DIOCESE OF MOTHERWELL

FREE

FONTES

FEBRUARY 2024 | ISSUE 10 |

MAGAZINE

Father Frank is new Bishop of *Galloway*

Pope Francis appoints Motherwell priest to lead Galloway Diocese p6-7

+ Mass concludes celebrations for the 75th anniversary of the Diocese
+ Diaconate Ordination of Deacon Kevin Kirby + Schools take part in Travelling Crib
+ Diocesan Choir recognised for service to the Diocese + An insight into Hospital Chaplaincy

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The next edition of

FONTES

will be available from

24/25 February

If you have any news or photos to contribute email media@rcdom.org.uk

Keep up to date with all the latest news and events from the Diocese

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FONTES is 1 year old!

As the official magazine of the Diocese of Motherwell marks its first year, we want you to share your thoughts and views on Fontes. Visit **rcdom.org.uk/fontes** and complete our survey and let us know what you think!

Bishop's Diary

February

4th - 11.30am - Sacrament of Confirmation at St Bartholomew's Church, Coatbridge

6th - Lenten Preparation Day for Clergy - 7.00pm - Sacrament of Confirmation at St Serf's Church, Airdrie

7th - 7.00pm - Sacrament of Confirmation at St Edward's Church, Airdrie for St Dominic's PS

8th - 11.30am - Diocesan Fabric and Planning Committee in Diocesan Offices, 2.00pm - Diocesan Finance Committee in Diocesan Offices, 7.00pm - Sacrament of Confirmation at St Anthony's Church, Rutherglen

12th - 3.00pm - Rite of Election in Motherwell Cathedral

20th - 7.00pm - Sacrament of Confirmation at St Bride's Church, Bothwell

21st - 7.00pm - Sacrament of Confirmation at St Mark's Church, Rutherglen

22nd - 7.00pm - Sacrament of Confirmation at St Gabriel's Church, Viewpark for St John Paul II PS

26th - 7.00pm - Sacrament of Confirmation at Christ the King Church, Holytown

27th - 2.00pm - Meeting of Diocesan Trustees

28th - 7.00pm - Sacrament of Confirmation at St Mary's Church, Coatbridge

29th - 7.00pm - Sacrament of Confirmation at St Ninian's Church, Hamilton, for St Ninian's PS and St Cuthbert's PS

A word from Bishop Toal

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I wish you all a very Happy New Year and every blessing for 2024.

The first Reading at Mass today on the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God is a very fitting blessing for all God's people from the Book of Numbers as we begin a new year:

"May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
May the Lord uncover his face to you and bring you peace."

The desire for God's blessing is very strong in people of faith and it is particularly sought after at times in life when we feel weak and vulnerable. We ask for this blessing frequently in our personal and communal prayer, and at times we ask a priest or deacon to pray with us and make the sign of the cross over us. This offers us a sense of God's love and mercy, and his consolation and protection in our particular time of need.

The recent Declaration from the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, Fiducia Supplicans, offered a reflection and direction on the Pastoral Meaning of Blessings, extending the possibility of giving a blessing to couples who are living in irregular relationships in the eyes of the Church, including same- sex couples. In the foreword Pope Francis made it clear that the Declaration remains firm on the traditional doctrine about marriage, not allowing any type of liturgical rite or blessing similar to the Rite of Marriage or other liturgical rites, so that any confusion is avoided. The value of the document is that it permits a broadening and enrichment of the classical understanding of blessings, based on the pastoral vision of Pope Francis. Since this is a development which has caused much comment and debate in the Church I recommend that you read the Declaration and gain an appreciation of the rich teaching offered on blessings. On the particular possibility of offering a blessing to those in irregular sexual relationships I quote No. 31 from Fiducia Supplicans:

"Within the horizon outlined here appears the possibility of blessings for couples in irregular situations and for couples of the same sex, the form of which should not be fixed ritually by ecclesiastical authorities to avoid producing confusion with the blessing proper to the Sacrament of Marriage. In such cases, a blessing may be imparted... that involves the invocation of a blessing that descends from God upon those whom – recognising themselves to be destitute and in need of his help – do not claim a legitimisation of their own status, but who beg that all that is true, good, and humanly valid in their lives and in their relationships be enriched, healed, and elevated by the presence of the Holy Spirit. These forms of blessing express a supplication that God may grant those aids that come from the impulses of his Spirit – what classical theology calls "actual

(Continued)
grace" – so that human relationships may mature and grow in fidelity to the Gospel, that they may be freed from their imperfections and frailties, and that they may express themselves in the ever-increasing dimension of divine love."

The possibility of blessings being given by the clergy to those in irregular situations, not within the liturgical or sacramental life of the parish, "but in other contexts, such as a visit to a shrine, a meeting with a priest, a prayer recited in a group, or during a pilgrimage" is very much in line with Pope Francis' often repeated desire that the Church reaches out to all her children, particularly those who feel isolated or on the margins. Such blessings can reassure that God loves and cares for them in their particular circumstances, and that the Church accompanies each of us in the often difficult journey of Christian faith and love. As Bishop I welcome the initiative taken, and the possibilities it offers, and pray that it will assist the clergy in caring for those who seek our pastoral care and support, so that they experience the desired blessing from the Lord, who loves us so much that he took on our nature in order to save us all.

May Our Blessed Lady, Mother of God, be with all her children, and help us grow in faith and love.

Yours in Christ,

+ Joseph Toal

Bene Merenti for faithful Coatbridge parishioners

Bishop Toal joined parish priest, Father Paul Denney, and the parishioners of St James the Greater in Coatbridge for Holy Mass on Gaudete Sunday during which he presented the Bene Merenti medal to two faithful parishioners.

Pat Brady and Ted Chatfield both received the Diocesan Bene Merenti Medal in recognition of their service and dedication to the Parish of St James over many decades.

New Calvary Scene blessed at St Thomas'

Parishioners of St Thomas' in Wishaw gathered recently with parish priest, Fr Krzysztof Garwolinski, Fr Thomas Devine and Deacon Henry McKenna, for the blessing of a new Calvary scene which has been erected in the Church grounds.

Golden Jubilee of St Francis Xavier's Church

St Francis Xavier's Church in Carfin was packed as the parish celebrated the golden jubilee of their Church.

A Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated by Bishop Joseph Toal to mark the 50th anniversary of the present church, which was opened on 3rd December 1973 by Cardinal Gordon Gray. The Bishop was joined for the Mass of Thanksgiving by parish priest, Father James Grant, as well as former parish priests and Choir.

A special hymn was written for the occasion by Sister Josephine O'Connell, a Carmelite Sister from the Carmel Monastery in Dysart, Fife, with the music written by Kevin Cameron, Director of Music at the Grotto. The Music was provided on the evening by the Parish Choir and Carfin Choristers Children's Choir.

Paving the Way:
Bishop blesses new Piazza at St Columbkille's

Following a major fundraising effort, the entrance of St Columbkille's Church in Rutherglen has had a major refurbishment which includes a new Piazza.

The exterior renovations to the listed Gillespie, Kidd & Coia Church were undertaken to mark its 80th anniversary and follow the major renovations carried out to the interior of the building in 2016.

