



Lord, Let Glasgow Flourish by the preaching of Thy Word and the praising of Thy Name

FLOURISH

FEBRUARY 2020

JOURNAL OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF GLASGOW

70p

God's love letter to you and me

GOD has written a love letter to you ... treasure it and read it every day. That was the powerful message of Pope Francis as he marked the Church's first ever "Sunday of the Word of God".

The new annual occurrence has been introduced by the Holy Father to encourage Catholics to read the scriptures on a daily basis.

And the Pope has some practical advice on how to do it.

Mass

At a special Mass in Rome at which he distributed Bibles to people representing every stage of life, he said: "Dear brothers and sisters, let us make room in our lives for the word of God! Each day, let us read a verse or two of the Bible."

"Let us begin with the Gospel: let us keep it open on our table, carry it in our pocket, read it on our mobile phones, and allow it to inspire us daily."

"We will discover that God is close to us, that he dispels our darkness and, with great love, leads our lives into deep waters."



"Change your life," Francis encouraged, "for a new way of living has begun. The time when you lived for yourself is over; now is the time for living with and for God, with and for others, with and for love."

"That is why the Lord gives you his word, so that you can receive it like a love letter he has written to you, to help you realise that he is at your side. His word consoles and encourages us."

Archbishop Tartaglia of-

fered his enthusiastic backing to the effort. He said: "The Pope's initiative is a very welcome reminder to us that we should make more use of the scriptures in our daily life."

"There are many pocket-sized editions of the New Testament available and it has been calculated that by reading just one chapter a day, starting now, the whole New Testament will be read by October."

"I also recommend the prac-

tice of *Lectio Divina* – placing oneself in the story described in the pages of the Gospel and slowly absorbing the great richness of the Word while applying it to our daily lives."

Youth

"I have worked with our Youth Department in running sessions on *Lectio Divina* for young people and they enjoy it, but it's something that people of all ages can derive great benefit from."



Archbishop Tartaglia and Canon Hill check out progress

Golden cross will crown St Matthew's

ARCHBISHOP Tartaglia swapped his high hat for a hard hat as he dropped in to see the progress at St Matthew's Church, Bishopbriggs. And Parish Priest and *Flourish* columnist, Canon Robert Hill was on hand to show him round the refurbished town centre building.

Work is almost complete on the popular church, which has been closed for months to allow a £1.2m refurbishment to go ahead.

The results are awesome as Archbishop Tartaglia was able to see for himself.

The building has been opened up to provide much

more light, new aisles have been created, a new altar and baptismal font installed, along with new seating and a new sound system and new windows.

A cross on the old church roof has been gilded and will be highlighted by a spotlight during the hours of darkness creating a new and powerful landmark at the very heart of the town.

Archbishop Tartaglia pronounced himself delighted with the progress and promised to be back later this spring when the church building will once more be open for worship.



Archbishop's plea on global warming page 3



Joy of our Syro-Malabar Catholics pages 4–5



The Two Popes: fact and fiction page 15

Archbishop's Diary

FEBRUARY 2020

Mon 3rd: 10am – Mass for the Golden Jubilee of our Lady of the Rosary Primary School in Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Cardonald

Tues 4th: 9.30am – Catechesis on the Eucharist for P4 Teachers

Thurs 6th: 7pm – Confirmations – St Mary Immaculate

Mon 17th: 7pm – Confirmations – Holy Cross, Crosshill

Tues 18th: 7pm – Confirmations – St Bartholomew's

Wed 19th: 7pm – Confirmations – Christ the King

Thurs 20th: 12noon – Meeting of Glasgow Church Leaders

Fri 21st: 10.30am – Education Liaison Meeting – SCES

Sat 22nd: 1pm – Mass for 40 Days for Life – St Andrew's Cathedral Glasgow

Mon 24th: 11am – Flourish Board Meeting; 4pm – SCES Executive Board Meeting

Tues 25th: 7pm – Confirmations – Christ the King

Fri 28th: 7pm – Confirmations – St Andrew's Cathedral

Auschwitz: we must never forget



As the world paused to recall the horrors of the holocaust last month, Pope Francis issued an appeal to the world to learn the lessons of the past.

Addressing a group of Jewish leaders the Pope said: "In 2016, I went to Auschwitz to reflect and to pray in silence. In our world, with its whirlwind of activity, we find it hard to pause, to look within and to listen in silence to the plea of suffering humanity."

Our consumerist society also squanders words: how many unhelpful words are spoken, how much time is wasted in arguing, accusing, shouting insults, without a real concern for what we say. Silence, on the other hand, helps to keep memory alive. If we lose our memory, we destroy our future. May the anniversary of the unspeakable cruelty that humanity learned of 75 years ago serve as a summons to pause, to be still and to remember. We need to do this, lest we become indifferent.

It is troubling to see, in many parts of the world, an in-

crease in selfishness and indifference, lack of concern for others and the attitude that says life is good as long as it is good for me, and when things go wrong, anger and malice are unleashed. This creates a fertile ground for the forms of factionalism and populism we see around us, where hatred quickly springs up. Hatred and the sowing of evil. Even recently, we have witnessed a barbaric resurgence of cases of anti-semitism. Once more I firmly condemn every form of anti-semitism.

Victims

To tackle the cause of the problem, however, we must commit ourselves also to tilling the soil in which hatred grows and sowing peace instead. For it is through integration and seeking to understand others that we more effectively protect ourselves.

Hence it is urgent to reintegrate those who are marginalized, to reach out to those far away, to support those ignored for lack of resources or funds, and assist to those who are victims of intolerance and discrimination.



Arts Project is all at sea in preparation for Lent 2020

■ This AGAP rehearsal for the forthcoming production, 'Star of the Sea' was made extra special by a visit from representatives of Stella Maris, including Fr Bruno Ciceri from the Vatican, Martin Foley from London and Regional Scottish Chaplain, Deacon Joe O'Donnell. The play, written and directed by Stephen Callaghan, will be performed at Lentfest, Edinburgh Fringe and at the International Congress taking place in Glasgow to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Stella Maris in October.

All Saints launch

A charity which works in partnership with All Saints Secondary in Barmulloch has had its official launch after months of building up relationships in the school which takes in young people from Barmulloch, Balornock, Blackhill, Springburn and Milton.

Youth Initiatives (Scotland), is based on a model originally founded in Belfast in 1991 and aims to awaken hope, inspire initiative and mobilise young people to make a vital contribution to their communities.

Charity chief Andy Jordan said: "We worked with hundreds of people from All Saints over the past six months and everyone involved found the experience very positive."

"We ran a two-week summer school, a help the homeless project and recruited over 60 students for various projects in the school. We also organised a retreat for 52 pupils from four different schools who are taking part in the Caritas award and it was great to see their enthusiasm"

For more information, contact Youth Initiatives Scotland by email at andyj@youthinitiatives.com on their website www.youthinitiativescot.com



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"I am the Immaculate Conception"
(Pastoral Theme 2020)



Cumbernauld adoration plan

THERE'S a new opportunity for prayer for Cumbernauld Catholics thanks to a new initiative by the parish of Sacred Heart in the town.

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament will henceforth take place every first Friday in the

Sacred Heart Day Chapel at 6.00 pm, followed by Evening Prayer of the Church at 6.45 pm and Benediction of the Blessed sacrament at 7.00 pm. Parish Priest Fr Campbell invites all Catholics in the area to use the new initiative to come along and pray for vocations.

Archbishop: global warming is also a spiritual issue

CATHOLICS need to see the challenge of global warming as a spiritual as well as practical issue... that was the message of Archbishop Tartaglia as Glasgow prepares to host the next UN Climate Change Conference – known as COP 26 – in November.

Archbishop Tartaglia offered his reflections as he celebrated the annual Choral Mass at Glasgow University.

