spiritual contemplation, he converted to Catholicism and was ordained a Jesuit priest.

Despite the risk of ministering in a reformed Protestant Scotland, he returned, disguised as a horse trader.

Author Eleanor McDowell describes this period as “a time of great religious upheaval”, but says Ogilvie was governed by his faith and conscience.

“Life for many Scots was overshadowed by intense suspicion and conflict,” she writes. “As a measure of safety and in order to preach the prohibited Mass in secret, Fr Ogilvie adopted the disguise of a horse dealer. But sadly, the course of his Scottish ministry lasted less than a year.”

A Jesuit in Disguise includes extracts from Ogilvie’s own writings, as well as descriptive accounts of his ministering in Scotland, his betrayal, arrest and imprisonment.

Dr McDowell also provides a detailed account of the events immediately prior to 10 March 1615 when he was hanged at Glasgow Cross.

“That evening his prayers were disturbed by the construction of the scaffold, in preparation for execution. When he faced the refined dignitaries he wore an ill-fitting, short coat that was torn under the arm. His gaoler, the one inclined to use force without pity, appropriated his ‘good’ coat. What need would the Jesuit have for it?”

Beyond John Ogilvie’s martyrdom, Dr McDowell also details the devotion shown to him by Catholics in Scotland and the cause for his beatification and canonisation.

In particular, she recounts the care experienced by Glasgow docker John Fagan, attributed as a miracle, and Mr Fagan’s attendance with his wife at the canonisation ceremony in Rome in October 1976.

In addition to the events surrounding the life, death and canonisation of St John Ogilvie, the author also draws out modern messages that can be learned from his witness.

“He died to defend the right of religious liberty during the highly charged period of the Scottish Reformation,” she writes.

“It is easy to look back on the Reformation and other times of religious conflict and point to discord and division. But the painful reality is that even today, with the benefit of hindsight, we must continue to strive towards a more inclusive and just society which respects religious freedom and a diverse Christian vision.”

A conference on Saturday 21 March will explore the life of St John Ogilvie and the Jesuit legacy in Scotland.

Hosted by the Scottish Catholic Historical Association, the Scottish Religious Culture Network at the University of Glasgow and St Aloysius College, it will take place in the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, St Vincent Street, Glasgow.

Professor Allan Macinnes of Strathclyde University will give the keynote lecture. Themes to be covered include:

• The life and times of John Ogilvie;
• Scottish Jesuits Continental links and networks;
• The Jesuit contribution to Scottish intellectual life and culture;
• The Jesuits and Scottish Catholic devotional life.

Registration is free but essential and includes lunch and refreshments on the day. Contact: darren.tierney@glasgow.ac.uk
Glasgow priest tasked with renewing devotion to Margaret Sinclair

By Vincent Toal

NINETY years ago, on 14 February 1925, Margaret Sinclair made her religious profession as a Poor Claren nun.

Before the year was out, the one-time Edinburgh factory worker had succumbed to the deadly grip of tuberculosis.

Today, her name lives on under the title ‘Venerable’ and her life of prayerful simplicity and selfless love continues to inspire.

Now, in a renewed ambition to see this model of Christian discipleship declared a saint, Glasgow priest Fr Joseph McAuley has been tasked with promoting her cause.

The parish priest of St Lucy’s, Cumbernauld, was invited to take on the role by Archbishop Leo Cushley of St Andrew’s and Edinburgh.

The Archbishop said: “As my delegate Fr McAuley will be working closely with me to promote Margaret’s cause and to spread the message of this fascinating young woman.

“Margaret led an exemplary life as a lay person, who was very much a modern woman, a woman of her times, and who was also an exemplary religious sister, albeit briefly, before she died at the age of 25.”

Almost immediately after her death in November 1925, a devotion to Margaret spread throughout Scotland and England, and was also carried to Holland and Australia. Fr McAuley recalled being introduced to this devotion by his mother, but attributed a more recent personal revival to the example of parishioners of St Benedict’s, Drumchapel.

“On a visit, I was pleasantly surprised that the parish community prayed the novena prayers to Margaret Sinclair each day after morning Mass,” he said. “As a result, over the past 10 years or so, I too have been praying to her each day”.

Margaret was born in Edinburgh’s Cowgate in 1900, one of eight children of Elizabeth Kelly and Andrew Sinclair, who did his best to provide for the family from his meagre wage as a dustman.

She left St Anne’s school, run by the Sisters of Mercy, at 14 and worked as French polisher during which time she became an active member of her trade union, later finding work with McVitie’s Biscuit factory.

In 1923, Margaret entered the enclosed order of Poor Clares in Notting Hill, London, taking the name Sister Mary Francis of the Five Wounds. Around the same time, her sister Bella joined the Little Sisters of the Poor.

As an extern, Sr Mary Francis was expected to provide for the enclosed nuns which involved daily begging expeditions around London.

Shortly after making her temporary vows in February 1925 she was diagnosed with tuberculosis and sent to a sanatorium at Warley, Essex, run by the Daughters of Charity.

Throughout the eight months leading up to her death, her steadfast joy and serenity in the midst of great suffering impacted on all who encountered her.

Within months her cause for canonisation was opened, with her spiritual director Fr Thomas Agius SJ, then priest at St Aloysius, Glasgow, testifying to her heroic character.

On 6 February 1978, Margaret was declared ‘Venerable’ by Pope Paul VI.

During his visit to Scotland in 1982, Pope John Paul II described Margaret as “one of God’s little ones, who through her very simplicity, was touched by God with the strength of real holiness of life, whether as a child, a young woman, an apprentice, a factory worker, a member of a trade union or a professed sister of religion”.

As he sets about renewing devotion to Venerable Margaret Sinclair, especially among younger people, Fr McAuley said: “This woman lived her life as all of us should aspire to. I am struck by the effect she had on people round about her, and see her as a real model for young people.”

Among early initiatives in reviving her cause, Mass will be celebrated at her tomb in St Patrick’s, Cowgate, Edinburgh, on the first Tuesday of each month at 7pm.

St John Ogilvie was hanged at Glasgow Cross on 10th March 1615.

The 400th Anniversary approaches.