A number of fundraising efforts were undertaken to support the work, including parishioners sponsoring a paving stone.

Bishop Toal joined the parish community for Holy Mass on the Solemnity of the Epiphany with parish clergy, Fr Bernard Mournian, Fr Pat Hennessy and Deacon Michael Ross. After the Mass, the Bishop blessed the new Piazza.

Parish Priest, Father Bernard Mournian said:

"The opening of the new Church 'Piazza', adorned with beautiful stonework, is a concrete testament to the faith of our forefathers and the living faith of our parish community today. This project was undertaken to mark the 80th Anniversary of our Church building, an outward sign of our gratitude for the sacrifices of so many who have made our parish the place that it is today."

NEW BISHOP OF GALLOWAY

"I am humbled and more than a little bit nervous that Pope Francis has asked me to take on this office"

Father Frank Dougan gets ready to bid farewell to Motherwell Diocese as he becomes THIRD East Kilbride Parish Priest to be appointed Bishop of Galloway

The Diocese of Galloway received an early Christmas present when it was announced in Rome on 19 December that the Holy Father had appointed a new Bishop to the Diocese.

Pope Francis has appointed Father Frank Dougan, a priest of the Diocese of Motherwell, as the new Bishop of Galloway.

The Diocese of Galloway has been a vacant see since 2022 when Archbishop William Nolan, who was Bishop of Galloway from 2014-2022, was appointed Archbishop of Glasgow. Since then it has been administered by Father William McFadden.

Father Frank Dougan was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Motherwell in 2001 and currently serves as Parish Priest of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in East Kilbride.

The appointment of Father Frank to Galloway makes it the third time a parish priest of Our Lady of Lourdes has been made Bishop of Galloway. In 1981, the late Bishop Maurice Taylor was parish priest of the East Kilbride parish when he was appointed Bishop of Galloway and in more recent times, in 2014, now Archbishop Nolan was also parish priest of the same parish when he was appointed to Galloway Diocese.

Reacting to his appointment, Fr. Frank said:

"I am humbled and more than a little bit nervous that Pope Francis has asked me to take on this office. I feel confident however that I will not be alone in spreading the joy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I will be joining with every single person in Galloway Diocese all of whom have a role to play, my role being just one of them."

"With God's grace and the deep faith of the Church in Galloway we can continue to build on the solid foundations left by those who have come before us, stretching back to St. Ninian who first planted the seeds of the Christian faith in Scotland here in Galloway."

Fr. Frank added:

"My mother was from Ayr, and I spent many childhood summers here, so you could say there is a little bit of coming home for me! But most importantly, we must proclaim a Church where everyone can feel at home and welcomed."

Responding to the news that a new Bishop has been appointed, Galloway Diocesan Administrator Fr. William McFadden said:

"On behalf of the community in the Diocese of Galloway, I am delighted to warmly welcome Fr Dougan as our new bishop. I can assure him of an enthusiastic welcome as he comes among us bringing his unique pastoral leadership and skills. I look forward to working with him, and in continuing the implementation in the diocese of the pastoral and prophetic vision offered by Pope Francis for the Church today. "

Reacting to the announcement, Bishop Joseph Toal, the Bishop of Motherwell said:

"I am very happy to hear that Fr Dougan has been chosen by the Holy Father as the new Bishop of Galloway. My thoughts and prayers are very much with him at this time. It is very good that Motherwell Diocese is again able to provide a Bishop for a Scottish Diocese, and it is quite something that another Parish Priest of Our Lady of Lourdes, East Kilbride, will become Bishop of Galloway."

Following the announcement, of Father Frank's appointment, Bishop Toal issued a letter to the faithful in the Diocese in which he reiterated his congratulations and acknowledged the wide contribution Father Frank has made to the Diocese and the Church in Scotland.

Bishop Toal said:

"We will miss Fr Frank in Motherwell as his ministry extended beyond the Parish to St Andrew's and St Bride's Secondary School and Hairmyres Hospital, along with his Canon Law responsibilities in the Diocese and with the Interdiocesan Tribunal. I am sure the wide pastoral experience gained here will be of great benefit in his episcopal ministry."

"As a Diocese we are grateful for Fr Frank's ministry, particularly in the parishes he has served in. We. will miss him, and I am very aware of the gaps which will need to be filled when he leaves! Although there may be some sadness there is gratitude also that he has accepted the call to serve as a Bishop, recognising little opportunity is given to say no, but admiring his willingness to serve the Lord and his Church in the apostolic ministry in these challenging times."

Bishop-elect Frank's Episcopal Ordination will take place on Saturday 9th March at 11.00am in St Peter's Ardrossan. On Sunday 10th March at 3.00pm he will formally take possession of the Cathedral Church of St Margaret's in Ayr. Due to limited capacity, both liturgies will be ticket only.

BISHOP-ELECT FRANCIS DOUGAN

BORN

8 December 1972

BAPTISM

St Aidan's Church, Wishaw

EDUCATION

St Aidan's Primary School, Wishaw
1984-1986: St Mary's College, Blairs
1986-1990: St Aidan's High School, Wishaw
1995-1997: University of Glasgow

SEMINARY

Pontifical Scots College, Rome
1990-1995; 1997-2001

ORDINATION TO PRIESTHOOD

27 June 2001 in St Aidan's Church, Wishaw by Bishop Joseph Devine

APPOINTMENTS

2001-2006: Assistant Priest of Our Lady and St Anne's, Hamilton

2006-2012: Vice-Rector of Scots College, Rome

2012-2017: Parish Priest of St Mark's, Rutherglen

2013-2017: Parish Priest of St Anthony's, Rutherglen

2017-2021: Parish Priest of St Anthony's and St Mark's Rutherglen

2021-2024: Parish Priest of Our Lady of Lourdes East Kilbride

2017-2024: Assistant Judicial Vicar, Scottish Inter-diocesan Tribunal

THE DIOCESE OF GALLOWAY

The Diocese of Galloway is one of eight Diocese in Scotland and was re-established in 1878. The pre-reformation Diocese of Galloway was founded in the fifth century by St Ninian. The Diocese covers the areas of Ayrshire, Dumfries and Galloway and is home to over 40,000 Catholics.

Pics: Rebecca Horisk

Kevin ordained to Permanent Diaconate

The second ordination to the Permanent Diaconate in the Diocese in 2023 took place on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception when Rev. Kevin Kirby was ordained Deacon in Our Lady of Lourdes Church, East Kilbride.

Born in Oxfordshire, Kevin is married to his wife Hilary, who he met in Oxford while she was studying nursing. They have five children and moved to Angus in 1992 before moving to East Kilbride in 1998.

Kevin spent a year at Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth before beginning work for an educational software company, ending up in sales and is now Pre-sales Director for Clue Software which produces intelligence and investigation software.

Scouting has played a large role in Kevin's life and on moving to East Kilbride he resumed volunteering for the scouts which led directly to establishing the first new Catholic Scout Group in Scotland for many years, at St Vincent de Paul Parish.

Deacon Kevin said: "Scouting as a youth ministry in the Church played an important role in my vocation, and I hope it will continue to play a part in my future ministry."

