



Galloway Diocese NEWS

St Ninian
Edition

September
2022

~ Congratulations ~

*To Father Kevin Rennie
Ordained 1st July 2022*



The priestly ordination of Deacon Kevin Rennie was a joyous occasion in St Teresa's church, Dumfries, attended by many priests and parishioners of the diocese and many of Kevin's friends and family from near and far.

The team at the Galloway Diocese News wish Father Kevin God Speed in his ministry of service.

More photographs and articles on pages 8 and 9.



Words from the Administrator

By Father William McFadden

Despite his mobility problems resignation is not 'a pressing problem' for Pope Francis

As we await the appointment of our new bishop, I take great consolation in the fact that he will be appointed to the position by Pope Francis. That this is the case, gives me the confidence to trust that he will certainly choose a good man to lead us in Galloway.

That Pope Francis is in fact considering resigning from his role as Bishop of Rome has been the focus of recent speculation in newspapers and other social media. But if we actually look at what the Holy Father has said, an imminent resignation would seem to be a long way off.

On his return from Canada, when speaking to journalists on the plane as is his custom after a papal journey, Francis acknowledged that he can no longer travel as he used to, and that he is in fact slowing down. His recent knee problems have caused him to use a wheelchair and a walker to get around, and he is in obvious pain when he is on the move. Yet, he did not say that he was thinking of resigning. In fact, he stressed that he had not thought about resignation, but that it was always a possibility and that the "door is open" to such an eventuality.

This conversation on the plane from Canada was not the first time that Pope Francis has spoken about the option of following the example set by Pope Benedict XVI when he made his decision in 2013. But for Francis it remains a possibility, not a pressing priority. When it was previously asked of him if the rumours were true that he had cancer and so was going to resign, his reply was a characteristic one that his doctors didn't tell him anything about it, and that he would only resign when he felt that he could no longer fulfil his



duties. And it is obvious that even with advancing age and infirmity, at present he is most certainly doing that. So, the prospect of his resignation remains therefore a matter for the future, and is not something that need concern us for the present.

That is certainly good news for us in Galloway as we look forward to an episcopal appointment. We pray for Francis, and for whoever the Holy Father chooses to appoint as our next shepherd of the diocese.

The relics of St Bernadette will be coming to Scotland between Saturday 24th September and Saturday 1st October. They will be at Carfin Grotto which is itself celebrating its own centenary.



Unlike the visit of the relics of St Thérèse a few years ago, the relics will remain at Carfin Grotto for the whole week and a programme of events will be hosted there. After the reception of the relics the first main event is the Scottish National Pilgrimage on Sunday 25th September with Mass at 3 pm. Every day there is a full programme of Masses, rosaries, processions and other liturgies from 8 am to 9 pm. Each day a different diocese provides the liturgies for that day. The day for Galloway is Tuesday 27th September and we share the day and liturgies with the Archdiocese of Glasgow. It is a huge privilege for Scotland to host these holy relics and this is another opportunity to worship as a National Church and Diocesan Church in the presence of St Bernadette. The diocese had a hugely successful Lourdes Day at Carfin in June and this would be another similar occasion to honour St Bernadette and the Blessed Virgin Mary. By now you will see more formation and timetables in your parish and it would be great if as many as possible from the diocese could along.

Down Memory Lane

Jim McKendrick reflects on the unique attraction of Whithorn as a place of pilgrimage, past and present.

I first visited Whithorn around 40 years ago. We were staying in the town for a few days and I can still remember vividly the boys serving Mass for Father Pat Keegans. I also have happy memories of the Priory and the museum, Luce Bay and the shore with the rock and the Cave. Above all, it was a spiritual place, ideal for prayer and silent reflection. That it has been a pilgrimage site for over 400 years is evidence of the strength of the lure and attraction of Whithorn. In medieval times this major site of pilgrimage was visited by Robert the Bruce. Also, Mary Queen of Scots visited in 1563 as did her father, James V, and her grandfather, James IV, who used to visit annually.

In modern times, each year, the Diocese of Galloway has marked the founding of Christianity in Scotland by celebrating Mass at the Cave of Saint Ninian. Although there were pilgrimages in the preceding years, Mass was celebrated at the Cave for the first time in September 1953 by Bishop Joseph McGee. The altar stood in front of a large banner of Saint Ninian. Canon McQuillan of Saint Meddan's Church in Troon preached the homily to more than two thousand pilgrims. The Saint Vincent de Paul Society were responsible for the organisation. The story of the origins of the Whithorn pilgrimage is related in much more detail in an article by Bishop Taylor in the 2017 St Ninian edition of the Galloway Diocese News accompanied by the photograph from the local newspaper (*right*).

From 1953 onwards, under the leadership of the bishops, ably supported by the clergy and laity of the diocese, the Whithorn Pilgrimage has been well promoted and publicised. Everyone has their own memories and experiences. Bishop Cunningham led the pilgrimage on nine occasions. In 2008, it was good, though on a cloudy, dry and warm day, to see him leading pilgrims through the mud of Physgill Glen and by the cliffs to the shore and the Cave.



