



Galloway Diocese NEWS

Advent
Edition
December
2022

200 years of St Margaret's Parish, Ayr



St Margaret's parish community in Ayr celebrated the 200th anniversary of its foundation in 1822 with a Mass on Wednesday November 16th, the Feast of St Margaret of Scotland, in the Cathedral honoured to have her as its Patron. The Mass was celebrated by Father David Borland, Administrator of the Cathedral, with priests and deacons of the diocese, some of whom spent many years in the parish, and members of the clergy from the other Christian denominations in the town.

Full story and more photographs on page 10.



Words from the Administrator

“Enlarge the Space of your Tent”

Father William McFadden explains why Pope Francis has extended the Synodal consultation process until 2024

As we continue to await the appointment of our new bishop, and as a diocese we experience directly the slow and deliberate manner in which the Church works in her consultation and discernment processes, a further example of this measured and unhurried approach has been announced by Pope Francis. He has decided to extend the consultation process of the Synod on Synodality for an extra year. Formally called “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission,” the Synod has been an opportunity for reflection, listening and dialogue among participants throughout the world. It was originally scheduled to conclude with an event in Rome in 2023, but Francis has now announced that it will not conclude until 2024.

As part of the initial consultation, parishes and dioceses were invited to meet, and after prayer, listening and dialogue, to send their conclusions to a national group, who would then draw up a collective response on behalf of each country’s Bishops’ Conference. These responses were sent to Rome, and a second consultative document, with a more global outlook, has now been drawn up in light of these responses. This text will now act as the basis for further listening and discernment on a continental basis.

This second document has the title **“Enlarge the Space of your Tent,”** and it particularly invites reflection on the Church as a place of **acceptance** and **inclusion**. Common themes which emerged from the national reports have been brought together, and from these, attention is drawn to a variety of matters which present significant issues and challenges. Among these are the clerical sexual abuse scandals, the lack of participation of women in the Church’s life and mission, and in its decision making, liturgical disputes, the

“Enlarge the space of your tent”
(Is 54:2)



problem of clericalism, the disparity between rich and poor, and the lack of inclusion and welcome of so-called “marginalised” categories, such as the LGBTQ community and families in irregular situations, including divorced and remarried couples. **“Enlarge the Space of your Tent”** puts down in clear language a broad spectrum of issues for ongoing reflection, but without seeking to offer solutions to any of the situations raised.

Pope Francis has always stressed that the Synodal process is all about listening, and it is about making sure that all people are welcomed and accepted in the Church. We all must “enlarge our tents” to be more inclusive and accepting. While acknowledging that the national reports reveal great diversity, **“Enlarge the Space of your Tent”** does affirm that some problems are longstanding in the Church, and do require to be addressed.

Conversion of the Church’s culture lies at the heart of the synodal approach. This will develop slowly, but synodal practices must be seen to emerge at all levels of Church life. This will certainly be a task for our new bishop to address directly.

If we can learn anything from the Synodal process as it unfolds, it is that if something is important then it takes time. Perhaps we need to be aware of this as we look forward patiently to the appointment of our new pastoral leader in the diocese.



Media Watch ~ 1

The Letter – A Message for Our Earth

A review by Jim McKendrick

In 2015, Pope Francis wrote *Laudato Si’* an encyclical letter to every single person in the world about the environmental crisis. The recently published documentary film (**The Letter**) represents a big step forward in spreading the pope’s teaching. The film contains never-before-seen footage of the Holy Father. Four voices that have gone unheard in global conversations have been invited to an unprecedented dialogue with the pope. Hailing from Senegal, the Amazon, India, and Hawaii, they bring perspective and solutions from the poor, the indigenous, the youth, and wildlife into a conversation with Pope Francis himself.

This documentary follows their journey to Rome and the extraordinary experiences that took place there, and is packed with powerfully moving personal stories alongside the latest information about the planetary crisis and the toll it’s taking on nature and people.



This is a must-watch movie and is available on **YouTube**. It can be shown free of charge by parishes, schools and other interested groups, and is available to download at www.youtube.com/originals/videos

Advent – ‘The Always New’

Jim McKendrick ponders the meaning of Advent, particularly as symbolised by the wreath and candles

The season of Advent began the Church’s liturgical year on Sunday, 27th November and encompasses the four Sundays and weekdays leading up to the celebration of Christmas. It is a time of preparation in our hearts and minds for the anniversary of the Lord’s birth on Christmas. It comes round every year at a time when we are bombarded by commercial advertising and external decorations, so, we run the risk of allowing it to pass us unnoticed. Yet Advent is *‘THE ALWAYS NEW’*, provided that we allow it to be new for us. Thus, it is good for me to take time to ponder the spiritual significance of this very special season of the liturgical year and to re-discover *the reason for the season*; a season that recurs every year, yet remains *ALWAYS NEW*. It offers me, annually, another chance to ponder what God’s desire for us might be – not only for this season, but for the entire year and indeed for my entire life.

I find our Advent Wreath and the weekly lighting of a candle very helpful in the contemplation of the meaning of the season of Advent. The use of the wreath and candles during Advent are a longstanding tradition that was originally adopted by Christians in the Middle Ages as part of their spiritual preparation for Christmas. The wreath and candles are full of symbolism tied to the Christmas season. The wreath itself, which is made of various evergreens, signifies continuous life. The circle of the wreath, which has no beginning or end, symbolises the eternity of God, the immortality of the soul, and the everlasting life we find in Christ.

Even the individual evergreens which may be used in the making of the wreath have their own meanings that can be adapted to our faith. The laurel signifies victory over persecution and suffering; the holly and yew signify immortality and the cedar signifies strength and healing while



the pine symbolises life and resurrection. The wreath as a whole is meant to remind us of both the immortality of our souls and God’s promise of everlasting life to us through Christ. The candles also have their own special significance. The four candles represent the four weeks of Advent, and one candle is lit each Sunday. Three of the candles are purple because the colour violet is a liturgical colour that signifies a time of prayer, penance, and sacrifice.

The first candle symbolises hope. It represents the expectation felt in anticipation of the anniversary of the birth of the Christ-child, who redeems and offers us the way to eternal life. The second candle represents faith. It is called the “Bethlehem Candle” as a reminder of Mary and Joseph’s journey to Bethlehem. The third Sunday of Advent is ‘Gaudete Sunday’ and reminds us of the joy that the world experienced at the birth of Jesus, as well as the joy that the faithful have reached the midpoint of Advent. It is called the “Shepherd’s Candle,” and is pink because rose is a liturgical colour for joy. We light the last purple candle to mark the final week of prayer and penance as we wait for the birth of our Saviour. This final candle, the “Angel’s Candle,” symbolises peace. It reminds us of the message of the angels: “Peace on Earth, Good Will towards Men.”

We know that Advent is a yearly event, when it takes place and how long it lasts. Yet, each year it provides a fresh opportunity to deepen our faith and focus on the true meaning of Christmas and what it means for us. The liturgy and symbolism of the four weeks helps me to reflect on the real meaning and purpose of this liturgical season.





St Mary's, Star of the Sea, Largs, holds its second Parish Festival

Photos, courtesy of Mike Condron and Mary Ryan

From the 16th September, St Mary's celebrated its second week long Parish Festival; the first was in 2019 but the pandemic put paid to the others. The idea was primarily to celebrate the parish's patroness, St Mary, Star of the Sea. The festival also gives the parish the chance to organise various celebrations of all kinds, it brings people out, builds up the community by means of the various activities involved and by the preparations for them. Another, important reason was to wave a defiant goodbye to the pandemic!

Plans for the Festival started in late 2021 and were spear-headed by a sub-committee of the parish pastoral council and many heads and hands soon set to work to turn the many ideas into reality. We were keen to get the children of St Mary's Primary School as involved as possible and they certainly played a big part in the celebrations.

The Festival kicked off on Friday 16th September with the Mass of St Ninian, attended by the school children and a good number of parishioners. Seventy parishioners enjoyed a dinner dance in the parish hall on the Saturday evening. On Sunday 18th the music at the 10 am Mass was greatly enhanced by Sir James MacMillan and some of his professional singing friends, with some parts being sung from a composition of William Byrd, and with a responsorial psalm composed for the occasion by Sir James himself. That evening we had a "Songs of Praise" with the top ten hymns voted for by the different Christian congregations in Largs. Monday 19th was a solemn day, and Mass was offered



Four young men carried the statue of Our Lady in procession. Two children crowned Our Lady and the Child before she was lifted back onto her pedestal.



for the soul of the late Queen Elizabeth II

Events during the week, included an early bird 7 am Mass for the workers, with breakfast in the hall, a Mass for the Sick – a moving moment for all who attended – and a day for the children with a bouncy castle at the school and then a family fun night with a quiz and pizza in the evening.