Speaking about his vocation, Deacon Kevin said: "I always had an idea that I could and should do more for the Church, and when a deacon arrived in our parish, I began to think more seriously about it as a vocation.

A good priest friend in the Archdiocese of Birmingham encouraged me. When he suggested I would make a good deacon, I responded, "I didn't think I was holy enough." Immediately, he countered that this was a pretty good qualification!

I also chatted with a Hampshire deacon who supported our parish mission a few years ago. He told me that if there was a "niggle", it was very probably God and not to ignore it.

From that point, I began to think seriously about the diaconate."

Kevin wasn't alone in his journey to the Diaconate and was supported by a large number of people, most importantly his wife Hilary.

Kevin said: "First and foremost, my wonderful wife, without whom it would not have been possible. She encouraged, cajoled and sustained me over the five years of my initial formation, together with the

continual prayers of my mother in Oxford."

He was also greatly supported by the clergy and people of Motherwell Diocese: "Fr Ivan Boyle supported my initial application and was instrumental in getting me started, along with Deacon Joe Gallagher. I have been fortunate in my placements, first at St Mark's and St Anthony's and latterly at Our Lady of Lourdes, where both parish communities welcomed me with open arms, provided encouragement and tolerated my early attempts at preaching. Above all, Fr. Frank Dougan and Deacon Bill McMillan provided tremendous examples of clergy to emulate. They had my back throughout my training and were always ready with reassurance, feedback, and occasionally gentle disapproval!

I was also supported by the leaders and parents of the Catholic Scout Group at St Vincent de Paul, who have been an essential part of my ministry."

Deacon Kevin has been appointed to serve in Our Lady of Lourdes parish and as he begins his ministry as a Permanent Deacon he said: "I am very much looking forward to helping ease the workload of the priests I will work with, developing my style of ministry as I gain experience and continuing my formation and learning. In addition, I hope to be able to pass on my experience of founding and running Catholic Scout Groups so that more young people may benefit from this unique youth ministry in their parishes."

Top left: Deacon Kevin with his wife and children. Top right: Bishop Toal with Deacon Kevin and the Deacons who attended.

Christopher accepted as Candidate for Holy Orders

Motherwell Seminarian, Christopher Igwe, was recently accepted as a Candidate for Holy Orders during Holy Mass in St Mary's College, Oscott, celebrated by Bishop David Oakley, Bishop of Northampton.

Christopher was joined for the occasion by Fr Jim Grant, Fr Pat Hennessy and Deacon Bill McMillan of Motherwell Diocese.

Anniversary Mass celebrates the past, present and future of the Diocese

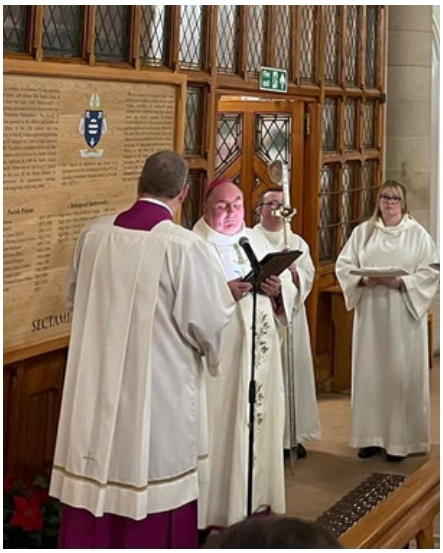
Pics: Daniel Horisk

The celebrations for the 75th anniversary of the Diocese of Motherwell came to a conclusion with a Mass of Thanksgiving in Our Lady of Good Aid Cathedral on the Solemnity of the Dedication of the Cathedral.

A large number of parishioners and priests from across the Diocese, joined Bishop Toal to give thanks to God for the past 75 years and to pray for the future of the Diocese.

As well as giving thanks for the past, the Mass provided an opportunity to pray for Project Wellspring, a new initiative being introduced in the Diocese to look at the future of the Church here in Motherwell and how it can best serve our communities in the years ahead.

At the beginning of the Mass, the Bishop blessed a new incumbents board which has been installed in the Cathedral to remember the Bishops who have served the Diocese of Motherwell and the priests who have served the Cathedral Church of Our Lady of Good Aid.



Above: Bishop Toal with civic representatives and members of various Church organisations.

Presentation celebrates Diocesan Choir's FOUR decades of service

Special tribute was paid to the Diocesan Choir during the Mass of Thanksgiving for the 75th anniversary of the Diocese in recognition to their contribution to the liturgical life of the Diocese for more than 40 years.

Bishop Toal presented a certificate to the choir during the Mass to place on record the thanks of the whole Diocesan community to the choir for their sterling service over four decades. Four members were individually recognised and were presented with the Bene Merenti Medal in recognition for their service to the choir.

Frank and Margaret Brady
Frank and Margaret have been choir members for 40-plus years and have both contributed significantly to behind-the-scenes administrative and organisational affairs of the group. Margaret in particular has been a driving force in these areas.

Raymond Cameron
Mr Raymond Cameron has been a member for 40-plus years and, in spite of his recent illness, has made sterling efforts to attend rehearsals on a regular basis.

Mary Johnston
Mrs Mary Johnston is a founder-member of the choir and in its early years was Choir Secretary and General Administrator. Mary also gave unsparingly of her time and skill in co-ordinating all of the secretarial work generated by John in the fund-raising tasks associated with the restoration of the cathedral organ from 2000 to 2006. The fruits of her labour are still to be seen - and HEARD!

There are many other members of the choir who, in light of their loyal service to the Diocese over many years, might be nominated for an award. However, on this occasion we propose to make a general award to The Diocesan Choir to mark its ongoing contribution to the musical and liturgical life of the diocese. Founded in 1981, it has participated in numerous National, Diocesan and Parish events over the past 42 years and it looks forward to its continued involvement. We are grateful to all of the members, past and present, and also to John Pitcathley and Des McLean for their leadership of the choir.

To find out more about the choir and for information on how to join, visit **motherwelldiocesanchoir.com**

The Scriptures

by FATHER THOMAS MAGILL

28th JANUARY
4th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

Deuteronomy 18.15-20;
Psalm 94;
1st Letter to the Corinthians 7.32-35;
Mark 1.21-28

The authority of the Lord doesn't depend on any office he has in the community or official standing or public role. It comes from the inner core of who he is, the Son of God – the One on whom the Spirit has descended (Mark 1.10-11). The man possessed by an unclean spirit speaks for all gathered in the synagogue: "What do you want with US?" (Gospel) He represents the isolation, brokenness, and fragmented relationships of all gathered in that place. This is what the Lord comes to destroy and then to restore to wholeness -- he comes to make us the flock led by his hand. (Psalm) He is the prophet God promised to raise up. (1st reading) He is the one who shares with us his prophetic nature so that we possess an authority not based on our position in the Church or society but emanating from deep inside us where the Spirit lives. Then who we truly are no longer depends on our situation in life and we become able to live lives free of worry and with undivided attention to the Lord. (2nd reading)

4th FEBRUARY
5th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

The Book of Job 7.1-4, 6-7;
Psalm 146;
1st Letter to the Corinthians 9.16-19, 22-23;
Mark 1.29-39

