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FLOURISH

Official Journal of the Archdiocese of Glasgow

March 2025

‘Don’t forget to pray for me’



Archbishop condemns foreign aid cuts

ARCHBISHOP Nolan has expressed 'incredulity' that money pledged to help the world's poorest people has been diverted to spending on armaments by the UK Government.

The Archbishop joined a chorus of voices expressing dismay at the plan to boost defence spending by cutting overseas development funding.

He said: "I am incredulous that foreign aid should be cut and that the poor should be asked to pay the price for increased military spending."

"The way to peace is not for conflicting sides to be armed to the teeth but to seek reconciliation with their enemies."

"The foreign aid budget itself promotes peace by helping to relieve poverty and stimulate development, thus eradicating some of the underlying causes that can lead to conflict in various parts of the world."

"The UK government should bow its head in shame at abandoning so

BY RONNIE CONVERY

many who till now have looked to the UK for help."

Anne Callaghan, SCIAF's Campaigns and Advocacy Officer expressed similar disgust at the decision:

"SCIAF is absolutely shocked at the announcement that the UK Government will be slashing the UK aid budget by 40% to fund defence spending. This is once again balancing budget decisions on the world's poorest people."

Defence

"The aid budget shouldn't be treated as a handy piggy-bank for spending for other priorities, including defence spending. UK aid plays a vital role in supporting millions around the world who face extreme poverty, famine, conflict, gender-based violence, and lack of access to basic services like health and education."

"Providing aid is a much cheaper way to try to avoid

conflicts from flaring up by investing in peace and security."

"This cut is an enormous strategic own goal. Following in the wake of President Trump's decision to obliterate USAID, this is not a recipe for restoring the UK's international standing."

"Rather, this slash and burn approach to UK aid is going to cause widespread devastation."

The Vatican body which oversees development work around the world has also denounced the decision of the UK Government (and other nations which have slashed aid).

Alistair Dutton, Secretary General of Caritas Internationalis, said: "The UK's decision to cut its aid budget by another 40% is just the latest display of cruel indifference to the poorest billion people in the world who face war, famine and dehumanising poverty."

"This will kill millions and betrays hundreds of millions more who will suffer greatly as a result."



Vatican joy for St Aloysius Schola

ST Aloysius' College's Amazing Schola Cantorum took Rome by storm recently, accompanied by parents, grandparents, staff, and the head teacher.

They filled ancient Roman venues with stunning melodies, showcasing what makes the Schola one of St Aloysius' proudest features.

From the soulful acoustics of the Jesuit mother house to the awe-inspiring glory

of St Peter's Basilica, their performances were widely acclaimed.

Iconic

Alongside their musical journey, the youngsters and staff explored iconic sites like the Colosseum and Roman Forum, adding layers of history and inspiration to their trip.

Wrapping up with a breathtaking concert at St

Paul's Within the Walls, they left everyone spellbound and proud of the heights our young talents can reach.

As the group posted on their social media accounts: "Big cheers to our Schola Cantorum for making waves far from home and bringing our St Aloysius' family together across borders all under the watchful guidance of our amazing director of choral music Miss Archibald!"

A saint in the making – New chance to see one-woman play on the life of Venerable Margaret Sinclair



PARISHES across the Archdiocese are to get a new chance to view the acclaimed play, The Margaret Sinclair Story, this Lent.

In place of the traditional AGAP Lent-fest programme, the play will tour six venues with its heart-warming tale of an ordinary working-class girl with a big heart for God and for helping others, whose beatification cause is now open.

It was first performed at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2016 to packed audiences at St Patrick's Church in the Cowgate, where the body of Venerable Margaret Sinclair is interred.

This Lent the title role will be played by Rachel Callaghan – a living relative of Margaret Sinclair (second cousin) – who has played the part on tour since 2017 and in the 2020 video recording made for the Margaret Sinclair Schools Pack by the Office for the Cause of Margaret Sinclair.

This will be the first performance of the play for eight years and is back due to popular demand in this 100th anniversa-

ry year since Margaret Sinclair's death. Stephen Callaghan, Creative Director of AGAP, said: "Margaret's journey poses the question of every human being – what is the measure of a life well-lived?"

"Her story takes us from a childhood in the slums of the Cowgate, through her working years as a furniture polisher and at McVitie's Biscuit Factory, attending dances and getting engaged before becoming a nun and eventually dying at the age of just 25 years."

"Far from being a dreary tale of solemn piety, Margaret's story is an inspiring one, funny and moving with a down-to-earth model of everyday sanctity."

You can catch the play at St Bernard's, March 20; St Philomena's, March 21; Our Lady of Lourdes, March 22; Sacred Heart Cumbernauld, March 28; Archdiocesan Offices, March 29; and Blessed John Duns Scotus, April 4.

■ Tickets available at 07495 347884 or via www.agap.co.uk/tickets

Notre Dame girl Dame Elish named as King's envoy to Kirk

A FORMER parishioner of St Saviour's in Govan and pupil at Notre Dame High school has been named the King's representative to this year's General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

Lady Elish Angiolini will fill the role of Lord High Commissioner in 2025 and is believed to be the first Catholic to do so.

The General Assembly is the most important event in the Kirk's calendar and the Lord High Commissioner represents the King, making opening and closing addresses to the assembly, which will be held next May.

Dame Elish, a former Lord Advocate, said being appointed to represent

the King was a "fabulously significant gesture".

"I am a Catholic but I don't see a conflict at all in taking up the role," she said.

She added: "The world is a scary place these days and it is important that people of all faiths meet, share and promote peace and harmony. This is a good example of that."

Elish McPhilomy (she later changed her name when she married her husband Dom) was brought up in Govan. Her dad was a coal merchant and later worked for Rolls-Royce. One of her first summer jobs was working on a checkout at Marks & Spencer.



She was educated at Notre Dame High in the West End and studied Law at the University of Strathclyde.

She was appointed Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire (DBE) for services to the admin-

istration of justice in 2011 and has been Principal of St Hugh's College, Oxford, since 2012.

The Rev Fiona Smith, principal clerk of the General Assembly, said: "We are honoured that His Majesty has appointed Lady Elish Angiolini as Lord High Commissioner. We very much look forward to welcoming her in 2025."

The Lord High Commissioner is appointed on the advice of senior politicians. In the past the role has been taken by members of the royal family. The Duke of Edinburgh was appointed last year and the King held the position himself while he was Prince of Wales in 2000.

Retirement beckons for Canon Peter as Fr Tom takes over at Christ the King

PARISHIONERS at one of Glasgow's largest parishes have bid a fond farewell to one of the city's longest-serving priests after Canon Peter Gallacher retired as Parish Priest of Christ the King.

Canon Peter, who is also Provost of the Chapter of Canons, has served the south side parish for 26 years and latterly had to serve the community (which formerly had four resident clerics) on his own.

After ordination in his native Dumbarton in 1979, he has held a wide range of roles in the Archdiocese, including Diocesan MC, seminary lecturer at the former Chesters College, head of the liturgy commission and Dean of the South East Deanery.

Treasurer

He was elected as Provost of the Cathedral Chapter and appointed Diocesan Treasurer in 2017.

He is to be replaced by Flourish columnist Fr Tom Kilbride, who is returning to the Archdiocese after serving as Rector of the Scots College in Spain.

Fr Tom said: "I loved my years at the College in Salamanca and it was a real privilege working with the seminarians, as well as the parish groups and visitors we welcomed there."

"But I am happy to be back in the Archdiocese and very much look forward to settling in to parish life again and getting to know the people of Christ the King."



Fr Tom Kilbride

Along with the news of the retiral of Canon Peter and the appointment of Fr Tom, Archbishop Nolan also announced the names of the priests he has appointed to serve on the College of Consultors for the next five years.

They are Monsignor Hugh Canon Bradley VG, Monsignor Paul Murray, Canon Paul Gargaro, Canon Gerard Tartaglia, Canon David Wallace, Fr John Campbell VF, Fr Chiedozie Ezeribe, Fr Martin Kane VF, and Fr Benneth Onyebuchukwu.

The College of Consultors is a body of priests, chosen by the Bishop from among the diocesan clergy.

Canon law requires the Bishop to consult with his college of consultors before making certain decisions. The College is also called into action in the event of the diocese falling vacant through death or retirement and when there is a need to elect a diocesan administrator.



Canon Peter Gallacher

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Sign up now and join schools across the country sciaf.org.uk/biglentwalk

SCIAF plans Lent walk to the Vatican

THIS Lent, SCIAF is asking school pupils across the country to become 'Pilgrims of Hope' and sign up for a virtual walking challenge – which will take them all the way from Scotland to Vatican City!

As part of their Big Lent Walk project, which is run jointly with CAFOD, SCIAF has created a virtual route to cover the 2000 miles from Scotland to St Peter's Square.