Initiatives here in Holy Cross Church Building, Croy:

Launch on Sunday 1st March by Archbishop Emeritus M Conti (at 11.40am Mass; 10 with Blessing of Ogilvie Banner) & Jesuit Fr T Curtis (at 9.30am Mass);

Vigil of Prayer 9pm to Midnight on Monday 9th March

Initiatives in Holy Cross Parish Hall, Croy:

“The AGAP Ogilvie Play at 2pm on Sunday 13th March;

“A Highlander for Heaven: John Ogilvie” by Fr A Cameron (Former Parish Priest of St Jude & St John Ogilvie) at 7.30pm on Tuesday 3rd March;

“Christian Unity and the Pope” by Rt Rev Dr G Duncan (Bishop of Glasgow & Galloway of Episcopal Church) at 7.30pm on Wednesday 11th March;
importance of a sensitive and caring service. We understand the Scattering of Ashes. Cemetery; Memorial; Home; Chapel; Crematorium; We can provide appropriately chosen music. of a loved one with our Commemorate the life accompaniment for:

For the past 30 years, SPRED has been quietly but persistently raising awareness in parishes that people with learning disabilities belong as full participants in the life of parishes. Reflecting on the experience of having SPRED in their parish, many people have affirmed that it plays a big part in building up the faith of the whole community. Fr Neil Donnachie, parish priest of Holy Cross, Crosshill, gives testimony to this: “Like many another priest, I was uncertain how to care pastorally with people who had learning difficulties. Truth be told, I had fears and anxieties about how to relate to them. SPRED opened up for me a whole new way to see beyond learning difficulties and discover that these children, young adults and adults are parishioners just like everyone else.

“They are full members of the Church and SPRED allows me and lay catechists to include them in our parish life and help them participate actively in the liturgy and in the sacramental life of the parish. It has become a richly rewarding and essential part of my ministry as a parish priest.” Each week, across 17 parishes, 180 volunteer catechists and 150 people with learning disabilities gather for a two-hour faith formation session – helped along by 72 volunteer drivers. In SPRED, each volunteer works with one person with a learning disability, the same person all the time so that a bond of friendship develops. The two become companions on the journey of faith. The significance was expressed by a grateful parent: “A gift, no matter how expensive, would mean nothing to my daughter. The greatest gift you can give her is your time.” For parents, SPRED offers reassurance and encouragement as they see their son or daughter accepted by the community.

Another parent said: “At SPRED my son knows the people and trusts them. This helps him become calm inside. He comes home settled and happy.” The archdiocese supports this commitment through the provision of the SPRED Centre at St Philomena’s, Povernmill, where all the volunteers are trained. In order to develop this ministry – reaching out to more of our parishioners with disabilities – new volunteers are needed. Male and female, young and old – you are invited to an Open Evening on Tuesday 17 February, 7pm, at the SPRED Training Centre, 20 Robroyston Road G33 1EQ, round the corner from St Philomena’s church.

SPRED enriching life of parishes

The Knights of St Columba have begun a campaign to create a Bouquet of Spiritual Action and strengthen the bonds of faith. It got underway on Feast of the Holy Family, 28 December, and runs to the Feast of St John Paul II on 22 October.

Charlie McCluskey, Supreme Knight of the Knights of St Columba, said: “During these next 10 months we will be praying for various intentions but with a single thread – that we continue to live and offer a lifetime of faith and call for the return of family values in our communities, with respect for life from conception to the grave.” He added: “During this spiritual journey we ask anyone who wishes to participate by praying as individuals, groups, or families for the intention of that month. The power of prayer is a wonderful thing and I believe that with the support of the Holy Spirit, this bouquet of prayer will send out a powerful message and that our country will begin to put God back at the heart of our society.”

The intention for February is for all those who are sick and that a spirit of care and concern for the dignity of all human life will be shown especially in the treatment of the weakest and most vulnerable.

Always fun to give

A CHEQUE for £3000 has been presented to Alzheimer’s Scotland from the parish of St Gregory’s, Wyndford. The money was raised in their 10th annual charity fun run which took place last autumn.

Laura Stockwell from Alzheimer’s Scotland was on hand to receive the cheque from a number of delighted St Gregory’s parishioners and their parish priest Fr Allan Cameron.
An urgent plea for more people to take up a career in teaching is being issued as the Church in Scotland marks Catholic Education Week.

In a letter addressed to parishioners across the country, Archbishop Philip Tartaglia states: “Only with sufficient numbers of committed Catholic teachers, will our young people be able to know the joy of the Gospel and to proclaim it through their lives.

“We urge you to see the wonderful opportunities which a career in teaching offers – to help others, to develop their talents, to inspire them towards success, to guide them to know and celebrate their faith in Jesus.”

The urgency of the appeal reflects the general reality of teacher shortages experienced across the whole of Scotland and the particular need for suitably qualified recruits in the Catholic sector.

Over the past six years, the country has gone from having too many teachers to now having too few.

Writing as President of the Scottish Bishops’ Conference, Archbishop Tartaglia has urged school students to give serious consideration to teaching as an option when applying for university.

He added: “We ask univer-

By Vincent Toal
sity students to consider com-
pleting a postgraduate qualifi-
cation in education so that they can teach in primary or secondary schools. We urge parents, grandparents and teachers to encourage young people to research teaching as a serious career option.”

Last month, around 60 young people attended an in-
formation evening hosted by the Archdiocese of Glasgow RE department, with input from primary and secondary headteachers, local government church representatives and Glasgow University’s School of Education.

The evening offered information on courses, advice on submitting applications and preparing for interviews, as well as encouraging the prospective student teachers to be involved in the life of the Church and allow themselves to be mentored by experienced teachers.

While welcoming this initiative, Michael McGrath, di-
rector of the Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES), explained some of the complexities around the supply of teachers to Catholic schools.

“While the University of Glasgow is funded to provide qualified teachers who will be involved in the life of the Church and allow themselves to be mentored by experienced teachers.

While welcoming this initiative, Michael McGrath, di-
rector of the Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES), explained some of the complexities around the supply of teachers to Catholic schools.

“We need more young people to apply directly from school and more to apply as postgraduates,” he said. “We need more students to ask universities to place them as student teachers in Catholic schools. And we need more teachers coming forward to prepare for working as head-teachers of Catholic schools.”