The 2013 Pilgrimage coincided with the 60th anniversary of the modern pilgrimage. Again the sun shone on the righteous at the Cave where Mass was presided over by Bishop Taylor. At the same time, due to his deteriorating health, Bishop Cunningham celebrated Mass in the town. Bishop Taylor has stood in for both Bishops Cunningham and

Nolan as principal celebrant at the Whithorn Mass and it was a great relief to see Bishop Nolan in 2017, preaching so vigorously on the sea shore.

Due to the Covid pandemic, there was no pilgrimage in 2020, and in 2021, despite Covid being still with us, and consequently many of the usual parish buses not running, around 170 pilgrims made a

welcome return to the Glen and Mass on the shore.

The pilgrimage landscape is changing significantly and there are many challenges to traditional pilgrimages. While numbers attending Whithorn are declining, Carfin, always popular, will only become more so with the imminent arrival of a relic of St Bernadette. Modern travel makes it easy to go on pilgrimage to Lourdes, Knock, Fatima, and Medjugorje. Longer duration pilgrimages, like walking the Camino de Santiago, are also made easier. However, our faith requires us to be hopeful and positive. This year marked the 1625 anniversary of Ninian's landing in Luce Bay, praying in the cave and dedicating his church to St Martin of Tours. Next year brings the 70th anniversary of the Galloway Diocesan Pilgrimage. This heritage and these special occasions offer us opportunities to promote the pilgrimage. Above all, we must never forget – God doesn't do numbers. One person was enough to save two wicked towns and the shepherd went to look for one lost sheep. The annual pilgrimage is about so much more than the numbers attending.

Congratulations

We celebrate two Golden and one Silver Jubilee

Father Eddie McGhee

Father Eddie McGhee celebrated his Golden Jubilee of his priestly ordination earlier this year and at the end of June he returned to Saltcoats where he had served for over 25 years in the former parish of St Brendan's and in St Mary's (Our Lady, Star of the Sea). He celebrated the Sunday Mass in St Mary's, received a presentation and attended a reception in the parish hall. Parishioners had prepared a buffet and there was an opportunity for Father Eddie to catch up with his old friends.



Father Stephen Latham



Father Stephen Latham celebrated the Silver Jubilee of his priestly ordination on Thursday 23rd June 2022 at a Mass of Thanksgiving in St Quivox' Church, Prestwick, in the presence of his brother priests, parishioners, family and friends.

Canon Archie Brown

Canon Archie Brown celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his priestly ordination on 8th July 2022 at a Mass of Thanksgiving in Our Lady of the Assumption and St Meddan's, Troon, in the presence of a number of priests from the diocese, family, friends and parishioners past and present.





Galloway Glimpses



Some photographs taken during a walk from Rockliffe to Kipford and in Wanlockhead. Thanks to Amy and her walking group. Sometimes you don't have to have bright sunshine to appreciate the beauty around you.



Pilgrimage News - 1

Looking back on some highlights of this year ... and looking forward in hope to next year.

On Sunday 12th June over 250 pilgrims travelled from across our diocese to take part in our pilgrimage day in Carfin Lourdes Grotto. This was the first time in many years that we had visited as a diocese and it was well worth the journey!

Due to the typical Scottish summer weather we had Mass in St Francis Xavier Church led by our pilgrimage director Father Gerald Donnelly and joined by homilist Father Jim Hayes, our Youth for Lourdes Director. Pilgrims were able to receive the Sacrament of the Sick during Mass, we even managed to have an impromptu Ave Maria following Communion.

There was the opportunity before the Rosary Procession to explore the grotto area and various chapels within the grounds, pilgrims also enjoyed the reliquary which holds hundreds of relics from saints from all ages. The weather held up for our Rosary Procession before heading back home to Galloway. It was a wonderful day coming together again and an event that we hope to make a regular occasion in the future. We can certainly say everyone had their Lourdes batteries well and truly re-charged to keep them going until next year!



pilgrimage day in Carfin – June 2022

Lourdes 2023 – Lourdes Hospitalite



Did Carfin inspire you to go to Lourdes? Our preparations have now begun for our long-awaited pilgrimage, the dates are Monday 3rd – Monday 10th July 2023. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for booking processes with our travel agent soon.

Have you always wanted to come to Lourdes and volunteer? Without helpers at all levels we would be unable to take assisted pilgrims to Lourdes, we are appealing for medical staff, particularly nurses. We also require men and women to be lay helpers and brancardiers whom assist with different aspects of care, such as logistics getting assisted pilgrims from A to B and helping with meals and entertainment.

The first volunteer sign up session was on Sunday 4th September but if you missed it and still want to be involved you can register your interest by emailing Suzy on glhpresident@aol.com. We hope to see you there!

Youth for Lourdes

The diocesan YfL team now invite young people aged from 4th year in Secondary school to aged 23 years to join us to begin our preparation to participate in the diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes, 3rd to 10th July 2023. The members of the Youth for Lourdes team will travel with the diocesan pilgrimage this year to assist them at the airport and through out the pilgrimage. We look forward to a great response. Our preparation begins very soon so please do get in touch and register using our QR code: go to <https://forms.gle/CupsmyMygBDZBJXY7>. The approximate cost will be £650 per person. We need all this time to get to know one another, prepare and fund raise.