The Archbishop used his sermon to students and academics to highlight the climate change emergency, setting it in a fully human – and spiritual – context.

He said: “It is beyond dispute that the subject of climate change and global warming is relevant to the common good of God’s children. To that effect, there will be a massive gathering here in Glasgow in November to consider what action the world should take to mitigate against the worst effects of climate change and to protect those who are most vulnerable.

“In Pope Francis’ encyclical, *Laudato Si*, on Care for our Common Home he says

that we have to ‘acknowledge our sins against creation.’ What are these sins of which we should repent? Quoting the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the Pope reminds us of these sins: ‘For human beings to destroy biological diversity... by causing changes in its climate... to contaminate the earth’s waters, its land, its air and its life – these are sins.’

“How do we repent of these sins? Pope Francis borrows a term from Pope St John Paul II. We need to open ourselves to a ‘global ecological conversion’, in which we renew and maintain the inseparable bond between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace.

“The response to climate change and global warming is not just about reducing emissions or about any other single measure, but about living the bond between care for nature, justice for people, the common good of society and a clear conscience in human beings...

“So when COP 26 comes around, the task of the Church will be to encourage the authorities to seek solutions to climate change that avoid proposals that are ideological, su-



Picture by Paul McSherry

perficial or reductionist...

“The scientific consensus is that if the earth warms another few degrees, great harm will be done across the board to the environment, to people, and other species. There may be monumental disagreements about this at COP 26 and about what to do about this.

The Church needs to help everyone to maintain civil discourse and respect different opinions.

Solutions

“The Church will also need to encourage everyone to reflect on the science in a way that produces solutions that

favour an integral ecology of the person, and a global ecological conversion that takes into account our relationship with God, with each other, with the human community and with the natural world.

“Here’s my admonition to COP 26: Reductionist solutions will not work. People

will rebel against them because they are likely to be inhuman. Forgetfulness of God will lead as it always does to injustice against man and yet more damage to the creation. Only an integral ecology will be a successful ecology. That is what I, as a Christian, hope for from COP26.”

Documentary reveals Pope Benedict’s hidden life

A NEW documentary for German television has revealed for the first time the private life of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI in the modern monastery within Vatican City State where he now lives.

The film, made at the end of last year reveals the great Joseph Ratzinger as he is today, in all his fragility.

His lucidity has not faded, but age has left its mark. Pope Benedict speaks with a low voice and moves around in a wheelchair. He spends his days in prayer and study, in the company of his faithful secretary Archbishop Georg Gänswein and his many and beloved books.

In the documentary broadcast by Bayerischer Rundfunk the 92-year-old speaks only three times and his voice is hardly audible. “I had a great voice, but it no longer works,” says Benedict.

“One sees that his strength



is no longer there,” explains Archbishop Georg Gänswein. “His voice is simply broken, weaker”, but what is “important” for him is “good company” that “raises his heart”.

“His decision to resign,” – says Gänswein – “was a long, well-prayed and painful decision, which he never regretted. The pope is completely at peace with himself.”

The German Pope’s physical appearance has deteriorated significantly over the past two years, as is clear from recent photos.

The documentary, entitled “The Little Bavaria at the Vatican”, also features the brother of the pope emeritus, Monsignor Georg Ratzinger (who is now 95 years old) and Father Bruno Fink, who was



Ratzinger’s secretary from 1978 to 1983, when the future pope was Archbishop of Munich.

Archbishop Gänswein shows viewers round the former monastery of Mater Ecclesiae, the residence of the pope emeritus, in the heart of the Vatican gardens. Here we see Benedict XVI in his study, surrounded by books and memorabilia that remind him of Bavaria, and then in the chapel and on a bench in the Vatican gardens.

Filmed in his study, the former pope explains that he has used it for 65 years and the secretary specifies that precisely at that desk the theologian Ratzinger wrote most of his works, many of which

have become worldwide best-sellers, translated into numerous languages.

“The life of the theology professor Joseph Ratzinger is reflected in thousands of books,” notes the author of the documentary, Tassilo Forchheimer. He added: “Benedict says that for him all the phases of his life are contained in the books and he takes care of them every day”.

The documentary is shot with great respect for the pope emeritus and his current conditions. Viewers are told that Ratzinger still leads a regulated life, starting with morning Mass, celebrated every day with Monsignor Gänswein at 7:30 in his private chapel.

We also learn that Joseph Ratzinger is still fond of Bavarian sweets and that traditional German and Italian dishes are served on separate days, because all together would be “too much” for him. The meals are cooked by Italian women of the

Memores Domini association (which is an offshoot of the Communion and Liberation Movement) who have become experts in Bavarian cuisine!

Among the memorabilia of Bavarian origin that are found in the residence there are photographs of Benedict’s parents and siblings (his sister Maria died in 1991) and there is a painting of Saint Augustine of Hippo which was given to him in 1977 when he was Archbishop of Munich.

In the chapel there is a replica (the original is located in the Marienplatz in Munich) of the statue of the patroness of Bavaria, the Madonna with the Child Jesus and the sceptre in her hand, a gift from a former Bavarian Prime Minister.

His homeland is very present in the heart of Benedict XVI. “I am always very close to Bavaria and every night I entrust our state to the Lord”, explains the pope emeritus. “In my heart, I am always tied to Bavaria”.



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Faith with a smile down Pollok way

JOIN the Syro-Malabar community at their weekly Mass – and really, you should – and you will see a people who take their faith very seriously but with such an outpouring of joy that it would take a heart of granite not to be uplifted.

It's a Sunday afternoon in St Conval's in Pollok, when I visit. The 2pm Mass is about to begin and the southside church, opened almost exactly 64 years ago to cope with a rapidly growing Catholic community in the area, is thronged with families.

Here, faith is family and faith is infectious. Oh yes... and everyone smiles.

Many in the several hundred-strong congregation are wearing the national dress of Kerala, Southern India, where

Glasgow's Catholic culture has changed significantly over recent years through the arrival in the city of Catholics from all over the world who have chosen to make their home in the Archdiocese. The arrival of Catholics from India, Poland, the Philippines, Italy, China and many countries of Africa has led to a new enrichment of the faith traditions of Glasgow. In a new series, **BRIAN SWANSON** sets out to meet the Archdiocese's "new Catholics" and discover the truly universal face of the local Church

When the Eparchy was created Archbishop Tartaglia said: "The Catholic Church in Scotland shares the joy of our Syro-Malabar communities which are notable for their religious devotion and for the seriousness with which they regard Catholic family life and the transmission of the faith to their young people and children."

Devotion

The first members of the Syro-Malabar Catholics came to the Archdiocese 13 years ago to work primarily in health care and as that sector grew so did their numbers which now stand at around 450.

Because of that growth their Bishop, Mar Joseph Srampickal, who is based in Preston, contacted the Archdiocese to help find a permanent place of worship for the Syro-Malabar community here in Glasgow.

In the early days they used a number of churches including Our Lady and St. George's in Penilee, Immaculate Conception, Maryhill and more recently St Bernard's, South Nitshill and St Robert Bellarmine's in Househill-wood.

But what the community desperately needed was a church with a hall large enough for children's catechesis and St Conval's, was, literally, an answer to their prayers.

the community originates, while the children incarnate the phrase 'wearing your Sunday best'.

Some parishioners from other parts of the Archdiocese may care to skip the next sentence: almost 150 children aged between 4 and 17 attend Mass here each week then spend an hour afterwards at

Catechism classes.

The growth of the community in Glasgow, as elsewhere in the UK, has been so dramatic in the past few years that in 2016 Pope Francis created a UK-wide Eparchy, similar to a diocese, for the 40,000 Catholics of the Syro-Malabar Rite living in Britain including those in Scotland.

