



# Galloway Diocese NEWS

Lent  
Edition

March  
2023



***Lent is a time for giving  
and today much is needed***

**Every year, SCIAF launches its Wee Box appeal  
*pick up a box from your church today and make a difference.***

For the poorest people, hunger is the start, but it doesn't have to be their end. There is still hope – change is possible. Please reach out to our poorest sisters and brothers with love and compassion and use your WEE BOX to make a BIG CHANGE.

This Lent, your donations will give families the ability to grow their own food by providing the training and tools they need. By ensuring they have the business skills they need to earn an income. And by providing access to women's groups and literacy classes so they can work themselves out of poverty. Visit [www.sciaf.org.uk](http://www.sciaf.org.uk)



## **SCIAF launches the Syria-Turkey Earthquake Appeal**

Donate to help those affected by the devastating earthquakes in Syria and Turkey.

Donate on line at [www.sciaf.org.uk](http://www.sciaf.org.uk)





## Words from the Administrator

*Father William McFadden wonders whether the Synodal process might lead to overcoming the alienation experienced by many in the Church.*



Being a gifted and eloquent orator is a rare talent, and one that is given to very few people. However, one man who certainly had such an ability, and who challenged and inspired, was Jimmy Reid, the former trade union leader, and rector of Glasgow University. His rectorial address at the university in 1972 was entitled, “Alienation”, and was a magnificent example of how reasoned argument and skilful composition can have a formidable effect and influence. Drawing on Marx’s theory of alienation, Reid spoke of how it was his experience that the alienation experienced by the workers of the day was due to the modern methods and practices of industry, which resulted in them having little understanding, control or influence over their actual employment situation, which in turn led to passivity and indifference. The workers were in fact alienated from their work, and Reid called for greater worker involvement in decision making at all levels, and for each individual to have their talents recognised and their potential utilised. Only by doing this could work contribute to the dignity of the human person, and so be something which promotes and supports human happiness and fulfilment.

It seems to me that Jimmy Reid’s “Alienation” speech can actually cast some light on the process of Synodality which we are undertaking both as a local and as a universal Church at present. Reading the responses from parishes, dioceses, and now nationally in the Continental phases of the process, **alienation** would undoubtedly describe what many people experience in the Church. An alienation from decision making; an alienation from even influencing decision making;

and an alienation from experiencing inclusion and connection to an institution that can at times appear, at best, out-of-touch, and at worst, misogynistic and manipulative.

In a letter sent in January to bishops throughout the world from the two cardinals who are leading the Synodal process, Mario Grech and Jean Claude Hollerich, it stated that the process is about “listening as a Church to the Holy Spirit” and not about addressing all the issues which are at present affecting the Church. The cardinals wrote that only by engaging in a synodal style of Church will all her members be able to feel “with the Church,” and so allow priorities and recurring themes to emerge and set the agenda for the future. The two cardinals specifically call on bishops to put into practice the teaching of Vatican II on episcopal collegiality, namely bishops working together, and so in this way foster a genuine spirit of evangelisation. For Grech and Hollerich, only with bishops engaging with one another, can we expect fruitful engagement with the laity to follow.

Perhaps the vision of Pope Francis for a Synodal Church, and the vision of Cardinals Grech and Hollerich for greater episcopal cooperation, might somehow lead to overcoming the alienation experienced by many in the Church. I hope that this turns out to be the case. But if the Synodal process does not do so, then something else will certainly be required. If the present alienation experienced by so many is not adequately addressed, and addressed soon, then it will simply lead to further dissatisfaction and distancing between the members of the Church and her institutional structures.

## Galloway Glimpses

*Half term beach, by Charlotte Soutar*



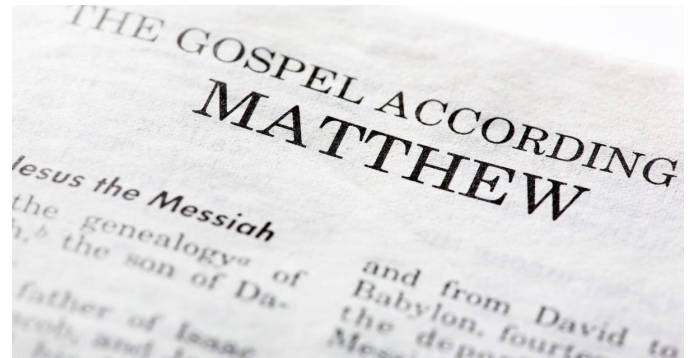
## A Lenten journey accompanied by Matthew's Gospel

By Jim McKendrick

Giving thought to observing Lent is important. Whether you wait until the last minute to decide or you've known your Lenten sacrifice since *last* Lent, it's worth spending time to thoughtfully consider how to make the most of the experience. As Ash Wednesday drew nearer and nearer, in panic I started to reflect on what I should do for Lent. The internal dialogue seems unending: trying to figure out what Lenten sacrifice to make. It's a conversation I have every year and always concludes – "I never know what to give up for Lent". The trouble is that I really think that there is something negative and limiting about giving up some activity for six weeks and then taking it up again. Surely, Lent is more than just "giving something up".

Pope Francis challenges us to read the Gospel – "Dear brothers and sisters, the Lord is not so much looking for skilled scripture commentators, but for docile hearts which, welcoming his Word, allow themselves to be changed inside. This is why it is so important to be familiar with the Gospel, to always have it at hand – even a pocket-size Gospel in our pockets, in our purses to read and reread, to be passionate about it." He said at an Angelus catechesis and this is something I am always 'Meaning to Do', but never get round to.

Suddenly, out of the blue, it came to me – why not read Matthew's Gospel during Lent this year? Immediately, it all seemed the thing to do. My motivation in this is to add in the regular reading of the Gospel as a form of prayer, a type of Lectio Divina, to complement my plans for fasting (not great) and almsgiving during Lent. What always strikes me when I hear readings from Matthew's Gospel is not just the meaning of the passages, but how much the idea of social justice permeates the entire texts. Also, the Gospel of Matthew portrays Jesus as the great teacher who has authority to interpret the Law of God and teaches about God's kingdom. He is the Saviour who fulfils the promises God made to his



people. I hope to explore these aspects in greater depth during this Lent. If *deciding what to do* was difficult, *figuring how to do it* turned out to be relatively straightforward. I devised some ground rules:

To allow for rereading and reflection, I would read one chapter a day and I would only read on weekdays to finish on Friday, 31st March, before Holy Week

I found that fortunately, between Monday 27th February and Friday 31st March, there are 25 weekdays. This was ideal since on these 25 days I could read chapters 1-25 of the Gospel and still have Holy Week free. Of the last three chapters, chapters 26 and 27 deal with the events of Holy Week and could easily be incorporated into the various services of that Holy Week. Also, chapter 28 covers events from the Resurrection onwards and is suited to read in Eastertide. Overall, this programme does not seem to be too daunting and I felt confident it is achievable. By the time you are reading this, I am sure I will have dealt with many challenges and also the inevitable fine tuning that reality tends to introduce. By Easter, I am sure I will have refined a tried and tested model which will allow me to read the other synoptic Gospels in a similar fashion. However, The Gospel of John may well be a much stiffer challenge.

