

DIOCESE OF MOTHERWELL

FREE

# FONTES

MARCH 2024 | ISSUE 11 | FREE

MAGAZINE

## PROJECT WELLSPRING LAUNCHES IN MOTHERWELL DIOCESE



“ Now, more than ever, we want to unite our diocesan family around the core ideals of the Gospel. ”

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Cover photos: Bishop Toal celebrating Holy Mass in St Francis of Assisi Baillieston (pic by Will Ross), Fr Stephen Reilly with pupils of St Mark's, Rutherglen, members of the Diocese gather to discuss the Synod, Motherwell Diocesan Youth Group at World Youth Day, Elaine Hands from the Foodbank at St Bernadette's, Motherwell.

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The next edition of **FONTES** will be available from **30/31 MARCH**. If you have any news or photos to contribute email [media@rcdom.org.uk](mailto:media@rcdom.org.uk)



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

-  [rcdom.org.uk](http://rcdom.org.uk)
-  [rcmotherwell](https://www.facebook.com/rcmotherwell)
-  [rcmotherwell](https://twitter.com/rcmotherwell)

## FONTES SURVEY

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](http://rcdom.org.uk/fontes) and complete our survey and let us know what you think!





## Parishes say goodbye as priests move on

**Parishioners in East Kilbride and Muirhead have been paying fond tributes to their parish priests as they prepare to move on to pastures new.**

In East Kilbride, parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes, have bid farewell to Fr Frank Dougan after only 2 years in the parish as he prepared for his Episcopal Ordination as Bishop of Galloway later this month. As well as his last Mass in the parish (above left), Fr Frank also attended special assemblies in the primary



schools and celebrated his final Mass as Chaplain of St Andrew's & St Bride's High.

Meanwhile, at St Barbara's Parish in Muirhead, parishioners have been saying farewell to their much loved parish priest, Fr Kenny Campbell, as he leaves the parish after 12 years. Fr Kenny celebrated a final Mass of Thanksgiving (above right) where he was joined by a large number of parishioners as well as Fr Kieran Hamilton and Fr David Brown. He now moves on to succeed Fr Frank Dougan in East Kilbride.

## Lanarkshire man ordained Deacon at Nunraw



**Brother Michael Downie OSCO was recently ordained a deacon by Archbishop Cushley at Sancta Maria Abbey, Nunraw.**

Originally from Holytown, Brother Michael is a fully professed Cistercian monk and is due to be ordained a priest later this year.

Brother Michael is pictured above (left) with Archbishop Cushley, Fr Mark Cairn, the Abbott of Nunraw, and members of the Cistercian community.

## KSC Crib donations help support local charities



**BY DES HAMILL**

**The Knights of St Columba in Coatbridge have recently made a number of donations to support local charities from the incredible £2210 raised by the generosity of the good people of Coatbridge and beyond who supported their Christmas crib appeal.**

The charities benefitting from these funds are Project Gambia, SCIAF, Mary's Meals who all received £500 and the KSC National Action Project (Let The Children Live) who received £210.

# Bishop's Diary

## MARCH

**2nd** - Cardinal Winning Lecture at Glasgow University

**5th - 7.00pm** - Confirmation at St John the Baptist Church, Uddingston

**6th - 7.00pm** - Confirmation at St Teresa's Church, Newarthill

**7th - 11.00am** - Mass to celebrate the 150th anniversary of St Patrick's Primary School, Strathaven. **1.00pm** - Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group Meeting. **7.00pm** - Confirmation at St Mary's Church, Larkhall, for St Mary's PS and St John's PS

**8th** - Patronal Feast Mass at St John Ogilvie High School in Hamilton

**11th-13th** - Bishops' Conference Meeting at Schoenstatt

**13th - 7.00pm** - Confirmation at St Aidan's Church, Wishaw 7.00 pm

**14th** - 10.00am - SCIAF Board Meeting. 7.00pm - Confirmation at St Cadoc's Church, Halfway, for St Charles' PS

**15th** - Caritas Cup Final

**18th** - 7.00pm - Confirmation at St John Bosco's Church, New Stevenston, for St Patrick's PS

**19th** - 7.00pm - Confirmation at St Columbkille's Church, Rutherglen, for St Columbkille's PS and Fernhill School

**20th - 2.00pm** - Wellspring Steering Group in the Diocesan Offices. 7.00pm Confirmation at St Leonard's Church, East Kilbride, for St Leonard's PS and St Hilary's PS

**21st - 2.00pm** - Meeting of the Council of Priests in Diocesan Offices. 7.00pm Confirmation at St Ignatius' Church, Wishaw

**22nd** - Caritas Cup Netball Final

**23rd - 11.00am** - Legion of Mary Acies Mass at St Vincent de Paul Church, East Kilbride

**28th - 11.00am** - Mass of Chrism in Motherwell Cathedral

## PROJECT WELLSPRING



# A word from Bishop Toal

## Dear brothers and sisters,

I am pleased to announce the launch of Wellspring, our new diocesan renewal project.

Wellspring is the fruit of many months of discernment and preparation and offers the hope of a new, energised pastoral landscape in our local Church, seventy-five years since our foundation. It is the prayerful and practical response to the findings of our diocesan synodal conversation.

At its core, this new project seeks to form missionary, evangelical disciples who are ready and equipped to respond to the challenges of our day. It will rely on the support of clergy and lay people working together, in a spirit of genuine synodality, for the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God here in our diocese. Of course, it will also look at other practical areas of our diocesan life such as property management, finances and effective working practices. Wellspring will focus on three specific areas of pastoral renewal:

## PROMOTING A COMMON VISION

Now, more than ever, we want to unite our diocesan family around the core ideals of the

Gospel. Everything we do will flow from our common, scripture-centred ambitions. We will be inclusive and outward-looking, eager to share the riches of our faith beyond the physical walls of our churches. (The full vision can be found in your Wellspring parish information flyer).

## LAUNCHING MISSIONS

We will prioritise and resource five key missions to foster deeper faith and greater witness to the Gospel. These five missions are:

**1.Liturgy**, ensuring high-quality, dignified and engaging Masses and services, especially the Sunday Eucharist;

**2.Adult Formation**, offering opportunities for prayer and learning to deepen our understanding of the faith;

**3.Youth Formation**, providing programmes of prayer, fellowship and learning for our young Catholics;

**4.Poverty Relief**, ensuring we offer generous practical and material support to those most in need;

**5.Education**, supporting our Catholics schools to be nurturing environments alive with faith.

## ENGAGING PARISH RENEWAL

We want to create thriving communities where all are renew our parishes 'from the soil upwards', identifying key areas of spiritual and pastoral growth. This local, bespoke approach will vary from parish to parish, meeting the needs and wants of individual communities. The diocesan Wellspring team will be available to support clergy and parish teams throughout the journey of renewal.

The success of Wellspring depends on two things. Firstly, it requires generous and big-hearted co-operation from each one of us. It invites us to live our

faith more completely and share our faith more courageously, especially in our homes and families. Living and sharing the joy of the Gospel is surely what will untap a new sea of grace in our diocese. So everyone is invited to take up this vital work.

Secondly, and most importantly, we need to pray that God will bless and multiply our human endeavours so that our diocese experiences a new and abundant spring of living water. The Lord is the one who will lead Wellspring; we simply make the offering of our lives as His instruments.

Finally, we entrust our future into the maternal hands of Mary our Mother. May the ancient image of 'the Mother's Well', from which our diocese takes its name, flow again with new graces. May Our Lady grant a new springtime in the life of our beloved diocese.