Please sign-up today.



3rd-10th July 2023
approx cost: £650

NOW RECRUITING

Age: current 4th year to 23 years by July 2023.

Would you like to meet and work with a great bunch of young people your age?

Would you like to assist the sick and infirm on the next diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes?

**We are recruiting NOW-so scan our QR code to upload our Registration Form and we'll be in touch, or use this code to access our Registration Form-
<https://forms.gle/CupsmyMygBDZBJXY7>**



For a Registration Form or further information please contact us at:
Youth for Lourdes, St Teresa's, Glasgow Street, Dumfries, DG2 9DE. Tel: (01387) 252603
Email: youthforlourdes@gallowaydiocese.org.uk or Facebook: Youth for Lourdes (Galloway)

A ministry of the RC Diocese of Galloway. Charity Number: SC 010376

Pilgrimage News - 2

National Pilgrimage to the Holy Land 16th – 23rd October 2023

By Father David Borland, our Diocesan Pilgrimage Director

Thanks to Covid 19 and the resulting travel restrictions it is now four years since the Diocese of Galloway last travelled on pilgrimage to the Holy Land to visit the holy sites associated with Our Lord and show some solidarity with the Christians who live where Jesus once walked. It has been a difficult time for all of us here in Scotland.

I visited Bethlehem and Jerusalem earlier this year on a private visit to see my Palestinian friends and to visit a project associated with the charity Friends of the Holy Land, St Martha's House, a day-centre for elderly Christian ladies, most of whom are widows. While the welcome I received from my friends, the ladies in the day-centre and the wider Palestinian community was as warm and genuine as ever, I left the Holy Land this time with a great sense of sadness.

We in this country have faced a difficult few years; we are now facing more difficulties with the cost of living crisis that is developing. Our Palestinian Christian brothers and sisters have faced, and are facing, these very same problems – but they do not have an NHS, they do not have a government that has the resources to provide state pensions or payments towards fuel bills, they do not even have 24 hour access to drinking water or electricity – because the sources of both are controlled by another country. The Palestinian economy is completely dependent on pilgrims and tourists, and there have been none of these since 2019, so our friends have had no income other than from charities, and for a proud people this is soul destroying. All of these together left me with a heavy heart as I came home, in fact I still shed a tear when speaking of this. But I also came home with a determination to do something about it.

My initial thoughts were a Diocesan Pilgrimage to the Holy Land just after Easter in 2023, but then these plans quickly grew into the idea of a first Scottish National Pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Archbishop Nolan, a great supporter of the Holy Land for many years, took this idea to the Bishops' Conference of Scotland and the other Scottish



Bishops offered their full support and recognised the need to help our Palestinian Christian sisters and brothers. Unfortunately it has proved impossible to organise the trip in quite such a short period of time but, undaunted, the first Scottish National Pilgrimage to the Holy Land is now planned for October 2023.

Working with Laila Tours Ltd, a company owned and operated by a Palestinian Christian family in Bethlehem, and a division of Platinum Holidays Ltd, a fully ABTA and ATOL bonded tour operator based here in the UK, we are in the process of putting together a full eight day package for a Scottish National Pilgrimage to the Holy Land leaving on Monday October 16th and returning Monday October 23rd 2023. The cost of the pilgrimage, based on two people sharing a room in a 3 star hotels on a half-board basis, is expected to be about £1,800 per person.

More details will be made available as soon as they are finalised and will be published via parish bulletins and future editions of the Galloway Diocese News. Please consider taking part in this pilgrimage and showing your support for our Palestinian brothers and sisters. In the meantime please continue to pray for our friends in the Holy Land, knowing that you are thinking about them and praying for them means a great deal to them.



If you have any questions about the Holy Land please feel free to email Father David Borland at david.borland@gallowaydiocese.org.uk

Ordination to the Priesthood

St Teresa's Church, Dumfries, Friday 1st July 2022



It has been a great joy to have been Ordained a Priest of Galloway Diocese after seven years of formation. It can often be easy when training in Rome to lose sight of the reason for which we train, being so far from home, and so far from the people we are training to

serve. I have been greatly touched by the encouragement I have received in spite of the distance, by all of those present both in person and online for the Ordination and First Mass, and by the countless messages and cards of support I have received.

My Ordination in Dumfries, the first I believe in St Teresa's since 1977, was an evening filled with so much joy and grace it is hard to put into words. For me, one of the most poignant moments was during the Litany of the Saints – lying prostrate on the floor of the Church and hearing the invocation of the Saints. It was a moment in which I very much recognised the vocation to which I had been called, the total abandonment of self to God, to follow in God's will for my life, and in so doing, to allow God to use me, his imperfect instrument, to lead others closer to him. But in that moment, I was reminded as well that the priest does not exercise his ministry in isolation, but sustained by Christ, supported by the

witness of the Saints, and the witness and support of the faithful around him.