It's nearly Spring, and we have been busy as little bees here at SPRED Galloway. At the end of last year, we had a wonderful get together at our Prayer, Sing and Share Advent event at St Margaret's Hall in Ayr, with Friends and Faith Friends (Volunteers) from all over coming to join us. It was a fantastic evening of friendship and fun (with lots of tea and cakes!) We welcomed back – at long last – our Kilmarnock Group. It was wonderful to see old and new Friends and Faith



Friends enjoying one another's' company .

On the 9th February, a group of SPRED Galloway Faith Friends, Trustees and Office Staff had an inspiring conversation, by the wonders of Zoom, with Joe Quane, Director of SPRED Head Office in Chicago. He is delighted with the changes we have been implementing, and the plans we have in store for a more vibrant and modern SPRED Galloway; we are enthused to work closely with him as he too recognises the importance of progressing together on our Faith Journey as one SPRED Family.

## SPRED Galloway

Spiritual and Personal Development for people with special needs



"The Blessings of Spring are many and sweet"  
Isaiah 43:19



## St Bride's Parish, West Kilbride, have created a unique Lenten reminder

During September 2022, the parish of St Bride's in West Kilbride decided to write a daily reflection from the readings of the day for Advent and distribute this booklet to as many parishioners as possible, including those still at home and to all the sick. We decided to meet in January and to write a similar Lenten booklet as well as the one for Advent. Well, where did January go? Here come the excuses, dark, cold, wet nights, coughs, flu, low energy!! God has heard them all before and I'm sure understands them completely.

We eventually met on 9th February – were we too late to produce a Lenten booklet? Father Duncan McVicar gave us some ideas that were doable for the deadline of Ash Wednesday. They are practical, meaningful, prayerful and visual. We decided on three ideas for Lent this year. Jesus was sometimes disappointed by his closest disciples and we wanted to make that right in our days.

*A little draw-string bag* with a purple St Bride's Cross on it. This addresses Jesus' betrayal for 30 pieces of silver and encourages us to fast and put the money saved into the bag for a local charity.



*A little cross* with our choice of inscription "Watch with Me" as a sign that we want to talk with Christ and accompany him in his Passion and also give testimony to our faith, remembering that Peter denied Jesus. This can be carried around or placed in our houses.



*A booklet of prayers* for each of the six weeks of Lent, written by parishioners from the scripture readings, which we hope will assist in the prayer life of the parish.



All three items were given out at Mass on the First Sunday of Lent and will be distributed to the sick and housebound. Once again we give thanks for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to help us when we had no idea that we could do.

The people of St Bride's Parish, West Kilbride and friends wish everyone a prayerful, meaningful, faith filled Lent 2023 and a Blessed Happy Easter.

## St Mary's in Largs is growing in devotion to Blessed Carlo Acutis



On the evening of Friday 9th December 2022, St Mary's in Largs welcomed Mrs. Jacquie Stacey, an English wife and mother, who has been helping Dr Nicola Gori, the postulator for the cause of canonisation of Blessed Carlo Acutis, to spread devotion to this Italian boy who died at the age of 15 in 2006 and was beatified in 2020.

Mrs Stacey gave a short talk on Carlo's amazing life and emphasised above all his devotion to the Eucharist. She brought with her a display of some of the 132 Eucharistic miracles which Carlo, as a teenager, had documented on a website which he had created for that very purpose. She spoke of how, even as a toddler, Carlo developed a love for Jesus which was to transform not only himself but his family and many of those who came to know him.

Jacquie brought a relic of Carlo's hair with her. About 80 parishioners came out on a cold winter evening to venerate the relic and, more importantly, to stay on for silent adoration of the Eucharist. As a result, devotion to Blessed Carlo is growing in the parish. We are asking his intercession for a real Eucharistic revival among us.

## Your Galloway Diocese News

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

Send your contributions before **5th May** for inclusion in the Pentecost edition to:

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

Email: [gdnews@gallowaydiocese.org.uk](mailto:gdnews@gallowaydiocese.org.uk)

RC Diocese of Galloway, charity number SC010576

# Safeguarding In Galloway Diocese

## Safeguarders and Safeguarding in Galloway: can you volunteer?

*By Tony Fisher, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser*



Galloway is beautiful, breath-taking and I've been told many times that it's much bigger than you would think. Annan to Ardrossan, Lockerbie to Largs, Kilbirnie to Kilmarnock, Dalry to Dumfries and everywhere in between. So when we talk about bringing volunteers together in the Diocese of Galloway, it isn't a small favour we are looking at, it's genuinely a big ask and I want to thank everyone for their patience, understanding and input regarding safeguarding that I have seen demonstrated as I have made my way around in these last few months and meeting a number of members of our safeguarding community.

Yes, there is always going to be hard work to be done in the world of safeguarding and that will continue to be carried out by a highly committed group who take their individual and team roles seriously. But whilst it is satisfying to have laurels, we should avoid taking too long a rest on them and we are always looking for parishioners to come forward and join the safeguarding network that we have firmly established in the Diocese of Galloway. Do you know anyone who may be interested?

From the discussions around the diocese, it is clear that there has been a lot of time, effort and dedication put in at grass roots level to ensure that those who need support know where to find and how to access it. I can see that throughout the diocese we are working closely with partnership organisations to continue to build and offer support for survivors and their families.

As you will be aware, the safeguarding teams and the Parish Safeguarding Coordinators (PSC's) are completing the detail of the Annual Audit and it will be interesting to measure

where we are in the post pandemic environment that we are now in. Thanks again to our safeguarding teams, administrators and parish priests who are working in partnership to complete and submit the audits.