Schools can use the SCIAF educational resource along the way, to learn about Saints and Blesseds including St Thérèse of Lisieux and Blessed Carlo Acutis.

The resource provides information on these figures as well as prayer resources for schools to use

throughout Lent as they raise funds for SCIAF. In this Jubilee Year, SCIAF hopes to engage students across the country to make their own pilgrimage.

Lorraine Currie, SCIAF's chief executive said: "You can take part and split the 2000 miles either as a class or school group walking each week over Lent. Once you sign up you will receive a welcome pack and the resource to go alongside your walking."

For any further questions on the challenge or how you can be involved in the SCIAF Community, please email getinvolved@sciaf.org.uk or click on www.sciaf.org.uk/biglentwalk

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12 years ago this month...



Picture: Imago Mundi

ON 13 March 2013, the world witnessed this scene as Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected as the 266th successor of St Peter.

Taking the name Francis, he became the first pope from the Americas, the first Jesuit pope, and the first to adopt the name of the beloved saint of Assisi,

signaling a commitment to humility, simplicity, and care for the poor.

Over the past decade, Pope Francis has led the Church through a time of renewal, challenge, and transformation, seeking to bring the Gospel message to a rapidly changing world.

From the outset of his pontificate, Pope Francis

emphasised the themes of mercy and inclusion and his care for the poor and for the planet has won him wide admiration even out-with the Catholic Church.

Few could have imagined that the 76-year-old Archbishop of Buenos Aires, who had already planned his retirement was to have quite such an impact on the world...

Saint Andrew's Metropolitan Cathedral, Glasgow

Saint Patrick's Day Mass



Saturday 15th March 2025 · 11am
Celebrant: Archbishop William Nolan

Please come early. You will be greeted by an Irish piper, followed by traditional music from St. James the Great Céilí Band. Cantor for the Mass is Clare O'Neill.

Pope: Examine your conscience this Lent

THE Pope urged people to examine their lives through the lens of those who have been forced to flee their homes due to war, poverty, or persecution, asking how we can act in solidarity with the vulnerable and marginalised.

"It would be a good Lenten exercise for us to compare our daily life with that of some migrant or foreigner, to learn how to sympathise with their experiences and in this way discover what God is asking of us so that we can better advance on our journey to the house of the Father. This would be a good examination of conscience for all of us wayfarers."

The Pope called on Christians to examine their daily actions: "Do we stand with our brothers and sisters who are seeking refuge, or do we turn away from them in fear and suspicion?"

Patience

"Journeying together... means walking side-by-side, without shoving or stepping on others, without envy or hypocrisy, without letting anyone be left behind or excluded. Let us all walk in the same direction, tending towards the same goal, attentive to one another in love and patience."

"This Lent, God is asking us to examine whether in our lives, in our families, in the places where we work and spend our time, we are capable of walking together with others, listening to them, resisting the temptation to become self-absorbed and to think only of our own needs."

The Pope also used the message to remind Catholics of the need for repentance: "Let us ask ourselves: Am I convinced that the Lord forgives my sins? Or do I act as if I can save myself? Do I long for salvation and call upon God's help to attain it? Do I concretely experience the hope that enables me to interpret the events of history and inspires in me a commitment to justice and fraternity, to care for our common home and in such a way that no one feels excluded?"

He ends his message with a passage written with striking honesty

In his message for Lent 2025, written just before he was hospitalised, Pope Francis invited Catholics to live the season of reflection and penance remembering the struggles of immigrants and refugees around the world, and keeping in mind the shortness of life. Flourish editor *Ronnie Convery* offers his summary of the Pope's Lenten message



Picture: Imago Mundi

about the approach of death:

"Sisters and brothers, we are sustained in the hope that does not disappoint ... It moves the Church to pray for everyone to be saved and to look forward to her being united with Christ, her bridegroom, in the glory of heaven."

"This was the prayer of Saint Teresa of Avila: 'Hope, O my soul, hope. You know neither the day nor the hour. Watch carefully, for everything passes quickly, even though your impatience makes doubtful what is certain, and turns a very short time into a long one.'"

12 years of Pope Francis in 12 quotes

In his Angelus address on March 17, 2013, Pope Francis reminded people of God's boundless mercy:

“**The Lord never tires of forgiving. It is we who tire of asking for forgiveness.**”

During a general audience on June 5, 2013, Francis spoke against food waste:

“**Throwing away food is like stealing from the table of the poor and the hungry.**”

During a press conference on July 28, 2013, while returning from World Youth Day in Brazil:

“**If someone is gay and he searches for the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge?**”

In a 2013 interview, Pope Francis described his vision of the Church:

“**I see the Church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else.**”

In *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), Pope Francis warned against the numbing effect of materialism:

“**The culture of prosperity deadens us; we get thrilled if the market offers us something new to purchase.**”

Pope Francis titled his 2016 book *The Name of God Is Mercy*, encapsulating his focus on divine compassion:

“**The name of God is mercy.**”

Pope Francis will long be remembered for his catchy, often memorable quotes which made headlines well outside the Catholic Church. Here are some of the most memorable phrases from 12 years of his pontificate



Picture: Imago Mundi

In his 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis encouraged a hopeful approach to environmental stewardship:

“**May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope.**”

In his 2019 apostolic exhortation *Christus Vivit*, Pope Francis advised the Church to focus outwardly:

“**The Church should not be excessively caught up in herself but instead, and above all, reflect Jesus Christ.**”

Highlighting the importance of openness to the divine presence of God, Pope Francis asked:

“**The Lord is knocking at the door of our hearts. Have we put a sign on the door saying: 'Do not disturb'?**”

In October 2016 the Pope had harsh words for those espousing anti-immigrant rhetoric:

“**It's hypocrisy to call yourself a Christian and chase away a refugee or someone seeking help, someone who is hungry or thirsty, toss out someone who is in need of my help...**”

Last summer he offered these consoling words to those facing death:

“**God is not ashamed of us; God does not judge us... On the contrary, He draws near to let Himself be touched and to touch us, and He always raises us from death.**”

And in words of encouragement for people to go to confession, in his keynote document *Evangelii Gaudium*, the Pope wrote:

“**I want to remind priests that the confessional must not be a torture chamber but rather an encounter with the Lord's mercy which spurs us on to do our best.**”

“**A small step, in the midst of great human limitations, can be more pleasing to God than a life which appears outwardly in order but moves through the day without confronting great difficulties.**”

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Pope Francis' life marked by many battles with illness from early age

Pope Francis' life has been punctuated by regular battles with illness.

In his youth, the young Jorge Bergoglio experienced a life-threatening illness at the age of 21. While studying to become a Jesuit, he contracted a severe lung infection, leading to the removal of part of his right lung.

This early health crisis shaped his perspective on suffering and mortality, themes that would later permeate his teachings on mercy and compassion for the vulnerable.

As Pope, Francis continued to face health issues, often balancing his physical limitations with an intense schedule of travel and pastoral work.

In recent years, he dealt with chronic knee pain, which forced him to use a wheelchair or walking stick and he has not said Mass at an altar for several years.

Despite this, he has remained active, visiting communities worldwide and emphasising the importance of being close to the poor, the



Picture: Imago Mundi

BY **RONNIE CONVERY** sick and those in need.

In 2021, Pope Francis underwent surgery for diverticulitis, a condition affecting the colon.

The procedure, which required a brief hospitalisation, was successful, and he was able to return to his

duties with characteristic vigour.

More recently, Pope Francis faced additional health challenges. He was hospitalised in March 2023 for a respiratory infection, which raised concerns about his ability to maintain his demanding schedule. Despite this, he continued to fulfill

his duties, albeit at a slower pace.

In late 2023, he underwent surgery to address a hernia, which temporarily limited his public appearances.

Last year he was largely confined to a wheelchair and even opened the Holy Door on Christmas Eve from his wheelchair.



Sacred Heart's shining light of faith

SACRED Heart Cumbernauld was once hailed as the church with the best stained glass windows in Britain – and now they are shining more brightly than ever thanks to new exterior lighting paid for by a generous benefactor.

The exquisitely detailed stained-glass windows depicting the Stations of the Cross were created by artist Sadie McLellan for the opening of the church which celebrated its 60th anniversary last year.

Despite the church once being memorably denounced as a “disused bingo hall” for its concrete-box appearance, the stained-glass windows have long been a source of pride among parishioners.

It was always planned to install more exterior lighting and that has now been achieved.

It means that parishioners attending Mass inside and those who drive past can both now marvel at the dazzling display.

BY **BRIAN SWANSON**

The windows of Sacred Heart so impressed award-winning Glasgow author Peter Ross that he singled them out in his recent book *Steeple Chasing* as ‘the best church windows in Britain’ making Sacred Heart, one of 14 modernist Catholic churches built by the architectural practice of Gillespie, Kidd and Coia between 1957 and 1972, the only church in the Archdiocese to feature in the publication.