Yours sincerely,



+Joseph Toal  
Bishop of Motherwell

## WELLSPRING VISION

# IMAGINE A CHURCH:

- Fully alive with committed witnesses to the great commission to "go make disciples of all nations" (Mt28.19)
- Filled with engaged Christians whose "hearts burn within them", having encountered the presence of God in their lives (Lk 24)
- Where all - regardless of background - are invited, welcomed and heard. Where their dignity as children of God, created in his image and likeness, is always recognised (1 Jn3.2); Genesis (1.27).
- Where young people live and share their deep love for the Gospel
- In which Sunday Mass and the vibrant celebration of Sacraments are a foretaste of the wonder of heaven for all - old, young, regular parishioners and guests
- That looks beyond our Church buildings to share the "the joys and hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of all people, especially the poor"; bringing the healing love of Jesus Christ "until the end of time" (Mt28.20)



## WILL YOU JOIN US?

[RCDOM.ORG.UK/WELLSPRING](http://RCDOM.ORG.UK/WELLSPRING)

# What is Project Wellspring?

BY ADRIAN HARKIN & FR MICHAEL KANE

**In March of last year, a series of events made Bishop Toal turn his mind to the long-term future of the Diocese. Mass attendance was reducing, costs were increasing and our property across the Diocese was ageing. He initiated a conversation to consider how the Diocese can best thrive over the next ten years. This project was supported significantly by laity, working in tandem with clergy. This truly synodal, collaborative approach quickly began to produce real fruits.**

In August of last year, some fifty members of clergy from across the Diocese gathered in Motherwell for an Assembly of Clergy. This started with a short analysis of the Diocese, which concluded that – while finances are tight – the Diocese is financially viable, and that – from the point of view of vocations – we are likely to be well served with priests over the next 10 years. However, it also concluded that the number of people attending Mass is shrinking at 4% per annum and indeed has shrunk from 46,000 people to 23,000 people over the past 12 years. The assembled clergy ran through some exercises and concluded that the Diocese should primarily renew itself spiritually and pastorally. This opened-up a



conversation about forming a bold, optimistic vision, fuelled by re-energised missionary disciples. This new vision was also outward-looking, highlighting the need to focus on our relevance to the whole of society (not purely to those who attend Mass); that our buildings should become hubs for community and poverty relief; and that we should all collaborate across the clergy and between clergy and laity.

We called the project “Wellspring”, based on the ancient term for ‘Our Lady’s Well’ which gives its name to the town and Diocese of Motherwell. Our Lady of Good Aid will be our patroness and source of grace during this time of renewal. The water of a spring is also a symbol of the Lord’s healing, forgiveness and life-giving grace. It reminds us of our baptismal vocation to live and share our Catholic faith which stands at the heart of the Wellspring invitation.

Between that meeting in August and a subsequent Assembly of Clergy in January of

this year, a phenomenal amount of work was completed on designing the Diocese in light of the blueprint agreed by the Clergy at the August meeting. The diocesan synodal team has also engaged in the conversation about setting the course ahead.

Wellspring has now launched as a project across the Diocese. The launch outlined the three main spokes of this new initiative:

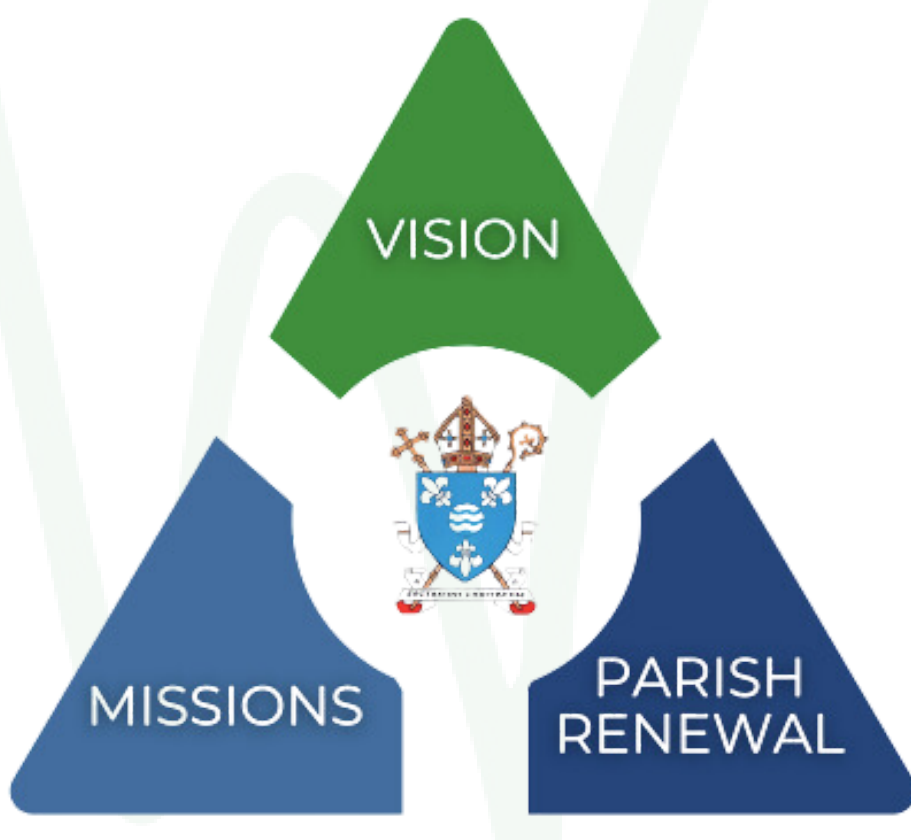
1. The Bishop’s vision for the Diocese, which aims to enthuse and inspire all of us in our discipleship. This vision will become the centre piece of all our prayer, missionary outreach and pastoral activity;
2. A focus on the 5 principal Missions which will transform our parishes and diocese (Liturgy, Adult Formation, Youth Formation, Poverty Outreach and Education);
3. Parish renewal, under which each parish will be supported in the work of renewal in programmes led by each Parish Priest and supported by lay mission teams. In addition to what the project has launched across the Diocese, there are a significant number of sub-projects that cover – among other things – how we support our priests, how we manage our finances and properties, and how we work more effective

FOR MORE INFORMATION & RESOURCES VISIT

and more collaboratively. The project will run for all of 2024 under the Bishop's leadership and a very strong governance framework. All clergy from across the Diocese will again convene in September 2024 to ensure that the programme is being designed, delivered and reviewed at deanery level.

The ultimate aim of Project Wellspring is to inspire all of us to engage more deeply with the Church we love and to help us to rediscover again the fundamentals of our vocation as Catholics: we are missionary disciples called to set the world on fire with the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Finally, Wellspring offers the very real possibility of a collaborative Church family where all, clergy and lay, work together for the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God. Realising this depends greatly on the generosity of lay Catholics to step forward and offer themselves for parish ministry and service. That could be as eucharistic ministers, a reader, server, choir member or in some other ministry or renewed mission. It could be in the delivery of Wellspring itself. The fruits of Wellspring and the fruits of synodality are the same: that as a Diocese of 23,000 practicing Catholics, we harness the enthusiasm, skills and experience of all 23,000 people as we continue to profess our faith and evangelise our world.



[RCDOM.ORG.UK/WELLSPRING](http://RCDOM.ORG.UK/WELLSPRING)

## Feasts in March

MARCH 4

• St Casimir

MARCH 5

• Ss. Perpetua & Felicity

MARCH 8

• St John of God

MARCH 9

• St Francis of Rome

MARCH 18

• St Cyril of Jerusalem

MARCH 19

• St Joseph

MARCH 24

• Palm Sunday

MARCH 28

• Holy Thursday

MARCH 29

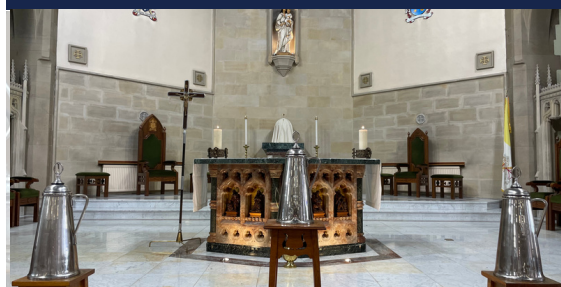
• Good Friday

MARCH 30

• Holy Saturday

MARCH 31

• EASTER SUNDAY



## The Chrism Mass

Holy Thursday  
28th March 2024 | 11.00am

OUR LADY OF GOOD AID CATHEDRAL,  
MOTHERWELL

ALL WELCOME

# P E R U



## An unforgettable experience as Fr. Pat returns to

# I L I U

**The city of Lima can boast centuries of history as well as being the bustling modern capital of Peru and the gateway to the Andes mountains. The conquistador Francisco Pizarro made it the capital of the vast Spanish empire in South America, while the continent's first saints - St Rose of Lima and St Martin de Porres - lived, died and were buried there.**

Fr Pat Hennessy and Fr Stephen Reilly recently visited to mark more recent history: the 65th anniversary of the Missionary Society of St James, the group founded by Cardinal Cushing of Boston to provide priests for the young churches of Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia. Fr Pat served in the Society for 10 years in the coastal town of Huarney and its mountain hinterland.