On the Wednesday night a concert of choirs and solo music, involving the primary children and various choirs from Largs and Fairlie, delighted the three or four hundred strong audience. Our Garden Fete on Saturday, with numerous stalls of all sorts, and crowds of people milling around was a great success, helped no doubt by two gin and whisky tasting sessions for the more mature palates!

The final event was the Solemn Mass of St Mary, Star of the Sea, on Sunday 25th, led by the children. The music for Mass was beautifully executed by our parish choir and organist, with the children taking the lead in the readings and the procession of the gifts.

Parish priest, Monsignor Peter Magee says, "my prayer for the parish was that we would all be open to whatever graces of God Our Lady saw that we most needed. I am sure many seeds of grace were sown. While parishioners all thoroughly enjoyed the Festival, it was our hope that, above all, she did, too!"

Assembly of Priests

The priests of the Diocese met in conference in November. Topics for discussion, reflection and prayer included the Bishops' Conference paper on Gender Identity. The pastoral approach to our sisters and brothers bravely dealing with gender identity issues is to offer love, support, understanding and compassion. The second topic looked at over the two day meeting was Synod and Discernment led by Jesuit priest, Father Dermot Preston. The group was led through a wonderful presentation ending in a directed meditation listening to the Holy Spirit speak to us just as the Spirit is speaking to all in the Church.



A Visit to Harrison & Harrison (Organ Builders), Durham

Parishioners see the skilled work in progress

On 5th September, a team of organ builders from Harrison & Harrison (H&H) travelled from Durham to begin the dismantlement of the historic 1903 H&H organ in St Joseph's, Kilmarnock. With most of the inner workings of the organ now removed, all that is left on the organ gallery in St Joseph's at present is the 'empty shell' of the wooden organ case (which would normally hold the front display of pipes).

A party of eleven from the parish, including Father Stephen McGrattan and Father Kevin Rennie, headed to Durham in October for a visit to the H&H workshops for an update on progress on the organ's restoration and to take the opportunity to witness first-hand some of the specialist work being done on the instrument. It was a delight to see again Lee Gibson and Geoff Pollard, members of the team which had dismantled the organ in Kilmarnock. It is a matter of great pride to Geoff that his great-grandfather was a major contributor to the construction of St Joseph's organ in 1903.

The visit provided a glimpse of the high levels of craftsmanship and unique skillsets which organ builders possess. Parts of St Joseph's organ which had already received attention were seen. The names on the organ's drawstops had long ago started to fade but here they now were with the names newly engraved and original colours restored. The pedalboard and the "Swell Pedal" had been cleaned, polished and re-upholstered and a particularly memorable moment was seeing for the first time the restored manuals, or keyboards (*pictured above*).



The group came away from the tour with a profound appreciation and gratitude for the dedicated expertise with which St Joseph's organ is being painstakingly, but surely, restored to its original state, rejuvenating its tired workings after almost twelve decades of service to the parish. Once work at Durham has been completed, there will be a four-week-long rebuild in Kilmarnock before the organ's noble sound will be heard again, in all its restored eloquence, at Holy Week and Easter 2023.

Concert at St Teresa's

Beatrice Gardener reports on a happy occasion

The Dumfries Male Voice Choir offered to put on a concert at St Teresa's Church, Dumfries, on 26th August in aid of our Parish Mission, 'The Ababa Project,' and we were doubly grateful as they had with them a visiting group of singers from Canada, The Calgary Burns Singers, all very smartly dressed in their very different styles of uniform. I spoke to one of the singers and although he had the broadest of Scottish accents and was in full Highland Regalia, he assured me he was from Canada, via West Ayrshire.



The evening was very well attended and the company didn't take much persuasion to join in. We visited many old favourites and great old marching songs. I was reminded of watching *The Good Old Days* with my parents. The ticket and raffle sales realised a wonderful figure, £760, all given over to the Ababa Project.

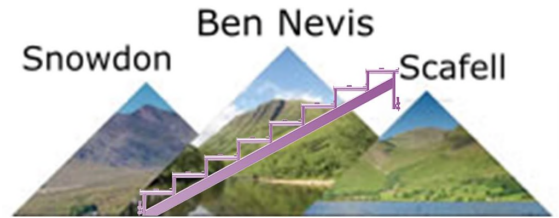
The Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady help so many children in Ethiopia, the very poorest and marginalised. So we are delighted to add this amount in to the pot. We have an education programme too which pays for children to attend school. We call it TEACH, (Teaching and Educating a Child) and as this is the start of the new school year we would be most happy to have any new sponsors join us. See our Facebook Page, The Ababa Project, St Teresa's RC Church.



NOT the Three Peaks Challenge

Another one of Father David Borland's stupid ideas!!! **

** His words, not ours!



Anyone who knows me will know two things about me: firstly I'll do almost anything to support the charity Friends of the Holy Land (FHL) help our Palestinian Christian brothers and sisters in Palestine, and secondly, I can't abide being cold and wet! So when I came up with the idea of doing the National Three Peaks Challenge in aid of FHL I immediately had to start thinking about how I could do it without the real possibility of getting cold and wet!

The 'National Three Peaks Challenge' is climbing Ben Nevis, Scaffell and Mount Snowdon, the three highest peaks in Scotland, England and Wales, a combined height of 11,182

feet. This challenge is undertaken by hundreds of people every year, and it is a challenge usually completed in one weekend by fit, outdoorsy, types of people – but if you know me even slightly you know I'm not fit nor an outdoorsy type of person – if I was to attempt to climb the Three Peaks Challenge over one weekend then at the very least I would need oxygen, I would probably need a heart and lung transplant too, in fact it would probably be more prudent writing a Will and choosing hymns before I left! The thinking cap got put on and a solution was found: the Three Peaks Challenge became the "Not the Three Peaks Challenge"!

My "Not the Three Peaks Challenge" in aid of FHL involved climbing the stairs in my house. From bottom to top the staircase in my house rises 11 feet, therefore all I needed to do during the whole month of October was to climb my staircase 1,017 times, that's 33 times every day for the whole month and I would have successfully climbed the equivalent height of the three peaks without getting cold or wet – it was actually an extra 71 feet but I was prepared to do that to compensate for avoiding the wind, snow and rain which usually accompanies the Three Peaks!

I began on Sunday October 1st, and with two very sore legs and a bemused dog (she accompanied me up and down for the first couple of days but then lay at the top of the stairs with a quizzical look on her face for the rest of the month), I completed the challenge on Monday October 31st, and my goal now is to be able to genuflect again at Mass! But it was worth it! So far, and the challenge is only just completed, more than £2,500 has been received for FHL. I cannot thank all those who sponsored me or donated to the cause enough – your generosity is astounding.

If any readers wish to add to this magnificent sum you can send donations to Father David at the Cathedral, cheques payable to him. Or transfers via PayPal to david.borland@gallowaydiocese.org.uk or you can donate to FHL directly via the FHL website.

Thank you.



the past seventy-five years, and during that time the Christian population there has fallen steadily.

Working closely with the churches here and in the Holy Land, their work is entirely apolitical, and has the backing and blessing of Anglican and Catholic Bishops in England, Wales, Scotland and elsewhere

Their mission is to secure a resilient and enduring community for Christians in the West Bank, Gaza, Israel and Jordan.

Visit their website – www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk – to find out more about their work and the people they support and where you can make a donation. They also have an on-line shop with a range of cards and gifts, including beautiful olive wood carvings.

Friends of the Holy Land (FHL) was established in 2009 to help and encourage Christians to flourish in the land of their birth, to ensure a secure presence where Christianity began. The Christian people of the Holy Land have been under increasing economic and political pressure in



Ecuador Trust Launches 200 Club

Father Martin Chambers explains

In recent years the Ecuador Trust has kept the plight of the poorest people in the shanty towns of Ecuador to the forefront of our minds. The images of families without running water, no medical care, little access to education and all the time living in bamboo huts for houses impact us all and remind us that our faith lives call us to reach out to the needs of our sisters and brothers in poorer parts of our world.

Over these years, the Ecuador Trust has organised different fundraising events and now has launched a 200 Club open to anyone across the country and beyond.

“The Trust was aware that, just as Covid hit us all hard in Scotland, it hit our friends in Ecuador in perhaps an even deeper way. Ecuadorians were living through Covid but with no access to government help nor to medical care. We wanted to reach out in a new way to help our friends at this time. That’s why this year we have set up a monthly 200 Club. For a £5 subscription, people have a chance of winning £150 each month while at the same time helping our Ecuadorian families at this difficult time.”

If you wish to take out a subscription, please send an email to theecuadortrust200club@hotmail.com and you can be registered. Interestingly enough, since the 200 Club started in September of this year and, although there are members from all over Scotland, the first two winners were from Galloway Diocese!