Throughout the weekend I was reminded of the community of the faithful which I have been a part of through baptism, and now that I am ordained to serve through Holy Orders. It was a great celebration throughout, both in St Teresa's and St Andrew's, and a great joy to be joined by so many faithful from around the diocese. It is a time which I will never forget, and it was an occasion which has given me great encouragement and reassurance as I embark in my new ministry in the weeks and months ahead.

I would also like to extend a particular word of thanks to Archbishop William Nolan of the Archdiocese of Glasgow for ordaining me a priest, a little over seven years after first accepting me as a seminarian for Galloway Diocese in 2015.



Photographs of the Ordination courtesy of John Donnelly



Mass of Thanksgiving

St Andrew's Church, Dumfries, Saturday 2nd July 2022

In St Andrew's, it was a great joy to celebrate my first Mass of Thanksgiving. To confect the Eucharist for the first time and to recognise at the moment of consecration Christ truly present in the Eucharist. This was a particularly humbling and powerful moment. The priest is ordained to serve and to bring Christ to others, and in a particular way through the Eucharist, and so to recognise Christ truly present at that moment is a somewhat indescribable feeling



Photographs of the Mass courtesy of Deacon Willie Hiddleston and David Buckley

Diocese of Galloway Youth Ministry

Two exciting events in
prospect



World Youth Day 2023

At last the Diocesan Youth Ministry Office World Youth Day team begins its' recruitment for young people across the diocese aged 16 to 25 years to sign-up to begin their preparation and fund raising work for the next International World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal. We plan to begin the two week pilgrimage journey on Wednesday 26th July 2023 coaching on the overnight ferry to Santander with visits to the famous Cathedral at Santiago Compestela and the great shrine of Our Lady in Fatima before participating in the World Youth Day events in Lisbon itself from 1st to 6th August heading back home to the diocese for 9th August.

Please scan the QR code or follow this link to register: <https://forms.gle/wJ4xvT2VLa3aw3xZ8>. Our preparation begins soon and we'd be delighted to have a strong team from the diocese participating in this wonderful youth festival.

Contact us for more information.

THE YOUTH MINISTRY OFFICE

Mary arose and went
with haste
Lk 1:39



NOW RECRUITING

A CELEBRATION OF WORLD YOUTH DAY 2023

WHEN: 26th July-9th August 2023

WHERE: Lisbon, Portugal

COST: approx. £750

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.

We are recruiting for this event now-our preparation will begin soon!

For more info use this QR code/link: <https://forms.gle/wJ4xvT2VLa3aw3xZ8>

Or email Fr Jim at: youth@gallowaydiocese.org.uk

Tel: 01387 252603

The Youth Ministry Office is a Ministry of the RC Diocese of Galloway. Charity Number: SC 010576.



National Youth Pilgrimage

On Saturday 24th September the diocesan youth offices have organised a Youth Pilgrimage in the beautiful area surrounding Dunkeld Cathedral and Birnam, where once the relics of St Columba had been kept to protect them from marauding Vikings! All young people aged 14-25 years are most welcome to come along on this wonderful day of short walks, wonderful

A free coach with pick-up points from across the diocese is available. Young people aged 14-25 years are welcome. No charge for the day- just bring a packed lunch! Contact the Youth Ministry Office to reserve a seat. Email: youth@gallowaydiocese.org.uk or Tel: 01387 252603

scenery and a chance to reflect and celebrate our Christian faith. The travel and day is free, just bring a packed lunch. Coaches will be leaving from Ayr, Kilmarnock, Saltcoats and Dumfries.

Please contact the Youth Ministry Office to book a seat on email: youth@gallowaydiocese.org.uk or call: 01387 252603.

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

RC Diocese of Galloway. Charity Number: SC010576

Are you called to be a priest?

By Father Martin Chambers, Galloway Vocations Director

"Remember, God may be calling you!"



A teacher came up to me recently and asked what the process is for becoming a priest in Galloway Diocese. And I thought to myself maybe not everyone knows how to apply for Seminary where the training for priesthood begins. So here's a wee summary ...

The first thing that happens is that the candidate's heart is stirred – by maybe a sermon at Mass or a conversation with a friend. Before applying for seminary, a candidate will generally have thought about it for quite some time. The candidate will then speak to his parish priest who will pass the candidate's name on to me, Father Martin Chambers, the Galloway Vocations Director.

Each year there is a formal nationwide process for application to Seminary. The first event will be an 'Information Day' which often takes place at the Glasgow

University Catholic Chaplaincy; this is where the candidate meets other Scottish candidates and other Vocations Directors from across the country. After this there are three 'Discernment Weekends' which generally take place at the Schoenstatt Retreat Centre in the Campsie Hills. The topics investigated in these weekends range from the call everyone receives in baptism through to the specific call to priesthood. During this whole process, each candidate – with the help of his own Vocations Director – will be completing an application form looking at, among other information, why he feels called to the priesthood. During the second of those weekends, there is a formal interview led by Father Tom Kilbride, the national Vocations Director. The interview panel will then present their interview reflections to the candidate's bishop. It is the bishop who has the ultimate decision about whether to accept a candidate or not for seminary.