Deacon Kenny McGeachie, who is based at Sacred Heart, said: “The modern stained glass windows depicting the Stations of the Cross were beautiful anyway but the new light shining through them from the outside, presenting the image of Jesus moving towards his Passion in a radiant and colourful way is nothing short of glorious.”

Parish Priest Father John Campbell said: “Someone once described being in Sacred Heart, especially at sunset, was like sitting in-

side a jewellery box with the walls covered with colour. I’d say that’s a very fair description – but from the outside who would know?”

“I’m very proud of the church. Over the years we’ve had countless architects, artists and other people who make a point of coming to the area just to look at these magnificent windows.

“I always tell them to come as the sun is setting which is the very best time to get the full effect – I never get tired of seeing them even after all

the years.”

The windows were created by internationally acclaimed stained glass artist Sadie McLellan, who pioneered an innovative technique known as *dalle de verre* which involved painstakingly setting thousands of pieces of coloured glass into concrete.

Sadie, from Bearsden who died in 2007 aged 92, also created windows for Pluscarden Abbey, Glasgow Cathedral, The Robin Chapel, Edinburgh, and Our Lady of Lourdes Church Cardonald.

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Schools open their own Holy Doors to mark the Jubilee Year

It may not be 'full in the panting heart of Rome' but these young pupils from St Charles Primary, Kelvinside, have taken inspiration from the Jubilee celebrations in the Eternal City to create their own version of the Jubilee Year Holy Door.

And in keeping with the school's eco policy it was built from recycled scrap timber in the grounds of adjoining St Charles Church as part of a project by the school's Faith Committee to mark the Jubilee by transforming the area into a prayer garden.

And when the pupils suggested building a Holy Door as a centre piece, Primary 7 teacher Niall Donnelly knew the very man for the task – his handyman dad, Seamus.

Acting deputy head and RE coordinator Marie Spratt said: "The children have been learning all about the Jubilee Year and were really taken with the idea of walking through a Holy Door.

"They had their own ideas and were delighted that Niall's dad was able to use



his skills to make one – the pupils are delighted with it.

"Each class will use it for private prayer and reflection and we hope to invite families as well over the coming months."

And the school has another success story to celebrate this month after inspectors from Education Scotland praised its digital learning achievements, especially the use of digital journals for all

pupils, which they highlighted as particularly good practice.

The report noted that digital technology is embedded across the curriculum and is used creatively to enhance children's learning.

It concluded: "This has led to increased motivation and engagement in learning as well as making the curriculum more accessible for children who have barriers to their learning."

WORDS BY BRIAN SWANSON

PICTURES BY PAUL MCSHERRY

This vibrant image of a Holy Door in Our Lady of the Missions primary school, Thornliebank, has become a focal point to encourage the school community to explore different ways of celebrating the Jubilee Year of Hope.

These included encouraging a number of primary 7 pupils to speak to local parishes with a view to reaching out to the sick and elderly in the community; pilgrim walks are being planned throughout the year and final arrangements are being made by the school's Pupil Council to take part in SCIAF's fundraising Big Lent Walk.

And at the end of last month pupils were introduced to a new classmate – the Jubilee Mascot, Luce – 'light' in Italian – which will be used in lessons and reflections.

Deputy Head, Angela



O'Connor, said: "Our Jubilee Door of Hope is in our Mensa area, an area which is accessed by all staff and pupils. It is bright and vibrant and provides an excellent focus

point for all. The children were very excited when the door was installed and are enjoying using this as part of their faith development and learning."

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Kids playing, Colombia

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60 YEARS OF CHANGE

HOLY YEAR 2025

HOLY YEAR 2025

All roads lead to Rome for the Jubilee pilgrims

If you like statistics, this is a big one. Each year on average, Rome welcomes 35 million tourists and visitors.

During the 2025 Jubilee Year an expected 32 million will arrive ... that's on top of the 35 million who already come annually!

Inevitably that will mean longer queues for taxis and toilets and tagliatelle, but with a bit of advance planning you can still have a wonderful experience as a 'Pilgrim of Hope'.

The good news is that the City Council and the Italian Government have done a great job in getting the city ready for the Holy Year. A new Piazza has been created (left), at the bottom of the Via della Conciliazione (the long processional avenue leading to the Vatican) which both eases traffic problems and creates a lovely walkway and gathering area.

The new space is called Piazza Pia and as a pilgrim you will want to be familiar with it. For pilgrimages to the Holy Door start here. Here's how it works:

Individuals, families or organised groups need to download the Jubilee app - Jubilaeum25 - onto a smartphone. Sign in and choose

If all roads lead to Rome, then all the more reason to have a guide with you when you get there.

In the first of a series of articles, Flourish Editor Ronnie Convery offers updates and advice on how to navigate the Jubilee Year as a "pilgrim of hope"

a date and time you wish to sign up. You can also do this via the website www.iubilaeum2025.va/en.html

On the chosen day, go to Piazza Pia a little before your slot and wait there. A Jubilee volunteer will come at the time indicated with a large processional cross and accompany pilgrims in a special cordoned-off lane up the Via della Conciliazione, across St Peter's Square, and through the Holy Door, up to the high altar. Prayers are said throughout the walk.

If you prefer more flexibility you can still just turn up at the police checkpoints leading into St Peter's Square without a booking and take your chances in the queue. In busier months it's best to get there for about 8am or wait until the end of the day as queues can be lengthy.

And remember Wednesday mornings can be problematic as there is often a

papal audience in St Peter's Square which prevents all access to the Basilica.

One rather nice tradition of the Holy Year is the 'Testimonium' - this is a hand-somely produced scroll, rather like a papal blessing, written in Latin (but with a translation on the back).

You can obtain one by going into the Jubilee InfoPoint which is situated halfway up the Via della Conciliazione on the left (as you walk towards the basilica). It has a bright green illuminated entrance so you can't miss it.

Pop in and they will print a testimonium for you with name and your date of passage through the Holy Door - and even put it in a handy protective tube for carrying home, and all for less than 5 Euro!

A few thoughts on the visit to the basilica itself ... St Peter's has been given a massive spring-clean ahead

of the Holy Year. You will automatically be funneled through the Holy Door - this is the door ceremonially opened by the Holy Father on Christmas Eve.

Once inside, immediately on your right, don't miss the stunning white marble 'Pietà' of Michelangelo which has been enhanced by new security glass and a new lighting system.

Above the Papal Altar the canopy - or Baldacchino - has been repaired and cleaned ahead of the Jubilee and now looks stunning. The golden angels and cross at the top have never looked more striking and dramatic in the structure's 400-year history.

If you want to go to Mass in St Peter's, Masses in Italian or Latin are celebrated every weekday as follows:

- 7am and 7.30am at the Altar of St. Joseph
- 8.30am in the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament (followed by eucharistic Adoration until 6.45 p.m.)
- 9am and 10am at the Altar of St Joseph
- 11am and 12 noon and 5pm and 6pm at the Altar of the Cathedra (behind the papal altar)

Confessions are heard throughout the day at confessional boxes scattered throughout the basilica,

with the languages spoken by the confessors displayed outside.

The other three major basilicas of Rome, St John Lateran's, St Mary Major's and St Paul's Outside the Walls also have their holy doors which can be crossed to gain the indulgence. Although online booking is available for these too, queues tend to be much shorter than at St Peter's.

Finally ... do not be afraid! An army of Jubilee volunteers are on hand all round Rome wearing a green high visibility vest to answer all your queries with a smile. Maps and Jubilee itineraries are available from the InfoPoint and online.

Buon Anno Santo ... Happy Holy Year!

Vatican visit from home



If you can't travel to Rome for the Holy Year, fear not. Thanks to technology you can now visit the basilica of St Peter in extraordinary 3D detail ... without waiting in queues.

The 'Virtual' Vatican has been made possible thanks to a collaboration between Microsoft and the Holy See - putting AI (or artificial intelligence) to good use.

Last month the Vatican "digitally" opened St. Peter's Basilica to the world after unveiling its on-line twin.

Microsoft captured over



Holy Door detail



Michelangelo's Pietà



Piazza Pia

March

- 8-9 March
Jubilee of the World of Volunteering
- 28 March
24 Hours for the Lord
- 28-30 March
Jubilee of the Missionaries of Mercy

April

- 5-6 April
Jubilee of the Sick and Health Care Workers
- 25-27 April
Jubilee of Teenagers
- 28-29 April
Jubilee of People with Disabilities



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Jubilee calendar for coming months

THIS Lent and Eastertide coincides with a series of major Holy Year events planned at the Vatican.

One March 8-9 there will be the Jubilee of the World of Volunteering. Volunteers from all associations, members of non-profit organisations, NGO workers and social workers are especially

invited to this jubilee event. The Pope is scheduled to celebrate an open air Mass in St Peter's Square on the Sunday.