Job experience the depth of human suffering – he loses wife, family, possessions and respect. His restlessness and agitation lead him almost to lose hope. (1st reading) When the Lord goes to a lonely place, leaving the safety and security of a family home, he joins all of us in the emptiness and pain which will mark our lives at some time. (Gospel) This experience of isolation is not utterly meaningless. It is a grace through which the Cross of the Lord is laid upon us enabling us to jettison baggage which weighs too heavily upon us, to still us in our feverish activity, and to dispossess us of all that is not of God. Then, with Christ, we can reach a new place to hear and share his Good News free to all whom we encounter (2nd reading), and praise and bless him who heals our broken hearts and binds up all our wounds. (Psalm)

11th FEBRUARY
6th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

Leviticus 13.1-2, 44-46;
Psalm 31;
1st Letter to the Corinthians 10.31-11.1;
Mark 1.40-45

In an extraordinary way, this story anticipates the suffering of the Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane. The leper says that Jesus can cure him if he wants to, and the Lord replies "Of course I want to." In Gethsemane, he says to his Father, "Take this cup (of suffering) from me. Yet not what I want but what you want." (Mark 14.36) He accepts God's will and takes on himself the exclusion, the marginalisation, and the isolation of all who suffer, in order to bring God's healing to all. The Lord's Cross and the shedding of his blood drains us of our uncleanness and our condemnation to live apart. (1st reading) We learn

that God's will is discovered when we are no longer led by self-will. Like the leper, we learn that our faith is not about a blathering and chuntering on, about "look at me," but is all about giving glory to God by the lives we lead, renewed and restored in our relationships with others. (2nd reading) Then we know God truly as our refuge and our salvation. (Psalm)

18th FEBRUARY
1st SUNDAY OF LENT

Genesis 9.18-25;
Psalm 24;
1st Letter of Peter 3.18-22;
Mark 1.12-15

"Covenant" is a biblical word with which we are quite familiar. Essentially it means "relationship" and reveals a God who is not far-distant but one constantly and repeatedly forging a bond with humanity. Even when humankind makes a mess of things, God renews his Covenant and shows that our relationship with him does not depend on what we do but always on his gracious initiative. (1st reading) The Father makes an everlasting Covenant with us through the Kingdom the Lord would establish by means of his death and Resurrection and our faith in his Good News (Gospel). Through baptism we were placed in this new Covenant and made members of this Kingdom (2nd reading). We experience the faithfulness and love of God when we keep faith in his Covenant, this divine-human relationship rooted in Christ. (Psalm)

Clergy Appointments

Bishop Toal has recently announced the following clergy appointments within the Diocese:

- **Fr Kenneth Campbell**, at present Parish Priest of St Barbara's Muirhead, will succeed Bishop-Elect Frank Dougan as Parish Priest of Our Lady of Lourdes, East Kilbride on the weekend of 10th/11th February 2024.

- **Fr Kenneth O'Brien**, Parish Priest of St Joseph's Stepps, will also become Parish Priest of St Barbara's, Muirhead, from 10th February. He will be assisted by Fr Danny Rooney and Fr Charles Coyle at weekends. Fr O'Brien will continue as Chaplain to St Ambrose' High School but will cease to be Assistant Chaplain to Monklands Hospital. He will also continue Canon Law work with the Diocese and the Inter-diocesan Tribunal.

- **Fr Michael Briody,** Parish Priest of St Michael's, Moodiesburn, has announced his intention to step down as Parish Priest at Pentecost, May 18th. The appointment of his replacement will be made later. Fr Briody will take a break from public duties, with a view to returning after a time of rest.

- **Fr Thomas Magill,** Parish Priest of St Athanasius is retiring as Parish Priest but will continue to serve the Diocese in other areas of priestly ministry

- **Fr Stephen Rooney**, at present Parish Priest of St Ignatius', Wishaw, and St Brigid's, Newmains, will become Parish Priest of St Athanasius', Carluke, on the weekend of 10th/11th February 2024. Fr Rooney will continue as Parish Priest of St Brigid's, Newmains, also, where Fr Eamonn Sweeney will continue to assist him.

- **Fr Krzysztof Garwolinski,** Parish Priest of St Patrick's, Craigneuk and St Thomas', Wishaw, will administer St Ignatius', Wishaw, on a temporary basis from 10th February until a new Parish Priest is appointed at Pentecost. Mgr Michael Conway will continue to assist in St Ignatius' along with Deacon Stuart Dick.

The Bishop thanks all the priests involved in these moves for their priestly ministry to date, and for their willingness to accept these new appointments. We ask God's blessing for them and their parishioners.

CALENDA

Sundays: Year B **Weekdays: Year II**

HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION

Thursday 9 May
Ascension Day

Friday 1 November
All Saints

Sunday 30 June
St Peter & St Paul

Wednesday 25 December
Christmas Day

Thursday 15 August
The Assumption

ORDINARY WEEKS OF THE YEAR

Before Lent, weeks 1-6
After Pentecost, weeks 7-34

LENT

Begins on **Ash Wednesday 14 February** and is a day of fasting and abstinence. It continues **until Holy Thursday on 28 March. Good Friday is on 29 March** and is also a day of fasting and abstinence.

HOLY WEEK & TRIDUUM

Sunday 24 March: Palm Sunday

Thursday 28 March: Holy Thursday

Friday 29 March: Good Friday

Saturday 30 March: Holy Saturday

EASTER SUNDAY
31 March

DIOCESAN CALENDAR

Thursday 28 March: Chrism Mass

Saturday 14 December: Dedication of the Cathedral

CALENDAR PROPER TO SCOTLAND

Thursday 13 January
St Kentigern (Mungo), Bishop

Sunday 10 March
St John Ogilvie, Priest and Martyr

Sunday 17 March
St Patrick, Bishop

Sunday 9 June
St Columba, Abbot

Monday 16 September
St Ninian, Bishop

Friday 8 November
Blessed John Duns Scotus

Saturday 16 November
St Margaret of Scotland, Secondary Patron

Saturday 30 November
St Andrew, Apostle and Martyr, Patron

MOVEABLE FEASTS

Sunday 19 May
Pentecost

Sunday 26 May
The Most Holy Trinity

Sunday 2 June
Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi)

Friday 7 June
The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

Sunday 24 November
Christ the King

Information from the Liturgical Calendar for Scotland 2023-24, Burns Publications.

AR 2024

Diocese of Motherwell

OTHER KEY DATES

Sunday 7 January
Day of Prayer for Justice and Peace

Thursday 18 January
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Sunday 21 January
Sunday of the Word of God

Friday 2 February
World Day of Consecrated Life

Sunday 11 February
World Day fo Prayer for the Sick

Friday 16 February
Day of Prayer for those who have suffered abuse

Sunday 7 April
Divine Mercy Sunday

Sunday 21 April
World Day of Prayer for Vocations

Sunday 12 May
World Communications Day

Sunday 13 July
Sea Sunday

Sunday 28 July
World Day of Prayer for Grandparents & the Elderly

Sunday 1 September
World Day of Prayer for Creation

Sunday 8 September
Vocations Awareness Week

Sunday 16 November
Catholic Education Week

Sunday 17 November
World Day of Prayer for the Poor

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Sunday 7 January: Justice and Peace

Sunday 25 February: Sick and Retired Priests

Sunday 10 March: SCIAF

Friday 29 March: Holy Places

Sunday 12 May: Communications

Sunday 16 June: Day for Life

Sunday 30 June: Peter's Pence

Sunday 8 September: Ecclesiastical Students

Sunday 20 October: Mission Sunday

Sunday 17 November: Education

NATIONAL PILGRIMAGE TO CARFIN

Sunday 8 September

OCTOBER

The Second Session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops takes place in Rome.