Fact box

THE Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, with four million members worldwide and growing rapidly, traces its origin to the arrival of St Thomas the Apostle in India around 52 AD where tradition says that he built seven churches in Kerala, Southern India.

The Saint was martyred in Chennai, formerly known as Madras, but the church he founded is now one of 22 Eastern Catholic Churches in full communion with Rome and the second largest in the world, after the Ukrainian Church.

When their first UK-based Bishop, Right Reverend Mar Joseph Srampickal was ordained in October 2016, the ceremony, at Preston North End's Deepdale football stadium, attracted a crowd of 12,000.

The title Mar means 'my lord' and is the way the community refer to bishops and saints out of respect.

There are around 40,000 Syro-Malabar Catholics in the UK with the largest concentration in Preston in the Diocese of Lancaster where they have their own Cathedral dedicated to St Alphonsa, India's first female saint.



Pictures by Paul McSherry



However, the move to St Conval's which was completed by Christmas 2018, could not have been achieved without the enthusiastic backing of Parish Priest, Father Martin Kane, members of St Conval's parish and the wholehearted support throughout from Archbishop Tartaglia.

Prayers

In a response to a report by Father Kane backing the move, the Archbishop replied: "The Syro-Malabar Catholics in Glasgow are a young and lively community with 150 children gathering for Mass and catechesis every Sunday with their families. The presence of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Community in St Conval's Parish will be a blessing for St Conval's and will help secure the future of the parish in times of some uncertainty."

Father Kane said: "The Syro-Malabar community put families at the very heart of everything they do. They are enthusiastic, deeply committed and incredibly well organised – no messing about."

"They spend hours organising lots of programmes and courses for children, teenagers, families, engaged couples and newlyweds. And they are all very well attended – people really want to be there."

"The Bible knowledge of the children and young people is especially impressive – they've caught me out a few times I can tell you."

"Another thing I notice is that a lot of men in the community get closely involved in everything and don't just

leave it to their priest and a few others. That's good because it gives young people, especially young guys, good role models."

Father Binu, who is the priest of the Syro-Malabar Mission in Glasgow, said: "Archbishop Tartaglia really understood our need and was kind enough to offer St. Conval's as our permanent place of worship. His Grace always had a great appreciation, concern and care for the Syro-Malabar community and encourages us and supports us not in mere words or presence but helping us in all possible ways make things happen for the good and growth of this community."

Grateful

"We are so happy that we have a beautiful church, a spacious house, a very useful hall and a good atmosphere here in St. Conval's."

Joseph K. Joseph who works in the food industry with his wife Jessy, a nurse, and their two daughters Jewel and Jovana came to Glasgow in 2004. He is a devout Catholic of the Syro-Malabar rite. He said: "As a community and as a family we will always be grateful to everyone who has supported the Syro-Malabar people in the Archdiocese of Glasgow over the years."

"We have a good life here thanks to the people of Glasgow who have always been very kind and the priests who have helped us in so many ways."

"Having a place where we can worship and call home is an answer to our prayers."



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Archbishop's praise for the 'Green Blazers'

ARCHBISHOP Tartaglia has paid tribute to Glasgow's famous St Aloysius' College at a national meeting of the UK's independent Catholic schools.

Speaking at the closing Mass of the assembly, held in Glasgow University Memorial Chapel, the Archbishop said: "As a Glasgow boy born and bred, I can tell you that St Aloysius' College is a truly iconic Catholic educational institution in Glasgow in the Jesuit tradition, and everyone recognises the famous green and gold blazer, with the eagle on the badge."

Encouragement

"The Ignatian motto: *Ad maiora natus sum* (I was born to reach for greater things) is certainly an encouragement to the pupils to fulfil their potential and to strive for eternal life."

The Archbishop used his sermon to mount a wider defence of all Catholic schools in Scotland.

He said: "Catholic schools across the world educate some 63 million boys and girls. Only the governments of China and India educate more children and young people. Here in Scotland, Catholic schools are often – falsely – accused of being the source of social division and exclusion in our society."

"The statistic that I just quoted shows how narrow-

minded, paranoid and laughable that accusation is.

"In fact, Catholic schools take very seriously the challenge to educate and form young people to respect the dignity of every human being and to contribute effectively to a diverse society."

Wisdom

In his sermon the Archbishop exhorted the representatives of Catholic independent schools to keep their focus on their true *raison d'être*.

He said: "In our first reading today, wisdom is exalted... Wisdom is amenable, calming and altogether benevolent... the personification of wisdom is completed in the New Testament when it is revealed that Jesus is the Wisdom of God who was with God eternally and through whom the world and all things were made."

"In education, you try to impart every kind and branch of wisdom to your pupils, and your attainment levels are undoubtedly excellent. In a Catholic school, the greatest wisdom of all is God and his Christ, Jesus."

"Just let me encourage you to find every way to present to your young people the most sublime wisdom of all, who is Jesus Christ our Lord, the wisdom of God in person."

"This is the treasure and the pearl of great price that Catholic schools can offer their pupils and the world we live in – an experience of the kingdom of God."

JOE WALSH TOURS

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Care and cure go together in tending those who are ill

Pope Francis has written a powerful letter to those living with health problems and their carers to mark the annual World Day of the Sick which is marked on February 11, the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. *Flourish* offers readers an abridged version of the Holy Father's letter below

JESUS DOES NOT make demands of those who endure situations of frailty, suffering and weakness, but offers his mercy and his comforting presence. He looks upon a wounded humanity with eyes that gaze into the heart of each person. That gaze is not one of indifference; rather, it embraces people in their entirety, each person in his or her health condition, discarding no one, but rather inviting everyone to share in his life and to experience his tender love.

Why does Jesus have these feelings? Because he himself became frail, endured human suffering and received comfort from his Father. Indeed, only those who personally experience suffering are then able to comfort others.

There are so many kinds of grave suffering: incurable and chronic diseases, psychological diseases, situations calling for rehabilitation or palliative care, numerous forms of disability, children's or geriatric diseases... At times human warmth is lacking in our approach to these. What is needed is a personalized approach to the sick, not just of curing but also of caring...

In experiencing illness, individuals not only feel threatened in their physical integrity, but also in the relational, intellectual, affective and spiritual dimensions of their lives. For this reason, in addition to therapy and support, they expect care and attention. In a word, love.

At the side of every sick person, there is also a family, which itself suffers and is in need of support and comfort.

Dear brothers and sisters who are ill, your sickness makes you in a particular way one of those "who labour and are burdened", and thus attract the eyes and heart of Jesus. In him, you will find light to brighten your darkest moments and hope to soothe your distress. He urges you: "Come to me". In him, you will find strength to face all the worries and questions that assail you during this "dark night" of body and soul.

In your experience of illness, you certainly need a place to find rest. The



Church desires to become... a home where you can encounter his grace, which finds expression in closeness, acceptance and relief. In this home, you can meet people who, healed in their frailty by God's mercy, will help you bear your cross and enable your suffering to give you a new perspective.

Dear healthcare professionals, let us always remember that diagnostic, preventive and therapeutic treatments, research, care and rehabilitation are always in the service of the sick person; indeed the noun "person" takes priority over the adjective "sick". In your work, may you always strive to promote the dignity and life of each person, and reject any compromise in the direction of euthanasia, assisted suicide or suppression of life, even in the case of terminal illness.

When confronted with the limitations and even failures of medical science before increasingly problematic clinical cases and bleak diagnoses, you are called to be open to the transcendent dimension of your profession... Let us remember that life is sacred and belongs to God; hence it is inviolable and no one can claim the right to dispose of it freely. Life must be welcomed, protected, respected and served from its beginning to its end: both human reason and faith in God, the author of life, require this. In some cases, conscientious objection becomes a necessary decision if you are to be consistent with your "yes" to life and to the human person.