On March 28 the annual 24 Hours for the Lord will take place - a penitential service at which the Pope is scheduled to preside.

And on March 29-30 the

Jubilee of Priests instituted as 'Missionaries of Mercy' will take place which again involves the Pope presiding at an audience of clergy from around the world.

April 5-6 will see one of the largest jubilee gatherings for the sick and health care workers.

The week after Easter will

be marked as the Jubilee of teenagers with the canonisation of Blessed Carlo Acutis and Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati.

And on April 28-29 there will be the Jubilee of people with disabilities.

The biggest influx of visitors will be in August for the Jubilee of Youth.

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Evangelisation: how to fill those empty pews

In an era marked by uncertainty, fear, and cultural shifts, the courage to be Catholic is more essential than ever.

The Catholic Church is called to be a beacon of hope, yet many parishes struggle to engage and evangelise effectively.

Archbishop Nolan has made evangelisation his top priority since taking over as Archbishop of Glasgow ... yet the question remains, "how do we do it?"

Dr Hannah Vaughan-Spruce (above), a leading voice in Catholic evangelisation and parish renewal, has dedicated her work to revitalising parish communities and will be one of the keynote speakers at Courage to be Catholic.

She told *Flourish*: "We know of the hundreds of thousands of people across the UK who are just lost in a flood of hopelessness, fear, and anxiety. They are desperately searching for meaning and love. This crisis presents a unique opportunity for the Church to respond with courage."

Despite the vast network of Catholic parishes across the country, many are struggling to reach those who are spiritually adrift.

She said: "Our parishes are, by and large, ineffective at reaching those people who are drowning in a



culture of darkness. While many adults are spiritually hungry, rarely do parishes celebrate adult baptisms. This reveals a disconnect between the Church's mission and its outreach.

"The Holy Spirit is initiating something exciting worldwide and we have a chance to make disciples in our parishes like never before. Evangelisation is not merely about preserving parish life; it is about igniting it. Parish leaders must, therefore, cultivate a culture of prayerful expectation.

Thriving

"Mission-inspired prayer is essential, aligning parish efforts with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Whether in pastoral meetings or community initiatives, allowing space for God's direction can transform a struggling parish into a thriving one."

Many parish communities recognise the stagnation within their commu-

nities but feel powerless to enact change.

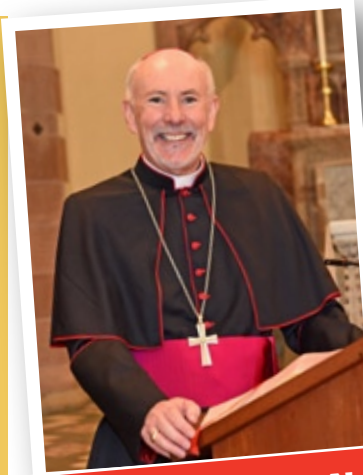
Dr Vaughan-Spruce likens parishes to islands in a great flood: "Lots of people leave the island. Some of our parishes have got smaller, some have been completely submerged beneath the water. We need to find ways of saving our islands and bringing new people to them." Yet, despite declining numbers, some parishes resist change.

"We all have people in our parish who say, 'This parish isn't going anywhere.' But it is delusional to keep doing the same thing for decades. God wants us to do something about those dwindling numbers."

She will tell the conference that parishes must embrace new methods of evangelisation, pastoral care, and community engagement. This includes fostering synodality, a key theme in Pope Francis's vision for the Church.

Dr Vaughan-Spruce told *Flourish* she draws inspiration from GK Chesterton, who wrote, "Christianity has died many times and risen again, for it had a God who knew the way out of the grave."

She said: "There are parishes that are discovering that there is a way out of the grave, and we want to share some of those stories with everyone."



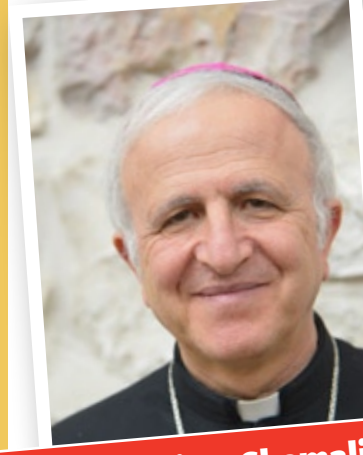
Archbishop William Nolan



Bishop John Keenan



Bishop Frank Dougan



Bishop William Shomali

The courage to be Catholic

Glasgow is set to host the most ambitious conference the Catholic Church has seen in recent years later this month ... and you are invited!

Courage to be Catholic, organised by Aid to the Church in Need, is being held at the Royal Concert Hall on Saturday March 29 from 9.30am till 4pm. Archbishop Nolan will welcome three international speakers who will talk about persecution in countries affected by violence and how to evangelise in our own parishes in Scotland.

The Archbishop will also welcome clergy from across Scotland including the President of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland, Bishop John Keenan of Paisley and Bishop Frank Dougan of Galloway Diocese. Bishop William Shomali, will share the suffering of Christians and bring a message from the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Cardinal Pizzaballa.

Voice

Nigerian Bishop, Wilfred Anagbe, will speak about the persecution of Christians in Africa and Dr Hannah Vaughan-Spruce, from Divine Renovation UK will deliver a talk highlighting the need for evangelisation in our own parishes.

A Mass will be celebrated at the end of the event in St Aloysius' Church in Garnethill, where a Nigerian priest will ask Catholics in Scotland to be a voice for the voiceless.

William More, Operations Manager in Scotland for Aid to the Church in Need, said: "This event will inspire, encourage, and inform you to

be pilgrims in this Holy Year of Hope.

"It's an event like no other; for the first time ever, we have over 20 exhibitors from around Scotland; sharing their work, selling their products, and asking for action.

Support

"You'll have time to make new friends and explore the stalls, to enjoy lunch and refreshments and to learn more about Aid to the Church in Need's work around the world. We are all working together to build up the faith in Scotland and your support for this event is essential."

The conference early bird and parish group offer is still available at www.trybooking.com/uk/events/landing/75521, or call 01698 337 470 to book your tickets.

The exhibitor list for the conference includes:

SCIAF, Stella Maris, SSVP Scotland, Missio Scotland, Justice & Peace Scotland, SPUC Pro-Life Ltd, Scottish Catholic Archives, Knights of St Columba, Union of Catholic Mothers, NET Ministries Scotland, Across, Ignatian Spirituality Centre, Beginning Experience Scotland Team, Legion of Mary/The Wayside Club, Minna's Children, Independent trader of Catholic cards, Being Catholic Television, The Martin Chambers Ecuador Trust, Pioneer Total Abstinence Association, Pauline Books and Media, Sisters of the Gospel of Life/Cardinal Winning Pro-Life Initiative, Congregation of the Sisters of Nazareth (Nazareth Care Home) and Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency.

Register on trybooking.com or scan the QR code now!

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SCOTTISH CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

'Courage to Be Catholic'



Bishop William Shomali
Patriarchal Vicar for Jerusalem and Palestine



Hannah Vaughan-Spruce
CEO, Divine Renovation UK



Bishop Wilfred Anagbe
Diocese of Makurdi Nigeria

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2025

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GLASGOW ROYAL CONCERT HALL
MASS 5:00PM AT ST ALOYSIUS

Conference will hear first-hand testimonies of the persecution of Christians around the world

Last year over 5000 Christians were killed in Nigeria alone, just for believing in Jesus and currently it is the most dangerous countries for Christians to live in the world.

In the last 12 months, 13 Catholic priests and religious were killed in Nigeria and 38 were abducted by extremists.

Fr Remi Ihyula, Head of Justice, Development and Peace in the Diocese of Makurdi, Nigeria, who is coming to the Glasgow conference, told *Flourish*:

"We cherish the solidarity that comes from Catholics in Scotland who know that their brothers and sisters are here, and they are going through this terrible persecution."

Afraid

"I think the greatest way that Scottish Catholics can help is to speak up for us, because sometimes we don't have the voice or a very strong voice in in Nigeria. I love my country, but I must be truthful, I think that we are still afraid to speak

sometimes, against the atrocities that are happening.

"People are afraid for their lives. I must confess that even this year I have been afraid several times to speak out after being asked by Nigerian press to comment on the violence against Christians.

"As a priest, I am also scared because several of my colleagues have been kidnapped or killed if they speak out. Therefore, I really believe the two biggest things people can do in Scot-

land is pray for us and give a voice to the voiceless."

And he had this message for *Flourish* readers: "Put pressure on the Nigerian government to take a different course ... we have we have a good opportunity now to make an impact as the President of Nigeria is not an Islamist, even though he's a Muslim.

"He is a moderate who through diplomatic channels might be influenced, we must make him understand that this should not be taking place."