ADVENT

Begins on **First Sunday of Advent 1 December**

CHRISTMAS DAY

Wednesday 25 December

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE SICK

Caring for the Spiritual Needs of our Sick in Hospital

Ahead of World Day of Prayer for the Sick on 11 February, FONTES spoke to the Hospital Chaplains in the Diocese about their ministry and what spiritual support is offered to sick patients in the three major hospitals in the Diocese of Motherwell.

Each of the three hospitals have dedicated Chaplains who are available to visit anyone in hospital. An on-call priest is always available, day and night, for emergency calls at each of the hospitals.

Monklands Hospital, Airdrie

The Chaplain of Monklands Hospital is Father Bruce McPhail, parish priest of St Andrew's, Airdrie.

Fr McPhail is available to visit patients during their stay in hospital, as he explains:

"The first point of contact should be the ward staff, even if it isn't an emergency. When I go into a ward I always ask the staff if patients have been looking for a priest. If it's an emergency, the staff contact me via the hospital switchboard.

The Chaplains and Eucharistic Ministers want to offer all Catholic patients Holy Communion and the Sacrament of the Sick during their stay in hospital. To enable this, it is very important to inform the nursing staff working on your or your loved one's ward so that they can let the Chaplaincy team know to visit."

Wishaw General Hospital

Chaplaincy at Wishaw General is provided by the Spiritans who serve St Bernadette's Parish, Motherwell. The main chaplain is Father Ricklan Mallya CSSp, assisted by Father James Flynn CSSp and also Deacon Henry McKenna who is a member of the generic chaplaincy team with an office in the hospital.

Father Flynn states "all three work in close harmony."

A priest is available at all times to visit any sick patients who require a visit. As Father Flynn explains: "They are on call on a special hospital phone from Saturday to Wednesday, day and night. On Thursdays and Fridays, 7 local parishes take it in turn to hold the hospital phone."

When a patient or, more commonly, the family members of a patient who is critically ill, want a priest they inform a nurse in the ward. The nurse informs the switch board who contact Father Ricky, Father James or the diocesan priest who is on call.

On occasion, Deacon Harry will contact the priests when he sees a Catholic patient who is critically ill and wants the anointing of the sick or Holy Communion or Confession.

Father Ricky and Deacon Harry work together to prepare a list of sick people who wish to receive the sacraments and they are visited systematically.

The Chaplains provide the Anointing of the Sick, Holy Communion, Confession, Blessings and prayers for someone who has just died. With Wishaw also having the maternity ward, occasionally the chaplains are also required to conduct a baptism of a baby in danger of death.

Hairmyres Hospital, East Kilbride

Hairmyres Hospital Chaplaincy is changing as Father Kenny Campbell prepares to succeed Father Frank Douagn as main Chaplain. Father Colum Martin continues to serve as Assistant Chaplain to the Hospital.

Currently Father Colum visits the hospital twice a week and receives referrals from parish priests and parishioners and the lay chaplaincy team via email.

As Father Colum explains: " I go on a Monday and a Thursday afternoon and respond to those referrals. It relies heavily on

collaboration and co responsibility between all of us, clergy, laity and NHS employees."

Anyone who has a loved one in hospital who would wish a visit from a priest is asked to inform the hospital staff or email Father Colum Martin: frmartin@rcdom.org.uk.

Priests are available at all times to respond to emergency calls. Anyone who requires an emergency visit at any time should ask the ward to contact the on-call chaplain.

Impact of Chaplaincy

Hospital Chaplaincy can have a significant beneficial impact on those who are sick in hospital and for the families, especially when their loved ones are seriously ill or sadly pass away in hospital.

It is also a very rewarding ministry for the chaplains who are able to bring spiritual comfort and support to people in their time of need, through the sacraments, prayer and simply their presence.

Speaking about his thoughts on hospital ministry, Father Colum Martin says:

"Personally I love visiting the sick as they are always happy to see you and you can see the bounce in people when they receive spiritual care through the Eucharist and the Sacrament of the sick.

It is also very humbling to be called out in the middle of the night to someone who is dying and be there with them and their families at the most distressing time of their lives and bring God's mercy and peace and occupy that space by being present."

For Father Colum, hospital chaplaincy is "personally where I have felt most like a priest outside the confessional."

Receiving a visit from the chaplains can also help people return to their faith as Father Bruce McPhail explains:

"One of my favourite aspects of hospital chaplaincy work is helping people to reconnect with their faith. I've met many patients who've been ill for some time at home who haven't had the opportunity to receive the sacraments either because they'd fallen off the radar or because of the scarcity of volunteers to do Eucharistic Ministry since the pandemic.

Others may not have practised for a while and appreciate God reaching out to them in their need.

Sometimes people forget God's always reaching out and just get used to how things have become so something needs to happen to remind them."

Father Bruce continues: "I've also noticed staff or patients of different faiths and denominations are encouraged when I'm praying or reading certain passages from Scripture. They want to tell me about their own faith. So it breaks me out of my own bubble and reminds me everybody can unite behind a God of love who cares for the sick."

As World Day of Prayer for the Sick approaches, let us keep all the sick - at home, in hospitals, care homes and hospices in the Diocese - in our prayers.

Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for them.

The Pope's Prayer Intentions

FEBRUARY- FOR THE TERMINALLY ILL

We pray that those with a terminal illness, and their families, receive the necessary physical and spiritual care and accompaniment.

Hospital Chaplains

As well as the three major hospitals, chaplains also serve the smaller, local hospitals in the Diocese. For a full list of hospital chaplains in the Diocese of Motherwell, visit: **rcdom.org.uk/hospital-chaplains**
or scan the QR code

FONTES SCHOOL NEWS

St Patrick's pupils spread festive cheer

Pupils of St Patrick's Primary School in Coatbridge helped get the local community into the Christmas spirit by singing carols at the St Patrick's tearoom to entertain parishioners and members of the wider Coatbridge community.

Before that, the pupils stopped to pay a visit to the Knights of St Columba's crib on the Main Street. The pupils sang some more carols at the crib and lent their lovely singing voices to help the Knights in their fundraising efforts.

Primary School Choirs hold Carol Service

BY CLAIRE O'NEILL

On Thursday 7th December, the Diocesan RE department welcomed teachers and school staff from across the diocese to a special service of carols and scripture with Bishop Toal in Our Lady of Good Aid Cathedral.