Having started out in the classroom almost 40 years ago, Mr McGrath is keen to encourage people with ability and generosity to come forward to teach and inspire younger generations.

“I would appeal to anyone with the talent and the interest and the qualifications to apply for a teaching course,” he said. “The financial rewards will not be life-changing, but the satisfaction and sense of fulfilment will be.”

Michael Currie and Our Lady's High pupils with Archbishop Tartaglia and priests Picture by Paul McSherry

AFTER a 40-year teaching career, Michael Currie has retired as headteacher of Our Lady’s High, Cumbernauld.

The one-time maths teacher took up the head’s post 11 years ago, moving from St Mungo’s Academy where he was deputy head.

“I have absolutely loved my time at Our Lady’s,” he said. “The staff, school community and pupils have been wonderful.”

At a Mass of Thanksgiving in the school, Archbishop Philip Tartaglia presented Mr Currie with the Archdiocesan Medal in recognition of his outstanding service to Catholic education. Among the concelebrating priests was his brother, Fr Pat Currie, while his wife Bernadette and other family members were also present.

The new headteacher of Our Lady’s is Daniel McNulty whose appointment follows in the footsteps of former All Saints Secondary colleague, John McGhee, who took on the HT’s post at John Paul Academy six months ago.

Meanwhile in Dumbarton, Christopher Smith has become head of Our Lady and St Patrick’s, following the retirement of Charles Rooney.

Teaching in Catholic Schools

Would you like to be a Catholic teacher in the Catholic sector? At the School of Education at the University of Glasgow you can take the Catholic Teacher’s Certificate as part of our teacher education degrees, Masters in Education (MEduc) or Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDIE). Your school placements will focus on the Catholic sector and you will benefit from the expertise of our professional and academic colleagues. You can enjoy being part of the wider University community, particularly its lively Catholic chaplaincy.

Check out our website at: www.glasgow.ac.uk/education
Catholic education evolves with diversity

THE recent tragic events in Paris have given greater impetus to those who like to see all religions as essentially backward-looking movements.

While much of this criticism is predictable, it is still disconcerting to be reminded of the ignorance of religion and religious ways of thinking which lies at the heart of much debate on public affairs.

The open comments sections of some of the online reports on the Parisian tragedy make one weep at the crass misrepresentation of some of the key beliefs on Christianity.

How do we move this debate forward? Is there any possibility of addressing the serious misrepresentations of faith held by Christians? How can we challenge the pronouncements of those who believe that the teaching of Catholic doctrine is a mere appendix of the school curriculum?

By LEONARD FRANCHI, director of the ST. ANDREW’S FOUNDATION

We need to articulate our positive message of education as an act of love and mercy to all.

Use of language is important: we should not tire of pointing out that those who describe Catholic schools as a form of educational apartheid are simply mistaken. Catholic schools should be open to all; they are not ‘schools for Catholics’.

While most Catholics would agree with the statement that the distinctive vision of Catholic education should inform the life of the school, we need to nail what this means. There is scope for a much wider dialogue with state authorities over the aims and purpose of education.

The Church’s long tradition of education should give us the confidence to propose a view of education which is driven by a healthy anthroplogy.

At the heart of this vision is the human person as ‘imago Dei’ – made in the image and likeness of God. Human beings are not numbered components of electronic systems: human beings are persons and our education system must reflect this dignity.

One way of promoting the innate value of each human being is to appreciate the dignity and richness of the many cultural traditions present in contemporary Scotland.

Catholic teaching on education has evolved in line with the growing diversity of the Catholic school population.

The most recent document from the Congregation for Catholic Education has this to say:

Dialogue with both individuals and communities of other religions is motivated by the fact that we are all creatures of God. God is at work in every human being who, through reason, has perceived the mystery of God and recognizes universal values (Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools, 2013, 13)

There is no reason to suppose that a commitment to intercultural dialogue makes a weakening of Catholic identity. It could be argued that intercultural dialogue should be an essential feature of the Catholic school.

What is important is the way in which Catholic schools develop their Religious Education programmes.

Religious Education is the subject which carries responsibility for the systematic teaching of Catholic doctrine. While it is a key part of the wider school commitment to evangelise and catechise, it is a subject in its own right:

It counts that the teaching of religion is a field of study in Catholic schools. This it gives status, placing it alongside the other disciplines in the school’s curriculum, in a necessary interdisciplinary dialogue and not as a mere appendix (Educating to Intercultural Dialogue, 2013, 74).

Religious Education at its best, builds understanding while allowing people to engage positively with the implications for life of the Sacred Tradition we have inherited.

Allowing all people access to this body of teaching is an important step on the road to a civilization of love in which wounds are first cleansed then healed.

Recently tragically events in Paris have given greater impetus to those who like to see all religions as essentially backward-looking movements.

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How do we move this debate forward? Is there any possibility of addressing the serious misrepresentations of faith held by Christians? How can we challenge the pronouncements of those who believe that the teaching of Catholic doctrine is a mere appendix of the school curriculum?

By LEONARD FRANCHI, director of the ST. ANDREW’S FOUNDATION

We need to articulate our positive message of education as an act of love and mercy to all.

Use of language is important: we should not tire of pointing out that those who describe Catholic schools as a form of educational apartheid are simply mistaken. Catholic schools should be open to all; they are not ‘schools for Catholics’.

While most Catholics would agree with the statement that the distinctive vision of Catholic education should inform the life of the school, we need to nail what this means. There is scope for a much wider dialogue with state authorities over the aims and purpose of education.

The Church’s long tradition of education should give us the confidence to propose a view of education which is driven by a healthy anthroplogy.

At the heart of this vision is the human person as ‘imago Dei’ – made in the image and likeness of God. Human beings are not numbered components of electronic systems: human beings are persons and our education system must reflect this dignity.

One way of promoting the innate value of each human being is to appreciate the dignity and richness of the many cultural traditions present in contemporary Scotland.

Catholic teaching on education has evolved in line with the growing diversity of the Catholic school population.