One family receiving food bags from Ecuador Trust

Media Watch ~ 2 Border Life – The Whithorn Way A review by Mary Buckley



ITV Border – the ITV region which serves Dumfries and Galloway, the Scottish borders and Cumbria has a weekly half hour programme called Border Life which covers, as you can imagine, many and varied aspects of life in the region and over a four week period in October/November part of each programme was devoted to the Whithorn Way. Presenter Sandy McCracken took us from the bustling city of Glasgow to the windswept beach at Whithorn, visiting along the way places of interest and meeting people who live and work within reach of this historic area.

In the first programme Sandy recounts the origins of Whithorn and its importance in the Christian life of Galloway and Scotland and it includes film of the recent pilgrimage and Mass at the cave. Starting the journey at St Mungo’s Cathedral in Glasgow, and stopping to investigate the Govan Stones, early symbols of Christianity, Sandy travels to Paisley and its abbey dedicated to St Mirin.

In the second episode we join Sandy on the Ayrshire coast at Irvine where Mary Queen of Scots stopped on her way to Whithorn. He also visits Prestwick, Ayr and Alloway.

The third episode brings us to the hills of Galloway and the church of Colmonell with its famous stained glass windows. At The Machars he explores the Bronze Age Drumtrodden standing stones, one of the last things the medieval pilgrims would see on the landscape before reaching their destination.

In the last episode Sandy arrives at the Royal Burgh of Whithorn and the first ever recorded Christian church in Scotland, ‘The Shining White Church’, founded by St Ninian in 397 AD, and the Priory, destination of many royal pilgrims coming to the tomb of St Ninian. Sandy then walks to the beach and Cave to join this year’s Galloway Pilgrimage. In an interview, Bishop McGee of the Diocese of the Argyll and the Isles explains the significance of pilgrimage and its twin purpose of journey and sharing with others.

Sandy finishes his journey at the Isle of Whithorn where St Ninian was reputed to have landed – the end of the Whithorn Way but in many ways the start of the story.



Rather confusingly the programmes are not dated and the titles reflect the other subjects they cover. Visit www.itv.com/border, click on Border Life at the top and look for these episodes:
1st local place names,
2nd getting on their bikes,
3rd charity homing dogs,
4th extreme sport making a splash.

Spotlight on Education

South Ayrshire Schools

In this edition we hear from Queen Margaret Academy and St Patrick's and St Ninian's Primary Schools on the theme of community

Queen Margaret Academy, Ayr

The focus this Christmas is in community and caring



At Queen Margaret Academy one of our values is community and we know that the strength of this school is our pupils, our parents and carers, our parishes, and our wider community. It is this value of community that inspired us to launch our first ever Christmas Appeal here at Queen Margaret Academy in 2020. Our rationale was a Christmas wish – that we could all come together to help **all** our families celebrate Christmas. We know Christmas can be a financially challenging time of year and in the midst of Covid, furlough schemes and lockdowns we knew Christmas could have been a difficult time for many. Our Christmas Appeal therefore asked our community to come together, donating items to provide some of our families with some festive foods for Christmas day. The hope of this appeal was that everyone in our school community could celebrate and share Christmas dinner together in their own families.

The response to the appeal was tremendous and we cannot begin to express how grateful we are to all those who contributed. All of the parcels were received extremely well and went a long way to help our families. The young people of Queen Margaret Academy played an integral role in the preparation and organisation of these festive packs. The impact they have had on the running of this project has been tremendous and we would go as far to say that without their involvement we simply could not have done it. We know that every family within our school community will require support in some way, shape or form over the years and it is our mission to make sure that we operate as a community in order to be able to extend that support to each other.



We have now run the appeal for two years and last year 54 parcels were made up for our families. Through our community fund we were also able to provide gifts for the pupils and their siblings in the household ensuring that every child in the family had a gift on Christmas morning. In total 203 people, mums, dad, brothers and sisters, were supported last Christmas through one reason and one reason only – the incredible ethos of Queen Margaret Academy and the care and compassion all our families and partners have for each other.

Over 15% of our families in Queen Margaret live in the most deprived areas across South Ayrshire, with a number experiencing hardship through loss of employment and the cost of living crisis. This year our Community Christmas Appeal continues to aim to provide our most vulnerable families, if they wish, with festive foods and items to help celebrate Christmas day. If you are able to support in any way possible financial, or through donating some of the listed items this would be hugely appreciated. Please be assured that any and all donations will be gratefully received. If you are able to support this cause can you please contact Queen Margaret Academy by emailing concetta.oware@south-ayrshire.gov.uk.



Spotlight on Education

St Ninian's Primary School, Prestwick
commitment to prayer and action



This year, in line with our school values and our excitement at becoming a Laudato Si' school, St Ninian's primary has made a renewed commitment to prayer and action. P7 have been leading this following a visit to St Quivox parish for a fantastic and inspiring retreat led by Father Latham, focusing on this commitment.

In response to many of our families affected by cancer we have spent time in our classes and assemblies creating prayers and coming together to pray for special intentions. We asked God for the courage to make a difference and we considered



Staff and children joined parishioners of St Quivox to celebrate the feast of their patron, St Ninian.

actions which would make this difference. Supported by Queen Margaret Academy and St Quivox parish we held a fundraiser and raised a staggering £5,700 for the Beatson Institute for Cancer Research, where some of our school community are being treated for cancer.

Looking towards Christmas, our prayers will focus on those less fortunate and our actions will centre around providing a better Christmas for families as we prepare to launch our toy appeal.

St Patrick's Primary School, Troon *inspired to shine*



At St Patrick's Primary School, our pupils and staff are inspired to shine in all they say, in all they do and in all that they are. The Gospel values and our school values of Achievement, Community, Faith, Inclusion and Respect underpin all that we do. We are so very fortunate to have such a supportive school and parish community where our wonderful pupils can thrive.

On 13th October we celebrated our Harvest of the Sea Mass which was led by our Primary 6 Pope Francis Faith Award pupils. We had a beautiful Mass with Canon Archie Brown where we thanked God for his Creation and for all of the hard work that fishermen around the world do on a daily basis to provide food for us all. We also gave thanks to the work of Stella Maris and the Fisherman's Mission in Troon who provide shelter and food for the fishermen. During Mass, our Primary 6 pupils were enrolled for the Pope Francis Faith Award during the Rite of Presentation. As part of their wider learning about The Mission,



Primary 6 visited Troon Lifeboat Station and The Fisherman's Mission where they learned about the vital services they provide. Many thanks again to Coxswain Millar, Ms Daly and Mrs Burtson for supporting our pupils, and to all parents/carers for donating food items and toiletries for the Mission. Thank you to Canon Archie Brown and our parish community for your ongoing support and prayers.

On 27th October we had a wonderful celebration for the 25th Anniversary of our current school building. The day started with a Mass of Thanksgiving followed by a reception in the school for invited guests and the school/parish community. It was so lovely to see former pupils and staff, share memories and to look at the exhibition of photographs from the past 25 years. In the afternoon our pupils enjoyed a fun-filled afternoon with a children's entertainer and ice-cream treats. A sincere thank you to Canon Archie Brown and to everyone who was involved to make the day a great success.

St Margaret's Parish 200th Anniversary

St Margaret's parish community in Ayr celebrated the 200th anniversary of its foundation in 1822. Father David Borland reports on a joyful occasion in the history of the parish community.

At the Mass of celebration, Father David remarked in his homily that, since the arrival in the town of the Rev William Thomson on Wednesday, October 16th 1822 to be the first resident parish priest, there had been a Catholic priest serving the people of Ayr and its surrounds every day since. "We often hear both priests and people nowadays," said Father David, "say that priests have an awful lot to do. But I would point out that Rev Thomson, in his first few years of ministry here in Ayrshire, served the needs of all the Catholics in Ayr, Prestwick, Troon, Irvine, Kilwinning, Stevenston, Saltcoats, Ardrossan, Kilmarnock, Dalmellington, Maybole, Girvan and even Ballantrae – and he did so on horseback! So if you ever hear me say again that I'm busy with three parishes – you have my permission to correct me!"



After the homily the recently gifted Relic of St Margaret of Scotland was processed into the Cathedral and installed in its place of honour in the Chapel where it now resides for the veneration of the Faithful.



The Relic of St Margaret of Scotland

The choir, accompanied by Mr David Robinson on the organ and directed by Mrs Pat Doogan, led the liturgy and congregational singing beautifully, adding to the great heritage of prayer and sacred music which have resonated around the walls of St Margaret's Church for 195 years – the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the opening of the church building will take place in 2027.