Updates are also ongoing on the work of the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (SCSSA) and you may have met the lead officer, Paul Donaldson, as he has made his way around the parishes in Scotland. Paul joined us at the Galloway office recently and gave an in depth insight into the plans being put in place at the Agency side of things.

You may also be aware of the development of the Safeguarding Training Suite that is being carried out by the SCSSA Head of Training, Helena Rameckers – the changes she is putting in place will make the training much more accessible and practical for all and this will in turn help us to develop how we continue to keep Safeguarding at the forefront of our practice.

The Training development has certainly generated a lot of positive and meaningful discussion for those who are completing the Audit. There is no doubt that this work will bring benefits to the safeguarding community.

If you have any questions or queries about safeguarding in Galloway, regardless how simple they may appear, please get in touch with us and we will endeavour to keep you updated.

*Tony is 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 [safeguarding.adviser@gallowaydiocese.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding.adviser@gallowaydiocese.org.uk).*

## **Our Lady and St Ninian, Newton Stewart, celebrate the Bard**

On 28th January parishioners and friends of Our Lady and St Ninian, Newton Stewart, gathered together in the hall for a Burns' Lunch Celebration.

There were spirited renditions of 'To a Mouse' from Jeremy Ksiezarek, Stephen Bradley gave us Holy Willie's Prayer and the Address to a Haggis was delivered by Jamie Aitken. Chris Flanagan was the Master of Ceremonies and with aplomb and humour, and with Margaret Flanagan took on the roles of Quiz Masters.

Traditional fayre of homemade soup, haggis, neeps and tatties, sandwiches and home baking made a sumptuous feast



enjoyed by all – and a dram for those who wished. Grateful thanks to the volunteers who worked very hard to beautifully decorate our hall and food preparation of a scale and quality to merit a Michelin star or two! But the enjoyable and successful afternoon was due to all those who made the effort to come and partake of the celebration and we thank them sincerely.

# Confirmation 2023

*The Sacrament of Confirmation this year was celebrated by the parish priests during February. Here is a selection of photographs from parishes in the dioceses. Congratulations and blessings to all the children as they now embark on the next stage of their journey of faith and thank you to the teachers, staff, catechists and parents who prepared the children so well.*



Confirmation in St Joseph's, Kilmarnock, for the young people of East Ayrshire



Children from St Andrew's, Dumfries



# Confirmation 2023



Children from St Mary's, Largs



St Quivox,  
Prestwick



St Margaret's  
Cathedral, Ayr, with  
children from St John's  
Primary, Ayr, St Francis  
Xavier's, Patna, and the  
children of the parishes  
of St Margaret's and St.  
Paul's.

# Confirmation 2023



St Mary's,  
Saltcoats, with  
both St Anthony's  
and St John's  
Primary Schools



Children from St Peter  
in Chains, Ardrossan,  
and St Bride's West  
Kilbride



Children from  
St Teresa's,  
Dumfries







## Where is Saint Ninian?

*The diocesan Lourdes group is launching an appeal to install a statue of our diocesan patron, Ninian, at our national shrine at Carfin*

When Carfin Grotto near Motherwell was formally declared to be the National Marian Shrine of Scotland on the first day of the arrival of the relics of St Bernadette on 25th September last year our diocesan Lourdes family were very much present and active throughout the whole week. On the 27th September our 26 primary schools responded wonderfully well to the invitation to visit the Grotto with nearly 250 pupils travelling from every part of the diocese along with their teachers, priests and with the help of senior Caritas students from our four secondary schools. The team from the Lourdes group was on hand to assist and guide them around this wonderful shrine. The children completed a worksheet as they visited every corner of the Grotto and celebrated Mass led by Father McFadden. One question remained at the end. The children asked, “Out of all the statues of saints and shrines, where is St Ninian?”



We were all taken by surprise when Father Jim Grant, parish priest at Carfin, told us there was no statue of St Ninian at the shrine! Today the diocesan Lourdes group is launching an appeal to raise £2,500 to commission and install a statue of our diocesan patron, Ninian. If you'd like to support this initiative please send your cheque, payable to “The Diocese of Galloway” to The St Ninian Fund, St Teresa's Church, Glasgow Street, Dumfries. DG2 9 DE.

*Be part of getting Ninian represented at the national shrine. Thank you in advance from the diocesan Lourdes Group*

## Rite of Election

*A wonderful Rite of Election took place on 26th February, the First Sunday of Lent, in St. Margaret's Cathedral, when nine Catechumens and 14 Candidates became The Elect in preparation for their Reception into the Church at Easter. Please keep all our friends in your prayers.*





# Pilgrimage to Lourdes 3rd - 10th July 2023



Have you always wanted to join the diocese on pilgrimage to Lourdes? Why not make this the year you do that, as after four years of waiting our pilgrimage to Lourdes is returning this July. We will be flying from Prestwick to



Lourdes on Monday 3rd of July and returning on Monday 10th of July. This year we will have a change of accommodation we will be staying in the 4\* Hotel Eliseo costing £949.00 each based on two people sharing. Bookings can now be made via our Travel Agent Joe Walsh Tours, [www.joewalstours.co.uk](http://www.joewalstours.co.uk), tel: 0808 1890468, booking forms are available in all parishes.

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 travel and booking. To find out more please contact our Chief Nurse Janie Agnew – [janieagnew@hotmail.com](mailto:janieagnew@hotmail.com) or 07739-399222.

Training for our helpers has begun, with our first safeguarding session having taken place in February. It's not too late to come to Lourdes as a helper. We will be having our final sign-up session on Sunday 26th March at 2pm in Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Kirkton Road, Kilmarnock, KA3 2DF, volunteers will be required to bring 3 forms of ID to complete their PVG.

The diocesan Youth for Lourdes team welcomes enquiries from young people across the Diocese aged from S4 upwards to join them in preparing to assist in the diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes, France. They fly out from Prestwick airport with the diocesan group on Monday 3rd July and return on the 10th. Join now to have time to work together to raise the funds. Again we thank our four diocesan secondary schools and all our parishes for supporting our fund raising efforts. Contact us on 01387 252603 or email: [youthforlourdes@gallowaydiocese.org.uk](mailto:youthforlourdes@gallowaydiocese.org.uk)



## World Day of Prayer for the Sick



On Sunday 12th February we gathered in St Margaret's Cathedral for the first time since February 2020 for the Diocesan Mass for the Sick. After the three year hiatus due to Covid, it was a really special occasion being together to celebrate Mass. Following Mass we had refreshments in the hall and then held the AGM of Galloway Lourdes Hospitalité. The afternoon together gave us hope for a wonderful pilgrimage this July.