When you can no longer provide a cure, you will still be able to provide care and healing, through gestures and procedures that give comfort and relief to the sick.

I think of our many brothers and sisters throughout the world who have no access to medical care because they live in poverty. For this reason, I urge healthcare institutions and government leaders not to neglect social justice out of a preoccupation for financial concerns.



Picture: Imago Mundi



University of Glasgow

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FOCUS ON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Catholic schools: open to dialogue

By Dr Leonardo Franchi
University of Glasgow

TODAY'S Catholic school is home to pupils of many different religious traditions.

We should be happy at this. It represents a cultural and sociological transformation of our schools. But we need to develop a refreshed vision for the education they offer. Moreover, we need to ask how Catholic schools can serve the ever-necessary project of the New Evangelisation.

In recent times, the Church has proposed that a commitment to intercultural dialogue should be central to her educational mission. This aspiration sits beside the accepted mission to promote a robust Catholic identity. Are both aims mutually coherent or do they offer an unacceptable tension which could unravel the culture of the Catholic school?

An important document published by the Congregation for Catholic Education in 2013, *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony for a Civilisation of Love*, offers some very useful guidance. It recognises the tension noted above, and calls on Catholic schools to 'develop intercultural dialogue in their pedagogical vision' and to retain 'courageous and innovative fidelity to one's own pedagogical vision'. In other words, be open to dialogue while remaining faithful to your tradition.

Critics might say that this is an unrealistic attempt to appear forward-thinking while appealing to a traditional view of Catholic education. I would



'Catholic schools must be prime examples of Catholic social teaching in action.'

prefer to say that it is a necessary starting-point for discussion on how the Catholic school responds to the challenges of secularism.

This vision is embodied in the Vatican's Courtyard of the Gentiles initiative which seeks the construction of spaces for dialogue between Christians and atheists. Pope Benedict XVI wisely saw the Courtyard as an 'extension' activity to draw together people of vastly different worldviews. Pope Francis, with equal wisdom, describes this approach as the 'grammar of dialogue', to encapsulate the underpinning principle of Catholicism's mode of encounter with other cultures.

What does all this talk of dialogue and Courtyard mean for the hard-pressed classroom

teacher, worn down by a plethora of guidance and support from various educational agencies? Do we need to add 'grammar of dialogue' to the deadening list of key skills for assessment?

Our commitment to dialogue must be evidence of how Catholic schools go about their daily business. Two points in particular are worth pondering:

Catholic schools must be prime examples of Catholic social teaching in action. Staff should be properly cared for and their developmental and pastoral needs addressed in a spirit of collegiality and openness. In other words, a Catholic school should be a great place to work! For the school leader, promoting the welfare of the teaching staff is

of a piece with the commitment to offering a fine educational experience to all those who come through its open door.

The commitment to dialogue requires a curriculum which reflects the insights of the Catholic educational tradition. The Catholic school values and teaches the 'best of what has been thought and said,' no matter its origin. To be clear, truth is not something to be constructed from our experience but a Person (Jesus) who illuminates all that we do: for the Catholic educator, authentic active learning is the conscious assent of the human person to Truth, Beauty and Goodness, not simply the moving of pupils around pre-designed learning carousels!

Our commitment to a Courtyard model of Catholic education, freely proposes the treasury of music, art, literature and science which has emerged from, and continues to inform, Catholicism. It is our responsibility to pass on (transmit) this vital cultural capital by encouraging the current generations to open their hearts and minds to engage with the voices of our fathers and mothers in faith.

I write this piece with The Sixteen performing the Missa Papae Marcelli in the background. I recall happy visits to Rome observing people gazing in wonder at Caravaggio's canvases in the Cerasi chapel of Santa Maria del Popolo. Sadly, many of those who listen to sacred music and queue for hours to see masterpieces of Christian art are far from the Church in terms of practice: but perhaps they are closer than we imagine in terms of their love and appreciation of Beauty. To them do we send the invitation: come and look more deeply.

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FOCUS ON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Early ecumenism paved the way for Cath

PROFESSOR STEPHEN MCKINNEY is Leader of Pedagogy, Praxis and Faith at the School of Education, University of Glasgow and a member of the St Andrew's Foundation.

In this abridged version of a talk which was delivered at the St. Mungo Festival, he reveals an amazing story of ecumenical co-operation dating back more than a century



THERE is a long history of the contribution of the Christian Churches to education in Scotland that can be traced back to St. Columba, to St. Ninian and to St. Mungo.

There were opportunities for boys to be educated in the monasteries in the medieval monastic period and later there were sang schools, grammar schools and schools attached to collegiate churches and cathedrals.



The universities of St. Andrews, Glasgow and Aberdeen were all initially ecclesiastical institutions.

University

Prompted by Glasgow's Bishop Turnbull, King James II wrote to Pope Nicholas V to request the establishment of a university in Glasgow. The Pope responded with a Papal Bull, a letter or proclamation named for the leaden seal (or bull) which was attached to it. Issued on 7 January 1451, the Bull erected a new *studium generale* for the teaching of "theology, canon and civil

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law, as well as the arts and any other lawful faculty". He granted the new University's doctors, masters, readers and students all the privileges, honours and immunities enjoyed by their counterparts at the University of Bologna.

Industrial

The modern chapter in the story of Christian education, however, begins in 1817 which is a key year for school education in the city of Glasgow. The parish school system did not appear to be functioning well in the industrial city. There was a great concern for the education of the children, especially the poor, in literacy, numeracy and religious and moral education.

Three very important initiatives were launched. The magistrates of the city began to establish schools. The Catholic Schools Society was set up and Dr Thomas Chalmers, a Church of Scotland Minister, established Sabbath schools associated with his parish in the Tron to

educate the poorer children.

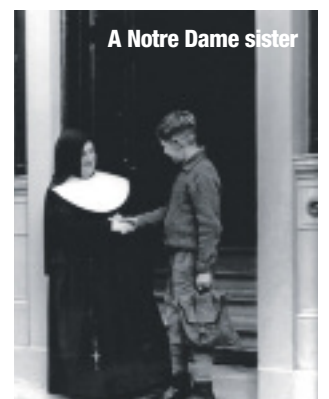
There were 15 Catholics and 15 Protestants on the Board of the Catholic Schools Society and the President was Kirkman Finlay – a prominent businessman and Protestant politician. Indeed it was widely reported that the President of the Catholic Schools Society was an important public figure from another denomination.

Eminent

Perhaps it is less well-known that Dr Thomas Chalmers who was a very popular preacher delivered public sermons to help raise funds for the Catholic schools. It is highly significant that two such eminent figures should be prominent in providing support to the emerging Catholic schools in the city of Glasgow.


Thomas Chalmers' influence was carried forward by one of his elders, David Stow.


Stow was very committed to early years education and to co-education. He understood




the importance of play and having a comfortable play area that was grassed, and the importance of a garden. He rejected strict rules and corporal punishment in favour of a more civilised approach.

Stow turned his attention to the preparation of teachers and under the auspices of the Glasgow Educational Society helped set up the first Seminary for teacher training in Britain. This was in Dundas Vale in 1837 and the Seminary was firmly based on Christian principles. The Seminary was successful in

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Catholic schools in Glasgow



producing teachers, but the numbers were not always high, and a series of financial challenges meant that the management was transferred to the Church of Scotland in 1845.

This created a major problem for Stow who had followed Thomas Chalmers at the disruption in 1843 in breaking away from the established Kirk to form the Free Church of Scotland, and he and the vast majority of the staff who seceded were asked to leave their posts in 1845. Undeterred, Stow helped to establish the Free Church of Scotland Seminary in Cowcaddens in 1845.

Scholarship

Most of the Catholic teachers who were certificated (the vast majority of Catholic teachers were uncertificated) had to train in England. The Catholic women were trained in Liverpool, Wandsworth, and even a few at St. Leonards-on-sea. The Catholic male teachers were trained at Hammersmith.