At the reception in the Cathedral hall after Mass many memories were shared and new ones were made, and of course the traditional cake was cut and eaten – a fitting end to a wonderful celebration.



a wonderful celebration



Relic of Saint Margaret of Scotland

On Thursday October 13th 2022 Father David travelled through to Edinburgh to receive a Relic of Saint Margaret of Scotland from Archbishop Leo Cushley, the Archbishop of Saint Andrews and Edinburgh. The relic, part of Saint Margaret's scapular bone, is housed in a gold coloured reliquary and is now permanently displayed in St Margaret's Cathedral.

In 2019 the Archbishop had the more substantial Relic, housed in Saint Margaret's Church, Dunfermline, removed for cleaning and testing at Glasgow University. During this process some smaller fragments became detached from the scapular bone and it is one of these fragments that



We do not worship the relics of the saints, but we honour them that that we may adore Him whose saints they are.

St Jerome



Archbishop Cushley offered to Saint Margaret's Cathedral, an offer Father David readily accepted on behalf of the Diocese and Saint Margaret's parish community in Ayr.

Since this year Saint Margaret's parish is celebrating the 200th anniversary of its foundation, it is more than fitting, in fact Father David thinks it is providential, that the Relic was received into, and installed, in St Margaret's Cathedral at the Mass of our national Patron Saint's Feast. Visitors to the Cathedral are able to venerate the Relic of Saint Margaret of Scotland.



The Relic was borne in procession into the Cathedral by members of the St Vincent de Paul Society





Relics of St Bernadette come to Carfin

Father Gerald Donnelly reflects on the visit to Carfin Grotto of the relics of St Bernadette which provided a wonderful week of celebration for the country and a special day of for the whole diocese.

Unlike the visit of the relics of St Therese of Lisieux a few years ago, which travelled around the Dioceses of Scotland, the relics of St Bernadette Soubirous remained at Carfin Grotto in Lanarkshire for the week 24th to 30th September as part of their tour throughout England, Scotland and Wales. The grotto was celebrating its own centenary and as part of the celebration was awarded the title of Scotland's principal Marian Shrine.

The week began with the National Pilgrimage on the Sunday 25th September which was attended by over 5,000

pilgrims and as the relics were not going to Ireland the Archbishop Martin of Armagh also attended the National Pilgrimage on the Sunday. The rest of the week was allocated to the various dioceses. Tuesday 27th September was Galloway's day which we shared with the Archdiocese of Glasgow.

A large number of parishioners from all over the diocese attended with a particularly good attendance from the primary and secondary schools. The day centred on the Mass at 1 pm. We were blessed by kind weather and so the Mass was outside at the grotto which is a representation of the grotto at Lourdes. A large crowd was present at the Mass and a number of priests were able to concelebrate. Father William McFadden, the principal celebrant, preached linking the veneration of relics as part of the living tradition of the Church, a tradition in the here and



Photographs copyright of Paul McSherry



now, not looking to the past. Father McFadden also urged all the young people present not to make the day a ‘one off’ experience of faith but to see it as beginning of engagement of practising the faith. The primary school children also engaged in discovering more about the grotto and about the various saints that are honoured in there. There was time for prayer and an opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The whole week, and Galloway’s day especially, was a tremendous success. The organisation for the week at the grotto and in the diocese ensured everyone benefitted from the experience.



After an incredible first day we were back on the Tuesday to join with the Archdiocese of Glasgow for a special liturgy programme including Mass, Sacrament of the Sick and Reconciliation, Water Liturgy with Lourdes water and Torchlight Rosary procession. We were delighted with the attendance of around 200 children and young people representing the diocese from all our schools, they had a fantastic experience learning all about Carfin and Lourdes with activities prepared by the Youth Ministry Office. They joined in the procession before Mass proudly displaying their school banners alongside the Diocesan Lourdes banners. After they headed back to Galloway we had a time to reflect before evening Mass with Principal celebrant the late Archbishop Mario Conti, this was followed by the most spectacular torchlight rosary procession, I carried the Diocesan banner which was an honour and the memories of the week will last a lifetime.

The week of the Relics Tour was an incredible experience; you really felt you were part of something very special and lucky to have been involved in this historical event for Scottish Catholics.

“An incredible experience”

Suzy Hollywood, President of the Galloway Lourdes Hospitalité, looks back on a memorable few days



Having been so moved by our Diocesan pilgrimage to Carfin in June this year I had a strong desire to be involved in the week of the Relics Tour. I spent a few evenings with the team at Carfin in preparation for the week, but nothing would prepare me for what I experienced.



On the evening of the Relics’ arrival, I travelled through with friends to Carfin to spend some personal time in the presence of the relics of St Bernadette; this was extremely moving and worthwhile as it was so peaceful before the busyness of the week ahead.

The following day was the national pilgrimage where thousands of people joined to witness history when the Bishops of Scotland declared Carfin Grotto, Scotland’s Marian Shrine. Agnes Clark and I were part of the stewarding team, the only people outwith Motherwell diocese who stewarded. We were flying the flag for Galloway and was privileged to be involved in carrying the processional banner for the relics tour at the first torchlight procession of the week.



St Bernadette, pray for us

National Pilgrimage to the Holy Land is Cancelled

Father David Borland with sad news about the eagerly anticipated national pilgrimage

I had hoped by this issue of the Galloway Diocesan News to be demanding from the editor a full-page advertisement for the forthcoming Scottish National Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, but unfortunately I am not in a position to do that.

Having received quotes from different Tour Operators, the Bishops of Scotland have decided that the cost for the proposed Scottish National Pilgrimage to the Holy Land is simply too high and they have therefore made the sad decision to cancel the Pilgrimage.

Due to increased fuel costs and the very low Sterling/US Dollar exchange rate (all prices are quoted in US dollars in the Holy Land) the cost of the proposed pilgrimage was going to be £2,500 for someone sharing a room with another pilgrim, and over £3,000 for a pilgrim in a single room. While the bishops recognise that some people would be able to bear that cost, they are also aware that most people could not, and we would therefore travel with a smaller group who would not be representative of the Catholic population as a whole.

I realise that many of you will be disappointed at this outcome; a number of you have been in touch with me expressing your interest in the Scottish National Pilgrimage, but the bishops have made the right decision under the circumstances.

I am currently looking at different options to travel to the Holy Land on a lower budget and with a smaller group of people using lower rated hotels. This would involve purchasing flights separately from the ground package in the Holy Land – which means we would travel without the protection of an ABTA bonding. Therefore every pilgrim would have to purchase appropriate travel insurance which covers every eventuality and not just the usual health and repatriation cover. It is hoped this trip could take place October 16th – 23rd 2023.

If you think you might be interested in this smaller group travelling to the Holy Land please email david.borland@gallowaydiocese.org.uk.

In the meantime please keep praying for our Christian sisters and brothers in the Holy Land whose lives are extremely difficult just now.



Lourdes Pilgrimage 2023



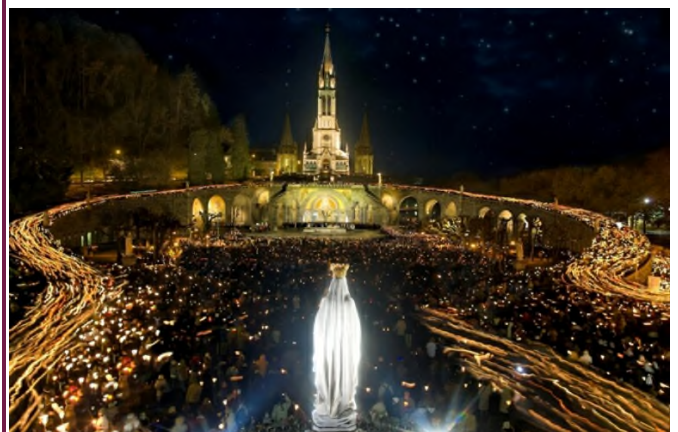
Suzy Hollywood, President of Galloway Lourdes Hospitalité, with good news for pilgrims

Finally, after four years of waiting, our pilgrimage to Lourdes will return in July 2023. We will be flying from Prestwick to Lourdes on Monday 3rd of July returning on Monday 10th of July. This year we will have a change of accommodation; we will be staying full board in the 4 star Hotel Eliseo, costing £949.00 each based on two people sharing.

Due to Covid our medical team is reduced, affecting our ability to operate a ward in the welcome centre. Therefore we will only be able to take low level care assisted pilgrims within the hotel accommodation. Those who fall into the category of low level care, and are independently mobile around their own homes, either with or without aids, will have to complete medical forms from our medical team prior to booking and travel. To find out more please contact our Chief Nurse Janie Agnew, email janieagnew@hotmail.com or phone 07739 399222.