# THE HOLY LAND

## Pilgrimage

Sunday October 15th – Sunday October 22nd 2023

*Father David Borland is organising a pilgrimage to the Holy Land during the October school holiday this year. In this article he explains why this pilgrimage is slightly different from our normal way of organising our pilgrimages.*

I was struck by the number of disappointed people who contacted me when it became apparent that the proposed National Pilgrimage to the Holy Land could not go ahead because of the cost, so I have been looking at different ways to put together a pilgrimage for a smaller number of people at a less prohibitive cost, and I am pleased to be able to offer the following to those who want to walk in the footsteps of Our Lord and support our Christian brothers and sisters living in the Holy Land.

Firstly, what is different? I am not using a UK based tour operator to put together our pilgrimage, I am doing the flight booking myself, but I am once again using Laila Tours & Travel Ltd. based in Bethlehem to organise everything for us in the Holy Land – they will handle everything from the moment we land at Tel Aviv airport until the moment we arrive back at Tel Aviv airport to fly home. By organising the pilgrimage this way we are immediately saving about £500 per person, and pilgrims should notice no difference in their pilgrimage experience.

By organising things this way we are not booking a 'package holiday', we are booking the two elements separately – flight + ground package, so travel insurance becomes an essential part of the trip. Each pilgrim will need to make sure that they have appropriate travel insurance from the moment they book, and their policy number will need to be written on their booking form before I can accept their booking.

Flights will be booked with British Airways from Glasgow/Edinburgh via London Heathrow to Tel Aviv. These flights need to be secured and paid for at the time you book your pilgrimage, therefore the deposit for this trip needs to be £800 per pilgrim, and the flight element will not be refundable – hence the importance of having travel insurance from the moment you book.

The total cost of this pilgrimage will be **£1,128 plus the cost of the flight**, based on two people sharing a twin room on a half-board basis in 3\* hotels. Unfortunately there is a single room supplement of £440 and single rooms are strictly limited in number. Flight prices are fluid and are currently available at around £700, but tickets increase in price as we approach the date of departure so the earlier you book the cheaper your flight will be, and the cheaper your overall pilgrimage will be!

### Where will we visit?

During our pilgrimage we will have a full spiritual programme and the services of a Palestinian Christian guide who will lead us through all the important Christian sites. A basic outline for our pilgrimage in the Holy Land is as follows:

**Day 2:** Bethlehem – Manger Square, Basilica of the Nativity, St Catherine's Church, Milk Grotto, Shepherd's Fields, St Martha's House

**Day 3/4:** Jerusalem – Mount of Olives, Pater Noster Church, Dominus Flevit, Garden of Gethsemane, Church of All Nations, The Cenacle, Dormition Abbey, St Peter's in Gallicantu, Western Wall, St Anne's Church, Via Dolorosa, Church of the Holy Sepulchre

**Day 5:** Jericho – The Baptismal Site on the River Jordan, Mount of Temptation

**Day 6:** The Galilee – Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, Tabgha, Peter's Primacy, Mount of Beatitudes

**Day 7:** Nazareth – Mary's Well, Old Synagogue Church, Basilica of the Annunciation, Wedding Church at Cana, Mount Tabor

If you would like to book your place on this pilgrimage please visit [www.rcayr.org.uk/pilgrimage](http://www.rcayr.org.uk/pilgrimage) where you will find a booking form, notes on completing your booking form (please read) and more information about our pilgrimage. If you have any questions about the pilgrimage then please contact me on [david.borland@gallowaydiocese.org.uk](mailto:david.borland@gallowaydiocese.org.uk) and I will try to answer them.

I look forward to walking in the footsteps of the Lord with you, and I know our Christian sisters and brothers in the Holy Land are looking forward to welcoming you to their home.

# Spotlight on Education

## Dumfries and Galloway Schools

*In this edition we hear from St Joseph's College, Dumfries, St Andrew's Primary and St Teresa's Primary, Dumfries and St Columba's Primary, Annan*

### Saint Joseph's College, Dumfries *putting faith in to practice*

As we return to the freedoms which we enjoyed before the Covid pandemic, we at St Joseph's College are keen to enhance pupils' experiences and well-being by focusing on the school Marist values in RE lessons and extending this to opportunities which we offer in extracurricular activities. These values are Presence, Love of Work, Family Spirit, In the Way of Mary and Simplicity. Saint Marcellin Champagnat, the founder of the Marist Brothers, promoted these values which underpinned his mission to better the lives of young people including those most affected by disadvantage and lack of opportunity.

Recently, some of our Marist leaders travelled to L'Hermitage near Lyon in France. This is the place where Marcellin set up his first community of brothers and is still home to many brothers today. There the pupils learned more about the roots of our school values working with students from other Scottish and Irish Marist schools. They shared ideas of how they can put the values into practice and so enhance our school communities. Upon their return, our leaders used the teamwork skills they had gained to organise quiz afternoons which further developed a family spirit among S1 and S2. In addition they raised over £300 which they donated to the charity Shelter to help the homeless.

With support from SCIAF staff, our new Marist leadership group of S4 pupils highlighted the work SCIAF does to help alleviate injustice and poverty across the world. To help financially the group sold glow sticks at the school Christmas ceilidhs. Using this money raised, the group decided to further

highlight the good work of SCIAF by buying Real Gifts for each of our four House Groups. Each House

received a gift of an animal, a shelter for a family, or supplies to start a vegetable garden. As the Marist Leaders had engaged with Laudato si' "resources in class they also wanted to ensure that each House group met the call from Pope Francis to promote sustainability. Consequently they also purchased four eco-cookers through the SCIAF Real Gifts scheme.

Caritas candidates and S5 pupils have also put Marist

values into practice by being involved in organising food drives to collect for our local Saint Vincent de Paul groups. Part of this initiative was to set up a "Junior Vinnies" team, made up of S1-S3 pupils. The group has so far made links with our parish priests, Father Gerald Donnelly and Father Jim Hayes, to discuss where to

best target their efforts. It was decided that our support would be best aimed at strengthening links between teenagers and the elderly in the community. The team are now planning to visit day centres and invite some of the elderly into St Joseph's to share in craft sessions, entertainment and refreshments made by pupils in our Home Economics department.