This service was led by a choir of pupils from the Motherwell schools who have been working with Mr James Greechan, Diocesan Choral Director, as part of the National Schools Singing Project. Scripture readings retelling the nativity story were read by teachers from different posts including a head teacher, a newly-qualified teacher and a teacher from the ASN sector. These readings were beautifully complemented by the singing of the children from St Brendan's Primary, St Bernadette's Primary and Cathedral Primary. It was a packed cathedral and a wonderful way for all who attended to enrich their own Advent journey.

St Bride's Mini Vinnies help support local good causes

The Mini Vinnies group at St Bride's Primary in Bothwell organised a Reindeer Rave for St. Andrew's Hospice which raised an amazing £2620! They also organised a number of raffles and collections for Missio Scotland which raised £437.95. And finally, they organised a collection for the Hamilton District Foodbank.

TRAVELLING CRIB KEEPS TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS ALIVE

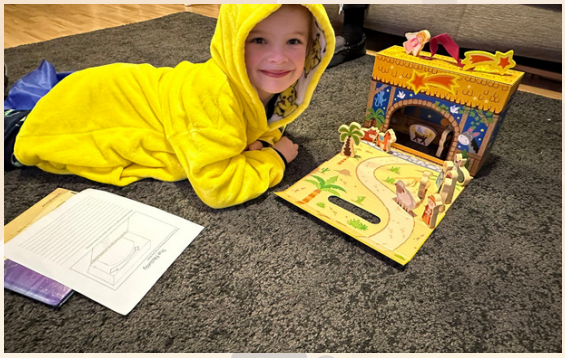
BY CLAIRE O'NEILL

Primary schools across the Diocese of Motherwell took part in an exciting new project to help children and their families to focus on the real meaning of Christmas by welcoming the Baby Jesus into their homes.

The new project, called 'The Travelling Crib' was launched as a joint collaborative between the RE Department of the Diocese of Motherwell and Pauline Books & Media after a successful pilot project with Paisley Diocese last year.

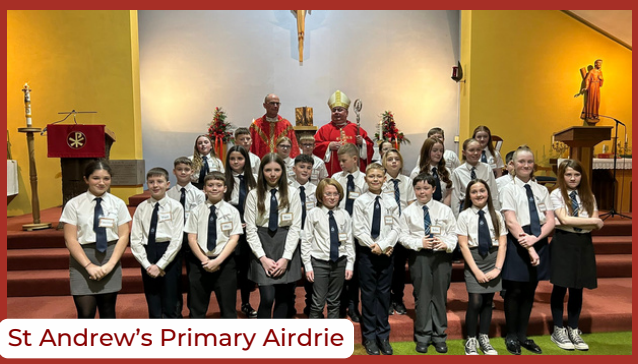
For a small fee, schools ordered a child friendly nativity scene and a book about the first Christmas and then a class rota was set up to allow each child to bring the crib home for a night and to reflect and pray together with their families about the birth of the Christ Child. Although the project is aimed at primary 2 classes, a number of schools ordered multiple sets so that as many children as possible could take part. Many schools also invited their parish priest into the class to bless their crib before it set off on the journey around the various homes, further cementing good home-school-parish links.

A special leaflet was written to accompany the crib which includes a simple time of prayer to support families as they pray together. Bishop Toal has been delighted to support this wonderful project and has included a message for children and their families in the leaflet. Feedback from schools and families was extremely positive and many schools are planning to make this an annual initiative.



Sacrament of Confirmation

St Thomas' Primary Wishaw



St Andrew's Primary Airdrie

St Patrick's Primary Coatbridge

St Monica's Primary Coatbridge

Holy Family Primary, Mossend

Children lead Christmas celebrations in Plains

BY SHARON IVANOVA

The children and young people of our parish have led us beautifully at St David's in Plains throughout the season of Advent and Christmas.

This has included our 6th year Caritas Students, Luke and Adam, and our children who prepared for the season through the Childen's Liturgy with the support from Fr Bergin. We had stories and processions with the children in costume. To conclude the celebrations, our very own Magi visited the three churches in the parish and travelled as far east as St Mary's in Caldercruix, then on to St Dominic's in Greengairs before arriving at St David's in Plains. Along the way they were supported with food and drinks from The Pantry in Plains and McDonald's in Airdrie, and as the three Kings, they were looked after like Kings, and fed like Kings. Their story concluded when they arrived at St David's and presented their gifts to the Baby Jesus.

The parishioners extend an amazing Thank You to Father Bergin, who despite still recovering from his illness, was out every day with the children, supporting, encouraging, leading and guiding them.

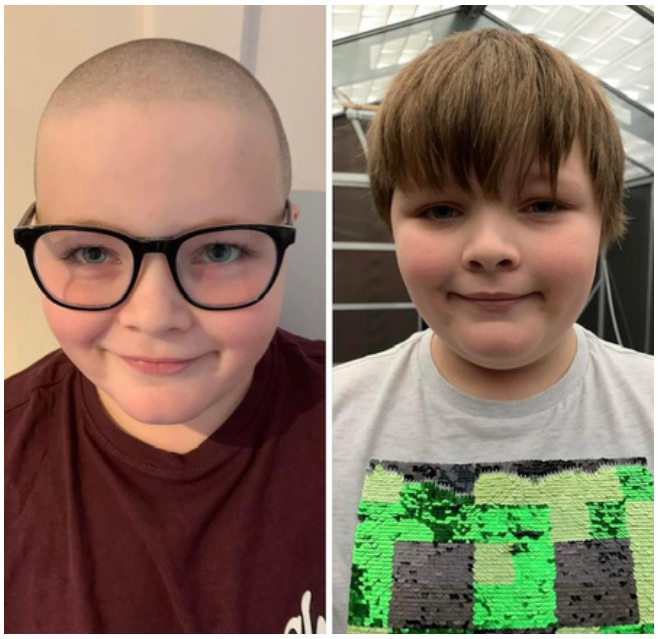
Legion of Mary Reunion

BY FRANK NUTTALL

The Legion of Mary Motherwell Diocese Curia held their Annual Reunion on 8th December, Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Hosted by Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and St Gerard Praesidium, the event commenced in St Gerard's Church, Bellshill, with the Rosary followed by Mass celebrated by Fr Thomas Toal and Fr Ricky Mallya. A three course meal was then served in the Church Hall, followed by a lively evening of music and dancing. It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening, thanks to the hard work and organisation by the host Praesidium.

OJ 'braves the shave' for Missio Scotland



Ozanam Club celebrate St Andrew's Day

BY MARGARET DALY

The SVDP Ozanam Club in Viewpark held a St Andrew's Night to celebrate our national patron which included a piper who entertained the group with Scottish tunes followed by a disco. A great time was had by all at the club. The club also had a great time on a trip to the Panto (oh yes they did!).

BY EMMA WYPER

Orrin-James or OJ to many, aged 9 from Hamilton was inspired by his godmother when she had decided to cut her hair off for charity.

The pupil of St Ninian's Primary decided to brave the shave too to help raise some funds for Missio Scotland, a charity his school support and one which he is passionate about. Having a short buzz cut already he knew he needed time and patience to let his hair grow. Looking at the calendar he set the date for Mission Sunday which gave him a good 6 months to grow it and fundraise.

The day before Mission Sunday he went for it and braved the shave. OJ has raised £365, with thanks to family and friends. All his family are exceptionally proud of him, but more so because it was all his idea (and with inspiration from his Godmother of course!).