After the anniversary celebrations, the Motherwell priests travelled to the shanty community of Ate in eastern Lima, where they were guests of the clergy of the Risen Christ parish. In the absence of infrastructure in the shanties, the Church seeks to be a practical, hope-filled and

spiritual presence, setting up canteens and chapels which create community and empower the people.

One visiting Irish priest who was returning to Ate - his former parish - for the first time after 12 years, was astonished at how much the area around the main parish church had developed in the intervening time: the locals are certainly not powerless victims but people full of ambition and creativity, who over the course of years build up businesses and improve their homes.

Fr Stephen commented particularly on the youth and vibrancy of the parish:

"I was so impressed that each Mass in the different parish chapels featured youth choirs and altar server teams. I couldn't believe that at the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation, 153 young people aged 17/18 years old had presented themselves as candidates. It really feels like a young church."

From Lima, the priests made the 5-hour journey to Fr Pat's

old parish of Huarney, then onwards into the mountains and the village of San Miguel. The local villagers welcomed their former parish priest with rare and beautiful mountain flowers, colourful balloons, and hugs aplenty. He was led to the church to celebrate Mass, before a celebration lunch of rabbit and guinea pig (a local delicacy) was served.

In the evening, Fr Pat celebrated Mass in the main parish church in Huarney, and many parishioners travelled to greet him, speaking of the fond memories they had of him from childhood 30 years ago: they mostly remembered his tall frame and his big white feet in his sandals!

Fr Pat said:

"It was a joy to return to the parish communities after many years away, and to see so many familiar faces. My years with them were among the happiest 10 years of my priesthood. I wasn't sure I'd ever return to Peru, so this trip has been a great gift."



Twenty four years have passed since **Fr. Pat Hennessy** left Peru, where he spent a decade of his life serving. Recently, **Fr. Stephen Reilly** accompanied Fr. Pat on a special reunion trip to the villages where he served, and now the two Motherwell priests they share their unforgettable experience with **Fontes**.



# The Scriptures

by FATHER  
THOMAS MAGILL

## 3rd MARCH 3rd SUNDAY OF LENT

**Exodus 20.1-17;**  
**Psalm 18;**  
**1st Letter to the Corinthians**  
**1.22-25;**  
**John 2.13-15**

The Ten Commandments gave the Children of Israel a clear identity as God's Chosen People. (1st reading) But as with all rules and laws, a minimalist attitude can be a temptation – "I've kept those so now I can get on with business as usual." It's precisely "business as usual" that the Lord comes to disrupt and overturn. The money-changers and the merchants in the Temple were doing what was expected of them but were missing the point (Gospel) The new Temple Jesus talks about is the Temple of his risen body in which all of humanity would rise to become the Temple of the Living God. Both Jews and pagans were looking in the wrong place and for the wrong thing. What Christ offered was a new beginning and a fullness of life through his crucified and risen body. (2nd reading) Only he has the message of eternal life. (Psalm)

## 10th MARCH 4th SUNDAY OF LENT

**2 Chronicles 36.14-16, 19-23;**  
**Psalm 136;**  
**Letter to the Ephesians 2.4-10;**  
**John 3.14-21**

The Lord contrasts light and darkness, truth and lies. He himself is a "sign of contradiction" whose light shone through the darkness when he was lifted up on the Cross, whose truth gave the lie to human ways of thinking and acting. (Gospel) When we are dead through our sins, God brings us to life in Christ sometimes in the most surprising ways, as when he used the pagan king Cyrus to restore his people to their land. (1st reading) All is grace and free gift, and it is God's grace that moulds us gently but firmly into his work of art (2nd reading), enabling us to leave behind the contradictions in our own lives and causing us always to remember what he has done for us. (Psalm)



## 19th NOVEMBER 33rd SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

**The Prophet Jeremiah 31.31-34;**  
**Psalm 50;**  
**Hebrews 5.7-9;**  
**John 12.20-23**

Death and Resurrection, loss and renewal, are at the heart of the message and ministry of the Lord. He shows us that they are also at the heart of humanity and creation. (Gospel) His disciples and listeners were keen on the renewal bit but, rather like us, not so keen on the dying bit. To live fully we must die to ourselves, to those ways of thinking and behaving which damage us and others, not to mention our relationship with God. This will involve commitment and suffering as it did with the Lord (2nd reading) but will emerge in a new relationship (covenant) with God and each other, our hearts cleansed and purified. (1st reading, Psalm) It is death and resurrection that we enter into in an intense way every time we celebrate Mass together through our participation in the Lord's Death and Resurrection. It is this that we will experience profoundly during Holy Week.

## 24th MARCH PALM SUNDAY

**Isaiah 50.4-7;**  
**Psalm 21;**  
**Letter to the Philippians 2.6-11;**  
**The Passion of the Lord**  
**according to Mark 14.1-15.47**

In a concise and powerful way, St Paul sums up the identity and mission of the Lord –being as we are, he accepted death on a cross, but God lifted him high so that the whole of creation

would acclaim him as Lord (2nd reading) This is the heart of the St Mark's Passion Narrative. Look out for some special contrasts made by Mark – the abandonment of Jesus by his closest disciples contrasted with the steadfastness of the women who stayed the course; the mockery he received from the bystanders contrasted with the act of faith by the centurion; the conviction of Jesus before the religious leaders as he sets his face like flint (1st reading) contrasted with the utter abandonment he feels as he dies on the Cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Psalm)

**31st MARCH  
EASTER SUNDAY**

**Acts of the Apostles 10.34-37;  
Psalm 117;  
Letter to the Colossians 3.1-4;  
John 20.1-9**

We have been brought back to true life in Christ. We have died with him and now our lives are hidden with Christ in God. (2nd reading) It's noteworthy that Mary Magdalene, Peter, and the Beloved Disciple come to belief when they see the empty tomb. (Gospel) The Risen Lord can only be experienced when we empty ourselves to make room for Christ – he can only fill us with his presence when we have discarded our ego, our false selves, and our self-image. We can only greet him with empty hands. Then, like Peter before Cornelius, we can give witness to our faith in him to others and bring his risen presence to the world. This day was made by the Lord: we rejoice and are glad. (Psalm)

## Fr Martin's appointment to Dunkeld completes Bishops' Conference



**For the first time in three years, all of Scotland's Dioceses will have a Bishop, as Fr Martin Chambers is appointed Bishop of Dunkeld, the last remaining vacant see in Scotland.**

The Galloway Priest has been nominated by Pope Francis to succeed Bishop Stephen Robson, who retired as Bishop of Dunkeld in 2022 on health grounds, having led the Diocese since 2013. For the past year the Diocese of Dunkeld has been sede vacante with Fr Kevin Golden serving as Diocesan Administrator.

Bishop-elect Chamber's appointment to Dunkeld follows just a few weeks after Bishop-elect Frank Dougan was appointed to Galloway Diocese. Their appointments mean the Bishops' Conference of Scotland will be complete with all eight members once again.

Reacting to his appointment, Fr. Martin said: "One of the catchphrases of Pope Francis is that, as Christians, we are called to be

"Missionary Disciples". The Pope reminds us that, yes, we are all called to take our part in the mission of spreading the Good News in our families and within our local community. However, the Pope reminds us that, first of all, we must sit as disciples at the feet of Jesus, listening to Him and letting Him guide our steps."

"As I set out on this new Mission as Bishop of Dunkeld, I pledge to sit in prayer as a Disciple at the feet of Jesus, listening to his voice calling me forward in faith. Together, with Christ's strength and inspiration, we will all be able to continue to build the Kingdom in the Diocese of Dunkeld."

Fr Chambers studied for the priesthood at the Royal Scots College, Valladolid and Salamanca, and was ordained for the Diocese of Galloway in 1989. Most of his ministry has been spent as a parish priest in Galloway, however he also served with the Missionary Society of St James for five years in Equador. He is currently parish priest of Our Lady of the Assumption & St Meddan's, Troon.