If you'd like to come to Lourdes to be a volunteer it's not too late; please contact the President Suzy Hollywood on GLHPresident@aol.com for more information.

Bookings can be made via our Travel Agent, Joe Walsh Tours. Email www.joewalshstours.co.uk. Look out for posters and further details which will arrive in parishes very soon.



Your Galloway Diocese News

At the Galloway News we want to hear from you, the priests and parishioners of the diocese. You can send items to the editor at any time or look out for the 'email hotline' and 'reply' to the reminder email:

Send your contributions before 18th February 2023 for inclusion in the Lent edition to:

**Galloway Diocese News, Candida Casa,
8 Corsehill Road, Ayr, KA7 2ST.**

Email: gdnews@gallowaydiocese.org.uk

RC Diocese of Galloway, charity number SC010576

Diocese of Galloway Youth Ministry

Now recruiting ...



Youth for Lourdes

The diocesan youth for Lourdes team have begun their preparation for the pilgrimage to Lourdes taking place from 3rd to 10th July 2023. A great first meeting took place in St John's Parish Hall, Cumnock, recently and the group were full of ideas on how to raise funds towards the £650 costs, as well as getting to know more about Lourdes, the diocesan Lourdes family and of course one another.

Over Christmas and New Year the members will concentrate on their fund raising so watch out for them at the back of their parishes or in the school halls providing lots of Christmas cheer. Perhaps you will stop and buy some of the goodies on sale.

Our next meeting will be back in Cumnock on Sunday 29th January 2023 from 3 pm till 6 pm. It is not too late to join and we hope some more young people aged from S4 upwards will come along then. All welcome.



YfL General

Email us to get the link to our Registration Form: youthforlourdes@gallowaydiocese.org.uk

THE YOUTH MINISTRY OFFICE
Mary arose and went with haste
WYD LISBON 2023
NOW RECRUITING
A CELEBRATION OF WORLD YOUTH DAY 2023
WHEN: 26th July-9th August 2023
WHERE: Lisbon, Portugal
COST: approx. £ 950
WITH YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ACROSS THE DIOCESE/COUNTRY/WORLD.
JOIN US TO REFLECT, SUPPORT AND PRAY TOGETHER.
YOUNG PEOPLE FROM AGED 16-25 YEARS WELCOME.

World Youth Day 2023

The diocesan World Youth Day group has begun its preparations for Lisbon 2023. Following a meeting in St Margaret's Cathedral Hall in Ayr, the group has set itself to continue to recruit across the diocese for any young person aged from S4 up to aged 35 to join the group and travel with them to participate in this marvellous festival of faith for young people united with the Holy Father, Pope Francis – who joined us at the meeting in the shape of a cardboard cut-out!

We invite those interested to email the Youth Ministry Office or click the link to our Registration Form for more information and to join us in St Margaret's Hall on Sunday 15th January 2023 from 6 pm till 8 pm. All welcome.



WYD General



Diocese of Galloway Youth Ministry Office (YMO)
Director: Father Jim Hayes

Office Contact:
St Teresa's, Glasgow Street,
Dumfries. DG2 9DE.
Tel: 01387 252603



Find us on Facebook
Galloway Youth Ministry Office

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Face to Face with Whithorn's Past

By Julia Muir Watt, Development Manager of the Whithorn Trust



Two mediaeval inhabitants of Whithorn have achieved international fame 700 years after their death, when their faces were reconstructed by scientists,

Recently, two mediaeval inhabitants of Whithorn achieved international fame around 700 years after their death. At the end of September 2022, the faces of these two people, reconstructed by scientists, were beamed around the world, with scientific journals and popular newspapers picking up the story as far afield as the Smithsonian in Washington DC, and in several languages, including Russian.

The project to reconstruct the faces of these individuals began as part of a revisiting of Whithorn's archaeological archive, known as "Cold Case Whithorn" led by Dr Adrian Maldonado, National Museums Scotland, which has meant that 52,000 items deriving from Whithorn's excavation have been re-housed and re-examined and, in some cases, studied in much greater depth. The scientific project was aimed at testing the dates we have always accepted for Whithorn. This includes radiocarbon dating of some human remains, which depends on finding suitable samples – not always achievable, especially with the very earliest burials. The Trust has also been asking questions about people's origins and diet applying stable isotope analysis, under the leadership of Dr Shirley Curtis Summers (University of Bradford), and continues to wait for results from ancient DNA analysis by the Crick Institute, University of Cambridge.



Sk8 – completed reconstruction of the priest

Facial reconstruction was a further step in getting to know our mediaeval ancestors and the Trust commissioned cranio-facial anthropologist, Dr Chris Rynn, formerly director of the MSc programme at the University of Dundee. The process is in part science and in part art: there are scientific ways of



Sk1049 – showing the layers from the front and the same subject, now revealed as a young woman

determining from very precise measurements of the skull what the eyebrows might have looked like, what depth the eyes were, even the size of the nose, and of course we can see evidence of dental health, though there are other parts of the face that we have to imagine. In the past, this process has involved careful clay modelling and application of muscle, fat and skin layers. Today, the process is carried out digitally, and Dr Rynn uses a "haptic" robotic arm attached to his computer, which, amazingly, enables him to "feel" the solidity of the skull as he works at its reconstruction. As he says, his process is scientific enough for it to be accepted in the courts, where his forensic reconstructions are regularly used.

Two individuals, radically different from each other, were selected for reconstruction and a grand "reveal" was held at the Wigtown Book Festival in September. They came from different areas of Whithorn Priory: one, known as

Sk8, was buried close to the high altar and may therefore have held a high position in the Church, while the second, Sk 1049, was buried in the lay cemetery. Archaeologists had already documented some basic information about them at the time of excavation, such as age, gender, and any pathologies



which may have been evident. Dr Rynn began with these basic facts and a 3D scan of each skull, which were created at the University of Bradford by Dr Adrian Evans. The Whithorn Trust had selected them, after advice on which individuals would be suitable for scanning, but also because each seemed to have an interesting story; indeed, Dr Rynn said that they were, respectively, the most asymmetrical and the most symmetrical skulls he had ever worked upon. Sk1049 was a young woman, only 21 or 22 years old when she died and was found buried on a bed of shells, while Sk8 was a middle aged man who had a cleft palate. The interesting fact that a man with a congenital condition had ascended high in the Church, was possibly a high ranking priest and yet had, in life, a speech defect gave us an interesting perspective on the position of disabled people in the Middle Ages. The software programme even struggled to recognise the outline of an atypical face and required special work by Dr Rynn. He later offered some interesting

SPRED Galloway

As the colours around us change from luscious greens, to bursts of crimson, chestnut, and gold, this hymn is in our minds...

*'Autumn days when the grass is jewelled
And the silk inside a chestnut shell.
Jet planes meeting in the air to be refuelled.
All these things I love so well
So I mustn't forget, no, I mustn't forget.
To say a great big Thank You
I mustn't forget...'*

The well known hymn by Kevin Mayhew, goes on to draw images of frosty moons, crunchy leaves, the smell of baking apple pies. All the familiar things that we often forget to notice, forget to give thanks for. Apart from serving as a good reminder to give thanks in the world around us, it is also a reminder to reflect on what gives us Joy.

We try to focus a lot on Joy in SPRED. It is a great way to pray – Jesus Others and then Yourself. Inspired by this, we have created a Tree of Joy. In September we had a coffee morning and we were delighted to welcome so many Friends, Faith Friends and visitors. Everyone who was there was invited to fill out a leaf and put it on our Tree of Joy. Unlike the trees outside which are losing their leaves, our Tree of Joy is slowly becoming covered. If you would like to help us cover our tree, please let us know 'What gives you Joy?'

One of our dedicated Friend members, Billy, wanted to share with you some of the Joy he has at SPRED Galloway.



Billy's story

"I'm registered partially blind. I'm also epileptic, and I have additional support needs. I've been a member of SPRED since I was sixteen and in S5 at Queen Margaret Academy. My school days were pretty stressful, particularly during exams. But SPRED really helped me get through them.

I really enjoy the sessions, and spending time with "the troops" SPRED helps me get through anything stressful, for example bad days etc. etc.

Back in September 2012, I took a violent epileptic fit which resulted in a eight week's stay in the Queen Elizabeth university hospital where I had five major brain ops to replace the shunt in my head. While in hospital, the then director, Sister Kathleen, visited me, passing on the good wishes from all my friends."



Face to Face with Whithorn's Past – continued

comments on our association of beauty with symmetry: in fact, from a biological point of view, the human face develops in stages, left and right, "like walking" and any childhood trauma, such as lack of food or even stress and anxiety, can cause asymmetries to develop.