The most recent document from the Congregation for Catholic Education has this to say:

Dialogue with both individuals and communities of other religions is motivated by the fact that we are all creatures of God. God is at work in every human being who, through reason, has perceived the mystery of God and recognizes universal values (Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools, 2013, 13)

There is no reason to suppose that a commitment to intercultural dialogue makes a weakening of Catholic identity. It could be argued that intercultural dialogue should be an essential feature of the Catholic school.

What is important is the way in which Catholic schools develop their Religious Education programmes.

Religious Education is the subject which carries responsibility for the systematic teaching of Catholic doctrine. While it is a key part of the wider school commitment to evangelise and catechise, it is a subject in its own right:

It counts that the teaching of religion is a field of study in Catholic schools. This it gives status, placing it alongside the other disciplines in the school’s curriculum, in a necessary interdisciplinary dialogue and not as a mere appendix (Educating to Intercultural Dialogue, 2013, 74).

Religious Education at its best, builds understanding while allowing people to engage positively with the implications for life of the Sacred Tradition we have inherited.

Allowing all people access to this body of teaching is an important step on the road to a civilization of love in which wounds are first cleansed then healed.
Six months ago, Fr Joe Lappin was nursing his blisters after trekking 500 miles of the Camino across northern Spain to Santiago de Compostela.

Now, as director of the Religious Education department of the Archdiocese of Glasgow, he is finding his feet as he familiarises himself with schools, teachers, advisors, catechists and students across almost 100 schools, within numerous parishes.

But he has an advantage, for before entering seminary he worked at the coalface in the classroom as an RE teacher.

“I’m happy to note that what was seen as innovative 20 years ago in St Aidan’s, Wishaw, is now considered good practice across the board,” he smiled.

At the same time, the learning environment is constantly changing, and he acknowledges that Catholic schools are to the fore in developing and nurturing the teaching skills needed to deliver quality education.

“We have some amazing Catholic leaders who are living in a world that might not be sympathetic to faith but are creating a wholesome environment in schools which manifest Gospel values through prayer, works of charity, right relationships and an openness to learning,” Fr Lappin attested.

“I have been quite inspired by how committed senior management are to Catholic education. They set the tone, motivate fellow staff, lead by example and have high expectations.

“A distinctive Catholic ethos does not happen by accident. A lot of people are making it happen, even in situations where many pupils are not Catholic.”

It is bolstering this climate and supporting teachers in their work which Fr Lappin sees as one of his main tasks.

“Every member of staff is on their own faith journey. Faith is more central in some people’s lives than others. Some are comfortable, others aren’t,” he points out.

“We need to provide opportunities for people to deepen their faith, to engage it at a personal level in the liturgy and through scripture with days of retreat and times for prayer and reflection.”

As well as good teachers, Catholic schools need outstanding witnesses to Christian faith.

“When youngsters see their teachers as people who live their faith, then that can make a huge impression on them.

“When they see them helping at the Wayside, befriending the homeless man or woman, and know that they find great joy in doing that, it is truly inspirational.

“And when they bring all that back to prayer and participation at Mass, it makes sense and has much deeper meaning.”

Alongside his colleagues in the RE department, some of whom have been on the road longer than he, Fr Lappin is also supporting the continued development of This Is Our Faith and the introduction of God’s Loving Plan.

This new resource guides teachers in helping children to develop healthy and respectful attitudes to their bodies and to relationships with family and friends. It aims to help children understand how love can be at the heart of their lives as part of God’s plan for each of them.

Fr Lappin’s companion on the Camino was Andrew McSorley, headteacher of St Thomas Aquinas Secondary in Glasgow’s west end, where he was chaplain at the time.

As part of his new role, as well as accompanying teachers, he is keen also to support chaplains whose presence within a school “provides another form of witness and can be a great source of support and motivation” for staff and pupils.

Rather than get his feet under the table of his new office in Clyde Street, Fr Lappin is happy to be out and about visiting schools – even if it causes a few more blisters.
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FEBRUARY 2015 • FLOURISH

EVENTS:

Inter-Faith Dialogue: An opportunity to explore and pray with the Scriptures of the major world faiths.

Wednesday, 25th February, 7–9pm – Judaism:

Wednesday, 25th March, 7–9pm – Sikhism:


The hymn of welcome – Tuloy po kayo sa aming bayan (Welcome to our home nation) – expressed the pride we felt at the blessings these days had in store.

Glimpse

People travelled far and wide within the island archipelago just to experience this moment. Just catching a glimpse of Pope Francis made it worthwhile.

A 66-year-old pilgrim walked for 36 days just to see Pope Francis in Tacloban, the city worst hit by typhoon Yolanda in November 2013.

It was seeing the devastation caused to families and properties, and the deaths of over 6,000 people which prompted Pope Francis to come and visit the Philippines.

This is a non-residential individually guided retreat with some input on the theme ‘Finding God in All Things’. In an atmosphere of quiet within the Centre suggestions from Scripture and from the tradition of prayer associated with St Ignatius Loyola will be offered. Saturday, 28th Feb & Sunday 1st March, 10.30am to 4.30pm both days

This message of loving concern was evident all throughout the Pope’s visit. Meeting with President Aquino and government authorities he urged them to reject corruption and lead lives of honesty, integrity and concern for the common good, upholding the human dignity of all people.

At Mass with bishops, priests, religious and seminarrians in Manila Cathedral, Pope Francis pointed out that “all pastoral ministry is born of love” and asked them to “show God’s mercy and compassion and become prophetic witnesses to the Gospel and put the poor at the centre of their ministry” so that the message of Christ is fully understood.

Dream

In his encounter with families, he encouraged everyone to be examples of holiness and prayer, and “to dream” saying that “when you lose the capacity to dream, you lose the capacity to love”.

The plight of street children was highlighted in the trip’s most poignant encounter with young people at Santo Tomas University.

Here, a girl of 12, a former street child, asked Pope Francis: “Why does God allow the children to be victims even if it’s no fault of their own? And why is it that only a few people help us?”

The tear-struck girl explained how “many children are neglected or abandoned by their parents and they experienced horrible things like drugs or prostitution”.