Bishop Wilfred and Fr Remi will speak at conference





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Arnold Clark

Change of scene for Father Joe as he is appointed Little Sisters' new chaplain

WARM tributes have been paid to retired priest Father Joe Mills who has left St Joachim's Carmyle to become live in chaplain at the Little Sisters of the Poor Care Home, Robroyston.

Father Joe, 83, has been in residence at St Joseph's Tollcross, St Joachim's sister parish, for the past few years where he played an active role assisting parish priest Father Stephen Hannah and working closely with parish groups.

Active

Parishioner Giovanna McMahon, who helps run the joint parish foodbank, the liturgy and music ministry, and who knows Father Joe well, told *Flourish*: "He retired back in 2017 because he had reached the age of 75 but he is as active as ever.

"His homilies are down to earth and full of humour but at the same time they maintain the dignity of the Gospel."

"Above all he is a people's person, everybody warms to him, and we will really miss

him. He will be a wonderful asset at St Joseph's – they are lucky to have him."

She added: "For the past few years we have been running a Knit 'n' Natter group on a Tuesday morning and he loved to join us so the ladies in that group are especially sorry to see him go."

Fortunate

Father Joe said: "I'm very fortunate to be appointed chaplain, although obviously I'm already missing all the good people from St Joachim's and St Joseph's.

"It's a new chapter in my ministry although it is a bit different from parish work but I'm gradually settling in and getting to know the people here – and there are priests that I know here too so I'm enjoying catching up with them."

Renowned as an after-dinner speaker, Father Joe, who was ordained in 1967, is a former spiritual director of the annual pilgrimage from the Archdiocese to the Holy Land.

Picture by Paul McSherry



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Glasgow centre offers Lent retreat without leaving your own home

THIS year's Retreat from the Ignatian Spirituality Centre in Glasgow will help you journey through Lent 2025 in this Jubilee Year, without leaving your own home.

The Garnethill-based Centre's Lenten journey this year picks up on the Jubilee theme "Pilgrims of Hope".

The letter issued by Pope Francis to help introduce the jubilee is entitled *Spes non Confundit* – hope does not disappoint. Hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Rom 5:1–2.5)

For this reason, the Lent Retreat theme is the "fruits of the Spirit".

John Hampsey of the Ignatian Spirituality Centre said: "We experience the fruits of the Spirit in consolation: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness and self-control. For St Ignatius consolation was

an increase in faith, hope and love. We are invited in the Spiritual Exercises to revisit consolation often.

"We pray that in this Jubilee Year the fruits of the prayer of so many people will renew our hope.

"We pray with Pope Francis that the Jubilee may be a moment of genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, the 'door' of our salvation, whom the Church is charged to proclaim always, everywhere and to all as our hope."

The retreat offers different ways of praying: with scripture, daily reflections, poetry, images (and with music in the online version)

The retreat can be found online at www.onlineprayer.net/fruits-of-the-spirit/ and you can order booklets via the website: www.iscglasgow.co.uk or drop into the Ignatian Spirituality Centre 35 Scott St, Garnethill, G3 6PE to pick up a free booklet.



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St Margaret's Children & Family Care Society is the only Catholic adoption agency in the UK.

We are proud that we successfully fought and won for our right to operate as a faith based agency. We are based in Charing Cross in Glasgow and are always looking for prospective adopters to provide forever homes to children who are waiting for adoption. The children who are waiting have changed significantly over the past few years.

Prospective adopters

- We are particularly keen to recruit prospective adopters for sibling groups; there are sibling groups of 2 and 3 who must be kept together for their future relationships and overall wellbeing; children with additional needs from minor to significant and older children.
- Prospective adopters must understand the importance of adopted children understanding their life story and sustaining their relationships with birth family where it is safe to do so.
- We also want to recruit adopters from minority ethnic groups to ensure that our prospective adopters mirror the ethnicity of the children waiting for adoption. There is a disproportionate number of children from ethnic minority groups waiting for a forever family. It is possible for a family from a different ethnic background to adopt a child from another, but they must understand the importance of the child being brought up with a clear understanding of their identity and sense of belonging to their ethnicity, culture and religious practices.

Fostering and Adoption Panel

St Margaret's has a fostering and adoption panel made up of volunteers from different backgrounds who offer their time generously to provide a service to St Margaret's. The Panel has a very important function meeting with potential adopters, considering the assessment reports completed by the social workers and making a recommendation about approval to adopt a child or children. If you think that your professional background, interest, enthusiasm or personal experience could offer St Margaret's a commitment to be a member of the Panel, then please get in touch. There is training and ongoing support available for all our panel members.

If you are interested, please contact Jacky, Janine or Marilyn at St Margaret's on 0141 332 8371 or email jacky@stmargaretsadoption.org.uk, janine@stmargaretsadoption.org.uk or marilyn@stmargaretsadoption.org.uk

A Lenten Prayer

Almighty and ever loving God,
you invite us deeper into your world, your people, your Lent.
May this time be one of outward focus, especially on the needs of children;
seeking you in those who wish to adopt and foster.
Help us live a Lent focused on freedom, generosity, and encounter; serving these people.
Give us hearts hungry to serve you
and those who need what we have to give.
Amen.

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Ozanam scholarship will be extended to help local students

A PIONEERING sponsorship scheme allowing young people from challenging backgrounds to go to University has been hailed as a success.

The Society of St Vincent de Paul in Glasgow initiated the so-called Frederic Ozanam Scholarship (after the founder of the SSVF) several years ago as a scheme helping pupils of Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese to be assisted financially to undertake further education at university.

Priority was given to pupils who, because of financial hardship, would not be likely to embark on a university education.

The scheme was piloted with two pupils from each of the following four schools in the academic year 2019/20: St Andrew's Secondary, Carntyne, St Margaret Mary's Secondary, Castlemilk, St Mungo's Academy, Gallowgate and St Paul's High School, Pollok.

Awards

The scholarship awards the sum of £1,500 per successful applicant to be payable in each year of their chosen degree course.

The pilot was deemed so successful it was extended to 12 Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese for subsequent academic years.

To be eligible, applicants must intend to study at one of the three universities in Glasgow (University of Glasgow, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow Caledonian University); fulfil the criteria of the Student Agency Award Scotland (SAAS); not be in receipt of any other



scholarships for their university education; and have the written approval of authorised representatives of their school.

The assessment criteria are based on the financial situation of the applicant's household; academic achievement; work experience; extra-curricular activities and achievements.

In total 16 awards have been made since the scheme started and eight more are in place for the current academic year.

Seven students from previous years have already graduated. Many of these have praised the scholarship, giving testimony to how it enabled them to successfully complete their degrees.

One recipient, Alexandra from 2019, said: "This scholarship has been incredibly helpful during my univer-

sity experience. Especially when starting my first year, I needed to buy things like a new laptop for my course and I couldn't have done so without this.

Amazing

"It is amazing that scholarships like this one offer so much help for students who really need it. I am forever grateful for this help."

Calum, who also won an early scholarship said: "In my first year of university my scholarship allowed me buy a laptop that I could use in the lectures and tutorials.

"This laptop became crucial in the next two years when I had to study from home.

"I am extremely grateful for this scholarship as it has benefited my studies greatly."

"Being a student nurse also it has helped me get

resources and equipment to better equip myself for the world of work and during nursing school also. I am forever grateful for this wonderfully opportunity," said Oluwatosin.

Now the scholarship has been extended to all 18 Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese, and applications are currently being considered.

Jim O'Hagan from the Saint Vincent de Paul Society told *Flourish*: "It is gratifying to know that the Frederic Ozanam Scholarship has enabled a few young people to achieve the success of a university education that might otherwise have eluded them as a result of circumstances outwith their control.

"It is hoped that it will continue to do so into the future and, who knows, may extend throughout Scotland in due course."

Sisters will take top roles in Vatican

IN a historic move, two women religious have been appointed to prominent positions within the Vatican, marking a significant step toward increased female leadership in the Catholic Church's central administration.

First, the Pope named Sister Simona Brambilla as the Prefect of the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

This appointment makes her the first woman to lead a major Vatican office.

The Dicastery oversees all Catholic religious orders globally, encompassing approximately 600,000 nuns

and 129,000 priests. Sister Brambilla, 59, a member of the Consolata Missionaries served as a missionary in Mozambique and as the superior general of her order from 2011 to 2023.

And later this month Sister Raffaella Petrini will take up the role of President of the Vatican City State, effectively making her the governor of the 44-hectare territory that serves as the heart of the Catholic Church.

Sister Petrini, 56, a member of the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist, had previously broken new ground in 2021 when she became the first female Secretary General of the Vatican's Govern-



Sr Simona Brambilla



Sr Raffaella Petrini

norate. In that capacity, she was responsible for overseeing the Vatican Museums, the health care system, and the police force.