There are at least two marvellous exceptions. Lizzie Morgan, a Catholic woman won a scholarship for the Free Church Training College in 1872. And Brother Ezechiel, a French-born Marist Brother who became a highly influential headmaster of St. Mungo's secondary school in Glasgow in the years 1892–1909, studied for two years at the Free Church Training College in the late 19th century.

Archbishop Eyre's vision

A MAJOR development in teacher education in Glasgow was instigated by Archbishop Eyre, the first Catholic Archbishop of Glasgow after the restoration of the hierarchy in 1878.

He was anxious to establish a Catholic teacher training college in Glasgow. He had strong connections with Liverpool and sought the help of the Notre Dame Sisters at Mount Pleasant in Liverpool. He was very conscious that the lack of certificated Catholic teachers and heavy reliance on pupil-teachers was impacting on the quality of schooling in many of the Catholic schools.

He negotiated with Namur, the mother house of the Sisters of Notre Dame and Mount Pleasant, and it was agreed that the Sisters would establish a teacher training college in Glasgow. The College was formally opened in January 1895.

When they arrived in Glasgow, the sisters received many visitors who arrived to welcome them to the city. This including Canon Chisholm, a local Catholic priest, who invited Dr. Ross, the principal of the Church of Scotland Training College, to meet them.

In 1895, then, the city of Glasgow had three colleges for teacher education. All three were operated by Christian denominations: The Church of Scotland, The Free Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church. The Episcopal Church had also opened the Episcopal Training Institution in Edinburgh in 1850 and there were Presbyterian colleges in Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen. This actually created a very interesting anomaly.

The Education (Scotland) Act 1872 had attempted to establish a state system of school education throughout Scotland. Wisely this was to be constructed around the best schools that already existed and these included the schools of the Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland and the Catholic and Episcopal Churches. The vast majority of the Church of Scotland and Free Church schools transferred to the state. The Catholic and Episcopal Churches did not. Most of these schools would, of course, be leased or sold to the state under the Education (Scotland) Act 1918.



Archbishop Eyre

The training of teachers in Glasgow (and other parts of Scotland) was still managed by the Christian denominations. This would not change till 1907 when the Provincial Committees for the Training of Teachers assumed control of the Presbyterian Colleges and Notre Dame would come under the control of the National Committee for the Training of Teachers in 1920.

Catholic teacher education continued in Notre Dame, later St Andrew's College and now in the University of Glasgow. The other Christian denominations continued to support students in the new state Colleges of Education.

All provided a Christian foundation for the teachers. One of the aims was that the students should know and understand the teachings of the Christian Churches, but there was also strong emphasis on formation. The Sisters of Notre Dame had a rigorous religious education programme for their students but also introduced young women to a deep understanding of spirituality and a cycle of prayer.

There remains a great civic pride in the schools, in Further Education and Higher Education in Glasgow. That pride cannot ignore the history and the role of the Christian Churches in this remarkable story.

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Pictures: Paul McSherry



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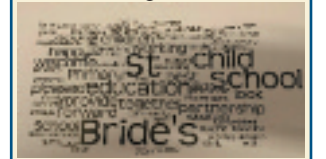
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Head Teacher: Michelle Diamond
Telephone: 0141 952 0282
Twitter: @OLOLPrimaryWDC

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Louise Kerr
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Fax: 0141 634 9750
(Acting) Head Teacher:
Damian Nicholas

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Tel: 01389 872 068
Email:
SchoolOffice.StJosephs@west-dunbarton.gov.uk
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Lynn Raynal (YPI Regional Facilitator), Jack Knox, Cameron Sweeney, Kyle O'Neil, Ross Rumsby and Mr John McGhee, head teacher

John Paul pupils' film acclaimed

FIVE pupils from John Paul Academy in Summerston have been hailed as "ambassadors of God's loving mercy" after donating £3000 to Brothers in Arms, a mental health charity dedicated to preventing male suicide.

be done to raise awareness of male suicide, and there isn't enough funding or help for people who are suffering. It made sense because we were a team of all boys as well."

Paul Kierney, principal teacher of RE at the school, said: "We are all so proud of the compassion and creativity of our senior pupils in their response to such a sensitive area of life. They're ambassadors of God's loving mercy."

Ambassadors

Dan Proverbs from Brothers in Arms said: "We are proud of these young men, not just because of the funds raised, but also the message and awareness they create around male mental health."

The Aberdeen based Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) offer an annual £3000 prize to the Scottish secondary school whose project is judged to be of greatest benefit to its local community and John Paul Academy was this year's winner. Under the rules of the competition, the prize money is donated to the winning school's chosen charity.

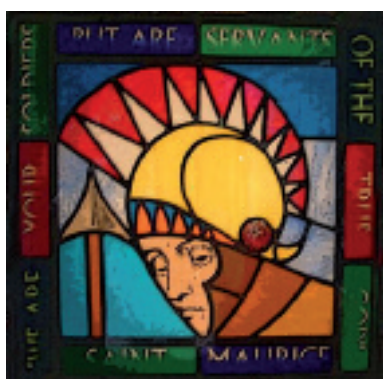
Kyle O'Neill, Cameron Sweeney, Cameron Dutton, Jack Knox and Ross Rumsby, all 16, made a film highlighting depression in young men and showing ways to get help after being impressed by the work of the Glasgow-based charity which was founded three years ago.

It was formed in response to the increase in male suicides, which is the biggest cause of death of men under 45.

Kyle said: "We made the film as part of our Youth Philanthropy Initiative, where we were to pick a charity whose mission meant something to us."

"We picked Brothers in Arms because more needs to

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Around the parishes

St Robert's parish fund on target

THE generous parishioners of St Robert Bellarmine, Househillwood, have begun the new year as they ended the old one – determined to hit their renovation fund target.

Challenged by Parish Priest Father Jim Dean to raise a total of £70,000 they responded magnificently throughout 2019 and begin the new decade with almost £50,000 in the bank.

And the fund will receive a further boost when a well-supported prize raffle, which includes a signed Celtic top, is drawn later this month.

Writing in the Parish bul-

letin Father Jim, who was appointed to St Robert's shortly after his ordination two years ago, said: "On behalf of the Social and Fundraising Group I'd like to thank everyone for their generosity which has been quite overwhelming.

"After 60 years, the church is very much in need of some TLC. The interior desperately needs re-painting, as well as a number of repairs so we decided that it would be fitting, in our 60th anniversary year to fund raise to help restore our magnificent church to its former glory.

"Regular fund raising events will take place throughout the year and I'm confident we will reach our target."

Now hear this: Church gets new sound system

THE congregation of Immaculate Conception, Maryhill, will soon have no excuse for missing out on Father Jim Lawlor's homilies as work begins to install a new £7,000 state-of-the-art PA system.

It's the latest in a number of ambitious improvements which have taken place over the past 12 months at one of the busiest churches in the Archdiocese.

These included the restoration of a stunning depiction of Christ on the Cross, built as a memorial to Rev Michael Patrick Gordon who was the first Catholic priest killed in World War I.

Parishioners also raised money to resurface the car park and install new lighting and signage.

And 2020 is a significant year for Father Jim who this year celebrates 10 years as parish priest at Immaculate Conception.

Ad multos annos!

Grandmother's love story inspired Maura's debut novel

FROM the moment my grandmother told me her story, I knew I had to write it down. It was undoubtedly a love story – one that spanned a lifetime – and beyond.

My faith of course is at the root of this story. Now as a grandmother myself, it is time for me to let go of my own grandmother's story – to share it with a wider audience, as testament to the notion that 'no light, no love is ever lost from the universe' and that's what inspired me to write it.