Throughout the visit, there were many moments for reflection and spiritual renewal of our relationship with Christ. For me, exiled in Glasgow, it brought back memories of 1981 when I was among the great assembly of people welcoming Pope John Paul II at Lanetia Park. I could understand why everyone wanted to be with Pope Francis. We have been blessed by his visit. We felt close to God and know that our faith is strengthened. Our prayers are that many will change through the encounter with God’s mercy and compassion.

At the closing Mass – attended by over six million people – Pope Francis invited the Filipino faithful to be “outstanding missionaries of the faith in Asia”.

He asked us to be witnesses to God’s truth and justice, to protect the family and to care for creation, and to build a world of justice, integrity and peace.

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Midwives vow never to give up on highest ideals

SEVEN long years and, eventually, failure at the Supreme Court. Yet they would do it all again in a heartbeat.

Midwives Mary Doogan and Connie Wood had no inkling of what lay ahead when they stood up for their right to conscientiously object to any participation in abortion after a reorganisation of services by managers at the Southern General Hospital.

“So strongly did we believe our case to be that it was only in the final days before it was heard that I actually contemplated the possibility of failure,” said Mary.

Supervise

“I am not at all an angry type of person but when I came back from London I did feel angry and, yes, it has taken its toll. But then I remember that it didn’t look like victory when Our Lord was hanging on the cross.

“Sometimes things have to be really bad before people stand up. Maybe the judgement will do that.”

In 2007, the decision to increase the numbers of earlier terminations for foetal abnormality being sent to the labour ward rather than gynaecology meant that, as labour ward co-ordinators, Mary and Connie would be required to delegate, support and supervise staff involved in the entire abortion process.

In effect, they would be exempt from only the administration of abortifacient drugs and the delivery of the baby which as Mary points out nobody can predict when that moment will be.”

The doctors’ right to practise midwifery as they had always done, without conflict of conscience, in harmony with colleagues who did not necessarily share their views and for the safe transition of the baby from the mother’s womb to independent life, was denied them.

They readily admit they were supported by the pair last December in the hospital board of management’s appeal against the earlier successful case at the Court of Appeal in Edinburgh. The initial emotions have given way to a more philosophical perspective while they consider the future and how they will pursue their options.

Lady Hale’s ruling went further than expected to state the conscience clause in the Abortion Act is not applicable to GPs or hospital doctors requested to prescribe abortifacient drugs.

“Fundamentally this is about normalising the termination of handicapped babies,” said Mary. “To me, it is a eguensics mentality. There is an ideology behind this that accepts and promotes the termination of these babies.”

In 1997 the Royal College of Midwives’ guidance lowered the broad scope of the conscientious objection provision in the 1967 Abortion Act. Mary and Connie attribute much of the apathy of other midwives to this change.

“We ask ourselves where are the midwives and why are they not speaking out,” said Connie. “But if you are not so strong in your beliefs then you just follow your professional body.”

Although, when the changes started to come in, they raked them with a number of our colleagues who remarked that they came into midwifery to bring babies safely into the world.”

Horrors

Now, more than their profound disappointment with the Royal College of Midwives, is their horror that a professional body should ally itself to the British Pregnancy Advisory Service, the UK’s single biggest provider of abortion.

The claim that the success of the case would have rendered “women’s care undeliverable in many NHS settings” is contemptuous to Mary and Connie.

“It is such a small amount of the workload and are very much the minority,” said Mary. “There were always other sisters on duty and they provided the care, so it was never an issue”.

The pair have said many times that it is not a Catholic issue, but they are sustained by their deep faith. They remain optimistic that, while they may have still to decide if they will pursue any legal avenues, the battle for conscientious right to objection will continue.

Much of their confidence comes from the growing numbers they see at SPUC youth conferences and in universities where there is significant pro-life work being undertaken by students.

As the law now stands, midwifery is an unlikely choice for a pro-lifer. There will be no chance of promotion beyond staff grade for a midwife with a conscientious objection. Even then their position could become untenable.

Midwifery at senior level is now only open to those who are prepared to end life as well as to welcome it, which may go some way to explain why the UK has a worrying shortage of midwives.

Servants of life

Your work seeks to bear witness by word and deed that human life is always sacred, valuable and sacrosanct. As such, it must be loved, defended and cared for.

While the Hippocratic Oath commits you to always be servants of life, the Gospel drives you further: to love life always, especially when it requires special care and attention.

The predominant school of thought sometimes leads to “false compassion” which holds that it is a benefit to women to promote abortion; an act of dignity to perform euthanasia. Faithfulness to the Gospel of life sometimes requires brave choices that go against the current, which in particular circumstances may become points of conscientious objection. This faithfulness brings with it many social consequences.

POPE FRANCIS TO CATHOLIC PHYSICIANS

Britain’s ‘tired establishment’ is intellectually bankrupt says BISHOP JOHN KEENAN in wake of Supreme Court ruling against Glasgow midwives Connie Wood and Mary Doogan

YEARS ago, Connie and Mary went into the midwifery profession following a call of the heart to be there for mums giving birth to their children.

They devoted themselves to this work faithfully while the NHS management decided to move an abortion provision into their unit and demanded that they make up the abortion rosters.

When Connie and Mary made a request to be exempted because of their beliefs they were refused, with the ultimatum that they would be sacked if they did not comply.

The NHS management pursued the case all the way to the highest court in the land at the cost of hundreds of thousands of pounds of taxpayers’ money, even though it meant the most minor of adjustments to get other nurses to see to the rosters.

This case was not about depriving women of their abortion services. It was about forcing nurses who had trained to deliver babies to become involved in medically killing them.

We should be in no doubt that this was a battle between competing proposals of the kind of society we want, a free and pro-life establishment that has run out of ideas and vision as to how to bring about a brighter and better future for our people.

Having committed itself to supporting a culture of death in the past generation it now sees that, to preserve this culture, it has to become an oppressor of basic human freedoms, with ultimate irony, in the name of being pro-choice. It has ended up in an intellectual bankruptcy plain to all to see.

Connie and Mary have been described as basic human right to freedom of belief in the course of their employment in the NHS. They have lost their jobs, their livelihoods and their legal arguments.

But they have won the respect, goodwill and admiration of thousands of their fellow citizens who work and hope for a better world tomorrow – for a society that celebrates heroes who refuse to be silenced as a voice for the voiceless and who will stand up for human life and freedom, whatever it takes, against any rationalizations and pressures wearing their worn out logic of meanness and fear.