*Below: Bishop-elect Martin, right, with Bishop-elect Frank Dougan, and Motherwell priests Frs. Mark O'Donnell and Stephen Reilly on an HCPT Easter Pilgrimage to Lourdes*



# *Wrapped in God's Love:* **Blankets & Tears of Mercy**



**On Ash Wednesday 2016 during the Holy Year of Mercy, Pope Francis commissioned over one thousand Missionaries of Mercy. He was placing Mercy at the start and heart of his papal ministry and our remit as Missionaries of Mercy was to take away the shame in people.**

Surprisingly that day, he did not preach on the great parables of Mercy in Luke's Gospel, ie the lost sheep, or the lost coin or the prodigal son but related the little known story of Noah from the book of Genesis 10:20-2

Noah, a man of the soil, was the first to plant a vineyard. He drank some of the wine, became drunk, and lay naked inside his tent. Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father's nakedness, and he told his two brothers outside. Shem and Japheth, however, took a cloak, and holding it on their shoulders, they walked backward and covered their

father's nakedness; since their faces were turned the other way, they did not see their father's nakedness. Being seen naked in public was the utmost shame.

From this scripture Pope Francis then challenged us to take away people's shame as Noah's sons did with their father. Every person he said, (each person reading this and the writer too!) has something so shameful in their lives that they cannot speak about it even to their nearest and dearest, least of all to a priest. "I want you to take away that shame," he challenged us but he added, "Do not probe. Let people come to you without words and wrap them up in Mercy." Mercy without Words! Mercy unmerited. (If we merited it, it would not be mercy.)

Whilst still in Rome I decided to take the Holy Father's words literally. Why not wrap this shame in blankets of



As we journey through the Season of Lent, **Fr Bobby Kane**, a Missionary of Mercy, writes about the mercy of God waiting for us in the Sacrament of Confession and the responsibility each of us have to help remove each others shame.



Mercy? From Aberdeen to Rothesay, from Newcastle to Cambridge, from East Kilbride to Plains, from Coatbridge to Hamilton, from Scotland to Malawi the Lord has done marvels with his blankets.

One of the unpredictable features of this ministry is that the God of Surprises keeps surprising with the gift of Tears. At every celebration tears have flowed, and surprising enough with men as well. Tears have dripped onto my hands and stole. The shame that has weighed people down, the shame that has caused them heaviness of heart, the shame that fills them with regret has been vanquished. The tears are healing, cleansing, freeing, consoling and medicinal. They are the gift of the Holy Spirit who is their Wellspring. They are sheer and utter Gift.

I do not think we truly appreciate the deep shame of the cross. Jesus was crucified

naked, the ultimate, deepest public shame. Our first mothers and fathers in the faith struggled with this shame. How could this naked, utterly shamed man on the cross be our Redeemer? We cannot bear a naked Jesus on the cross so we dress him up in our crucifixes. We take away his shame. We can do it for each other too.

As Pope Francis keeps reminding us, we are a Church, a People of Mercy. Being merciful is the calling of the People of God. I have looked on with gladness and delight at each of these celebrations as

as the shamed ones with enthusiasm and joy, wrap one another up in their Blankets of Mercy. It is not solely my role as a presbyter. We are all called to Wrap!

May the Lord ease the burdens of your hearts and lighten the sorrows of your soul. May he take away your shame so that you come to know, experience and see the true face of God revealed in his Son Jesus, Mercy Incarnate.

*(Words are extremely limited to convey this mystery of Mercy. Above all it needs to be experienced.)*





# A shop called Hope

**Claire Cook** from **SCIAF** gives an insight into this year's **WEE BOX** appeal which focuses on how, with your help, they are supporting communities in **Rwanda**.

**For those of us old enough to remember it, spring 1994 was a very dark chapter indeed. Rwanda was blighted by 100 days of genocide, which left around one million people dead. Yes, one million people. War inevitably hits the vulnerable most and around half of those who died were women and children.**

Thirty years on and Rwanda and its people are still recovering from the genocide that ripped their country apart and the

deep trauma and ongoing sexual violence it left behind. But even after the genocide ended, Rwanda is a country where violence has become normalised. The legacy of these horrors are still open wounds, and shockingly, almost half of women aged 15 to 49 in Rwanda have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime.

SCIAF's work across Rwanda, driven by donations from the people of Scotland, focuses heavily on supporting those

affected by sexual and gender-based violence. Working through local Rwandan organisations, SCIAF is supporting projects which help women and girls rebuild their lives after abuse, to change social attitudes, and build a future free of abuse and discrimination.

SCIAF's Lenten WEE BOX appeal in 2024 touches on subjects that may be upsetting. But there are also stories of hope.

## Jeanette's story

Jeanette lives with her friends Audrey and Claudine in the back room of a tailoring shop that they run together – a shop called Hope.

Jeanette was raped when she was 17 by a taxi driver, leaving her pregnant. She suffered a lot and wasn't able to work, so would spend every day in bed, hungry, until she gave birth.

She said: "I was under a tremendous amount of stress during the pregnancy. I gave birth to my son in November and I was hospitalised for the entire month. He was very little.

"Two months after he was born, my child died. He died in hospital. We buried him. That's the entirety of it. I struggled immensely with accepting what had happened. The intense agony I experienced was so overwhelming that it felt like I was on the verge of losing my sanity."

In 2021 Jeanette got involved in a SCIAF project with the Justice and Peace Commission in Rwanda, supporting young



Photos by Colin Hattersley

people from poor families, or those who have become single mothers at a young age.

It's here she met Audrey and Claudine, and the three completed vocational training in sewing.

She said: "After completing the training, we were given 100,000 Rwandan Francs (£67) to buy a sewing machine and a pair of scissors. We decided to seek a small loan to start our own business. We borrowed 20,000 Rwandan Francs (£13) to buy basic tools. We live here in our workshop, we work as a team, and make joint decisions regarding any purchases we intend to make.

"Since I started receiving support from this project, my wounds have been healed. I told myself that I'm not the only one

who has been through this, and that I cannot change anything except to embrace and accept what happened, and become the best version of myself. My life has changed.

"God holds an irreplaceable position in my life, primarily because I attribute everything I have to Him. When people trust in God, facing trials and adversity can help them draw closer to Him."

SCIAF is providing medical care, trauma counselling and skills training so survivors can recover, support themselves and rebuild their lives. We're working to change attitudes, so women and girls are safe, respected and valued while also developing networks of community leaders who speak out against violence and demand gender equality.

*\*names changed and images anonymised to protect identities*



## How can you support SCIAF this Lent?



**Make sure you pick up a SCIAF Lent pack from your local Church and fill up your WEE BOX during Lent**



**SCIAF Sunday is 10th March 2024, the 4th Sunday of Lent**



**Visit [sciaf.org.uk](http://sciaf.org.uk) for more resources to use in your home, parish and school during Lent**



**Take part in SCIAF's WEE BOX day of prayer on Friday 8th March 2024**

# SOCIALS

Follow us on X  
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## St Michael's Primary Moodiesburn @StMichaelsPNS

These children have been awarded with certificates for showing the value of Faith.



## St Patrick's Primary New Stevenston @StPatricksPrim2

Congratulations to our two Primary 5 pupils who served at their first mass this morning. Father Gerry and everyone at St. Patrick's are extremely proud of you both.



## St Mark's Primary, Rutherglen @Stmarksrutherg2

P3 were learning about the liturgical colours with Fr Stephen and he brought vestments for the children to try on.



Pupils from St Andrew's & St Bride's High, East Kilbride, who took part in the event

## Schools gather together to remember the Holocaust

BY CLAIRE O'NEILL

**Holocaust Memorial Day is the international day set aside for communities to come together to learn, remember and to reflect on the persecution and murder which took place during the Holocaust of the Jewish people and other groups.**

Each year, South Lanarkshire Council marks this day by hosting the annual Holocaust Memorial event in one of the local secondary schools. This year, on 30th January, the evening was hosted by Strathaven Academy.