I didn't do it immediately – I let it incubate for at least 10 years before I first put pen to paper. By then I was in my mid twenties, I had two young children, and I wrote the first three chapters along with a synopsis, in historical fiction style, and sent it to a literary agent in London. She immediately got back to me – could I finish it in three months? It was a family saga-type novel – this genre was selling like hot cakes in the mid 1980s, but I knew then, with two very young children that this would prove to be an impossible task. But buoyed by her enthusiasm, I put it in a top drawer, and knew one day I'd come back to it.

And as the years passed by, a teaching career and a third baby later, the millennium approached. I knew that I had to finish my book. So once I had 75,000 words completed, I sent it to various publishers Scottish and London-based, and I received very encouraging feedback. They loved my



Picture by Paul McSherry

A teenage girl sitting at the foot of her grandmother's bed for hours on end became enthralled by the old lady's stories of her first love who was later to become a priest, writes Brian Swanson. And even at the age of 15 MAURA McROBBIE, then caring for her grandmother in the last few months of her life, knew that one day the stories she heard would end up in a book. Her book. Now retired from a highly successful career in teaching, the former deputy head and parishioner of St Andrew's, Bearsden, explains the background to her recently published debut novel *Howth* based on the stories she heard all those years ago

characters: Florrie and her sweetheart Fitzgerald; they loved the Irish/Scottish family-type genre and they suggested that I tweak it here and there and add a bit about the Second World War, and with these adaptations, they considered it to be extremely marketable. Again, happy with their feedback, I put the manuscript back into my top drawer – where it lay for years while other forms of distraction took precedence.

Influences

In my final years teaching, I joined Weegie Wednesday in Glasgow. This is a network of writers, publishers, screenwriters and illustrators, who meet monthly – with invited guests – to share their literary achievements, aspirations and talents. This was key to me finishing my novel 'Howth'.

The powerful influences of religion were inescapable. My grandmother was brought up in a Catholic family in Dublin the eldest of five children, and her future was set out for her – to either marry a Catholic and have several children herself – or to stay at home and help her mother with the domestic chores.

Florrie wanted more than

this, to be free of constraints, and domesticity, and most of all she wanted financial independence. She broke away from her family and her sweetheart to work in Glasgow, initially for a three-month period. The only way she was allowed to do this, was to stay with her mother's cousin who was Mother Superior of a Convent in Glasgow.

Florrie herself was captivating and charming, and she soon came to the attention of a young Scottish chemist who was from a successful family of entrepreneurs – and it wasn't long until they were married.

However, in turning her back on Catholic Ireland, Florrie unwittingly fell headfirst into the rigours and t 'thou shalt nots' of Presbyterian Scotland. She was never allowed to forget where she came from and she suffered deeply on account of her faith.

But she never gave up hope. Silently she prayed for her enemies and found ways to overcome their actions. As a teenager, listening to her story, perched at the end of her bed, she told me it with such warmth and candour,

without resentment or bitterness – and at times with humour.

However, the strangest irony of all, was when I asked her what had happened to the sweetheart that she had left behind her all those years ago in Dublin, I learned that he had become a priest and had gone to work in the missions in South America.

He had been imprisoned and persecuted due to his Catholic beliefs. It was then I realised, that both of them, in their own different ways had been persecuted on account of their faith. And yes, she had kept in touch with him over the years. It was then that I knew I had my story – of two Christian saints of their day.

■ Maura will give a talk about her book and take part in a Q & A in the Chapel House at St Andrew's Church Bearsden on Thursday 13th February from 4.30 – 6pm. Copies of the book will be on sale with proceeds going to the Parish Homeless Fund. Copies of the book are available on Kindle and by contacting: www.mauramcrobbe.com

New Mass times for Drumchapel churchgoers

PARISHIONERS in Drumchapel are getting used to a new schedule of Masses each week-end.

Following the retiral in November of Fr John McGuire, of St Laurence's, Fr Gerard Barnes was appointed parish priest to St Laurence in addition to St Benedict's.

St Benedict's

Under the new schedule Mass will be celebrated at St Benedict's as follows: Saturday Vigil-Mass 5pm; Sunday 12 noon. Holy Day of Obligation: Vigil Mass 7pm

Confessions: Saturday 4:30pm and weekdays after Mass

St Laurence's

St Laurence's new times are: Saturday Vigil Mass 7pm; Sunday 10am

Holy Day of Obligation: 9:30am

Confessions: Saturday 6:30pm and weekdays after Mass

At your service: the volunteers who help tackle loneliness

IT is now widely accepted that social isolation is a major public health risk for people of all ages.

However, it adversely affects older people most of all. It can increase the risk of mortality in people aged 75+ by almost 50% even after underlying health problems are taken into account.

How so? Loneliness can lead to feelings of low self-worth, anxiety and depression. Not only does it adversely affect the immune and cardiovascular systems, but loneliness also halts people's recovery as those who feel isolated are more likely to have a lower sense of purpose, so less likely to ensure their homes are heated or that they are eating a healthy diet.

Put simply; older people are dying from the effects of social isolation. But it is preventable.

The Scottish Government has identified older people as a priority group and the need for preventative and anticipatory support to help older people retain their independence for as long as possible in their own communities.

This is precisely what the Good Morning Service does.

We support people by building friendships via Good Morning Calls at pre-arranged times. If the member wants, over time meaningful relationships are built. We are there to

share stories, and to provide emotional support in challenging times.

We are also a safety-net alert scheme, alerting to potential health problems whenever a Good Morning Call remains unanswered and the person cannot be located. Emergency contact persons or Police Scotland are alerted.

Good Morning Service is, and always has been, a community-led organisation.

Community

It was set up by a local Glasgow community in 2000 when an elderly man who lived in Ruchill passed away alone in his home. Sadly, no-one noticed his passing. He wasn't a recluse, he got out and about regularly and yet, still, nobody missed him.

Our Treasurer, Sadie Gordon, worked on the initial idea with a local Safety Forum in Milton in 1999. You may have heard of Sadie; she was the first person to receive the Mary Barbour Award for community activism last year.

From the initial few people who were transferred from Glasgow City Council's social work department our charity now supports around 300 people each year with approx 50,000 calls handled by a staff team of 20.

We have a cocktail of funding partners including Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership, Impact Funding, Corra Foundation



"It's good to talk," as actor Bob Hoskins famously said in those BT ads, but do you know just how good? Good Morning Service's Chief Executive, **NICKY THOMSON**, does. The Glasgow-based organisation she helped found 20 years ago

supports people by building friendships via Good Morning phonecalls at pre-arranged times. But the charity offers much more than that, as Nicky explains in this special article for *Flourish* aimed at encouraging parishioners throughout the Archdiocese to become involved

and many smaller foundations and trusts.

We are also proud to be a charity partner of Dallas McMillan Solicitors as well as having a Supporters Club of warm-hearted individuals who make monthly donations

"The value of the service is in the friendships that are built – we are lucky enough that clients call us their friends and we gladly accept that."

■ Good Morning Calls are available free of charge to those over 55 living in Glasgow City Council and South Ayrshire Council areas. To join call 0141 336 7766 or go to www.goodmorningservice.co.uk to download a referral form. Individuals can sponsor a Good Morning call by sending a text to GMS001 to 70970 via Donate.



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February readings offer feasts and challenges

Canon
Robert
Hill

IT may be a Leap Year, but February is still the shortest month of the 12, even if it has an extra day added on, so there are only four Sundays for this month, and these take us on a journey which begins with the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord – important enough to displace the normal Sunday readings.

The remainder of the month is dedicated to themes from Matthew's gospel, ranging from the follow-on from the Beatitudes which are normally read on the 4th Sunday. Yes, you've guessed it: the beatitudes fall foul of the Presentation being on a Sunday! For the remaining two Sundays, gospel passages are taken from the section of the Sermon on the mount

often called 'the antitheses', because each of them is introduced by Jesus with the words: "you have heard how it was said that....but I say this to you..."