As Pope Francis said: “In many quarters we encounter a general impression of weariness and aging, of a Europe no longer fertile and vibrant… which once inspired but seems to have lost its attraction, having been replaced by the bureaucratic technicalities of its institutions.

“Such an establishment has lost its right to inspire the young.”

Connie and Mary on the other hand, will be seen as pioneers of a fresh start for a new generation determined that it does not have to be this way.

The courageous and convincing witness of these two women, ready to take on the might of the establishment, no matter the personal cost, makes me and many others more certain than ever that the final victory of a free and pro-life generation is surely only a matter of time.
Missionary is Sri Lanka’s saint

CANONISING Sri Lanka’s first saint, who ministered to Catholics under persecution 300 years ago, Pope Francis spoke of the “fundamental human right” of religious freedom.

“Each individual must be free, alone or in association with others, to seek the truth, and to openly express his or her religious convictions, free from intimidation and external compulsion,” the Pope said before a congregation of more than 500,000 in the capital Colombo on 14 January.

St Joseph Vaz was a missionary from India who rebuilt the Catholic Church in Sri Lanka after its suppression by Dutch Protestant colonists.

Pope Francis called on Catholics today to emulate the new saint by spreading the Gospel with missionary zeal and sensitivity.

“St Joseph knew how to offer the truth and the beauty of the Gospel in a multi-religious context, with respect, dedication, perseverance and humility,” he said.

“We are called to go forth with the same zeal, the same courage of St Joseph, but also with his sensitivity, his reverence for others, his desire to share with them that word of grace which has the power to build them up. We are called to be missionary disciples.”

Noting that St Joseph had won the support of a Buddhist king by caring for victims of a smallpox epidemic, and thus “was allowed greater freedom to minister,” the Pope praised today’s Sri Lankan Catholics, who make up only seven percent of the population, for their charitable service to their neighbours.

The Church in Sri Lanka “makes no distinction of race, creed, tribe, status or religion in the service she provides through her schools, hospitals, clinics and many other charitable works,” he said. “All she asks is the freedom to carry out this mission.”

Pope Francis added: “As the life of St Joseph Vaz teaches us, genuine worship of God bears fruit not in discrimination, hatred and violence, but in respect for the sacredness of life, respect for the dignity and freedom of others, and loving commitment to the welfare of all.”

As the canonisation service began, a black wooden cross was carried in solemn procession before a congregation of more than 150,000, with the Pope speaking from the rostrum.

He urged St Joseph’s followers, “to be a Church that finds its strength in love and service and witness to the Gospel in a multi-religious context.”

Sr Frances will help you choose what’s right for you!

Visit: www.sistersofnazareth.com
Email: vocinfo@sistersofnazareth.com
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The London Province of the Redemptorists has just elected a Provincial Council made up entirely of Scots.

Brothers and priests from communities in England, Scotland and Zimbabwe met in Chapter at St Mary’s, Kinnoull, in early January.

Perhaps swayed by the Scottish hospitality, they managed to elect a trio of Scots to the posts of Provincial Superior, Vicar Provincial and Consultant.

Fr Ronald McAlinsh CSsR, who is based in Kinnoull, was a native of Perth, was elected to a second term as Superior. His Vicar Provincial is Fr Richard Reid CSsR, originally from Greencroft and now serving in Liverpool. New consultant Fr Gerard Mulligan CSsR is from Strathaven and is also based at Kinnoull.

As well as the elections and other business, the chapter discussed celebrations planned to mark the 150th anniversary of the Icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour being entrusted to the Redemptorists.

It was Pope Pius IX who in 1866 gave the 15th century Byzantine Icon to the Redemptorists telling them to make her known throughout the world.

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JESUITS in Britain

Interreligious dialogue is a necessary condition for peace in the world.

Pope Francis
**Peace prayer for war victims**

**PARISHIONERS of Holy Cross, Croy, marked the World Day of Prayer for Peace by laying a wreath at the parish memorial to those killed in war.**

The New Year’s Day service took place after Mass honouring Mary, Mother of God.

John McDonald of the parish Justice and Peace group said: “This year, to commemorate the start of the First World War, we remembered the soldiers and civilians of all nations who lost their lives.

“As a gesture of solidarity, we linked up with the parish of Heilig Kreuz (Holy Cross) at Volkssdorf, Germany, and exchanged prayers to be incorporated into joint services of remembrance.”

The prayer from the German parish recalled the Christmas truce of 1914, stating: “For a short moment, God’s peace could be felt on earth. Men of different nations and beliefs put down their arms and celebrated Christmas together.

“This short moment of peace did not have any visible effect on the later course of the war. But maybe it had changed the lives of those men and our lives as well.”

The Croy congregation also considered the theme of Day of Prayer for Peace – ‘No longer slaves but Brothers and Sisters’ – linking human trafficking and slavery with ongoing conflicts and violence.

Pupils from St Maurice’s High School Caritas group took part in the service, offering a prayer for peace as a candle was lit:

“Lord of all nations, Saviour and judge of all, remove from human hearts all bitterness and hate,

Let the sounds of strife, the cries of battle, be silenced for all eternity in Your loving and endless grace.”

The candle was placed beside a copy of the prayer at the Sacred Heart altar in the church and was lit each day throughout January.

**20 years of Housing Action**

A LAND free from homelessness, where all have a house and all are at home.

That was the ambitious commitment made by Christians from various church traditions when they came together in St Andrew’s Cathedral to mark 20 years of Scottish Churches Housing Association (SCHA).

The service on Saturday 17 January celebrated the work of churches throughout Scotland in supporting homeless people.

It also recognised the ongoing challenge of working towards a Scotland free from homelessness.

“Although homelessness figures are coming down, homelessness has not gone away,” said Alastair Cameron, SCHA chief executive.

“There are a lot of bad signs – increasing use of food banks, problems of poverty and child poverty, and the stigmatisation of people claiming benefits.

The number of homeless households in Scotland dropped from a peak of over 60,000 in 2006 to around 36,500 last year.