If the decision is for a candidate to go forward to seminary, the autumn months are taken up with the process of getting things ready for travelling to the Seminary in Salamanca, Spain where seminary life begins in January with the initial 6-month Propaedeutic Course.

So there it is, how to apply for seminary. I wonder if anyone is reading this little article thinking, "*maybe God is calling me onwards to priesthood.*" If so, please speak to your parish priest or contact me, Father Martin Chambers at: martin.chambers@gallowaydiocese.org.uk

Remember, God may be calling you!



The Whithorn Pilgrimage

past, present and looking to the future

Whithorn was a famous place of pilgrimage in the Middle Ages but the pilgrimages ceased after the Reformation. Revived in 1924, they are now held annually on the last Sunday of August. It was in September 1953 that Mass was celebrated for the first time at Saint Ninian's Cave. Bishop Joseph McGee said Mass at the altar set within the Cave in front of a large banner of Saint Ninian. Canon McQuillan of Troon told the story of Saint Ninian to what was estimated to be the largest pilgrimage since the war.

Over fifty buses and several private cars conveyed more than 2,000 pilgrims. The organisation was by the Saint Vincent de Paul Society. Next year, 2023, sees the 70th anniversary of this modern pilgrimage. 2024 marks the centenary of the first Whithorn pilgrimage since the Reformation. It seems important to celebrate both of these significant anniversaries in a special way.

The upcoming pilgrimages of 2023 and 2024 mark special anniversaries in the recent history of the influence of St Ninian. Please keep the date of the last Sunday in August (27 August 2023 and 25 August 2024) when we hope to see you at Mass near St Ninian's Cave.

Photographs of this year's pilgrimage are overleaf.



Return to St Whithorn 2022

On Sunday 28th August 2022, some 250 pilgrims gathered on the shore near St Ninian's Cave to celebrate Mass.



The pilgrimages of the last two years have been muted as a result of the pandemic. In 2020 there was no public Mass but some faithful pilgrims came to the cave to pray to keep alive the unbroken tradition of recent years. In 2021 a smaller pilgrimage took place of around 160 or so pilgrims. This year nearly 250 pilgrims gathered for Mass on the shore, with another 30 or so attending Mass in the church in Whithorn – the green shoots are beginning to grow larger again! Many travelled by coach from their parishes. Mass was celebrated by Bishop Brian McGee of Argyll and the Isles. In the homily he spoke about the Christian life as an ongoing encounter with the person of Jesus who desires to live in close relationship with us. The weather was kind to the pilgrims with gentle clouds shielding them from the sun on a warm afternoon. St Andrew's Deanery co-ordinated the liturgy and led the music. The 91st Ayrshire Scouts from St Joseph's, Kilmarnock steadfastly fulfilled their commitment to preparing the path to the beach, cutting back the shrubs, trees and bushes, and setting up the altar and shelters for the celebration of Mass.





As a diocese we are grateful, once again, to a number of people who make the pilgrimage possible: thank you to the Johnston Stewart family for access to the Physgill Estate, to Christopher Nicholson who farms the land and makes fields available for parking, to Marjorie Clarke for her duties as sacristan, and to Dougie Williams for provision of the tractor and trailer to convey equipment to the shore.

Thank you also to Edward Flannaghan for the photographs.



Synod on Synodality in Galloway Diocese

the synthesis for our diocesan phase of the Synod has been submitted.
A first step in this new way of “being Church”

Writing this at the start of August, some six weeks after the synthesis for our diocesan phase of the Synod was submitted to the Bishops’ Conference, it already feels like a long time ago that the diocesan team were living and breathing the whole process. It was certainly with a sense of accomplishment mingled with relief that the final document was emailed to the General Secretary and published on our diocesan website (www.gallowaydiocese.org.uk), where it is available on the home page to download and read.

The synthesis begins with a page dedicated to facts and statistics about our diocese, the purpose of which was to contextualise the information contained in the synthesis. Following an introduction which provides some background to how, when and under what circumstances the synod took place, the report is divided into the three “pillars” of the Church identified in the Synod on Synodality’s Vademecum – namely, Communion, Participation and Mission. Some key points from each of these pillars are highlighted below.

Communion: The importance, but also the limited numbers, of clergy was widely acknowledged, as was the need for laity to provide better practical support to our parish communities. Almost every synod response highlighted the desperate need to engage with young people and their families more effectively. The wide range of personal preferences for the celebration of Mass was reported. A desire for increased mixing of parishes, and for increased ecumenical work, also formed part of this section.

Participation: The need for the Church to listen, and for that listening to result in tangible action, was highlighted here. The role of women, the obstacles to speaking out in defense or support of our faith, and a need for better organisation of our

parish ministries, were included. Good leadership models, opportunities to re-build post-Covid, and varied responses on how lay gifts and talents can be used for the purpose of building our communities were also reported.

Mission: The reality that large numbers of people have been ‘left behind’ was highlighted in this section, with attention given to individual demographics, and to some practical suggestions received. In particular, the different challenges faced by our urban versus rural communities was reported here.