Alongside other religious leaders from South Lanarkshire, Bishop Toal represented Motherwell Diocese and was accompanied by Fr Charles Coyle, who has responsibility for inter-religious dialogue for the diocese, and Claire O'Neill who is the diocesan RE co-ordinator. Young people from across the schools in South Lanarkshire

provided performances which encouraged reflection on how lessons can be learned from history in order to create a safer and better future for all. The performances also explored the right of people to participate in their own faith traditions.

Diocesan schools were very well represented during the event with a guitar ensemble from St John Ogilvie High, a drama group from St Andrew's and St Bride's High and pupils from St Patrick's Primary in Strathaven who sang in the learning community choir. The whole event proved to be an inspirational, thought-provoking and reflective evening.







## Choristers take part in first Singing Programme Conference

BY JAMES GREECHAN

**"It was the best day of my life!" exclaimed one Head Chorister on return to school after attending the first Diocesan Schools Singing Programme (SSP) Head Chorister Conference. On Friday 26th January, the Diocesan Centre and Cathedral welcomed twenty-seven enthusiastic young Head and Assistant Head Choristers for a day of singing, workshops, catechesis, and pizza. All seven schools involved in the Diocesan SSP (part of the National SSP) were represented, concluding the day by singing afternoon prayer together in thanksgiving for the work of the programme and praying for its continued success.**

The day began with an inspiring masterclass from Beth Taylor, who was recently commended as grand finalist at the Cardiff Singer of the World competition. As well as sharing her experience of becoming an internationally-acclaimed opera singer, Beth focused on the foundations of a good vocal technique and even signed numerous autographs! As a proud Glaswegian Mezzo-Soprano, Beth Taylor's story and input were an inspiring testament

to the power of music and the life-changing opportunities it can offer. Beth Taylor wrote: "The students were exemplary in their singing, their curiosity, and attitude. It was a joy to work with them!"

Other sessions included a lively panel discussion entitled 'Ask not what your choir can do for you, but what you can do for your choir', an engaging presentation on 'Why we sing at Mass' by Fr Christopher Morris, and a ground-shaking demonstration of the Cathedral Organ by Director of Music, Mr. John Pitcathley. A particular highlight was the pizza for lunch, generously provided by Fr Devlin of St Ambrose Parish, Baillieston.

Mrs Bernadette O'Donnell who accompanied pupils from St Brendan's Primary, Muirhouse, wrote this about the day:

"Throughout the day, the children remained engaged and enthusiastic, eager to absorb every piece of advice and instruction. The activities and exercises were thoughtfully designed to challenge and nurture their musical abilities, allowing them to grow and

develop as performers. It was truly heart-warming to witness their progress and confidence soar."

To become a Head or Assistant-Head Chorister, members of the choir must put their name forward and demonstrate that they have what it takes to be a good role model to other choristers. More than simply singing well, there is a particular emphasis on the need for Head Choristers to be responsible, respectful, supportive of their peers, and highly committed to the mission of the school choir. This mission was encapsulated in the spirit of the Head Chorister Conference itself – to make music joyfully in worship of the Lord. We are extremely grateful to the schools involved, the parents of our Head Choristers, and all who helped make the day such a great success.

We kindly ask you to pray for the continued success and growth of our Schools Singing Programme. If you would like to know more or support our work in any way, please follow us on **X @ChoralDOM** or get in touch via **[jegreechan@rcdom.org.uk](mailto:jegreechan@rcdom.org.uk)**

# Through the Desert God Leads us to Freedom



Message from the Holy Father for Lent 2024

## Dear brothers and sisters!

When our God reveals himself, his message is always one of freedom: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (Ex 20:2). These are the first words of the Decalogue given to Moses on Mount Sinai. Those who heard them were quite familiar with the exodus of which God spoke: the experience of their bondage still weighed heavily upon them. In the desert, they received the “Ten Words” as a thoroughfare to freedom. We call them “commandments”, in order to emphasize the strength of the love by which God shapes his people. The call to freedom is a demanding one. It is not answered straight away; it has to mature as part of a journey. Just as Israel in the desert still clung to Egypt – often longing for the past and grumbling against the Lord and Moses – today too, God’s people can cling to an oppressive bondage that it is called to leave behind. We realize how true this is at those moments when we feel hopeless, wandering through life like a desert and lacking a promised land as our destination. Lent is the season of grace in which the desert can become once more – in the words of the prophet Hosea –

the place of our first love (cf. Hos 2:16-17). God shapes his people, he enables us to leave our slavery behind and experience a Passover from death to life. Like a bridegroom, the Lord draws us once more to himself, whispering words of love to our hearts.

The exodus from slavery to freedom is no abstract journey. If our celebration of Lent is to be concrete, the first step is to desire to open our eyes to reality. When the Lord calls out to Moses from the burning bush, he immediately shows that he is a God who sees and, above all, hears: “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey” (Ex 3:7-8). Today too, the cry of so many of our oppressed brothers and sisters rises to heaven. Let us ask ourselves: Do we hear that cry? Does it trouble us? Does it move us? All too many things keep us apart from each other, denying the fraternity that, from the beginning, binds us to one another.

During my visit to Lampedusa, as a way of countering the globalisation of indifference, I asked two questions, which have become more and more pressing: “Where are you?” (Gen 13:9) and “Where is your brother?” (Gen 4:9). Our Lenten journey will be concrete if, by listening once more to those two questions, we realise that even today we remain under the rule of Pharaoh. A rule that makes us weary and indifferent. A model of growth that divides and robs us of a future. Earth, air and water are polluted, but so are our souls. True, Baptism has begun our process of liberation, yet there remains in us an inexplicable longing for slavery. A kind of attraction to the security of familiar things, to the detriment of our freedom.

In the Exodus account, there is a significant detail: it is God who sees, is moved and brings freedom; Israel does not ask for this. Pharaoh stifles dreams, blocks the view of heaven, makes it appear that this world, in which human dignity is trampled upon and authentic bonds are denied, can never change. He put everything in bondage to himself. Let us ask: Do I want a new world? Am I ready to leave behind my compromises with the old? The witness of many of my brother

bishops and a great number of those who work for peace and justice has increasingly convinced me that we need to combat a deficit of hope that stifles dreams and the silent cry that reaches to heaven and moves the heart of God. This "deficit of hope" is not unlike the nostalgia for slavery that paralysed Israel in the desert and prevented it from moving forward. An exodus can be interrupted: how else can we explain the fact that humanity has arrived at the threshold of universal fraternity and at levels of scientific, technical, cultural, and juridical development capable of guaranteeing dignity to all, yet gropes about in the darkness of inequality and conflict.

God has not grown weary of us. Let us welcome Lent as the great season in which he reminds us: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (Ex 20:2). Lent is a season of conversion, a time of freedom. Jesus himself, as we recall each year on the first Sunday of Lent, was driven into the desert by the Spirit in order to be tempted in freedom. For forty days, he will stand before us and with us: the incarnate Son. Unlike Pharaoh, God does not want subjects, but sons and daughters. The desert is the place where our freedom can mature in a personal decision not to fall back into slavery. In Lent, we find new criteria of justice and a community with which we can press forward on a road not yet taken.

This, however, entails a struggle, as the book of Exodus and the temptations of Jesus in the desert make clear to us. The voice of God, who says, "You are my Son, the Beloved" (Mk 1:11), and "You shall have no other gods before me" (Ex 20:3) is opposed by the enemy and his lies. Even more to be feared than Pharaoh are the idols that we set up for ourselves; we can consider them as his voice speaking within us. To be all-powerful, to be looked up to by all, to domineer over others: every human being is aware of how deeply seductive that lie can be. It is a road well-travelled. We can become attached to money, to certain projects, ideas or goals, to our position, to a tradition, even to certain individuals. Instead of making us move forward, they paralyse us. Instead of encounter, they create conflict. Yet there is also a new humanity, a people of the little ones and of the humble who have not yielded to the allure of the lie. Whereas those who serve idols become like them, mute, blind, deaf and immobile (cf. Ps 114:4), the poor of spirit are open and ready: a

silent force of good that heals and sustains the world.