Other pupils have worked towards their Pope Benedict Caritas Award by being readers in local parishes and for example at regional Remembrance services where they recited poems, one of which had been written by a former pupil. They also accompanied younger pupils to Carfin during the visit of St Bernadette's relics to Scotland's National Marian Shrine.

St Joseph's may have come a long way from its Marist roots, but the values of its founder still play a large part in shaping today's ethos, educational mission and charitable practices.



## St Columba's Primary, Annan

*investing in enterprise*

Siobhan Wright from SCIAF recently led a 'Talents Focussed' assembly at St Columba's Primary. Siobhan asked the school community to take part in a talented fundraising enterprise project that is inspired by Scripture and encourages pupils to put their faith into action. The fundraising project is all about giving young people the opportunity to use their creativity, enterprise and other God-given talents to raise awareness and funds for the work of SCIAF.

During the assembly, Siobhan shared the Parable of the Talents, with some pupils having the opportunity to act out various parts. Pupils then considered their own God given talents and gifts and were asked to think about how they could put them to use.

Throughout Lent, pupils will have the opportunity to develop their own talents and business and enterprise skills to run events to raise money for SCIAF which has given the school an initial loan of £50 which will allow pupils to invest in enterprise activities to make the money grow. Initial ideas involve a parish Lenten Lunch and a Car Wash. It is hoped that the parish and school communities will work together to support our pupils develop their talents whilst raising money for SCIAF.



## St Andrew's Primary , Dumfries

*Working for Laudato Si'*

At St Andrew's we have been getting back into the swing of things during this academic year, reinstating some pre-Covid routines and changing others based on the experiences of the previous three years. Included in that change is our approach to the Pope Francis Faith Award as well as beginning to align our curriculum with Laudato Si' .

The Pope Francis Faith Award has been part of our P6/7 curriculum for several years now. In that time we have grown to value the core values of the scheme. They have informed our revised school aims. Taken in conjunction with the goals of Laudato si' we have focussed on the key idea 'to recognise the significance of their words and actions at home, school, community and global level.' This has been in response to feedback from our P6 and P7 classes on the effectiveness of The Pope Francis faith Award. Feedback had suggested that we were spending too much time record keeping for the award and not enough time doing. It was demotivating for the children and staff. We needed to change our approach.



With this in mind we have begun to refresh our approach. In collaboration with Father Gerald Donnelly and the community of St Andrew's parish, we are putting a revised programme in place, one that also recognises achievements in line with the principles of Laudato si' . There will be opportunities for all children to help prepare Mass as in the local community, not just celebrate with them. Ideas are being generated by those in the parish community about how our children can be actively involved, whether that be through coffee clubs, understanding and actively participating in the role of an altar server and other such things. In tandem with this we are purposely making links between our work on changing our immediate environment for the better, the Pope Francis Faith Award and Laudato Si' .

Our picture shows Mariel and Euan who are in charge of a project with the Woodlands Trust to plant 15 more trees in our school grounds. Mariel is driving it by meeting with Amey, the company that is charge of our school building and grounds, and arranging with the Woodlands trust to have the trees delivered.

*Spotlight Continued on next page*



# Spotlight on Education

It is the primary aim of St Teresa's to ensure that Jesus Christ and the Gospel values are central to the life of our community of faith and learning, providing a happy, safe and supportive environment where everyone is valued and treated with courtesy. We put into practice an inclusive ethos which inspires a climate of tolerance and respect and encourages all to respect the rights of everyone in our school community, our parish community and the wider world. Although some of our pupils come from other faith communities, all are included in the prayer life of the school and take a full and active part in the many ways we celebrate our faith, as well as supporting the work of a variety of charities, especially our own parish Ababa project in Ethiopia.

From Nursery to P7 we work hard to improve our school grounds and, as a Laudato si' school, to care for the local area. We grow a variety of fruit and vegetables which we use for cooking and sometimes take some of the produce home to our families. We have recently been planting trees in our playground as part of a community project to enhance the local environment

In April of this year we will celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of our school with many planned events. We are taking this opportunity to look back over the last 60 years and reconnect with past members of our school community, and are arranging times when past pupils can share their experiences and memories with the children of today. Although many things have changed in our building and in the way we work, the constant will always be the fellowship and generosity of our pupils and families.

## St Teresa's Primary, Dumfries

*Working together in partnership with the wider community*



## Diocese of Galloway Youth Ministry

*youth pilgrimage to Lisbon  
26th July – 8th August*



The diocesan WYD 2023 team are getting all prepared to lead a small youth pilgrimage to Lisbon, Portugal to participate in this international youth event led by the Holy Father, Pope Francis. The Galloway group are busy preparing at regular meetings and are busy fund-raising the £950.00 costs among their families and parishes. They are so grateful for the wonderful support they are receiving from them

all. If you can help please get in touch.

The group fly out on 29th July for this 10 day international event and hope to join over 300 other young pilgrims from across Scotland and the two million other young folk who will arrive from every corner of the world.

If you are aged s.4 upwards and would like to be part of this wonderful opportunity, give Father Jim a call at the Youth Ministry Office on 01387 252603 or email [youth@gallowaydiocese.org.uk](mailto:youth@gallowaydiocese.org.uk)

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

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

Find us on Facebook  
Galloway Youth Ministry Office



RC Diocese of Galloway. Charity Number: SC010576



## A View from Westminster

*Dr Philippa Whitford, MP, looks back at the last three years of Covid, lockdown and virtual meetings, and looks forward to a future which can incorporate the 'new normal' into our daily life.*

As we approach our fourth Easter season since the start of the Covid pandemic, we can see that many aspects of life have returned back to normal, but some have not. Many people still spend part of their week working from home, with virtual meetings on their computer, and the tendency of teenagers to chat to friends via their phones has spread to older age groups.

Hybrid working has several benefits – avoiding workers spending hours each day commuting to an office, only to sit at a computer anyway, as well as reducing the carbon emissions and pollution caused by transport. Many, with long commutes into a city, gained two to three hours each day to spend with their families and one of the positive sights during the 'lockdown' was whole families out for a walk or cycle together. In my own job, holding virtual meetings allowed greater participation of those who might have difficulty in attending for reasons such as cost, distance or disability. In the case of a meeting of women parliamentarians from the Middle East and North Africa, they might have struggled to leave their countries or get a visa to come to London.