“I think it’s important that churches are doing something that makes a difference to lives of people in major ways, supporting individuals and groups that may have nothing to do with their churches but who are in need of support.”

SCHA acts as a stimulus to support activities at a local level, raises awareness about homelessness and encourages churches to make surplus property available for affordable housing.

Miriam McHardy, who represents the Scottish Catholic Bishops on the SCHA management board, said: “We draw our strength from the dedication of individuals and groups throughout Scotland who are committed to justice for people experiencing homelessness.

“We encourage and support churches addressing homelessness in their communities – by planting new, locally controlled projects, such as starter packs, befriending, and lodgings schemes.”

In Glasgow, where SCHA was launched in January 1995, one of the first projects to benefit from its support was the Starter Packs initiative based in Govan.

The project ensures a ready supply of everyday household items like cutlery, crockery, pots and pans, cleaning materials and linens for people setting up home or taking up a tenancy.

SCHA has helped establish another 25 similar fresh start or start-up schemes across Scotland.

**St Dot’s living legacy**

Maureen Coyle reflects on the legacy of fellow Notre Dame Sister, Dorothy Stang, who was brutally murdered ten years ago.

At her funeral, which was attended by over 200,000 mourners, someone exclaimed: “Sister Dorothy we are not burying you, we are planting you.”

From the seed of the martyr new life has burst forth. Even in the midst of continued violence and threatening situations, hope abounds.

The people of the Amazon, previously oppressed and repressed, now take on their own destiny.

A people who were afraid of the loggers and gunmen, who threatened their land and families, have been emboldened to confront those who would deprive them of their livelihood.

People have been educated and now organise themselves into communities with a voice.

They have created channels for communications where the official ones are denied them.

Local media portrayed the Sisters, the farmers and the land pastoral team as the villains of the piece.

Although the murderers and those who hired them were found guilty and given long sentences, all are free thanks to courage and intimidation.

But more people are taking a stance, challenging such injustices, violence and murder. They are sustained by a profound and irrepressible hope and belief in a future in which they reverence as Sister Dorothy’s legacy.

In Anapu, an annual pilgrimage has been established, travelling the road of Dot’s last journey.

Hundreds take part, celebrating her life which was lived planting the seeds of justice for the poor and living out the Gospel values.

Sister Dorothy lives on in the people who pray to her, honour her memory and who imitate her values respecting all God’s creation.

Sr Maureen is a member of the Justice and Peace group in St Jude and St John Ogilvie, Barlanark.
Festina lente – Mark makes haste towards Lent

In the first two Sundays, we have Jesus teaching in the local synagogue and the silencing of an unclean spirit, a miracle cure at home and countless cures of sick people who were brought to him. All of these are listed in a narrative that suggests great haste, not least because they are all carried out in a single day!

On the third Sunday, the pace slows down and there is a very poignant meeting between Jesus and a leper: the compassion of Jesus is clearly shown here.

The last Sunday – the first Sunday of Lent – has Mark’s succinct account of Jesus’ ‘testing’ just prior to the beginning of his ministry.

All passages are taken from the first chapter of Mark, and if they do nothing else, they demonstrate the urgency with which Jesus proclaims in word and action that God’s kingdom is at hand. We need to understand that it is part and parcel of human existence.

This is Good News for everyone who embraces it.

1 February
4th Sunday of Year (B)
Mark 1:21–28

The first miracle listed in Mark’s gospel is performed in the context of the very heart of the Jewish religious system – in the synagogue, and on the Sabbath.

The original Greek text implies that Jesus was in the habit of going to the synagogue at Capernaum on the Sabbath to teach. Even more significant is the reaction of the synagogue congregation to his teaching: it was new and it carried authority – unlike the teaching of the local scribes!

Suddenly, there is uprooted from a man possessed by an unclean spirit. We simply do not know what this was, so speculation is pointless; we do know however that the man’s condition seriously limited his well-being.

Jesus silences the unclean spirit with a word (no action is performed, so he cannot be accused of doing work on the Sabbath). The people are – not surprisingly – even more amazed. They describe Jesus’ action as ‘a new teaching’; they are impressed by this demonstration of Jesus’ authority.

Not only does he speak of the good news of God’s kingdom – he makes it a reality in the brokenness of people’s lives.

8 February
5th Sunday of Year (B)
Mark 1:29–39

Miracles come thick and fast in the early stages of Mark’s gospel.

On leaving the synagogue, Jesus learns that Simon’s mother in law is in bed with a fever. We must assume that her life is in danger and she is suffering from more than a mere temperature!

Like the previous miracle (this episode follows immediately after the synagogue story), this one gives us insights into what Jesus has come on earth to do.

He takes the sick woman by the hand and ‘raises her up’. The Jerusalem Bible translation says ‘helped her up’, which is weak, because the original Greek word is the one St. Paul uses to describe how God ‘raised Jesus from the dead’.

This is our first indication that Jesus is the one who gives new, resurrected life to those who meet him.

15 February
6th Sunday of Year (B)
Mark 1:32–45

This is a strange tale, because it seems to be in the wrong place in the narrative!

When we left last week’s gospel, Jesus had been surrounded by people; so much so that he withdrew from the crowds there and went off to Galilee to preach in synagogues and to cast out evil spirits. It is strange therefore that we find him very much alone, at an unspecified location and without any disciples. This is particularly strange since the narrative takes up from where it left off immediately after this story. All of this suggests that Mark has deliberately inserted this story here, although it originated at another point in Jesus’ ministry.

The story is a simple one. An outcast – a leper – approaches Jesus and says ‘If you want to, you can cure me’. Jesus retorts, ‘of course I want to!’. He stretches out his hand and touches the man and cures him, telling him to go and show himself to the priest as Moses had instructed.

This is another example of how Jesus gives a new lease of life to those whose lives are damaged. There is however another aspect to this story.

When Jesus touches the leper, he takes on the exclusion which is the fate of the leper, who was not allowed into the presence of those not affected by the disease. Lepers were excluded, even by their own families; in effect, they ceased to exist.

Significantly, we are told Jesus had to stay in places where no one lived (like a leper, in other words) while the former leper can now move around in society, telling what Jesus had done for him. This is an example of role reversal:

Jesu s takes on the condition of the one he heals.