ICONS

BY FATHER THOMAS MAGILL

The series of 6 icons in St Athanasius' Church Carluke depicting the Paschal Mystery of the Lord is now complete.

The icons move from the Incarnation, through the Crucifixion and the Resurrection to the Lord Enthroned in Glory with the Blessed Virgin and the Beloved Disciple, figures of the Church.

Fr Magill notes how the particular experience of icons in their vividness and symbolism imprints itself so easily on our memories. As windows into the divine, they invite us through contemplation to be taken up into the divine life itself. He hopes these memories will remain in the hearts of all the parishioners especially the young as they go on to make their way in life, and remain life-long experiences of being grasped by God.

All the icons were the work of the iconographer Maria Carla Bono and of her husband Mario who prepared the wood according to the traditional norms in their workshop in Cuneo, Italy.

Saints & Feasts

by FR FRANCIS MCGACHEY

Every evening, in the Church's last prayer of the day, Compline (Night Prayer), a passage from the Gospel of Luke is recited. The words are those spoken by Simeon, an elderly man, when Jesus was presented in the Temple, forty days after his birth. Simeon proclaimed Christ as "The Light to enlighten the Gentiles".

On the 2nd February – the fortieth day after Christmas - the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple, is celebrated. It is sometimes known as 'Candlemas Day', since on that day, from around the Tenth century, candles for use in the Church are traditionally blessed. Why?

Apart from their connection with words of Simeon, and their practical value, candles have had a symbolic value: they are used in the liturgy to represent Christ, "the Light of the world... the Light no darkness can overpower." (John 1,5) Additionally, they are also a sign of festivity, and a mark of reverence for God's presence.

The most prominent candle in any Church is the Paschal Candle. Blessed at the Easter Vigil, and present beside the baptismal font throughout the year, it is used at Baptism – the child's father lights a Baptismal candle from it and is entrusted with the duty of passing on of the light of Faith. At funerals it is placed beside the coffin, as a sign of hope in the resurrection.

The other candle present in all Catholic Churches is the red-coloured Sanctuary Lamp. It burns day and night, to indicate the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle.

Blessed candles are used on the altar during Mass, Adoration and Benediction; at all the sacraments except Confession; in processions, as a sign of rejoicing: at the beginning and end of Mass, in the procession with the Book of the Gospels. They are used during the veneration of the Cross on Good Friday.

It is traditional for every Catholic home to have at least two blessed candles. These are used when the Blessed Sacrament is brought to someone sick or housebound – sad to say, a custom that seems to be disappearing today! In times gone by, it was customary for the priest to be met at the gate with a lit candle!

They should be lit when the Sacrament of the Sick is given at home; in the presence of a corpse, as a mark of vigil. Also, at times of danger or during any prayer time.

Feasts in February

FEBRUARY 2
- Presentation of the Lord

FEBRUARY 3
- St Blaise

FEBRUARY 5
- St Agatha

FEBRUARY 6
- St Paul Miki and Companions

FEBRUARY 8
- St Josephine Bakhita

FEBRUARY 10
- St Scholastica

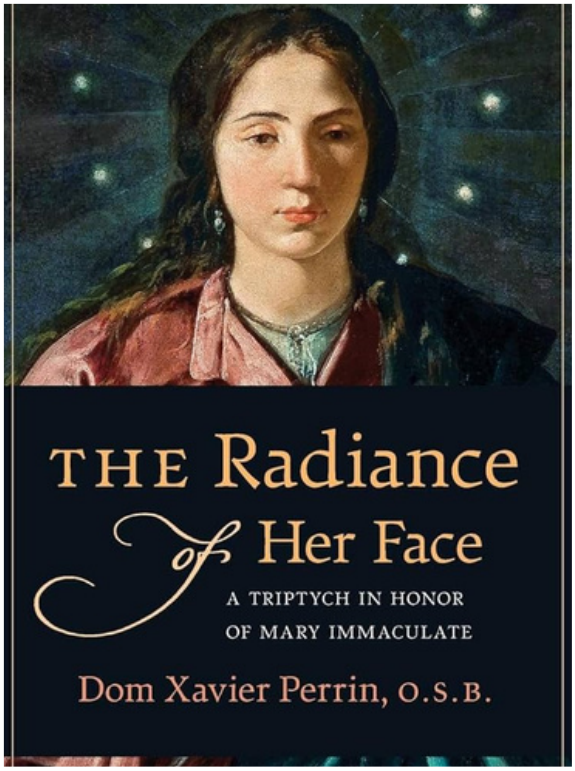
FEBRUARY 14
- Ash Wednesday

FEBRUARY 22
- St Peter's Chair

All you holy men and women, pray for us

The Radiance of Her Face
A tryptic in honour of Mary Immaculate.

Dom Xavier Perrin OSB, Arouca Press, 2017



BY FATHER LIAM O'CONNOR

Beauty and more specifically the beauty of Mary Immaculate is the reason for this book. "There is nothing as beautiful as the Blessed Virgin's smile. How could one who was "full of grace" not be radiant with beauty?" The reader is given ample examples from the life and apparitions of Mary that point towards this truth.

Dom Xavier, Abbot of Quarr Abbey, has chosen as the subtitle of this work, 'a tryptic in honour of Mary Immaculate,' to give form to the structure of this short devotional work in honour of Mary Immaculate.

The reader can therefore view the life of Our Lady like a devotional altarpiece with three distinct panels.

The image of the Queen of Heaven will take up the central panel and will be treated last. The wings of the tryptic will focus our thoughts on the Annunciation; a moment fixed at the beginning of Mary's yes to God.

The opposite panel addresses the solemn definition of Mary's Immaculate Conception by Pope Pius IX during the celebration of Holy Mass in Saint Peter's; this panel would recognise her co-operation with God as a work now fulfilled and recognised by the Church.

Dom Xavier informs us: *"The Immaculate Conception is a mystery of mercy. According to the text of the Bull defining the dogma, the Blessed Virgin Mary "was preserved free from all stain of original sin from the very first moment of her Conception, by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race."*

God's desire to show mercy to our fallen world comes about through the saving work of His Son, born of the Immaculate Virgin.

Our Lady's presence was felt in a particular way by the faithful before and after the solemn definition by the Pope in 1854.

'In the first instance with the events that took place on the Rue de Bac in 1830 with Saint Catherine Labouré', and the Miraculous Medal, "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to Thee."

Then following the definition of 1854, in 1858 Our Lady appeared to a young girl at Lourdes, to Saint Bernadette with the words, "I am the Immaculate Conception." Bernadette's life was transformed with this meeting and she lived in the immediate radiance of the Immaculate Conception.

Mary lived as a channel of God's mercy, as seen at the Wedding Feast at Cana and in other moments of her life.

Dom Xavier concludes the work with a gaze towards the hearts of Jesus and Mary. Mary takes infinite joy from the heart of her Son; their hearts are in constant dialogue with each other.

The concluding thought of this book is how the Church sings in praise of Mary Immaculate, a praise that rejoices in her purity as an image of God and a chosen vessel of grace.