But humans are meant to be together, and isolation and loneliness was one of the worst impacts of the pandemic, particularly for those who had to 'shield' at home or who were separated from loved ones in a care home. Communities and neighbours found inventive ways of supporting each other, helping with shopping or having a chat over the hedge or through the window. Once a week, my own neighbours stood at their gates clapping for nurses and key workers and we stayed on for a blether afterwards to catch up with each other.

Being forcibly separated from others has made us all more appreciative of spending time with friends, family or even colleagues in the physical world rather than the virtual, but society has not fully returned to normal. Globally the pandemic is not over, due to our failure to share vaccines on an equitable basis with those in low-income countries. Indeed, we had a surge in cases over this winter which, along with an influenza outbreak, put incredible strain on our health services. There are many who for various health reasons, including age, have to take basic precautions and are still cautious about mixing in large groups, either to protect themselves or for fear of passing Covid on to a vulnerable loved one. And many of us have just got out of the habit of being in busy places, whether that is a pub, public transport or in church.

While the virtual streaming of Mass is a great benefit to older or housebound parishioners, it doesn't compare with the sense of shared community we experience when we are together, particularly in the build up to our most important liturgy – the death and resurrection of Christ at Easter – literally the feast of our salvation.

For those who have not returned to regular church attendance, this is something we could aim for, to prepare

ourselves to take a full part in the Triduum. For those who are already back to regular attendance, we should think about how to make others feel safe and more comfortable. With so many elderly parishioners, is it really too much effort to use hand gel or wear a simple mask? The final challenge is to all of us

who contribute to the liturgies, whether as readers, musicians, singers or the main celebrant, the priest, as well as those who organise the activities of the parish such as coffee after Mass, or social events.

Every parish is like a family and, like any family, it's easy to drift apart if we don't reach out to each other. We need to make an effort so that those who come to Mass feel welcome and find comfort, inspiration and strength. As a former priest of my parish memorably said, "we all carry our faith within us but, like coals in a fire, burn hotter and brighter when we are together".

So this spring, let's remember that Lent isn't just about giving up chocolate and alcohol but about prayer and that the most powerful prayer is when we join our voices with others in Mass. When we stand and say that greatest of all prayers, the 'Our Father', we pray for God's Kingdom to come on earth; a Kingdom meant for all the people of the earth regardless of their background, race or religion. It's our job to ensure everyone feels welcome in that Kingdom: to get out into the streets and invite everyone to the feast.

Thankfully it is not for us to judge who is worthy of an invite – something we should all be grateful for, as we might not get past the judgement of our neighbours. On the first Holy Thursday after he was elected, Pope Francis washed the feet of those in prison, including a young Muslim woman, thus setting us an example of reaching out to invite others to enter the Kingdom of God.

A simple guide if we feel ourselves getting up on our high horse, feeling critical of others or facing difficult decisions, is just to imagine Jesus was here, physically, with us: what would he say – what would he do? We know how he behaved when he was alive, the company he kept, the forgiveness he showed – even to those who crucified him. He calls on us to remember only one thing – Love – for those around us, for our planet and for ourselves. If we can add to the love that is around us, hopefully we can all find a little more peace and joy in our faith this Easter.

*This is my last column for the Galloway Newsletter. It has been a pleasure writing for you and while some of you may not have agreed with what I have written, I hope that it was of interest. I sought to challenge all of us, myself included, not to think our duty is done on a Sunday morning, but recognise that we are called to support and love all our brothers and sisters every day of our lives.*

We thank Philippa very much for her contributions to the Galloway Diocese News over the years. Her articles have been interesting, informative and – in some cases – controversial, but have given a fascinating insight into life at Westminster.

In future editions we hope to include articles from the Scottish Catholic Parliamentary Office.



# Praying with The Saints

## SAINT NINIAN

By Father Martin Chambers



Prayer is such a big part of all our lives and it is important to recognise what effect prayer has on our hearts and on our daily lives. When we pray (in Church and at home), our hearts are moved, renewed and strengthened. Within our prayer lives, there are many tools to help us get closer to God and find our own mission in life. For myself, I pray with the Scriptures, the Divine Office and the Rosary; these prayers are not simple words but rather ways in which I am able to converse with God and to reflect on God's will for my life.

On top of these tools, we have the lives of many saints who are an influence on us. In recent Galloway News articles, we have looked at the way many of our great saints can inspire our prayer lives. Of course, within our own diocese, Saint Ninian features large as the founder of our Diocese and therefore perhaps the greatest prayer influence on our diocese and on our own hearts.

### The Life of Saint Ninian

The facts we know about our diocesan patron saint are few and far between but, from historical sources, we know that he was born in 360 and died, at the age of 72, in 432.

There are two historical sources that help our understanding of Saint Ninian:

a source from the 8th century, written by St Bede the Venerable, says that Saint Ninian began the conversion of the Picts who were an Iron Age people living in the time of Saint Ninian in what is now Scotland;

and, in the life of Saint Aelred in the 12th century, Saint Ninian is mentioned as a son of a Christian chieftain who made a pilgrimage to Rome where he was consecrated Bishop. According to this source, on his way back from Rome, he travelled through Gaul and befriended Saint Martin of Tours.

We know from these and other historical sources that Saint Ninian was the first Bishop of Galloway. He established the diocese at Whithorn where he built a white-washed church (in Latin it was called 'Candida Casa') and this Latin name has been given down through the years to our own bishop's house. By the 6th century this monastery at Whithorn had become a leading centre of prayer and devotion for the Anglo-Saxon world.

We are not entirely certain where Saint Ninian travelled in Scotland once he became Bishop of Galloway but we do know of his great influence in the Celtic world and its spirituality. And his influence survived down through the years in the number of Churches that have survived across the Christian

world – not just in the Catholic Church – with his name. His missionary work across our land prepared the way for Saint Columba and Saint Kentigern.