Since the beginning of Pope Francis' papacy in 2013,

the percentage of women working in the Vatican has risen from 19.3% to 23.4%, with women now holding several key leadership positions in the central government of the Church.

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This Lent we should treasure the restlessness of our hearts

DURING the last years of his life, Thomas Merton lived in a hermitage outside a monastery, hoping to find more solitude in his life.

But solitude is an elusive thing and he found it was forever escaping him.

Then one morning he sensed that for a moment he had found it.

However, what he experienced was a surprise to him. Solitude, it turns out, is not some altered state of consciousness or some heightened sense of God and the transcendent in our lives. Solitude, as he experienced it, was simply being peacefully inside your own skin, gratefully aware of and peacefully breathing in the immense richness inside your own life.

But that's not easy. It's rare. Rarely do we find ourselves at peace with the present moment inside us. Why? Because that's the way we are built. We are overcharged for this world. When God put us into this world, as the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes tells us, God put "timelessness"

into our hearts and because of that we don't make easy peace with our lives.

We read this, for example, in the famous passage about the rhythm of the seasons in the Book of Ecclesiastes. 'There is a time and a season for everything, we are told: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to gather in what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal... and so the text goes on.

God has made everything suitable for its own time but has put timelessness into the human heart so that human beings are out of sync with the rhythms of the seasons from beginning to end.

God has put a sense of past and future into our hearts. Perhaps that captures it best in terms of how we generally experience this in our lives.

Difficult

We know from experience how difficult it is to be at peace inside the present moment because the past and the future won't leave us alone. They are forever

Scribblings of the spirit

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



colouring the present.

The past haunts us with half-forgotten lullabies and melodies that trigger memories about love found and lost, about wounds that have never healed, and with in-

choate feelings of nostalgia, regret, and wanting to cling to something that once was. The past is forever sowing restlessness into the present moment.

And the future? It im-

pales itself into the present as well, looming as promise and threat, forever demanding our attention, forever sowing anxiety into our lives, and forever stripping us of the capacity to simply rest inside the present.

The present is forever coloured by obsessions, heartaches, headaches, and anxieties that have little to do with people we are actually sitting with at table.

Philosophers and poets have given various names to this. Plato called it "a madness that comes from the gods"; Augustine, in perhaps the most famous naming of them all, called it an incurable restlessness that God has put into the human heart to keep it from finding a home in something less than the infinite and eternal – "You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."

And so, it's rare to be peacefully present to our own lives, restful inside of our own skins. But this "torment", as T.S. Eliot, once named it, has a God-given intentionality, a divine purpose.

Expectation

Henri Nouwen, in a remarkable passage both names the struggle and its purpose: "Our life is a short time in expectation, a time in which sadness and joy kiss each other at every moment.

"There is a quality of sadness that pervades all the moments of our life. It seems that there is no such thing as a clear-cut pure joy, but that even in the most happy moments of our existence we sense a tinge of sadness. In every satisfaction, there is an awareness of limitations. In every success, there is the fear of jealousy. Behind every smile, there is a tear. In every embrace, there is loneliness. In every friendship, distance. And in all forms of light, there is the knowledge of surrounding darkness.

"But this intimate experience in which every bit of life is touched by a bit of death can point us beyond the limits of our existence.

"It can do so by making us look forward in expectation to that day when our hearts will be filled with perfect joy, a joy that no one shall take away from us."

Our restless hearts keep us from falling asleep to the divine fire inside us.

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Nourish your soul with our monthly spirituality supplement

Genocide does not start with genocide

You may think that signing up for a weekly update from the website of Gov.UK of the Foreign Secretary's programme is some sort of weird self-flagellation.

But when you chair a peace organisation it pays to be on the ball.

Our politicians do and say things that don't make it into mainstream media but are essential to our understanding of what is happening to our common home.

Included in the roundup of the week that the 80th anniversary of the Holocaust was commemorated was David Lammy's speech given at a reception co-hosted with the Israeli Embassy at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office.

His address contained these words: "Genocide does not start with genocide. It starts with denial of rights. With attacks on the rule of law. With a festering resentment of the other."

I could only quote this on social media and ask Mr Lammy to look to Gaza.

The Nazis, of course, had a "festering resentment" of



Marian Pallister

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

many different peoples that led to the cruel deaths of 6 million Jews, and another 11 million that included Russians, Belarussians, Poles, Ukrainians, Serbs, Romani, LGBT people, mentally and physically disabled people, Soviet prisoners of war, Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses, Spanish Republicans, Freemasons, people of colour, and other minorities not considered by Hitler and the Nazi regime as part of the so-called "master race". Those minorities included those on the Left, including trades unionists and socialists.

The outcome of this hell of hating, of denying rights, of messing with the law to make one set of narrow parameters mainstream, to label as "other" all who don't fit those narrow parameters was most horrifically illustrated in

World War II. But around the world the "never again" message has not touched the hearts of latter-day Hitlers.

Pol Pot, Idi Amin, Saddam Hussein and Papa Doc Duvalier are names that spring to mind as perpetrators of genocide in the latter years of the 20th century. There is – sadly – a queue of contenders lining up to make it into the 21st century hall of shame too, and we are only just at the first quarter.

May we never forget that genocide is not about statistics, about numbers, about politicking. It is about individuals. Children. Women. Men. People of all faiths and none.

If, like me, you have been in war situations, you get to know that while "genocide" can mean a rounding up of people to systematically

slaughter them, the word also applies to the less methodical murder of a particular part of society that a regime believes should be eliminated.

I give due credit to David Lammy when he said that young people need to understand "what a catastrophic moral failure for humanity Auschwitz was", but when he says that "the seeds of such a catastrophe are still around us" he must, as Foreign Secretary, look to the catastrophe no fragile ceasefire can disguise and ask what role the UK government has played.

In his book for Jubilee Year, Pope Francis says "According to some experts, what is happening in Gaza has the characteristics of a genocide. It should be carefully investigated to determine whether it fits into the technical definition formulated by jurists and international bodies."

If we seek a nonviolent world, we must acknowledge the dignity of every human being. We must acknowledge every individual's right to justice. We can't stay silent.



When too many tests fill a pregnancy with anxiety and fear

WE are awaiting the arrival of another baby into the family this summer.

Our grandson who will be two by then is enthusiastically practising his oh-so-gentle 'pat-pat' for when he gets to meet his brother or sister.

We're at a stage where babies just keep coming and we are no less excited than we were when the first was on the way.

For all the glow expectant mothers exude, pregnancy is an anxious time. They put their trust in the midwives and doctors who care for them and their babies.

Back in the dark ages of the eighties when I had my first, the internet was still to arrive and the sum total of my knowledge came from a tome of a reference book. It sat at my bedside and was referred to nightly.

By the time it was finished with in the mid-nineties it was too dog-eared for the charity shop. It was both a comfort and a source of anxiety. In a textbook pregnancy it confirmed all was well at any given stage. But all the possible complications were there in black

and white.

When I put it down I took a deep breath and picked up my St. Gerard Majella prayer card. So many times I convinced myself my baby had a rare and untreatable complication, and all of those occasions I was calmed by that prayer.

I even put in a shout to give her Majella as middle name. It didn't come to pass and perhaps just as well. The late Monsignor McMahon – who was then chaplain to the Queen Mother's – came to visit me and was well taken with her name although we both agreed it was über-Catholic enough to ensure not everyone would employ her.

Pregnancies are not always straightforward and the trust mothers place in the specialist teams who see them through to delivery is not always upheld.

There have been some high-profile cases recently, several of which have been in a single health authority, in which parents have been wrongly told that test showed their babies had serious genetic conditions.

Carly Wesson and her partner, Carl Everson,

Mary's musings

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



were told at the 12-week scan their baby had a high chance of having Down's Syndrome. CVS (Chorionic Villus Sampling) determined the baby had a rare condition called Patau's Syndrome, the result of which might be miscarriage, stillbirth, or the baby dying shortly after birth.

A foetal care consultant told Carly and Carl the baby would have severe care needs if she survived to term. Carly underwent a termination only to learn later that results from more detailed analysis and a post-mortem revealed their baby daughter whom they named Ladybird had no chromosomal abnormality.

In another health authority, a couple decided on a termination after being told their baby had a fatal form of dwarfism when, in fact, it was unaffected. The

mother says she did it out of concern for her baby, in its best interests. She said the thought of her suffering any pain, and only surviving for a short period after birth, was too much to bear.

Shockingly, the fact that her two older children have a non-fatal condition which means they are small for their ages was not taken into account when the doctors made their judgement.

Her mother said: "I knew there was nothing wrong with Keira. As a mother, you just know. Her movements were strong, but I trusted the advice I was given."