2 FEB
The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord.
Luke 2:22–40

The story of the 40 day old Jesus being presented to the Lord in the Jerusalem Temple is being celebrated today because the Feast has always been considered a major celebration, and takes precedence over other celebrations that may fall on the same day. The background is important. Early in the history of Israel, the custom of offering to God the firstborn of any living creature was introduced. This was done by offering the animal for sacrifice, whereby it was slain and burned. Humans were not exempt from this obligation, but for obvious reasons, the first human offspring were not treated in the same way. As Luke tells us: "Every first-born male must be consecrated to the Lord". Luke was almost certainly the only Gospel writer who was not Jewish, but he had a great re-

spect for all things Jewish, and he is at pains to stress that Jesus was brought up by Jewish parents who were scrupulous in keeping the Law. The celebrating is dampened a bit when Simeon, a prophet, proclaims that this child will be the cause of the rise and fall of many, and that the child's mother, Mary will have her own soul pierced too. Already, after only 40 days in this world, Jesus is identified as the one who will redeem humanity, but at the cost of his own life. Perhaps the Feast being celebrated on a Sunday helps us to remember the end of the story of Jesus, even if his ministry is only getting under way.

9 FEB
Sunday 5, Year A.
Matthew 5:13–16

A change of Gospel, change of location, and the ministry of the adult Jesus take us to a whole new setting. Now on a mountain in Galilee, Jesus is teaching in the manner in which Moses himself taught. Matthew is careful not to suggest that Jesus does away with the teaching of Moses. What he does is not to abolish the Law, but to fulfil it: that is, to lay out the true meaning of the Law which Moses received from God. At the end of this Gospel, Jesus will commission his apostles to go out into the whole world and proclaim the Good News. That will only happen after Jesus' death and Resurrection, and only after they have been thoroughly instructed by Jesus himself. Meanwhile, he applies two wonderfully encouraging parables to them. First, they are the salt of the earth. Disciples in every age are to be the flavour which knowledge of God brings to humanity. Second, they are to be the light of the world. Just as a city on a mountain, or a lamp in a house cannot be hidden, neither can disciples fail to be the light which comes from Jesus himself. Notice that despite the very early stage of his teaching, Jesus says that his disciples *are* the salt of the earth, and that they *are* the light of the world. They can't do anything to make them-

selves light, but they – and we – can keep their light hidden!

16 FEB
Sunday 6, Year A.
Matthew 5:17–37

The Sermon on the Mount gives the evangelist Matthew a great platform for presenting Jesus as the one who fulfils all that Moses taught. The Law of Moses was and still is the core of Jewish morality and religious practice. At the start of today's gospel passage, Jesus is careful to point out that he has not come to do away with the Law of Moses. Quite the opposite: his teaching is to show that the Law of Moses really meant, and what it pointed to. One of the major ways Jesus does this is through a series of sayings usually called the antitheses, each of which begins with something like: "you have heard it said that such and such a thing must happen" or even "such and such must never happen". Jesus then says "But I say this to you..."

In these illustrations, he is drawing out more clearly what was the purpose of the law in the first place. Jesus also stresses that not one tiny dot, not one stroke of the written text of the Law would disappear until it is totally fulfilled. This is a clever play on a feature of the handwritten scrolls of the Law. If a scribe made the slightest mistake in copying the text – even a small dot or a tiny dash missing, or in the wrong place, the scroll would need to be destroyed and the process started again.

Then, Jesus goes on to explain some aspects of the Law. First, he tackles the law everyone knows. You must not kill. Even today, lawyers argue that it is sometimes permissible to kill – in war, in self-defence etc. Jesus' point is that the law to protect life cannot be reduced to a series of exceptions. In fact, says Jesus, to diminish a person by making a sarcastic comment, to destroy someone's reputation is to take something from the life of that person. Upholding the sanctity of life means always and without exception treating

with dignity and respect for life as a gift from God from the very beginning to the very end of a person's lifespan. Actually, the same principle applies to peoples' legitimate relationships: these must never be debased by another either. There are no exceptions!

23 FEB
Sunday 7 Year A.
Matthew 5:38–48

Jesus continues to explore the true meaning of the Law of Moses. This time he does not use commandments from the Law of Moses, but instead turns to an ancient code of war, put into action by the Babylonian King Hammurabi designed to curb excesses of retaliation in a situation of war. This was enacted around 1800 years before Jesus' public ministry, and was designed to limit retribution to no more than paying back the injury first inflicted.

This is still too much for Jesus. He insists that no retaliation is ever permissible. It's not difficult to see the logic in this. Striking back at an aggressor doubles the violence; it does not stop it! He says "if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well. Of course, these ideals are very hard to attain. They are so challenging that even Jesus is forced to admit that putting these into action is tantamount to being perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect! Will that ever be possible for humans? Most likely not, but that is no excuse for not trying!



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The Two Popes: between fact and fiction

BEFORE reviewing a film about “The Two Popes” I feel a need to declare an interest... I have fond personal memories of one of them.

As a student of Italian language and literature in the mid 1980s at Rome’s La Sapienza University I was being culturally enriched but materially impoverished. So poor in fact that I couldn’t afford to sit down in a bar (it costs more in Italy!) and so learned the joys of *al fresco* eating by necessity.

One of the nicer spots to enjoy a *panino con prosciutto e formaggio* (a ham and cheese roll sounds better in Italian) was on the steps, under the colonnades of St Peter’s Square. And it was from there, every day without fail, that I would see one of the two Popes walk past.

Of course Cardinal Ratzinger wasn’t Pope at the time – he was the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith – and each lunchtime he would leave his office and go home for a mid-day break. Each day I would see him approach. He



By Ronnie Convery
Communications
Director, Archdiocese
of Glasgow

was a well known and controversial figure even then, often attacked in the papers for his alleged “panzerkardinal” approach to dissenting theologians and apparently harsh ways with liberal bishops.

Yet here he came, a small, slightly curved figure in a plain black soutane, with a French-style beret covering his shock of white hair. Shyly raising his eyes only to those who greeted him.

Years later, I got to know bishops who had been received by the “German Shepherd”. Often they had attended their first meeting in trepidation, only to be amazed at the sweetness, gentility and humility of the man whose ci-

vility clashed so radically with the media-created image.

I mention this personal anecdote only to justify one of my (few) criticisms of this rather good film. Namely that the characters are portrayed rather too starkly... Pope Benedict comes across initially as the almost machine-like traditionalist attempting to make small talk in Latin during the tea break at a meeting of Cardinals. He is seen as a stickler for protocol; somewhat elite in taste and rather negative in his view of the world.

Jorge Bergoglio – the future Pope Francis – on the other hand – is also impoverished by the “good pope, bad pope” dichotomy. The complexity of his personality is somewhat lost in his depiction as an almost Forrest Gump-esque character, happier to chat to the palace gardener than the Cardinals of the papal household.

The reality is that in many ways in real life, Pope Francis is a much tougher character than Pope Benedict.

I refer not only to his capacity to show displeasure in public (he has given the Vatican *curia* a bruising ticking-off in



Picture: Netflix

public almost every year since his election and can be impatient with those who try to pull him over during walkabouts, as was recently highlighted in a YouTube video which went viral) but also to his style of government.

Francis is a rich and complex character. He is all for the devolution of power away from the centre of the Church but is also in many ways the

Papa Re – the Pope king – who is not afraid to overhaul the apparatus around him to allow his own vision of the papacy to take root.

On the other hand, the apparently uber-traditional Benedict is in fact an ultra-revolutionary – the first Pope to abdicate since Gregory XII in 1415.

But these are criticisms of ecclesiology perhaps, rather than of cinematography. For in cinematographic terms there can be no doubt this is a well-produced movie.