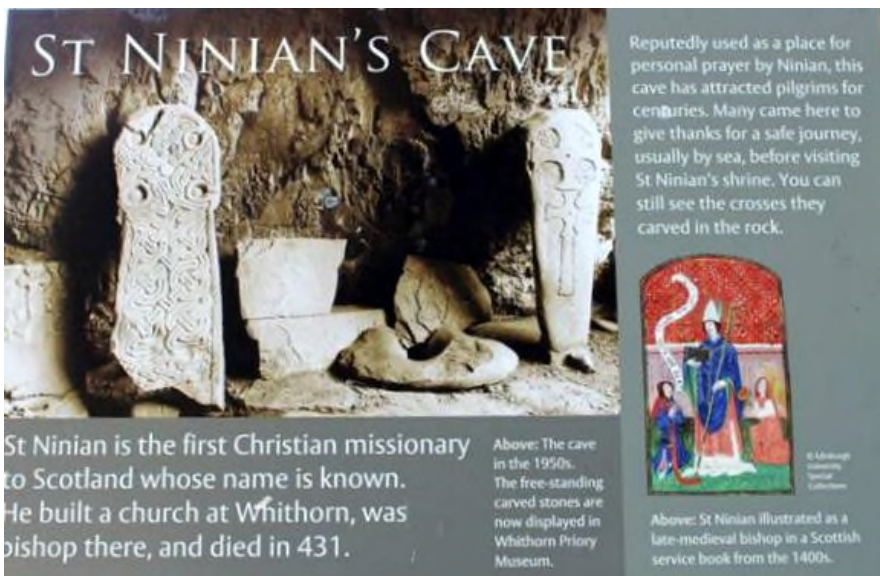
Down through the years, of course, Saint Ninian has been drawing many pilgrims to Whithorn. Perhaps the most famous Whithorn pilgrim was King James IV of Scotland who became a regular visitor to the town. He was King of Scotland from 1488 until his death at the battle of Flodden in 1513. Yet he is only one pilgrim amongst many thousands, including ourselves, who feel called, like Saint Ninian, to be modern-day missionaries and witnesses to the Mission of the Good News of the Kingdom. That list of pilgrims includes you and me as we seek to listen to God calling each one of us on a daily basis.

### Feast Day – Scripture Passages

As I was reflecting on the life of Saint Ninian, I went to the Scripture readings for his Feast day on 16th September to see if I could see there how each of us can be inspired in prayer by the life of our patron. The first thing I noticed is that we are invited to take our Mass readings that day from the section in the Lectionary 'for Missionaries'. That fact alone reminds me that, through the life of Saint Ninian, you and I are called to be part of the Mission of Jesus Christ.

I invite you now to reflect with me on these readings for the feast day of Saint Ninian. There we will see how the life of the saint can influence our prayer lives and thrust out onwards to be modern-day missionaries .

*Isaiah 52:7-10:* it starts with the words 'How lovely on the mountains are the feet of one who brings Good News'. This passage reminds us of the work of our patron saint and how he started out on his missionary journey from the cave at Whithorn – going out with the Gospel as his companion. It also calls each ➡







## Six months in ...

By Father Kevin Rennie

*Father Kevin discovers that parish life is not the same as seminary but the hands on experience has helped him settle into the realities of parish ministry.*

I was ordained in July of last year and subsequently started as the assistant priest in St Joseph's in Kilmarnock on the first of September. Since starting, one of the biggest things I've found is that no matter how much seminary makes you think you're prepared, the realities of parish ministry are very different – whilst the seminary gave me the intellectual and theological tools, it has been very much hands on, on the ground experience which has helped me to settle into the realities of parish ministry.

The community in St Joseph's has been very welcoming, encouraging and supportive (and understanding if at times I am not fully aware of, and how to, do certain things). My time started with bacon rolls after Sunday Mass as an opportunity to meet the parish community. Since I arrived the Church has been closed for a month to allow for repainting, and so it was an opportunity to meet the other parish communities in Kilmarnock, and we're now greatly anticipating the return of our restored pipe organ in time for the Easter Masses.

I have found my ministry to be very rewarding and diverse – going between the hospital, primary school, secondary

school and the sick and housebound, and then assisting with youth work in the diocese more generally. One of the great things about being a priest is that no two days are the same, every day I'm meeting someone different or doing something different. A particular highlight for me has been working with the children and young people in Kilmarnock through the schools, as well as through Youth for Lourdes and World Youth Day. In the schools, the young people always offer a different perspective and are engaged and keen to listen and to learn. With fewer young people attending Masses, I find school ministry to be very rewarding in that it offers an opportunity to reach out to young people who maybe at times question the importance of Christ in our lives.



*at the Diocesan Mass for the Sick in February*

As a priest, it is a great privilege to be able to bring Christ to everyone; we're all called as Catholics to witness to Christ in our lives, but priests in particular have the privilege of administering the Sacraments, right through from Baptism at the beginning of life, through to the Sacrament of the Sick, and of course being able to celebrate the Mass. It is always a great joy to see the good that Christ does in the lives of others, working through all of us as his instruments.

### Praying with St Ninian, *continued*

one of us – in our daily lives – to be heralds of peace, to raise our voices in joy and to bring consolation to all who are in need. There are so many people in our world who reach out to those in need through their Christian witness and we can reach out too, just like Saint Ninian, bringing God's values to bear in our world.

**2 Cor 4:1-2.5-7:** This passage reminds us that we are 'earthenware jars' holding the treasure of God in our hearts. Saint Ninian would have appreciated that fact through his own prayer life and would have understood that the reading also says that we hold God's mercy in our hands and hearts. You and I hold that mercy ourselves and are called to tell others about it, reminding them that, although they might feel weighed down in life, they can be raised up by God's love and mercy.

**Luke 10:1-9:** the Gospel of the Feast day Mass invites us to reflect on the mission before us as a harvest for God: *'the harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few'*. We can imagine Saint Ninian, while thinking about returning to Scotland from Rome, would have been inspired by the harvest of God. Could he have understood the true influence he might have on the Celtic world and on Scotland itself? Perhaps not. And maybe we should encourage ourselves to be stronger in our belief that God calls each one of us – while we might be aware of our limitations – to be courageous in the Mission, like lambs among wolves bringing peace and harmony into the world from God.

Let us be inspired in our prayer lives! Let us be inspired by the life and witness of our patron, Saint Ninian. And, as we walk to and from Saint Ninian's Cave at Whithorn, and as we walk on our pilgrimage through life, let us in faith say 'yes' to the gospel, 'yes' to Jesus and 'yes' to God's life in us!



# The Teaching of Pope Francis

by Father William McFadden

*Pope Francis, together with the Moderator of the Church of Scotland and Archbishop of Canterbury, made a three day "Pilgrimage of Peace" to South Sudan*

It was wonderful to see Scotland so well represented during Pope Francis' recent pilgrimage to Africa, with the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Dr Iain Greenshields, joining the pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, for a well-publicised three day "Pilgrimage of Peace" to South Sudan. At a special ecumenical prayer service in Juba, the capital and largest city of South Sudan, the three leaders called for unity among the Christian Churches, and appealed for Christians to believe that their shared faith could be the means for building a lasting peace.