To conclude the synthesis, the diocesan synod team emphasised that although we have completed the work entrusted to us last September, the diocesan phase of the synod was simply a first, small step in this new way of “being Church”. It is hoped that the diocesan synthesis will provide the first stepping stone for individual parishes to build upon the synod encounters already held earlier this year. As such, appendices were attached to the synthesis containing a small selection of responses received (Appendix A); demographics identified for outreach by synod participants (Appendix B); and practical suggestions received from participants (Appendix C). We encourage all parishes to use the synthesis as a starting point for further synod encounters in individual parishes, and to continue in the synodal way while we wait for the outcome of the Synod in October 2023.

Our diocesan synthesis has been considered, alongside those from the other seven Scottish dioceses, by a national team comprised of two members of the clergy and two lay women. A national synthesis will soon be published which will be available to download.

What price memories ...

Amy Kinnard, who so often sends us lovely photographs for the Galloway Glimpses feature, sent this lovely study of a rose, called Doris Tysterman, which she bought and planted in her garden on the day her father died. It has been flourishing now for 31 years, and is still blooming. Amy says “So, my rose – reminding me always of my father – keeps me smiling after all this time”.



Safeguarding In the Catholic Church

Helena Rameckers, our former Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, takes her leave of the diocesan team to take up her new post as Head of Safeguarding Training with the new Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (SCSSA),



At the end of the National Safeguarding Webinar in October 2021, Bishop Hugh Gilbert announced the bishops' decision to establish a new Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (SCSSA), which would be established as a private company operating independently of the Catholic Church. The precise remit of the SCSSA will take some time to develop, however a number of underpinning principles were established: to take account of the perspectives of survivors of abuse in the development of safeguarding policy and practice; to promote national safeguarding standards, and to monitor compliance with these standards; to lead safeguarding learning; to develop processes to deal with whistleblowing and complaints about responses to safeguarding allegations; and to manage communications on national safeguarding policy and practice.

In the months that followed the initial announcement, an intensive process of public consultation, recruitment of a chair and board members, and employment of agency staff was undertaken. In June 2022, following a rigorous (and stressful!) application and interview process, the announcement was made that agency staff had been selected: Mr Paul Donaldson of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office would be the new Director of Safeguarding; and I would be leaving my post as Galloway's Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser to become the new Head of Safeguarding Training.

In many ways, my decision to transition to the new National Agency was straightforward. The opportunity to help shape the culture of care which safeguarding has, in an intentional way, been steadily growing in our Catholic

communities is a privilege. Working with different groups of people who strive to be Christ's hands and voice in our communities, and helping them to understand that safeguarding is not an onerous "add on" but a real living out of Christ's commandment to love one another, is deeply rewarding and, I believe, beneficial for all. It is a testament to the outstanding team who work hard in Galloway to keep our communities safe that I will be taking several excellent safeguarding initiatives which have been established here, and developing them for national implementation.

In spite of all the reasons I had for making the leap, it was the outstanding team we have in our diocese that gave me cause to hesitate. One of the team expressed regret at my leaving by saying, "our team is only as good as its leader". I think the converse is also true, however – a leader is only as good as the team they have. It is for this reason that I am certain the next Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for Galloway will find themselves in a role that is as rewarding as it is challenging, and as energising as it is demanding. At the time of writing this, the closing date for applications for the post has passed, and interviews have been arranged. I hope everyone looks forward to reading the safeguarding section in the next issue of the Galloway Diocese News to learn more about our new DSA; I know I will!

Tony Fisher has been appointed as the new Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, and he will take up his post later in September.

P7s return to Whithorn

St Ninian's Primary, Newton Stewart, St Columba's, Annan, St Teresa's, Dumfries and St Andrew's, Dumfries came together on Thursday 16th June for their annual Primary seven pilgrimage to Whithorn. This is the first time since Covid that this traditionally annual event has been able to take place. It is used as a way of coming together before the primary seven children move to secondary school. Mass was celebrated on the beach, led by Father Gerald Donnelly, as thanks for the children's years in primary school and as a way of looking forward together to their next chapter in school.

After Mass, lunch was taken, followed by some fun time together in the beautiful surroundings of the beach. Unfortunately, St Ninian's Cave is still closed due to rock fall. Some rather drookit P7 pupils then returned to the buses for the long journey home.



We all hope this marks a return to our annual trip to Whithorn.



Praying with the saints – St Francis of Assisi

By Father Martin Chambers

His whole life was a prayer of love for God: in nature, in a simple way of life and in the Sacraments of the Church

From a very early age I, like many people, knew the prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi through the hymn *'Make me a channel of your peace.'* This hymn was written in 1967 by the South African hymn writer, Sebastian Temple. It has spoken deeply to many people down through the years about taking care of Creation and finding God in nature, sentiments that are at the heart of the prayer life and the spirituality of Saint Francis himself. In this article, therefore, I hope to look into the life and attitudes of Saint Francis of Assisi, sharing some thoughts about how our prayer lives can also reflect the Saint's life.