The sets are truly magnificent – Bernini helped of course in providing a magnificent stage for this powerful drama back in the 17th century – but the two “big conversations” of the film take place in the Vatican Gardens at Castel Gandolfo and the Sistine Chapel.

Knowing both spaces, I found it impossible to decide, as I watched the film, whether the cast had been given special access or had just been lucky enough to work with the best set-builders in the game (in fact it is the latter).

The attention to detail is spectacular: The coat of arms on Benedict’s papal sash is perfectly sewn; the text of the cardinals’ promise as they cast their vote in the papal election is pronounced in perfect Latin and even the Pope Emeritus’ predilection for Fanta orange is included.

There will be some who criticise this film for simplifying complex arguments. They are right in a way, but to do so is to forget that this is a Netflix film aimed at mass-market audiences most of whom will have little insight or interest in the minutiae of Vatican politics or doctrinal divergences.

Director Fernando Meirelles does a fine job to capture the issues, the worldviews, the personalities of the two Popes and the context of the extraor-

dinary time in which the film is set.

He cleverly uses two imagined conversations between the Archbishop of Buenos Aires Jorge Bergoglio and the Bishop of Rome (Josef Ratzinger) to sketch the issues facing the Catholic Church and the wider world... issues of poverty; the role of faith in public life; church and politics and human sexuality among others.

While the conversations are not claimed to be true, they illustrate in broad-brush terms the issues and the various pastoral approaches the Catholic Church employs to respond to them. They reflect more or less accurately the visions of the two Popes.

And then there are the actors... Jonathan Pryce quite simply *is* Pope Francis for the duration of the film – the physical likeness is uncanny and he inhabits the role masterfully. Anthony Hopkins is also on top form as Pope Benedict, although not quite so convincing as his colleague in bringing the true character to life on screen.

This is a film to be enjoyed – as a film, not a documentary. It is full of gentle humour, words of wisdom, beautiful locations and ultimately two loveable and admirable characters both of whom want what is best for the Church and the world.

And that is perhaps where the film succeeds... because for all the initial depiction of Papa Ratzinger as the pantomime baddy and Papa Bergoglio as the knight in shining armour, it ends with a portrayal of two elderly men, sharing their experiences, united by their love for what they hold to be true.

This review first appeared in the new online journal Adamah. You can read more at www.adamah.media

It's the Passionists' Jubilee Year

AT the end of 1999, and the beginning of 2000, I welcomed in the New Year, and the New Millennium, at St. Gabriel's Church Hall in Prestonpans, where I was parish priest at the time.

A great number of parishioners gathered in the hall from 11.00 p.m. We celebrated a prayer service to take us up to midnight and, once the bells had rung, we celebrated in the traditional way.

Shortly after that I was transferred to Dublin, and ever since then I have greeted the New Year in with family, initially at the house of my older brother and his wife, and then, in more recent years, at the house of the older of my two nieces.

Part of the thinking was that, seeing as how I was in Dublin and not able to be with the family around Christmas, this was the occasion when the clan could all gather and celebrate together, with me included, and, even though I am now back home in Scotland this past three Christmases, the tradition persists. Scotch broth and steak pie are consumed in abundance. Now, of course, there have to be vegetarian and vegan versions on offer as well. After dessert, glasses are filled, and we would normally head into another room to join Jackie Bird, Phil Cunningham and Aly Bain, and then the lone piper on Castle Mound in Edinburgh for the final reflective moments, before the bells and the fireworks resound, then hugs and handshakes and kisses to greet

the year, and arms linked for Auld Lang Syne. Followers of this log may

remember that last year, three beautiful desserts were dropped and left splattered on the pavement by my younger niece's husband and, while the fault lay more with the bags than with him (or so he says), he wasn't entrusted with the task this year, just in case.

The transition from 2019 to 2020 was, however, slightly different to previous years, and not just

because there was no Jackie Bird. For many of the family 2019 had been a difficult year due to sickness and bereavement. For a variety of reasons some well kent faces were missing. Among those missing was my older niece's brother-in-law, a fellow priest in the Archdiocese of Glasgow, who drew the short straw and was on call throughout the night for the Glasgow Royal Infirmary. I was lucky as I was on call on the 30th. Also missing was my younger brother who, after a lengthy period of sickness during the latter part of 2019, is, for the time being at least, housebound. This meant that, half an hour before the bells, I left the celebrations, and went to be with him to raise a glass of Irn Bru to greet 2020. In many ways I enjoyed the quieter crossing of the threshold as I had found 2019 quite difficult for myself. I was asleep on



Fr Frank Keevins CP
is parish priest of St
Mungo's, Townhead

Glasgow will have a chance to change lives worldwide

WHEN Pope Francis published his second encyclical in 2015, *Laudato Si*, he brought global attention to something climate campaigners had been saying for many years; we all must work together to look after our planet and stop global warming reaching irreparable levels.

He provided a unique and powerfully Catholic argument to 'Care for our common home' – that we have as a Church a moral duty to conserve and preserve this planet.

Since then a string of terrible natural disasters, have made the Holy Father seem like a seer – Cyclone Idai, the Australian bushfires, huge swarms of locusts in Eastern Africa – and increasingly the news is uncomfortably reminiscent of the Book of Revelations.

The science suggests worse is to come – In October 2018, the UN published a landmark report that shows the devastating impact of exceeding 1.5°C of global warming, and that we could reach this level as soon as 2030. The consequences of missing that target are millions of more people exposed to heatwaves, droughts and annihilation of natural resources upon which they rely.

Now this winter tens of thousands of politicians, diplomats, scientists and activists will descend on Glasgow for COP26 – the UN Conference on Climate Change. In short – it is a huge international climate conference, the biggest conference of its kind that the UK will ever have hosted, and the biggest opportunity

By Ben Wilson
Policy Officer, Scottish
Catholic International
Aid Fund (SCIAF)

for mass civil society mobilisation for global justice since the G8 came to Gleneagles in 2005.

And the story of Glasgow can help shape our understanding of the crisis we are in.

Founded by St Mungo in the 6th century, Glasgow takes its name from the Gaelic for 'dear green place'. But long after its patron saint had passed this 'dear green place' was transformed into an industrial heartland. It became a centre of shipbuilding in the 15th century when vessels from Glasgow were used to transport slaves across the globe and transport the spoils of Empire. In the 19th century, Glasgow became the heart of the industrial revolution, processing the raw materials brought back by ships from the Caribbean and from plantations in the US.

However, the wealth that the ships brought back to Glasgow did not go toward feeding the people who built them. In a time where Glasgow was known as the 'second city of the British Empire' it was also a host to slums, extreme poverty particularly among its growing Catholic population.

In the 20th century, Glasgow became a site of resistance, with its people leading movements that would transform workers' rights across the country alongside Catholics fighting for equal rights. And now in 2020 Glasgow can again be a symbol to the world of turning our backs on the old ways of exploitation and embracing justice for all.



At SCIAF our partners all over the world are telling us constantly that they are seeing the impact of climate change, that it is making life poorer, hungrier and more precarious for millions.

So this conference is a tremendous opportunity for Scotland to show the world our concern for the climate crisis, to engage and inform the Scottish public about this emergency.

Every COP involves technical, often tedious negotiations when thousands of negotiators, politicians and policymakers meet to thrash out agreements and cobble together commitments

for action. This technical theatre is shaped by some of the richest countries who insist on being centre stage while side-stepping their responsibilities.

At the same time the poorest countries in the world, who've done least to cause the crisis, cry out for justice as their people suffer most.

Around the central circus of the negotiations, there will be a huge carnival of events. At SCIAF we want to ensure that the message of *Laudato Si*, the story of Glasgow and the voice of the most vulnerable is at the heart of that carnival.

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