In a survey by *New York Times* journalists positive screening tests for rare disorders had an alarmingly high rate of incorrect results, some as high as in the 90 per cent range. At the same time literature pro-



moting the tests advertised them as "highly accurate" and offering "total confidence."

When little Keira's mother opted to abort her baby she said it was the "the most impossible choice we've ever had to make. We thought the best option was to end the pregnancy because the baby was suffering."

The entire narrative around pre-natal testing has to change. Finding evidence of a condition is not synonymous with "incom-

patibility with life." The subjective opinions which pressurise women to terminate the lives of their babies should be prohibited.

For all the responsibilities the medical staff incorrectly and appropriately investigating the health of the child, it is important we foster a culture that emphasises the ultimate responsibility which parents have for their child. For their health, for their future and most importantly for their life.

ART OF THE MONTH

Fear not the sound of silence during these Lenten days

THE masterpiece, "Christ in the Wilderness" by Ivan Kramskoi, painted in 1898 serves well for meditation during the Holy Season of Lent.

BY MGR TOM MONAGHAN

Jesus is alone in the desert, deep in contemplation and fasting. The barren landscape and the sombre mood of Christ invite us to meditate on sacrifice, spiritual struggle, and the call to conversion.

Our Lord, a solitary figure, is seated upon a barren rock, hands clasped, eyes downcast. The landscape is bleak, colour reserved only for the Lord's garments. No angels in attendance; no devils crouched in the shadows; no storm clouds gathering ominously.

Simply a stillness: Christ alone with the weight of the mission He has undertaken. The viewer can almost hear the silence and feel the chill of the morning air. The starkness deprives the Lord of a halo to mark Him as divine.

There is no easy triumph in His expression. Only weariness, deep thought and sorrow. This is the Christ who has entered into the full burden of our condition.

Something else is missing – despair. The clasped hands, the slightly forward-leaning posture, the quiet

intensity of His gaze all suggest a resolve that does not waver. The tempter has not yet spoken, but Christ is already preparing His answer. It is the answer of one who has chosen hunger over compromise. Solitude over easy acclaim. The will of the Father over the seductions of the world.

The painting reminds us that it is in the silence, in the stillness, that the great battles of the spirit are fought and won. Here, on this rock, we find not merely the Man of Sorrows, but the King who will reign from the tree.

In an age that flees silence, do we dare to enter the wilderness? Do we dare to meet Christ there?



PRAYER OF THE MONTH

Lord Jesus,
In the solitude of the wilderness, You
fasted and prayed,
bearing the weight of the world's
temptations in silent love.

Teach us to seek You in our own deserts,
to trust in the Father's providence,
and to find strength in Your divine
presence.

This we ask in Your Holy Name. Amen.

Sunday readings are the key to getting the most out of this year's Lenten season



Fr Tom
Kilbride

Parish Priest of Christ
the King, Glasgow

LENT has begun, and already we are preparing for Holy Week and Easter by our penances – our extra prayer, fasting and acts of charity.

Our Lenten Sundays direct us there but also remind us of the journey we must make before then, our 40 days “in the desert” with Jesus.

First Sunday of Lent, Year C

We always begin Lent hearing about Jesus' 40 days in the desert and the tests he faces. Luke, whom we are hearing from this year, recounts Jesus' three temptations and the Scriptural responses he makes.

He differs from Matthew's account in one thing: he leaves the temptation in Jerusalem to the end. For Luke, the whole Gospel – all of Jesus' ministry – is leading him to Jerusalem, for there everything which brings about our salvation takes place and from there the disciples will be sent out on their mission to the world.

Jerusalem means the Cross but it also means resurrection and the victory of the Kingdom of God. The devil clearly knows this and

tempts Jesus to forgo God's plan.

He rejects that, however. There is a journey he must undertake first, a mission of bringing good news to the poor, of proclaiming the Lord's year of favour, and a cross he must carry which will bring us healing and salvation.

We look ahead to Holy Week and the events which take place in Jerusalem, the “opportune time” mentioned at the end of the Gospel, but we too have a journey over these weeks first, to prepare us to renew our faith in that salvation. The First Reading gives us a hint about where to start: remember God's saving actions and love for us, profess our faith in him again and offer him something of ourselves as gift. That's a nice framework for our Lenten penances, perhaps, as we get underway.

Second Sunday of Lent, Year C

Lent's second Sunday always presents us with the Transfiguration of Jesus, that mystical moment on the mountain when Jesus gives his three close com-



panions a glimpse of his true glory.

Again, Luke has a unique take on the experience. First, he tells us it happened while Jesus was praying. Second, Luke refers the appearance of Moses and Elijah to his “departure” (literally his “exodus”) in Jerusalem. Again, Luke points us forward to the city where Jesus will die, rise and send out his apostles. The vision prepares us for that, with an eye to the glory, even if we have to pass through the darkness of the Passion first.

Here, Jesus is silent, but the Father calls him “my Son”. On Calvary, the Father will be silent but Jesus will call him “Father”, as he prays for our forgiveness and as he yields his spirit. But that's all for another day!

For now, our Lent invites us to “listen to him” more and perhaps to deepen our relationship of love for Jesus and the Father in prayer.

Third Sunday of Lent, Year C

Many parishes this Sunday will use the readings for Year A, with the Gospel about Jesus' meeting with a Samaritan woman at a well, offering her “living water” rather than the natural water she is drawing.

It is a beautiful story which mirrors the journey of many preparing for baptism at Easter time, preparing for that “living water”, a journey of encounter, questions, revelations, faith and ultimately mission.

Many, however, will hear the strange Gospel passage from Luke today, about the brutality of Pilate and a fatal accident in Jerusalem. Jesus mentions them as a warning against complacency: don't presume you are not a

sinner!

However, the First Reading and the little parable of the fruitless fig tree give a wider context: God always reaches out to us to save us. Moses encounters God in the burning bush and learns that the one who made all things is a God who saves, a God who hears the cry of the suffering and a God who acts out of compassion. So, the Gospel's vineyard owner gives the tree another chance.

Perhaps the two sides of our Lenten message this week are don't be complacent, but don't lose heart either!

Fourth Sunday of Lent, Year C

We hear today one of the most famous and most loved parables from the Gospel of Luke. The wayward son more or less tells his father to his face that he wishes he would die, so he can get his inheritance. In love, his father concedes it.

However, when faced with a moment of crisis the son knows he must return and face his father, and he is welcomed with equal – indeed more lavish – love. It was the son who was dead but is alive again, his father says.

Such lavish love is a parable of God's forgiveness towards us when we repent and turn back to him – a mid-Lenten boost as our penances and resolve might be wavering a little – while the banquet of celebration is offered to us when, forgiven, we share in the Eucharist.

Like Joshua's people rejoicing to enter the promised land (First Reading) we are fed with the lavish gift of God, the Body of Jesus himself, whenever we return home.

en as a tool to condemn but as a way to seek life and to find God: justly calling out sin must be accompanied by mercy and new beginnings.

Sometimes we feel glad of that for ourselves, but can be slower to offer it to others, a bit like the crowd around the woman. As the other readings today suggest, we should “press on towards the goal”, to which God calls us “upward” (Second Reading) rather than being stuck on “the things of old” (First Reading).

God wants to make us new, and Lent is our time for letting him do that. We may have “sown in tears”, but we will “sing when we reap” because God is offering us a fresh start, a new direction and deeper relationship with him in Jesus.

Whether we are preparing for baptism or preparing to renew our baptism at Easter, these are special weeks to reconnect with God's love and mercy, and to show that mercy to others too. But let's not jump to the end too quickly: let's make the most of the journey too!



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Requiescant in pace

Remembering the life of Fr Justinian

JOHN McGread was born on April 8th 1931 in Glasgow, one of eleven siblings.

His parents were James and Ellen McGread (nee O'Brien). Later on, the family would be decanted to Girvan as a result of the Second World War.

They had a hotel there that was frequented at holiday time by many priests from different dioceses.

John was 19 when he joined the Passionist Order, and made his First Profession on November 6th 1952, from whence he was known as Justinian.

When I first met him, in 1971, he was guestmaster at our Passionist Retreat House at Coodham in Ayrshire, having just returned from what was called fron-

tier apostolate in British Columbia.

Prior to that he had been at our Passionist monastery in Musselburgh, doing supply work, as well as missions and retreats, and prior to that again, he had been a young chaplain in the Glasgow Royal Infirmary where he initiated a Sunday Evening Mass which lasted for many years after.

After his time in Coodham, Justinian went to St Joseph's Church at Avenue Hoche in Paris, where the Passionists administered an English-speaking parish with parishioners coming from all over the world.

After he left Paris, he served at St Gabriel's Par-



ish in Prestonpans, before taking a sabbatical year in Chicago at the Institute of Spiritual Leadership. He would return from there to assume formation roles, firstly as Director of Pos-

tulants at the Graan in Enniskillen, and then as Novice Master at Crossgar in County Down.