Pope Francis specifically urged South Sudan's Christians to avoid further ethnic or tribal conflict, which has shown itself since the country became independent in 2011. "Those who claim to be believers should have nothing more to do with a culture based on the spirit of vengeance," said the pope, and instead urged them to be committed to Jesus' teaching which was one of "non-violence."

Francis specifically asked those present to focus on three precise verbs: "to pray", "to work," and "to journey." Asking all Christians to pray for peace, he stated: "In the diversity of our confessions, let us feel united among ourselves, as one family, responsible to pray for everyone". On the importance of "work," the pope asked the people to work tirelessly "for the peace that the Spirit of Jesus and the Father urges us to build: a peace that integrates diversity and promotes unity in plurality." And on the theme of "journey," he acknowledged the journey of "reconciliation" which has already been undertaken by many in the country, but which remains a journey requiring perseverance and persistence.

Pope Francis concluded his presentation by mentioning two further important concepts for the people of South Sudan: "memory" and "commitment." The people are to remember those in whose steps they are following, and to be steadfast in bringing about concrete expressions of God's love through their faithful dedication to peace.

Prior to the Ecumenical Service, the three leaders had met with the civic leaders of the country, and had challenged these political authorities to truly get together and work collectively for peace. Pope Francis, Archbishop Welby and Doctor Greenshields also met with some 2,000 refugees living in camps. Despite the grim reality which so many face in these places, Francis told them that the "future cannot lie in refugee camps," offering them a vision for the future of hope, and filled with joyful anticipation.



They met with some of the 2,000 refugees living in camps

Having concluded their three day "Pilgrimage of Peace," the three leaders were again united in the in-flight press conference held on the flight home. It was a further expression of his ecumenical commitment, that Pope Francis insisted that all three be involved in what is usually an opportunity for the press to question the pope individually on his experiences and thoughts following a papal visit to a foreign country.

During this press conference, Pope Francis returned again to the theme of violence and tribalism, and he highlighted the arms trade as exploiting this tragedy, identifying the manufacture and sale of arms to encourage war as "diabolical."

The historic three-day pilgrimage of the three Church leaders from the Roman Catholic, the Anglican, and the Presbyterian Churches, has left some forceful and compelling dialogue, as well as some powerful visual imagery. Their message of peace is not one that is limited to the people of South Sudan though. We are all challenged to be individuals and communities committed to the ways of peace. We are also all called to imitate the example given of ecumenical passion. Perhaps these memorable days in Africa might inspire our ecumenical journey in Scotland, and we too might become greater "pilgrims of peace," praying, working and journeying together as Christians living out Christ's call that "all may be one."



## Dates for your Diary

**Tuesday 4th April, 7.30 pm**

Mass of Christm in St Margaret's Cathedral, Ayr

**Sunday 9th April**

Easter Sunday

**Sunday 28th May**

Pentecost Sunday

**Monday 3rd – Monday 10th July**

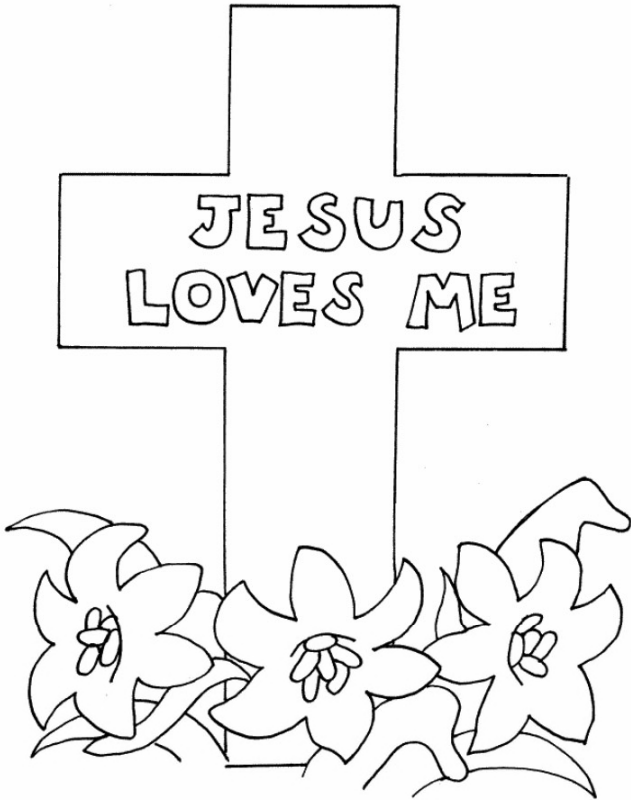
Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes

**Sunday 30th July – Tuesday 8th August**

World Youth Day, Lisbon, Portugal



# LENT



## Wordsearch

l t u e s d a y n  
 e a s t e r s t a  
 n i g h t s y f i  
 t l d a o p t r t  
 s k y a y b r s s  
 g l k l y s o u i  
 g i w x y s f s r  
 e m f l o u r e h  
 s h r o v e y j c

Lent      Easter      Shrove      milk  
 flour      eggs      Tuesday      Jesus  
 Christian      forty      days      nights

## What is Lent?

Lent is the period of six weeks (40 days not including Sundays) leading up to Easter, the most important festival in the Christian calendar. Lent starts on Ash Wednesday.

The last week of Lent is called Holy Week. The word 'Lent' comes from the Anglo-Saxon word 'Lenten', which means springtime.



*This year during Lent,  
 I promise to...*

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**ST JOSEPH'S, KILMARNOCK  
THE NEWLY RESTORED 1903  
HARRISON & HARRISON PIPE ORGAN**



**SOLEMN BLESSING  
AND DEDICATION  
FOLLOWED BY AN INAUGURAL RECITAL  
BY ANDREW REID, FRCO**

**Former Managing Director of Harrison & Harrison Organ Builders,  
Former Director of the Royal School of Church Music**

The 1903 Harrison & Harrison organ, restored for Easter 2023, will be solemnly blessed and dedicated using the traditional French blessing of a pipe organ whereby the organist improvises eight themes in response to invocations for the organ to sing the praises of God and honour the mysteries of our salvation.

**Sunday 16 April, 2023 at 6.00 pm**  
St Joseph's Church, 15a Hill Street, Kilmarnock, KA3 1HB

***No booking required - Just come along - All very welcome***