Because the individuals were unknown and, given that 2022 was Scotland's Year of Stories, the Trust then invited the English Department at the Douglas Ewart High School, to imagine the lives of these people in monologues which would be voiced to animations of their faces. Graeme Davies, Head of English, worked with Urbancroft Films, to get the young people to imagine themselves inside the minds of people living 700 years ago. Two winners were selected from the entries by Barbara Henderson who writes historical fiction for young people. An adult competition ran

simultaneously for the wider public. Urbancroft films then had the testing job of setting the words, spoken by actors, to films of the faces. Eloise Kitson and Duncan Adams were the winners of the young people's competition, imagining a tragic love affair for Sk 1049, ending in her death at sea, while Sk 8 found security and welcome at Whithorn Priory, despite his facial disfigurement. Heidi Hunt, who won the adult category, reimagined a real event of 1453, when a French ship was caught in a storm and those on board vowed a pilgrimage to St Ninian's shrine if they were saved.

These films were released at Wigtown Book Festival to a large audience in Wigtown Parish Church. The audience was silent and clearly moved by the winning monologues. These will now be on show at the Whithorn Trust visitor centre. When the DNA results are

returned from Cambridge University, the hair and eye colour may be adapted on the digital reconstructions. Dr Rynn is now at work on Sk1 – Bishop Henry of Whithorn, who was found holding the famed Whithorn Crozier.

We do not know what these mediaeval people would have made of their unexpected fame in the strange digital world of the 21st Century, but we do hope that the interest, the fascination with their story, and the care and compassion with which they have been treated would have been welcome.

The project was the result of collaboration between many partners – the Whithorn Trust, National Museums Scotland, the University of Bradford, the Crick Institute University of Cambridge, Dr Chris Rynn, Urbancroft Films and the Douglas Ewart High School.



A View from Westminster

In an article which she agrees may seem 'too political' Dr Philippa Whitford, MP, says it simply isn't possible to gloss over the chaos of what has been happening and the real harm that will do to ordinary people in our communities.

Well, what can I say about the last few months of chaos at Westminster that you don't already know? Nothing apart from the frustration of watching it unfold from a ring-side seat with absolutely no ability to stop it.

Despite the cost-of-living and energy crises emerging since the spring, the UK Government was in a state of paralysis from the vote-of-no-confidence in Boris Johnson in June, through the resignations of over 50 ministers, the long drawn out campaign for the Tory leadership and the brief but disastrous premiership of Liz Truss. Her policies, announced in the mini-budget, crashed the pound, threatened pension funds and sent mortgage costs soaring, thus exacerbating the cost-of-living crisis even further and adding home owners to those wondering how they would get through the coming winter. The proposals for tax cuts for the wealthiest and a return to unlimited bonuses for city bankers contrasted with the threat of benefit cuts to those on the lowest incomes if they don't find better jobs and were the most blatant example of 'taking from the poor to give to the rich' I have seen in my 7½ years at Westminster.

While Rishi Sunak no doubt appears to be a steadier hand than his immediate predecessor, the UK government has already signalled budget cuts to public services. The failed austerity experiment of the last decade left public services, such as Health and Social Care, in a vulnerable state when they had to face the enormous challenges of the pandemic. As well as the personal misery inflicted on individuals and families, austerity simply does not work. While it may initially make the treasury balance sheet look better, in the medium term it takes spending power out of local economies, kills local businesses and high streets, and eventually reduces the tax take of the government. The austerity policy, therefore, becomes a self-defeating downward spiral of economic decline.

In contrast, the idea behind a 'Wellbeing Economy' is to invest in every citizen so they reach their full potential and recognise that our society is made up of individuals, families and communities and the greater the wellbeing of each member of society the greater the wellbeing of the whole.

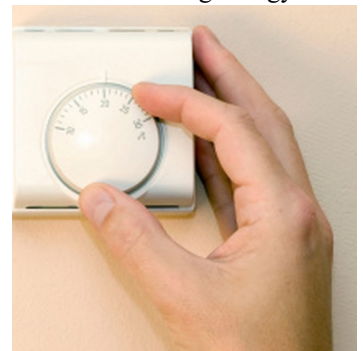


Many people are not aware that the Scottish Government was one of the founders of the Wellbeing Economy Governments Group in 2018, with Iceland and New Zealand. Scottish academics also work with others internationally, through the Wellbeing Alliance, to research policies which can deliver the biggest improvement in the quality of life for their residents through a focus on physical and mental health

along with social, economic and environmental wellbeing. We all know we need to be doing things very differently by the end of this decade if we are not going to leave our children and grandchildren with a burning planet to deal with. Ironically the disruption of the Covid pandemic has brought the opportunity to rethink and choose not to 'build back', but to build forward towards a fairer and more sustainable economy.

Scotland already has many policies like the Baby Box, free tuition and free personal care that invest in the personal wellbeing and dignity of every citizen. There is, however, more to do in terms of tackling poverty and legislating for fair pay, but unfortunately powers over the economy and employment rights currently reside at Westminster and the Mini-Budget of Liz Truss demonstrated just how diametrically opposed the UK government is to such a wellbeing approach.

After taking no action all summer on soaring energy bills talk of an energy 'cap', and claims that a 'typical family will not pay more than £2,500 a year' are misleading. The £2,500 figure is simply the average cost for a household but does not relate to the family living there in any way. 'Typical' families live in all sorts of houses and particularly low income families are more likely to live in poorly insulated houses or be forced to use more expensive pre-payment meters. The key issue is not the genuine cost of producing energy in the UK but that the international price for gas rose after the Russian invasion of Ukraine and, therefore, the oil and gas companies can sell fossil fuels from Scottish and UK waters at a huge price on the global market. In addition, the international price of gas is used to set electricity prices despite the fact that only a tiny amount of the electricity used in Scotland is generated from gas-fired power stations, while renewable electricity costs a fraction of fossil fuels. The situation here is particularly anomalous, as Scotland produces over 2/3 of the UK's gas and over 1/3 of its green electricity, yet Scottish customers pay higher rates than the UK average. Soaring energy prices are a central component of inflation and the current cost-of-living crisis and, along with a surge in the price of basic foodstuffs will truly drive many low income families and pensioners into the position of making that clichéd choice between 'eating or heating'. This is worst for the poorest households and is



Continued on next page

Doctor Philippa Whitford is a parishioner of Our Lady of the Assumption and St Meddan in Troon. She is the MP for Central Ayrshire and the SNP Westminster Spokesperson on Europe. In these articles she hopes to convey how her faith informs and impacts her politics. The views expressed in these articles are those of the author.

Safeguarding In Galloway Diocese

Tony Fisher has been appointed to the post of Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

Tony will be based in the Diocesan Office in Ayr on a part time basis and you can contact him on 01292 266750 / 07542 947989 or by email on eguarding.adviser@gallowaydiocese.org.uk.



As we reported in the St Ninian edition, our previous Diocesan Safe Guarding Adviser, Helena Rameckers, been appointed as the Head of Safeguarding Training with the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Standards and we wish her well in her new role. Tony Fisher took over as DSA for the Diocese of Galloway on 19th September 2022.

Tony started work as a Kitchen Domestic in a residential care home on Arran in 1985, so he brings with him over 37 years experience in Social Services in a local authority, education and third sector environment. He has been based in Ayrshire, Glasgow and Dumfries and Galloway and he qualified as a social worker in 2016. Tony has worked in adult and children's services and was most recently employed, through the pandemic, as Senior Manager for Care at Home and Assistive Technology in East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership.

Tony left his role in service management for a spell as a Classroom Assistant, where he was based at two North

Ayrshire Secondary Schools, and whilst he really enjoyed the direct work with the young people, he was immediately interested in the DSA post when it was advertised in the Church Bulletin and said he is delighted to have secured the role on a permanent basis.

Tony is very much a local, born and bred in Saltcoats where he continues to have a live faith connection as a parishioner of St Mary's Star of the Sea where he was one of the parish Safeguarding Coordinators for four years. He has been a member of the Saint Vincent De Paul Conference for over ten years and will continue his membership of the SVDP as his role as DSA develops.

He has been making his way around the diocese to introduce himself and to get to know all of the parish priests and parish Safeguarding Coordinators and he was in post in time to attend this year's annual Safeguarding Conference in Glasgow on 1st October.

It was confirmed at the Conference that Bishop Joseph Toal will be taking his leave as Lead for Safeguarding and he has passed that responsibility on to Bishop Brian McGee who is Bishop for Argyll and the Isles. We thank Bishop Toal for all of his dedication and leadership and we wish Bishop McGee all the very best in his new role and we look forward to working with him in the future.

Westminster – Continued

driving local authorities to consider how to set up 'warm banks' – places such as libraries where people can keep warm during the day. Is it not shocking that we might expect people to spend the day in community shelters, as in times of a local disaster, as they cannot survive in their own homes this winter?