From Spiritans Sound Outreach

Priests Reunited

BY FR OLUWAFEMI VICTOR ORILUA CSSP

In a surprising turn of events, two of our Spiritan priests, Fr Godfrey Odigbo CSSp and Fr Patrick Gaffney CSSp, found out that they have a shared history and have been living together in Carfin for the past three months without knowing it.

The discovery happened when Fr John McFadden CSSp, the Superior of the Spiritans in Carfin, found an old photo in the archives. The picture showed both priests together by the seaside many years ago, and it was found in the late Fr O'Toole's box. This photo became proof of their connection from the past.

As they looked at the old picture, both priests couldn't remember the details of that moment – the waves, laughter, and shared camaraderie felt like distant memories. The unexpected find has led to conversations, laughter, and a sense of wonder as they try to remember the details of their past meeting.

Now, in the quiet halls of Carfin Spiritan community, Father Godfrey Odigbo, 75, and Father Patrick Gaffney, 85, are on a journey to rediscover their shared past. They are still battling, piecing together the details of their connection, and appreciating the mysterious ways life has brought them back together.

Tenth anniversary of Fr Joseph Brannigan RIP

The 2nd of January 2024 marked the 10th anniversary of Fr Joseph Brannigan's death. Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Toal in St Mary's Church Lanark on Monday 29th January 2024 at 7pm. This date would also have been Fr Joe's 70th birthday. Tea & coffee in the Clubrooms afterwards.

O'HARE

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

Jesus, I trust in you.

He will be forever in our hearts

Inserted by his ever loving family.

February Clergy Anniversaries

May the Lord who chose them to serve Him as priests, number them among his chosen in heaven. Requiescant in Pace.

01.02.1960	Rev. Dermott McMullan
01.02.2013	Rev. Walter Scott
02.02.1970	Rev. Michael Maher
03.02.1999	Rev. James J. Keegan
12.02.1973	Rev Richard Lillis
16.02.2019	Very Rev. Andrew Canon Reen
17.02.2014	Very Rev. Kieran Canon O'Farrell
19.02.2018	Rev. Sean O'Shea
25.02.1949	Rev. Bartholomew Flynn
28.02.1991	Rev. Joseph Martin

Prayerful Resolutions

Will Ross

For many of us, the first weeks of January can feel a bit disappointing - Christmas has moved from the present to the past and become little more than a pleasing memory; the New Year has arrived and there may now be worries for some about how we will pay for what we spent at Christmas. What was promised as a time of joy and peace is not like that for everyone - it might have been a fraught time, perhaps filled with anxiety or even distress for one reason or another, especially as the bills start to appear. And Christians are not immune from all this - we share all the concerns common to the rest of humanity, of which we are a part. So if you find yourself struggling, you are certainly not alone.

In the spiritual life, we may find that we have descended from the 'mountain' of Christmas joy - where we might have encountered the Christ Child and His Mother in a special or meaningful way - and gone back into the 'valleys' of real life and every-day faith, with all its attendant questions and struggles, and where it can seem that the gloom of that valley dulls and darkens everything and prevents us from seeing a way forward.

Yet no matter what Christmas has been to us this time round, and no matter how we feel today, still the early weeks of the New Year are also an opportunity - a chance to start afresh and to begin anew, whether in our faith or in other areas of life. It is the time of resolutions - of deciding that we will do what has been left undone, of stopping what should have ceased already, and of trying our best to do better in some way or other.

For Christians, one of the simplest - and best - resolutions is deciding that we will pray a little more, a little more often, or a little better than we were doing previously. For us, prayer is the very breath which animates the life of faith.

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, tells us that prayer is "the key that opens the door to faith" and he makes this invitation to us - "let us see the flame of faith alive through prayer". For those times when all of this seems like too much for us, he reminds us what our prayer needs to look like - it must be "courageous, struggling and persevering". And how right he is - sometimes our prayer can indeed feel like a great struggle, requiring a valiant courage in the face of obstacles which can seem insurmountable at times. Yes, we might well struggle and we may have to make a determined effort to keep going, to persevere. And yet, oddly, it is often when prayer is just that - a real struggle - that it becomes most powerful. The Gospel gives us a flavour of this, telling us that in His agony in Gethsemane, the prayer of Christ was more earnest (cf. Luke 22:44).

In fact, the entire life of Christ was filled with prayer - and especially those most crucial moments which were always preceded by time spent in prayer. If we are to be authentic followers of Him, then our lives, too, must be characterised in the same way. As the Holy Father suggests - "let us learn from Christ how to pray". During his year-long catechesis on prayer in 2021, the Pope spoke of prayer as being the 'sacred fire of faith', like that fire which burned in ancient temples, and one which must never fail - 'there must be a sacred fire in us too, which burns continually and which nothing can extinguish', he said.

We might find ourselves filled with a degree of enthusiasm to do a little better in our prayer lives - and then find ourselves rudely coming to a halt as we wonder just what we are supposed to be praying for. Of course, our prayer will always encompass our personal needs and the intentions of those we love. But prayer is broader than just this. Prayer helps us to open our hearts beyond our own needs, and it suggests areas into which our prayer can extend.

Here, too, the Holy Father can offer us good counsel concerning those things for which we might want to pray.

High on his list is the Synod whose first session took place in October last year. The participants who were present in Rome commented regularly on the atmosphere of prayer in which they found themselves - and to which they all contributed. Pope Francis reminded us again and again that this journey of Synod is spiritual above all else - and therefore requires the prayerful support of all of us; it cannot proceed effectively without that prayer.

The Final Synthesis Report, published at the end of the First Session, contained numerous excellent suggestions for prayer intentions - for our Bishop, for our local Church and its specific needs, and for the clergy; for a commitment to prayer which goes beyond the Mass alone; for a profound spiritual conversion in our local Church and for a missionary energy, so that we can offer a real ecclesial service to the Church in our diocese.

Ultimately, the particular way in which we pray, the actual form it takes, is less important that the reality of our actually giving ourselves over to time spent in prayer.

Perhaps these broad suggestions of the Holy Father and of the Synod members might open a way for us to offer prayer - regularly and consistently - for the Church and for the work of the Synod, in real and concrete ways.

2024 EVENTS

14th January
The Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
Our Lady of Good Aid Cathedral
7.30pm

11th February
Opportunities to Respond
Our Lady of Good Aid Cathedral
7.30pm

24th March: Palm Sunday
The Poverty of a King
Our Lady of Good Aid Cathedral
7.30pm

14th April
Living in Hope
Our Lady of Good Aid Cathedral
7.30pm

12th May
Our Lady of Good Aid Cathedral, 7.30pm

DIOCESE OF MOTHERWELL YOUTH

Gather together with other young adults from across the diocese for our monthly youth events

Eucharistic Adoration | Reflection | Discussion | Social Time

17 - 35 | Our Lady of Good Aid Cathedral, Motherwell

For more information please contact:
frodonnell@rcdom.org.uk

SOLEMN NOVENA TO OUR LADY UNTIER OF KNOTS

with Rosary and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament

EACH TUESDAY at 7.00pm
BEGINNING: 20th FEBRUARY
for nine weeks

ST. BRIDE'S PARISH CHURCH
EAST KILBRIDE

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