It is time to act, and in Lent, to act also means to pause. To pause in prayer, in order to receive the word of God, to pause like the Samaritan in the presence of a wounded brother or sister. Love of God and love of neighbour are one love. Not to have other gods is to pause in the presence of God beside the flesh of our neighbour. For this reason, prayer, almsgiving and fasting are not three unrelated acts, but a single movement of openness and self-emptying, in which we cast out the idols that weigh us down, the attachments that imprison us. Then the atrophied and isolated heart will revive. Slow down, then, and pause! The contemplative dimension of life that Lent helps us to rediscover will release new energies. In the presence of God, we become brothers and sisters, more sensitive to one another: in place of threats and enemies, we discover companions and fellow travelers. This is God's dream, the promised land to



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which we journey once we have left our slavery behind.

The Church's synodal form, which in these years we are rediscovering and cultivating, suggests that Lent is also a time of communitarian decisions, of decisions, small and large, that are countercurrent. Decisions capable of altering the daily lives of individuals and entire neighbourhoods, such as the ways we acquire goods, care for creation, and strive to include those who go unseen or are looked down upon. I invite every Christian community to do just this: to offer its members moments set aside to rethink their lifestyles, times to examine their presence in society and the contribution they make to its betterment. Woe to us if our Christian penance were to resemble the kind of penance

that so dismayed Jesus. To us too, he says: "Whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting" (Mt 6:16). Instead, let others see joyful faces, catch the scent of freedom and experience the love that makes all things new, beginning with the smallest and those nearest to us. This can happen in every one of our Christian communities.

To the extent that this Lent becomes a time of conversion, an anxious humanity will notice a burst of creativity, a flash of new hope. Allow me to repeat what I told the young people whom I met in Lisbon last summer: "Keep seeking and be ready to take risks. At this moment in time, we face enormous risks; we hear the

painful plea of so many people. Indeed, we are experiencing a third world war fought piecemeal. Yet let us find the courage to see our world, not as being in its death throes but in a process of giving birth, not at the end but at the beginning of a great new chapter of history. We need courage to think like this" (Address to University Students, 3 August 2023). Such is the courage of conversion, born of coming up from slavery. For faith and charity take hope, this small child, by the hand. They teach her to walk, and at the same time, she leads them forward.

I bless all of you and your Lenten journey.

**FRANCIS**



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# Church prays for Survivors of abuse

**The first Friday in Lent, is dedicated here in the Catholic Church in Scotland to remembering and praying for survivors of abuse.**

We don't always know who they are when we gather as a community to pray. Many no longer feel able to come into Church with us, and their loss is sorely felt. Abuse suffered at the hands of priests and religious was a betrayal of the sanctuary that the Church should be, and the effects of it continue to ripple through our communities.

Our Church should be a place of sanctuary. Our Church is learning how to be a listening Church. Can we describe Safeguarding as a new charism? What of the future? To where is God calling us now? Even in the darkness, God has been gifting a charism to the Church. He is teaching us to listen, to accompany, and to be instruments of healing – yes, to those who have suffered abuse within the Church, as well as those who have suffered abuse in families or other places. By and large, today we find it difficult to listen, to take the time to listen. Today, this is one great area into which the Lord is leading the Church. People who are unheard and often invisible are among the very people to whom the Church is called to minister. The Lenten fast, the ongoing Christian sacrifice, which is pleasing to the Lord is, as the prophet Isaiah says, to let



**HEAL THEIR WOUNDS,  
THEIR STRENGTH RENEW  
A Prayer for Survivors**

**Bestow healing, Lord God,  
upon your beloved children,  
wounded by the pain and fear  
inflicted on them by others.  
Cast light on the darkness of their hearts  
and draw near to them  
to restore what is lost.  
Shelter them safely in your love  
and make them confident in the knowledge  
that they have been powerfully redeemed.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

the oppressed go free, to lift burdens, to share bread with the hungry, to shelter the homeless poor. We cannot love God without loving our neighbour.

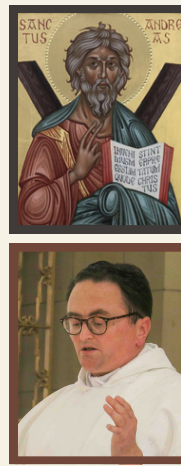
Accompanying survivors is, without any doubt, a challenging ministry, but it is, at the same time, a beautiful vocation, a contemporary vocation towards which the Church calls people forth. We become instruments of healing by seeking justice, but also, increasingly, by listening and accompanying. We must

continue to walk forward together as a Church to grow in our profound spiritual conversion regarding safeguarding, because it is the Lord who is calling us, and this mission is essential in our time.

Today, to survivors of abuse, not only within the church but to all those whom we meet in our daily lives and are unaware they have suffered abuse in its many forms – domestic abuse, online abuse, familial abuse and more – we say we are so, so sorry. It is not your fault. It was never your fault.

# Forming Catholic teachers of tomorrow

**Fr Charles Coyle** gives an insight into being Co-ordinator of Pastoral and Spiritual Formation at Glasgow University.



**I have been the Co-ordinator of Pastoral and Spiritual Formation at the St Andrew's Foundation for Catholic Teacher Education in Glasgow University since August 2023.**

How does someone become the Co-ordinator of Pastoral and Spiritual Formation? Well, the Bishops' Conference of Scotland choose a Catholic priest and then ask that priest to apply for the job. The Bishops identified me as someone they considered appropriate for job and then asked me to apply to the University via its formal application process. As you can imagine there were other international applicants; such a prestigious university always attracts many.

I was amazed, as I'm sure many people were, when the bishops asked me to apply.

The question I am asked most often is: "What's it like to work at the St Andrew's Foundation"? The answer is always the same: it's a privilege. It's a privilege to work at Glasgow University alongside my colleagues in the St Andrew's Foundation and the wider School of Education. Most especially though, it's a privilege to work with the student teachers. I firmly believe that the profession of teaching is the most important in the world, and it's a privilege to help form the next generation of Catholic teachers.

The St Andrew's Foundation prepares teachers for our Catholic schools throughout Scotland. I teach across the four years of the undergraduate degree programme, mainly delivering the years of the undergraduate degree programme, mainly delivering

Catholic teacher formation content. Over the four years we cover the four pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, namely: faith, liturgy & the sacraments, morals and prayer. I also teach on the one year post-graduate programme, and a one-year part time course for people who are already teachers, but who would like to gain the Catholic Teacher Certificate.

The students also form a pastoral planning team that organises pilgrimages and many and various social events. This year we are going on pilgrimage to Rome.

If you would like to know more about the St Andrew's Foundation, or if you think you'd like to become a Catholic teacher, then please get touch: [charles.coyle@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:charles.coyle@glasgow.ac.uk)

## Fr Colum strikes lucky

Father Colum Martin flaunted his bowling prowess on a recent outing with the Altar Servers of St. John the Baptist's in Uddingston, stunning everyone with a top score of 161 points, claiming victory on the leaderboard with the top score of the day at the Hollywood Bowl in Coatbridge.



## The Marian Trust

The Marian Trust, the charity appendage to the former Our Lady's High School (Motherwell) Former Pupils Light Opera Society, is in the process of dissolution. Any one with Bonds purchased from the Trust who wishes to redeem them now should contact one of the following numbers - 07480596356 or 01698 264784.

# The Man Born to Be King

Dorothy L Sayers. Edited by Kathryn Wehr.  
InterVarsity Press, 2023

**BY FATHER LIAM O'CONNOR**  
**This new annotated edition by Kathryn Wehr brings twelve radio plays to a new reading public. They were first composed for broadcast by the BBC in 1941 during a time of unease as the nation was at war by the detective novelist turned translator of Dante, Dorothy L Sayers.**

Sayers wished to present the vitality and truth of the Gospels in an accessible way to the public at large.

The plays manage to synthesise happenings from the four gospels in a dynamic, current way which at the time caused some outrage.

Sayers herself came from an Anglo-Catholic background and was motivated in a true apologetic way like her contemporary C S Lewis, whom it was said she inspired to engage with the wider culture to hear and be invigorated by the accounts of the life of Jesus. The plays needn't be read all at once but savoured for liturgical seasons as they address the mysteries of His Birth, Public Ministry, Institution of the Eucharist, Passion, and Resurrection.

We could in some sense see them in the tradition of the great medieval mystery plays that were so popular in England.

Sayers realised from the moment the plays were to be broadcast on the radio the furore in the press was a result of the misgivings of those who had never heard a word of the plays, but were opposed to the idea that the words and life of Our Lord could be presented in an up-to-date narrative form.