In addition, at exactly the same time that there is growing demand for support from food banks, fewer people can afford to donate to them.

The last two Christmases have been difficult for everyone, due to the impact of the pandemic, but this year will be no less so as many people will be hit by doubling energy costs, rising mortgage rates and soaring inflation on basic foods. Just as individuals and communities rallied round to support their neighbours during the pandemic, we need to try to do the same to help get everyone through this winter.

More government action is required at Westminster, which holds all the powers over energy, but all of us need to do what we can. If we can afford it, we need to increase our donations to keep local food banks and community groups functioning; maybe by cutting back on the over-the-top



materialism that usually dominates Christmas. If money is tight, we may still be able to help in other ways, particularly by donating that most valuable commodity – our time. Volunteering with local community support projects, or just helping an elderly neighbour, can all make a difference.

This is the third Christmas in a row that will not be dominated by the usual razzmatazz, frenetic shopping and glittering parties, but maybe that will help all of us remember the real meaning of Christmas, and rediscover its greatest pleasure – giving to others.



Praying with The Saints

Pope Saint John XXIII

Father Martin Chambers reflects on the life of the pope who convened the Second Vatican Council and therefore changed the course of the Church.

In October this year we celebrated the 60th anniversary of the start of the Second Vatican Council, a Council which has had a tremendous effect on all our lives within the Church. To mark this anniversary we organised in our Kilmarnock parishes a series of Adult Education talks to look into the effect of Vatican II in our Church. Of course, the pope who convened the Council was Pope Saint John XXIII who was canonized in 2014. It was while I was researching for these parish talks that I realised what a big effect ‘the smiling pope’ had had on my own life. I remember as a teenager finding this pope’s prayerful diary ‘Journal of a Soul’ on my parents’ bookshelf and beginning to read it. Here was a prayerful man who had worked for the Church for 76 years before becoming pope and, at that late stage in his life, wanted to share the wisdom of his prayer life and wanted to renew the life of the Church. Of course, the Council that Saint John XXIII convened changed the course of the Church in terms of a vision for the Church, in terms of liturgy and in terms of the way the Church relates to the world. Yet behind all of this was a man of prayer who invited you and me to “*throw open the windows of the Church.*” In doing so, he calls on each one of us to renew our own prayer lives and, through the liturgy and mission of the Church, come close to the Jesus Christ who calls on us all to be modern-day disciples.

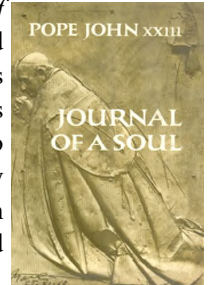
The Life of Saint John XXIII

As I say, even as a child, I remember being fascinated by the life of Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli. In some ways his life was ordinary. He was born into a large family that lived in Bergamo, near the city of Milan and was ordained at the early age of 22. Yet as a priest, his life became ever more extraordinary with service in a number of key Church posts: Papal Nuncio in France; delegate to Bulgaria; delegate to Greece; and then delegate to Turkey. And it was in 1953 that Pope Pius XII made Roncalli a Cardinal Archbishop of Venice. Then in 1958, at the age of 76, Cardinal Roncalli was elected as Pope. Many of course expected him to be a caretaker pope because of his age but he surprised many in convening the Second Vatican Council which, of course, changed the course of the Church in modern times.



Journal of A Soul

It was this book called the ‘*Journal of a Soul*’ that first led me to understand the Pope John as a prayerful man. This collection of writings charts Roncalli’s goals and his efforts as a young man to ‘*grow in holiness*’ but it also has many prayerful reflections from after his election as pope. Here are three quotes that I picked from the book:



- ◇ *Prayer is the raising of the mind to God. We must always remember this. The actual words matter less.*
- ◇ *When God created the shadows, it was to better emphasise the light.*
- ◇ *O Lord, do not let us turn into ‘broken cisterns’ that can hold no water ... do not let us be so blinded by the enjoyment of the good things of the earth that our hearts become insensible to the cry of the poor, of the sick and of our brothers and sisters who lack the necessary to eat.*

You can find this ‘Journal of a soul’ in any bookshop and I would encourage you to do so but even these three quotes inspire me and all of us to view prayer as a conversation and a raising of our hearts to God. Through prayer, says Saint John XXIII, we are called to let God into the daily events of our lives and to see that, in each moment of our days, God is shining a light where we think there is only darkness.

What a gift in prayer Saint John XXIII has left us.

The Prayer of Vatican II

Of course, Saint John XXIII is most famous for convening the Second Vatican Council and, while researching for our recent parish talks, I realised how much spirituality there is in the Council documents themselves and in the vision of the Church that it put forward. The very fact that liturgies were now able to be celebrated in a person’s mother tongue meant that the prayer of the Mass and Sacraments was made more accessible to everyone. That is also true of the Scripture readings that were now proclaimed in each person’s own language. In preparing for these parish talks, I saw that the fact that we were able to celebrate in our own tongue was a call to each person to participate more fully, to pray more deeply.

Saint John XXIII made many public pronouncements at the time of the Council. Some of his sayings allow us to delve deeply into this Saint’s own prayer life. As well as concentrating on what is happening within the community of the Church, He always called on the Church to turn its gaze outwards to the needs of the world.

Turn to next page



The Teaching of Pope Francis

by Father William McFadden

Throughout his pontificate Pope Francis has continually referred to the importance of the Second Vatican Council

The Second Vatican Council remains the most significant event in the recent history of the Catholic Church, and throughout his pontificate Pope Francis has continually referred to its importance. On the 60th anniversary of the opening of the Council on October 11th, he preached a homily once again stressing the fundamental place the documents of the Council must have in our understanding of Church. However, he also highlighted that unfortunately individuals and groups have preferred to use the Council to foster division rather than be guided by its direction for unity.

He stated boldly: “How often, in the wake of the Council, did Christians prefer to choose sides in the Church, not realising that they were breaking their mother’s heart! How many times did they prefer to cheer on their own party rather than being servants of all? To be progressive or conservative rather than being brothers and sisters?”

Pope Francis draws attention to the fact that putting too much stress on either being “guardians of the truth” or “pioneers of innovation” has led to a distortion of the teachings: “Let us be careful: Both the ‘progressivism’ that lines up behind the world and the ‘traditionalism’ that longs for a bygone world are not evidence of love, but of infidelity.” The pope is calling for an authentic interpretation of the Council that is neither influenced by an insular progressive belief that totally rejects the values of the past, nor a self-styled traditionalist dogma that automatically rejects any notion that God might be challenging us to change and growth in the present. As always, Pope Francis steers a balanced course uniting and bringing together what others might use to pull apart. He recognises that there is polarisation in the Church but that such a state of affairs is a regretful affliction.

In accentuating the way in which the Council teachings



The Second Vatican Council which opened in Rome on 11th October 1962

have moulded the Church over the past 60 years, and which must continue to do so, he brings out the twin essentials of evangelisation and a preferential option for the poor. He said: “The church is meant to be, as Pope John put it, ‘the church of all, and particularly the church of the poor.’ In words which sound like an appeal from his heart, he adds: “A church in love with Jesus has no time for quarrels, gossip and disputes...May God free us from being critical and intolerant, harsh and angry!”

For Pope Francis, the Council must be the standard by which we judge ourselves

as Church today. He encourages all people to be authentically faithful to the Council, which he said, “rediscovered the living river of Tradition without remaining mired in traditions”, and he urges us to leave behind “nostalgia for the past, regret at the passing of former influence, and attachment to power.” His strong words draw attention to the pastoral nature of the Council documents, and to their continuing guidance for constant reform and renewal.

Finally, in reference to this Mass commemorating the 60th anniversary of the opening of Vatican II, the Dicastery for Evangelisation, which is the Vatican department given the task of organising the “Pilgrims of Hope” Jubilee which we will celebrate in 2025, issued a statement saying that this celebration would “formally begin the year of preparation for the Jubilee of 2025,” and that with this “the preparation for the Jubilee of 2025 will begin to take concrete shape, with the year 2023 dedicated to the teaching of the Council.”

The documents and the teaching of Vatican II remain central to who we are as Church, and Pope Francis never fails to remind us that we must continually return to them as the fundamental source of Church teaching today.

Pope Saint John XXIII – continued

In this way the saint invites us to see our prayer lives as not only a personal and private affair between God and ourselves but also an engagement with the world, seeing in the world an opportunity for God’s grace to shine. Reflect for a moment on these words from the saint:

“In this world of ours, every believer must be a spark of light, a centre of love, a vivifying ferment for the masses; and it will be that all the more as, in the depths of their being, men and women live in communion with God.”