He would have a second term in Paris before returning to Glasgow in 1990 as the chaplain, once again, to the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, and he remained in Glasgow ever since, apart from a period of compassionate leave in Ayrshire to assist with the care of an ailing, and much-loved sister.

He was 67 years a priest, ordained on December 21st 1957 along with eight others, and with Justinian's death, all of them have now gone to God.

He died in the Royal Infirmary on Sunday 2nd February, appropriately the World Day for Consecrated



Fr Frank

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

Life, Justinian having lived for over 72 years as a consecrated religious.

Many family members, and his Passionist community, had been at his bedside shortly before his death, and one of our Passionist students was with him when he passed away, having held his hand and recited the 23rd psalm, the Lord is My Shepherd, as Justinian had always requested.

In our Passionist community in Bishopbriggs, whenever we gathered at the end of the day to pray night prayer together, after singing the anthem to Our Lady, we would all turn to Father Justinian, and he would say "Good night, God bless, and sleep well", and that would be our final word for the day.

Let it be our final word to him now. May his good soul rest in peace.

Fr Bill: a missionary vocation well lived

WITH the death of Fr Bill Tolan, Glasgow has lost one of its best-known missionary priests.

Yet although much of his life as a Mill Hill Missionary was spent in the Archdiocese, he was both born and died far from its boundaries.

Fr Bill was born on the 9th of June 1935, at Long Island, New York in the Diocese of Brooklyn, USA. His parents were Francis Tollan, an electrician, and Alice McNulty. He was born into a family of three brothers and one sister.

Returning to Scotland as a boy he felt the call to serve as a missionary and completed his secondary education at St Joseph's Missionary College in Lochwinnoch.

He then proceeded to Roosendaal in the Netherlands from 1953 to 1955 and completed his philosophy studies.

He completed his theological studies at St Joseph's College in Mill Hill, London from 1955 up to 1959.

He took his Perpetual

Oath at St Joseph's College, Mill Hill on 7th May 1958, and a year later he was ordained to the priesthood by Cardinal Godfrey.

After his ordination he came back to Glasgow for his first stint as a priest and studied literature and geography at Glasgow University and graduated with an M.A. in 1962.

He was soon on his way again though – appointed to teach at the minor seminary in Freshfield in Merseyside from 1962 – 1970. During this period, he did supplies, and preached mission appeals in California and Washington, USA.

In 1970 his superiors finally appointed him to the foreign missions... to Buea, Cameroon to teach in Sasse College.

A year later, he was transferred to Bishop Rogan College which had just started teaching A-levels. He was appointed as the parish priest of the Cathedral parish of Soppo, a chaplain to the Sisters of St Therese and a member of the Bishop's Council.

Fr Bill was the moving

BY RONNIE CONVERY force behind the Charismatic Renewal in Buea and Bamenda Dioceses. He was the organising secretary to the Kumba Catholic Convention held in the late 70s.

He remained in Cameroon till 1982 and was fully involved in different ministries such as teaching in the seminaries, leadership roles, spiritual director, and parish work.

Lochwinnoch

In 1982 he became the Rector in St Joseph's College at Lochwinnoch as well as bursar for the British Region. He oversaw the transfer from Lochwinnoch to Cardonald in Glasgow in 1985.

In 1988, he was elected to the Mill Hill Missionaries' General Council. As a member of the General Council, he held the portfolio for Finance and Latin America.

In 1994, he was re-elected to the General Council for further six years. Adding to his previous respon-

sibilities he became the Councillor for Europe and the Americas.

In 2001 Fr Bill was appointed back to Cameroon for six more years to assist in the formation of young students in a Mill Hill Formation programme in Bamenda.

In 2007, he was appointed to Cardonald to help with Mission Appeals, animation and the editing of the St Joseph's Advocate.

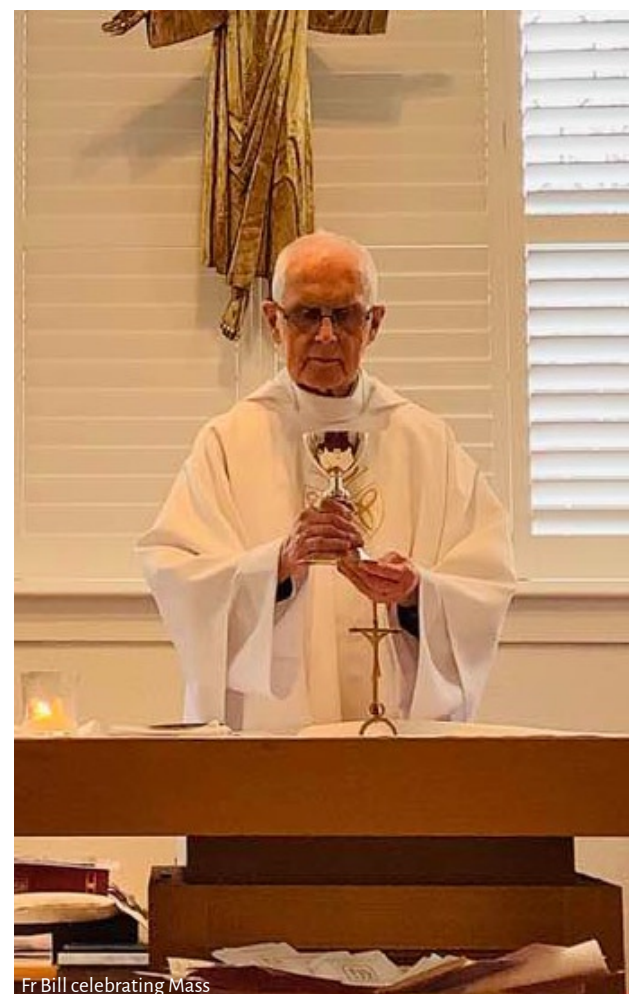
For 14 years he visited countless parishes across Scotland and covered Masses in many parishes in the Archdiocese.

In November 2021 Fr Bill retired to Herbert House, Freshfield in England.

With declining health, Fr Bill passed away in the early hours of the Feast of the Epiphany.

"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'" Matthew 25:21

Requiescat in pace.



Fr Bill celebrating Mass

Don't take your Wee Box for granted this Lent. It really can deliver big change

“A BOMB came in through the roof. When it exploded, I was standing just 10 metres away. I was 17.”

On the morning of May 2nd, 2002, Luis was sheltering in the church of San Pablo Apóstol in Colombia with his family and hundreds of local people. On all sides, armed men were closing in. The church was surrounded.

“When the bomb hit the room, everything went dark and smoky,” Luis said.

“When the darkness lifted, a little boy begged me not to leave him. I picked him up and took him outside. He died in my arms. When I got home, I just cried and cried.”

Miraculously, Luis' whole family survived. But 119 others were not so fortunate and perished that day.

The attack left the church in ruins. But despite the carnage, the ‘mutilated Christ of Bojayá’ – a crucifix of our Lord Jesus – survived, albeit with His arms and legs missing. Today, this striking relic (right) is a powerful symbol of the conflict in Colombia – a reflection of the suffering inflicted on communities, but also a sign of hope, of better things to come.

BY LORRAINE CURRIE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF SCIAF

“The role of the Church is to do social work in the poorest communities,” Luis explained, “because, the truth is, the Church is the only organisation that is always here.”

SCIAF works with Church partners in Chocó, the poorest part of Colombia. Its yellow beaches and soaring rainforests present an idyllic image, but round every corner, behind the smiles, lurks horrific violence. There are drug



gangs, armed groups, illegal gold miners. Children are snatched and forced into illicit activity; women and girls are subjected to sexual violence as a weapon

of war; and families are turfed out of their homes.

One of our brave local partners, Fr González, delivers life-changing care so children have safe places

to play and recover from conflict.

“Some of the children we work with have seen their parents killed. One girl was given over to gangs for sexual exploitation, to meet her family's financial needs,” Fr González said.

“Another was sexually abused by the armed groups. These atrocities are normal for people in this area.”

“Through the arts, poetry and music the children can express their feelings. We help them better understand their situation and protect them from dangers. And, most importantly, we have fun together. We've seen some big emotional changes in the young people.”

For this vital work to continue, however, we need your support.

“We must continue working with the most vulnerable as our children are the future. We're very grateful

to SCIAF and hold them close in our hearts for all that they are doing for us,” added Father González.

At SCIAF, we believe that no one should be left behind – and that a better world is possible.

In the world's poorest places, we bring these beliefs to life by providing emergency care during people's darkest days, and remaining with communities long after other organisations have gone. In Colombia, this means we help communities to campaign for justice and peace, so that atrocities like the Bojayá bomb don't ever happen again. It means we tackle the underlying causes of poverty that drive illicit activity, by helping people earn a living.

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