She remained steadfast in her own noble motives and was confident that they would be well received; this was indeed the stance of the committee of BBC censors comprised of Anglican and Catholic bishops and Jesuit and Baptist clergymen.

For a flavour of her plays, here follows a dialogue from: 'The King's Supper' (p330.):

"JESUS: My soul is full of sorrow – it is like the horror of death, Stay here a little and watch with me, while I go and pray...

PETER: We three together again, as we were before in the mountain.

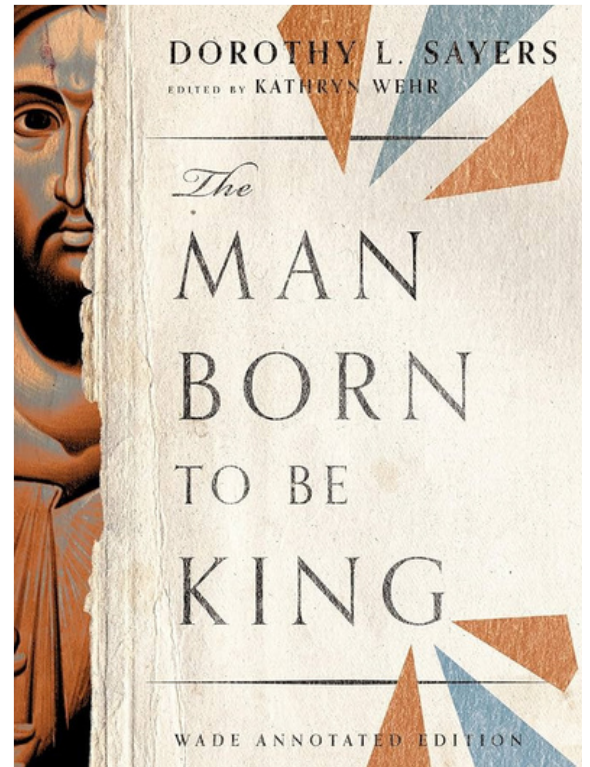
JAMES: What shall we see tonight?

JOHN: I have wept so much that my eyes can see nothing.

JESUS: (a little way off): Abba, Father – all things are possible with Thee. If it be possible – nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.

JAMES: How earnestly he prays.

PETER: As though in a torment



that grinds him, soul and body.

JAMES: The sweat shines on his forehead – I have seen it so on the face of men stretched upon a rack.

PETER: It falls to the heavy earth like drops of blood

JAMES: Such prayer cannot go unanswered.

PETER: There is no answer – no light – no vision: only the dark agony of the mortal flesh."

The Man Born to Be King – List of Plays:

Play 1: Kings in Judea

Play 2: The King's Herald

Play 3: A Certain Nobleman

Play 4: The Heirs to the Kingdom

Play 5: The Bread of Heaven

Play 6: The Feast of Tabernacles

Play 7: The Light and the Life

Play 8: Royal Progress

Play 9: The Kings Supper

Play 10: The Princes of this World

Play 11: King of Sorrows

Play 12: The King Comes to His Own

# Making the most of change

**Margaret Davis writes about how the Catholic communities in Lanark, Biggar and Forth have coped and flourished from major changes as the parishes come together**

**Recent years have witnessed a major time of change and flux for the Catholic Church globally, for the Diocese of Motherwell and for many of our local parishes.**

Our parish, St Mary's in Lanark, was no different. A major renovation programme, 4 parish priests in 6 years, a changing town with many new homes being built bringing new families, and, along with the rest of the world, the impacts of a global pandemic.

2023 saw even more change at St Mary's. The closure of St Mary Magdalene's in Forth and proposed amalgamation with St Isidore's in Biggar opened a new chapter for the parish.

And what an exciting chapter it's turning out to be.

St Mary's has always had a strong community spirit, built up over 170 years, with many families being parishioners for generations. Recent months have seen this bedrock of strong community spirit being enriched by new blood with the changes breathing new life, not just for those coming in, but energising those already there.

The parishioners coming from St Mary Magdalene's and those who have chosen to come at this point from St Isidore's have been made very welcome and know they are welcome.

Right away the St Mary's Social Committee began new monthly coffee mornings on the first Sunday of each month to create a way for everyone to get to know another which has been a major success and is now embedded in parish life. The Committee has happily welcomed new volunteers from the other parishes.

Beautiful statues of St Mary Magdalene and St Isidore were positioned at the entrance porch of St Mary's as a special sign of welcome and items of great significance to those parishes were installed within the church.

All of the St Mary's parish ministries have also welcomed new members, including Margaret McCusker who has been a very positive addition to the Ministry of Welcome at St Mary's.

Margaret writes:

"Prior to attending St. Mary's, I had spent three years at St. Isidore's in Biggar. At St Isidore's, I was asked to do some weekday readings, and Fr. John-Paul was quick to encourage me to become a regular reader. I would consider myself an extremely shy introvert; therefore, this is out of my comfort zone and something I would never have envisaged myself being able to do.

I was first introduced to St. Mary's through the rosary group, which meets on Zoom. Very quickly, I was made to feel welcome and embraced by everyone as part of the group.

My first actual visit to St. Mary's was for a weekday Mass, and the feeling of peace in the church was extremely strong. I felt as though I had found my home. I soon took the decision to attend St. Mary's regularly, as St. Isidore's was due to close and shortly after I was drafted to be a passkeeper on Sunday mornings.

I feel that St. Mary's has a wonderful family feel and Fr. John-Paul is able to see things in people and is able to encourage them to pursue new things; his enthusiasm and energy are like a breath of fresh air for the parish."

Another parishioner who has quickly become a very valued member of St Mary's is Cathie O'Brien who shares her own experience of dealing with change:

"I can be threatened by change or I can embrace it. It all





depends on how I think and feel within myself. It is inevitable in life that change will occur from time to time. How I deal with it is up to me.

Unexpectedly change came into my life a couple of years ago when I moved from my family home and parish of St Columbkille's Rutherglen after 55 years. From a large bustling parish at one edge of the Diocese I had moved to the somewhat smaller and quieter parish of St Isidore's in Biggar at the other end of the Diocese. It was a vast change but I soon warmed to my new little chapel, grew to love it and became involved in the life of the parish. However, that wasn't to be for long then change happened yet again.

With the advent of Covid and later the slow return to Mass attendance, unfortunately churches would have to close in many areas including our own.

I was saddened to hear that my tiny parish would be closing but thankfully the nearest Catholic Church isn't too far away. I became a parishioner of St Mary's in Lanark on the closure of St Isidore's. I've been made very welcome by all I've met in the parish. It is a warm and friendly place of worship. I feel very blessed and thankful at this change and look forward to attending Mass and many other services and activities with this joyful and vibrant congregation.



For anyone who may be anxious about change I would say, take that first step. Someone will come to welcome you."

The congregation of St Isidore's now celebrate Sunday Mass in Holy Trinity Chapel in Lamington. However the parishioners of St Mary Magdalene in Forth have joined fully with the community of St Mary's in Lanark. It marked a major change in the history of a village parish, and the spiritual life of parishioners as described by Rowena Colpitts:

"The ongoing impact of difficult decisions are known full well in Forth. We are a mining village of 3,000, 8 miles north of Lanark and had until recently a Catholic church in the centre of our community.

Catholic worship has not always been in the village with stories of walking to parishes nearby for Mass often told, but in 1970 a church was built. After a fire, a smaller, humbler church was built on the same plot.

Becoming part of the parish of St Isidore's in Biggar, St Mary Magdalene's never had a resident priest and so was served by priests from Biggar, then Lanark and Newmains. We were known for our warmth and welcome and as a powerhouse of prayer with a strong devotion to Our Lady and the Sacred Heart. The congregation was lively, devout and generous. So, in Autumn 2021 when we were told that it was likely that we were to close, we were all a little stunned but not surprised. We took the decision to prayer and accepted that without an increase in congregation numbers or an influx of new

priests we couldn't stay open.

Just before Easter in 2022 we held our final Mass and after 5 decades of service to the Forth community, our Church closed.