Both in his own personal life and in convening the Council, Saint John XXIII calls each person to a deeper prayer life through the renewed liturgies of the Church.

And there is one final prayerful thought about this saint that I would like to share: Saint John XXIII convened the Council as a means of spiritual renewal for the Church. In doing this at the age of 77, he showed the world that we are always – regardless of our age – called as a Church and as individuals to prayerfully renew ourselves as a way of coming closer to God. God never stops calling us forward through prayer.

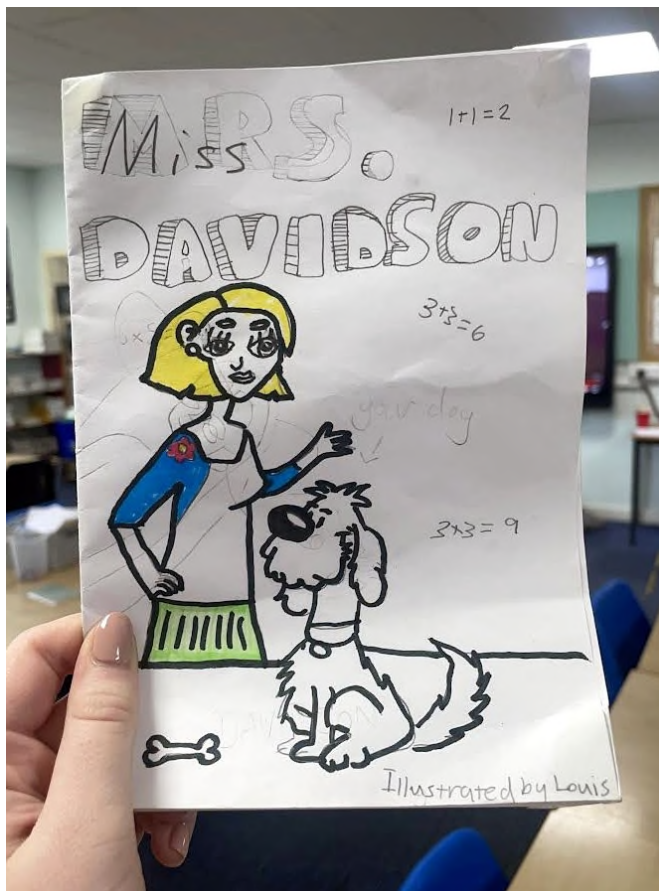


Becoming a Catholic Teacher

In this series, Amélie Davidson (a Primary Education student at the University of Glasgow) writes about her journey to becoming a Catholic teacher. In this article Amélie writes about her latest school placement and her experience of returning to university

School Placement

During August and September, I went on a five week placement at St. Cadoc's Primary, Newton Mearns, with Primary 6. This was my first time teaching outside my local authority and so it was a fantastic opportunity to see how another area operates. I had a wonderful time, all of the staff were very welcoming and the five weeks flew in! Here are a few of the RE lessons that I taught.



The Story of Creation

At the beginning and end of each RE lesson, we lit a candle and took a minute to pause and pray, with a different child leading the prayer of their own choice. The children refreshed their memory on the Story of Creation, creating a comic strip to identify what happened on each day. Then, they identified something that they were going to do during the school year to thank God for his creation; such as being a good P1 mentor or picking up litter in the playground. Following on from this, we explored what 'interdependence' means and ways that the children can care for animals on our Earth – creating chains of animals that depend on one another, including humans! It was inspiring to see how enthusiastic and knowledgeable the class was about ways to look after the planet and God's creation.

Suffering

The other topic that I taught in RE during my placement was 'Suffering' which I was slightly apprehensive about, teaching such a complex and emotive topic. However, the topic resulted in thought-provoking discussions with the class. To begin, we learned about different saints who had suffered such as St Thérèse of Lisieux and St Bernadette. The class was tasked with writing questions that they would like to ask these saints if they could interview them. They ranged from 'How did you feel when Mary appeared to you?' to 'What is your favourite food?' To finish the topic of 'Suffering', we spoke about times in our own lives that we have suffered but that God has been there to help us.

Returning to University

After placement, I returned to university and started Year 4. It doesn't feel that long ago since I was in Fourth Year at secondary school! It is wonderful to be back on campus full time for the first time since 2019 – although lockdown learning did mean that I didn't have to wake up at 6.30 am for the bus! My favourite class this year has been my Education Elective which is called Prophets of a Future Not Our Own. In the class, we have been discussing 21st Century Challenges for Catholic Schools such as mental health, sectarianism, poverty, and LGBT inclusion. How can the pastoral resources of Catholic schools address the mental health needs of their pupils? Do Catholic schools have a specific role in bridging the attainment gap and addressing poverty? These are just a couple of questions that we have discussed and debated.

My next placement is 12 weeks, beginning in January, and is my last placement before I qualify. Then I am staying on for Year 5 to complete my Masters in Education – so there will be a few more of these articles to come!

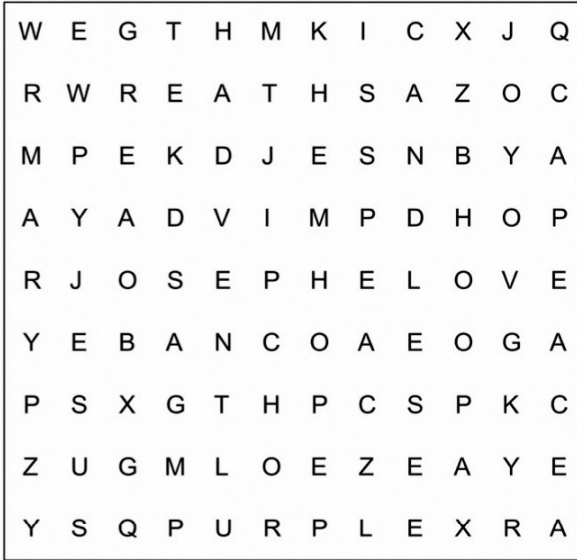


Cloisters at the University of Glasgow



ADVENT

Wordsearch



WORDS TO FIND

- | | |
|---------|--------|
| Advent | Joy |
| Wreath | Love |
| Candles | Mary |
| Purple | Joseph |
| Hope | Jesus |
| Peace | |

What is Advent?

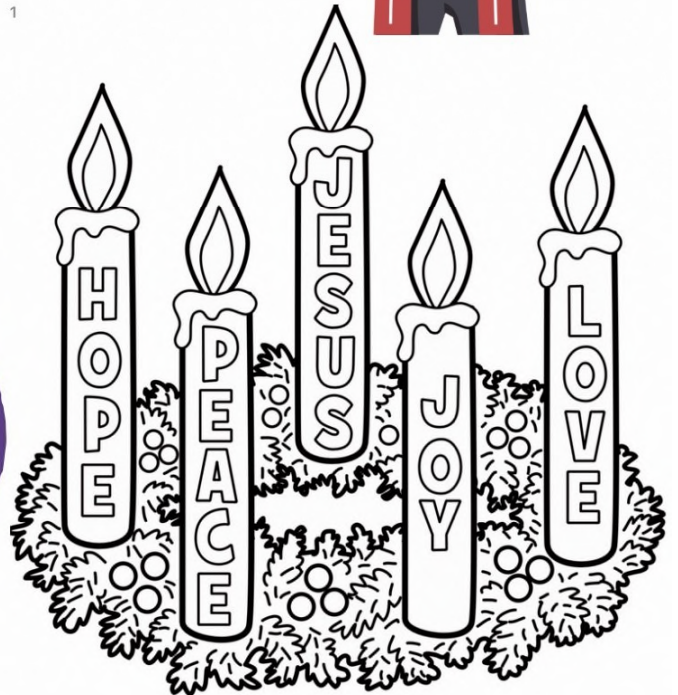
Advent marks the start of the Christian year. It is the four weeks before Christmas, beginning on November 30 or the nearest Sunday to it. The word Advent comes from the Latin 'adventus' which means 'arrival' or 'coming'. This is the time for Christians to prepare for celebration of the birth of Jesus and look forward to the time that Jesus will come again!



ADVENT PRAYER

4, 3, 2, 1... Count the weeks until Jesus comes.

Each week we add another light,
 Our hope for Jesus growing bright.
 We pray, we share, we do our part...
 to welcome Jesus to our heart!





Real Gifts are beautiful, ethical charity gifts for your family, friends and loved ones that also make a difference to people's lives around the world. When you buy a Real Gift you are providing something vital to our sisters and brothers in Africa, Asia and Latin America and also giving a thoughtful gift to someone in your life.

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***“Come and adore Him,
born the King of Angels”***



The team at Galloway Diocese News wish all our readers a happy and holy Christmas and a peaceful and healthy New Year