This is precisely what happens when Jesus dies on the cross: he changes place with sinful humanity. He relinquishes his own life that we might have the fullness of life. Today’s episode is, in effect, a passion prophecy!

22 February
1st Sunday of Lent (B)
Mark 1:12–15

Lent has begun, and we are back almost to the beginning of the first chapter of Mark – ‘Jesus’ time of testing in the desert, immediately following his baptism.

Mark’s version of the ‘temptations’, as they are usually called, is much shorter than Matthew and Luke; unlike them, he does not specify what Jesus undergoes.

We read only that the Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert after he had been tempted (put the test by) Satan, was with the wild beasts and was looked after by the angels.

The outcome of this ‘trial period’ is not defined, but we must conclude that Jesus was victorious because immediately following this, he proclaims Good News that ‘the kingdom of God is at hand’.

Jesus can only proclaim Good News and say that the kingdom has arrived if he has overcome the power of evil during his desert ‘struggle’.

It is important to note that ‘repent’ is a translation of the Greek word which means ‘change your mind’, and in itself has nothing to do with feelings of contrition.

As hearers of the Gospel, we need to undergo a change of thinking that strengthens the realisation that the closeness of God’s kingdom is indeed the Good News which should influence our lives.
Lots to figure in diocesan accounts

THE latest annual accounts for the Archdiocese of Glasgow up to 31 March 2014 were signed off by the trustees in early December.

The financial statements include the assets, liabilities and transactions of the curial funds and the 93 parishes which make up the archdiocese.

A surplus of £1,467,238 on curial funds for the year (2013: £2,087,627) and a deficit of £42,994 on parochial funds (2013: surplus £710,093) are recorded.

Curial net current assets were £1,654,600 at 31 March 2014 (2013: £2,118,110) and parochial net current assets were £5,573,339 (2013: £5,548,938).

Curial Funds are used to support the Archbishop in providing diocesan services and pastoral care and to meet the costs of the central administration. Some 50 staff are employed in curial activity, with the highest paid employees on salary costs – including three priests.

The archdiocese has a hand of £60,000 to £80,000 totaling over a million pounds. It also invested in equities directly or through mutual funds – mainly involved in the manufacture or the supply of goods and services which would be in conflict with the teachings of the Gospel and the social teachings of the Catholic Church, particularly those which promote the dignity of the human person, the sanctity of human life and the imperative of peace on earth”.

The trustees are Archbishop Philip Tartaglia, Mgr Paul Conroy (Vicar General); Canon Peter Gallagher (Treasurer), Canon John McAuley and Mgr Chris McElroy.

Thanking the Catholic community for “the consistent and generous level” of its giving, the trustees also assure a “continuous review and reduction of expenditure where possible”.

Full year-end accounts are available on the AoG website: www.rcag.org.uk

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### Special collections

Over £1.25 million was donated by the parishioners of the Archdiocese of Glasgow to diocesan and non-diocesan (SCIAF, Mission Scotland, Mission appeals and other) special collections during 2013/14. The figures for diocesan collections are below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2013/14 (£)</th>
<th>Cumulative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro Life</td>
<td>£37,305</td>
<td>£37,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice and Peace</td>
<td>£36,720</td>
<td>£36,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Sunday</td>
<td>£37,142</td>
<td>£37,142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lenten Alms</td>
<td>£115,789</td>
<td>£115,789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>£37,441</td>
<td>£37,441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminary Students</td>
<td>£61,058</td>
<td>£61,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisted Parishes (£x4)</td>
<td>£120,553</td>
<td>£120,553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£457,008</strong></td>
<td><strong>£457,008</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Due to the date of Easter, part of the 2014 Lenten Alms collection for sick and retired clergy will be included in 2014/15.

### Breakdown of ‘Parish Life’ grants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2013/14 (£)</th>
<th>Cumulative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Diaconate</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>126,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Formation</td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td>63,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Ministry</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>278,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts Project</td>
<td>43,000</td>
<td>263,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPRED</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage Preparation</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecumenical Officer</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>102,700</strong></td>
<td><strong>802,300</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The professional fees were paid to a company to develop and manage the campaign. The grants to the Archdiocese (from investment income) have been used to support Parish Life (£802,300), Care of Clergy (£287,099) and, until 2011, the refurbishment of St Andrew’s Cathedral (£105,198).
Milestone signals redoubling of effort to tackle poverty

By Alistair Dutton
Director of SCIAF

It’s a sad fact that around 60 per cent of hungry people in the world today are women. Discrimination means they are less likely to receive the seeds, farm tools and training they need compared to men, and when a crisis hits, they’re more likely to eat less so their family can have more.

The WEE BOX appeal tells the story of Mary Jackson, a farmer in Malawi whose life has been transformed thanks to your help. Mary is just one of thousands of women we support in countries like Malawi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

She told us: “Before, we were very poor. The children had to go to bed on empty stomachs. It was hard for us to keep them in school when they were hungry and they often missed lessons.”

The project gave us training in new ways of farming so we could grow more food. I received maize seeds, sweet potato, peas and peanuts. I was able to borrow money to set up a small business.

“Now I can give my children proper meals. When their shoes wear out, I can replace them. We can afford soap for washing. You’ve made real changes in my life and in the community.”

In this special anniversary year we’ve secured aid match funding from the UK government which means that every £1 donated to the WEE BOX appeal before 17 May will be doubled – so the money you give will have twice the impact.

In addition to giving something up and putting the money saved in a WEE BOX, we can also look at what more we can do for others in Lent – how we can help to build a more just world. That’s why we’re encouraging people to reflect on the issue of climate change and the impact our own lifestyles can have. We’re hoping supporters will commit to walking or cycling instead of taking the car for short journeys, or sharing car journeys with friends to help reduce their impact on the planet.

We would also like as many people as possible to write to the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and ask what she’s doing to make tackling climate change a priority of her Government.

As we mark our 50th anniversary, it’s a time for us to reflect on the huge difference we’ve made and thank those who have made it possible.

It’s also an opportunity to look at what more we can do to make the Church’s mission of creating a more just world a reality.

With your support, we’ve given millions of families a better chance in life and hope for the future. We won’t stop while they need our help.