So, over a year has passed since our small congregation joined the larger parish and this sad transition has seen us miss our frequent check-ups on parishioners, our close contact with a parish priest and the joy of sharing in the sacramental celebrations of villagers and family alike. However, it has also shown us the love and concern at a great depth that we have received from St Mary's. We have been encouraged to join in church activities and have better access to more events and liturgical celebrations. We now join for Mass in one of the most magnificent churches in Scotland – a very different building from what we had come from.

In these past 2 years, we have walked in faith and have been reminded that to be a Catholic is to be a pilgrim."

2024 will see further changes at St Mary's with major pastoral and spiritual projects underway in the parish. As we witnessed over Advent and Christmas there is a real energy and sense of renewal in the parish led by a very able Parish Priest who has a strong vision and blueprint for our future. As many of our fellow parishes in the Diocese go through change in the coming months and years we hope that these shared experiences give some light and hope as to how positive change can be.

# The faith of a young Carfin teen continues to inspire many



**Louise Lawlor Devaney**, writes about a new biography of the late Joe Wilson as his short life continues to have such a powerful impact on so many people

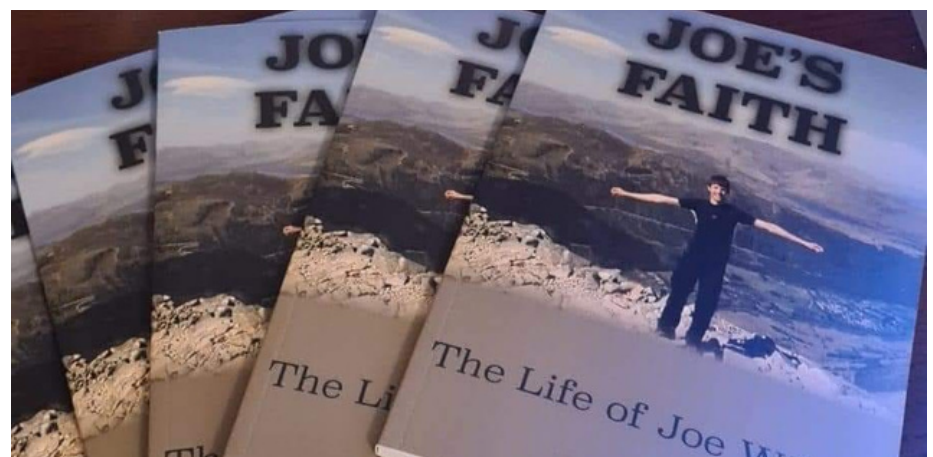
**"The Life of Joe Wilson" by author Jane Burns is a moving biography that delves into the life and spiritual journey of Joe Wilson, a young man from Carfin with a profound connection to God and the Catholic faith.**

His devotion to doing God's will at such a young age inspired many of those who knew him before he died suddenly at the age of 17. After his death, Joe's reflections from a diary that he wrote in his teenage years were made into a small booklet which has since travelled far and wide. This was one of the many inspirations for the biography as his quotes and reflections of Catholicism have made an impact on thousands of people all over the world. Many people who have stumbled upon Joe's story have started praying to him, seeking his intercession. Remarkably, people also feel that their prayers have been answered. An astounding revelation that has captured the interest of many.

"The Life of Joe Wilson" meticulously encapsulates Joe's admirable devotion to his faith, highlighting how his beliefs helped him through life's challenges. Through intimate diary excerpts, personal anecdotes, and reflections from family and friends, Jane Burns paints a vivid picture of Joe's exceptional devotion to God.

This biography is an exploration of the impact of faith on youth, the community, and how a life, no matter how short, can leave a profound impact on the world even after death. Readers will get the chance to learn more

about Joe's remarkable ability to embed Catholic principles into his daily life as well as his intrinsic desire to help improve the lives of others. It is a refreshing reminder of the indistinguishable power of belief and unwavering faith. If you would like to read more about the life of Joe Wilson, the biography can be purchased online for £7 on the following website: [www.joefait.org](http://www.joefait.org). Alternatively, the biography can also be purchased at some church stalls local to Joe's home town in Carfin and Newarthill. It is also available to other church stalls on request.



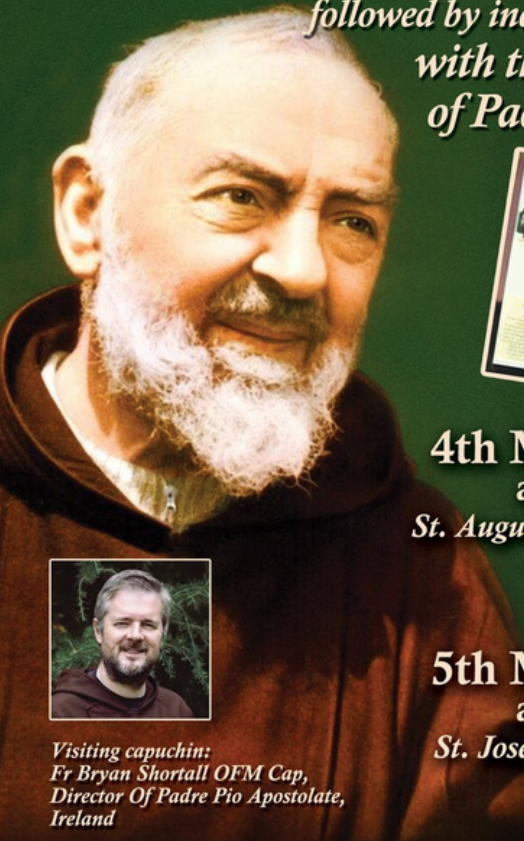
## The Pope's Prayer Intentions

### MARCH - FOR THE NEW MARTYRS

We pray that those who risk their lives for the Gospel in various parts of the world inflame the Church with their courage and missionary enthusiasm.

# PADRE PIO MASS WITH THE RELICS

*followed by individual blessing  
with the glove  
of Padre Pio*




**4th March 2024**  
at 7.00pm  
*St. Augustine's R.C. Church,  
Coatbridge*

**5th March 2024**  
at 7.00pm  
*St. Joseph's R.C. Church,  
Clarkston*



*Visiting capuchin:  
Fr Bryan Shortall OFM Cap,  
Director Of Padre Pio Apostolate,  
Ireland*

Padre Pio Shop & Tea  
in hall afterwards

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## March Clergy Anniversaries

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

03.03.1989	Rt. Rev. Mgr. John O'Donnell	13.03.2018	Very Rev. Timothy Canon Brosnan
05.03.1965	Rev. James Walsh	15.03.1959	Very Rev. Patrick Canon McCarthy
05.03.1971	Rev. Hugh Mahon	19.03.1960	Rev. Michael Little
07.03.1990	Rev. Patrick Kilcoyne	19.03.2006	Rev. John Givens
09.03.1958	Rev. John Roger	21.03.1988	Rev. James Dooley
09.03.1993	Rev. Denis Garrity	22.03.2010	Rev. William Sproule
10.03.1955	Rev. Alexander McBride	25.03.1976	Archbishop James Donald Scanlan
10.03.1982	Rev. Sean Mannion	26.03.1995	Rev. Patrick Brosnan
10.03.2022	Rt. Rev. Mgr. Thomas Canon O'Hare	29.03.1989	Very Rev. Patrick Canon Kelly
12.03.1982	Rev. James McGill	29.03.2020	Very Rev. Denis Canon Keane
13.03.1994	Rev. Robert Healey	30.03.2016	Very Rev. Patrick Canon O'Hare

PADRE PIO EVENTS PRESENT:

# ST PATRICK'S VARIETY CONCERT

11<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024 AT 7.30PM  
THE ROYAL CONCERT HALL, GLASGOW

STARRING:

FROM BRITAIN'S GOT TALENT, **FR RAY KELLY**, THE SINGING PRIEST

WORLD RENOWNED COMEDY ACT,  
**JIMMY CRICKET**



COMPERE & COMEDIAN PRIEST  
**FR FRANKIE MULGREW**



ACCOMPANIED BY GLASGOW'S OWN  
**ST ROCH'S CEILI BAND  
& HARRISONS IRISH  
SCHOOL OF DANCE**



AND...  
**YOUNG  
CARFIN GROTTA  
CHORISTERS**

AND...  
**SURPRISE  
GUEST  
VOCALIST**



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