Saint Francis Conversion

Saint Francis was born into a wealthy family where he was brought up enjoying the finer things of medieval life. Although he learnt how to spend money lavishly, his displays of disillusionment with the world's values came even in his teenage years. This is exemplified in the *'story of the beggar'* where, after selling cloth and velvet on behalf of his father, he ran after a beggar and gave the beggar everything he had in his pockets. In his own words, Saint Francis speaks of his conversion:

*'The Lord granted me, Brother Francis, to see lepers.
And the Lord himself led me among them
and I had mercy upon them.*

*And when I was with the lepers
all that seemed bitter in me changed into sweetness of heart.'*

Like many people of that era, he took up a life of penance to distance himself from worldly values: he lived on the outskirts of Assisi working manually to repair churches; he adopted a hermit's garb, simple shoes and a staff. However, it was only when he heard the Gospel passage where Jesus says that the way of perfection consisted in giving everything away to "Come, follow me," that Saint Francis understood the perfect way for him to follow Jesus was in embracing a life of complete poverty.

Even at the stage we can see that prayer for Saint Francis consisted in the formal prayer life of the Church – he adopted a monastic and rigorous prayer schedule – but also in meeting the needs of the poorest and neediest on the streets around him. In attending to both his prayer life and to charitable



exercises, Saint Francis found himself close to God.

In seeking Christ in our own daily lives, there is a call for all of us, therefore, to pledge ourselves to both daily prayer and daily charity.

Saint Francis' Prayer Life

It would be easy to conclude that Saint Francis' call to us is a call to give up material wealth and to share what we have with those around us. It would be easy to say it is all about material goods. That, of course, is only part of the story of his life. His idea of poverty was not simply an economic choice but rather a **'way of life'** for everyone to come close to Christ, God's own Son, who came on earth to show the world the way to happiness and love. Saint

Francis followed the way of poverty so that he could empty himself in the same way that Christ emptied himself as given to us in Philippians 2:

'In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus. His state was divine, yet he did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave.'

Saint Francis had a great love for the nativity of Christ because he saw in the manger scene the humility and service of God that we are all called to follow. He also loved to meditate on the crucifixion of Christ to see how far Christ would go in his service and love of God's children.

For Saint Francis, his formal prayers in the monastery as well as his works of charity outside in the community were ways in which he could come close to Christ. In this way, the saint teaches you and me that Christ comes alive inside the Church but also outside in the community.

Prayer Lessons from Saint Francis

A key point from Saint Francis' own prayer life is that he understood that to live spiritually was not to distance yourself from the world but to immerse yourself in the world. For Saint Francis, spirituality and a prayer life was about *'living according to the Spirit rather than living according to the flesh'* ... living by Gospel values and not simply by worldly values. In this way, the saint teaches that people can find God in daily life, through nature and in all circumstances of daily life. Daily life and nature itself become a daily prayer.



The Teaching of Pope Francis

by Father William McFadden

In appointing women to the Dicastery the pope has given a voice in the leadership of the Church and challenges the understanding of who we are as the Church today.

Every so often Pope Francis makes a statement which on the surface might not appear to be very much, but which in reality is in fact quite momentous. He made such a pronouncement on 13th July, when he appointed three women to the Vatican's Dicastery for Bishops. The Dicastery, which was known as the Congregation for Bishops until the reforms Francis himself brought into play at Pentecost this year, is one of 16 departments responsible for helping the pope in his governance of the universal Church. It has the task of receiving feedback from the consultations from local churches instigated by the nuncios throughout the world, and to recommend to the pope priests across the world who might serve as bishops. As such, the Dicastery has a significant influence on both the local and the universal Church.

In appointing women to the Dicastery, the pope has given a voice in the leadership of the Church which up to now has not been present. It is a decision consistent with Francis' repeated desire to open up the Vatican to include women in positions of responsibility, as seen in his recent appointments of three religious sisters and one lay woman theologian to high-ranking positions within the Vatican.

In appointing women to roles which previously had been restricted to men, and ordained men at that, the pope is seeking not only to clericalise decision-making in the church, but is challenging the ethos and culture of the Roman Curia, and indeed of the whole Church. Francis' reforms are not just about rearranging the organisational chart of the Vatican, or about making decisions about levels of management. Rather, they are part of his drive to renew the Church and to harness the gifts and talents of all her members, lay and clergy, women and men, alike. That women will now assist the pope in choosing the next generation of Church



leaders is more theological than managerial, and offers a vision of the Church which must then be reflected in parishes and dioceses, where a synodal model which listens to the voices of all people, especially women, becomes the norm for the Church of today. There are profound issues at stake in transforming the Church in light of Pope Francis' teaching and guidance. It is about empowerment, about enablement, about releasing the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The appointment of a few women to various roles within the Vatican will not immediately change the Church. Indeed, at its worst, it can seem as tokenistic and minimal. However, the actions of Pope Francis challenge the understanding of who we are as the Church today, and present a clear shift in priorities and imagination. Perhaps this is indeed a very small gesture, but if it inspires further meaningful and significant change in the place of women in the Church, then it might just prove to be a remarkable act by a remarkable pope.

Saint Francis' whole life was a prayer of love for God: he loved God in the animals and plant of nature; he loved God in a simple and humble way of life; and he loved God in the Sacraments of the Church, especially in the Eucharist.

I would encourage you all to re-read the life of Saint Francis, to reflect on the choices he made for his own life and ask yourself what choices you could make. I would encourage you to reflect on his love of nature and of animals and see in that lifestyle a closeness to God that you and I can copy.

And I would invite to spend some time in quiet prayer, reflecting on the following phrases which are prayer reflections Saint Francis himself wrote down:

- ✠ *If God can work through me, then God can work through anyone;*
- ✠ *A single sunbeam is enough to drive away many shadows;*
- ✠ *Start by doing what is necessary, then what is possible and suddenly you will be doing the impossible;*
- ✠ *While proclaiming peace with your lips, be careful to have it more fully on your heart.*



Reflection on The Diaconate

Deacon William Corbett looks back on ten years of service in Galloway

On the 18th of August 2022 I will be celebrating ten years as an ordained Permanent Deacon. Those ten years have flown by, or is it just I am getting older?

It seems only yesterday that I was being ordained by Bishop John Cunningham, in St Margaret's Cathedral. It was a wonderful day, full of memories. The church was filled with family, friends, parishioners, work colleagues, and many of the local clergy, with the Galloway Diocesan Choir singing. Bishop John informed me that I was being appointed to St John's the Evangelist in Cumnock under the mentorship of Father Stephen McGrattan. I was to assist him also with St Thomas' in Muirkirk and St Patrick's in Auchinleck. Father Stephen was a good mentor and he taught me how to do everything 'by the book' and also gave me many opportunities to serve.

When Bishop John retired from ministry, I was able to assist at the ordination of Bishop William Nolan, in the Grand Hall, in Kilmarnock. Bishop Nolan appointed me as chaplain of Ayr University Hospital while still retaining the chaplaincy at Crosshouse hospital. By this time, my heart was in serving others and I found my daily job very frustrating. I decided, in consultation and agreement with my wife Julie, to retire early at the age of sixty.

After four years in Cumnock I was moved to St Margaret's in Ayr. It is never easy moving; I had made a lot of friends in the town and villages, and I was in a comfort zone. It was painful to leave them, I had been made so welcome there from day one.

On arriving at St Margaret's, I found that my anxieties of beginning at a new parish were unfounded. Father David Borland, the Cathedral's administrator, and now my new mentor, made me very welcome. Although, as I had already noticed, all priests do things a little differently, I knew I would learn to adapt. Again, I had landed in a busy parish with Father David covering St Margaret's and St Paul's in Ayr, with St Francis Xavier's in Waterside. I continued with chaplaincy at both hospitals, and assisted at four Masses each weekend. I am currently running, with an excellent team, our RCIA programme, and I am the Spiritual Director to the SSVP, and I attend most of their meetings.

During the Covid 19 lockdown, I continued assisting Bishop Nolan at Mass on Sundays, streamed on Facebook. After the worst of the pandemic was over and due to the fact, I am getting older, I now assist at just two Masses per weekend. Six years ago we had our first grandchild, Olivia; since then, during the lockdown we have another two, Evie and Finlay. I have given up the chaplaincy so that my wife and I can babysit to allow my daughters to work. An extremely rewarding but sometimes difficult job, but it is still service.

The last ten years have gone fast, but it has been satisfying and rewarding. I have made many new friends and the parishioners have been so accepting and welcoming. Being deacon is so important to me and I am glad that I chose the



path, which without the support of my wife it may have never happened. I have celebrated quite a number of marriages and baptisms and sadly very many funerals. It has been a great honour for me to celebrate both my daughters' marriages and to baptise my three grandchildren. These events were joyous and very emotional.

I have seven years to go before I retire from clerical work at the age of seventy-five, I am sure time will go just as fast as the last ten years. I have been truly fortunate with having Fathers McGrattan and Borland as my parish priests; I have learned much from them, and will continue to do so. It has equally been very humbling receiving cards and letters and words of thanks over the years from many parishioners. It is a privilege to be able to serve so many people and I plan to continue to do so for as long as I am able.

God Bless.

Your Galloway Diocese News

At the Galloway News we want to hear from you, the priests and parishioners of Galloway.

You can send your items to the editor at any time or look out for the 'email hotline' and 'reply' to the reminder email.

Send your contribution before
11th November 2022

for inclusion in the Advent edition to:
**The editor, The Galloway Diocese News,
Candida Casa,
8 Corsehill Road, Ayr, KA7 2ST.
Email: gnews@gallowaydiocese.org.uk**

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FEAST OF SAINT NINIAN

Did you know...?

A man named Ninian went to visit Scotland around 400 AD to tell people about Jesus and Christianity. He built a church in the town of Whithorn and called it "Candida Casa" which means 'Shining White House'. Ninian became the first Bishop of Galloway and later became a Saint.



Saint Ninian wanted to spread God's message across Scotland to make the world a better place.

Write or draw what you would do to make the world a better place!

COLOURING SHEET



Saint Ninian,
We pray that you help us to spread the Good News of Christ to our family and friends, just like you did.
Amen.

