



Galloway Diocese **NEWS**

Summer
digital
Edition

June
2021

Receive the gospel of Christ
whose herald you have become.



*Believe what you read
Teach what you believe
And practice what you teach.*

Congratulations to Kevin Rennie on his ordination to the Transitional Diaconate.
More on centre pages



The Bishop Writes

The Holy Land Coordination pilgrimage did not go ahead this year and Bishop Nolan reflects that the Holy Land today is is very much the land of the suffering Christ.



I missed getting to Gaza this year. The lockdown prevented me from going there in January with the Holy Land Coordination pilgrimage.

This is a pilgrimage like no other. When the dozen or more bishops of the Coordination have their annual trip to the Holy Land it is not your usual pilgrimage. We are not there to visit the sites or the sacred shrines, we are not there to trace the footsteps of Jesus, we are not there to see ancient churches, we are there to see people. It is the Christian people and not the holy places that we go to visit.

And that means we go to places the normal pilgrim would never visit, such as Gaza. It takes a bit of determination to get



Bishop Nolan entering Gaza

to Gaza. There are a lot of bureaucratic obstacles to overcome. So it is not easy to get in. But it is even harder to get out. One Bishop had to have five attempts to pass through the body scanner, even taking off his clerical collar. And luggage is not just put through a scanner – the bags have

to emptied, all the contents taken out and put in a tray.

Trying to live a normal life is hard for the people there. They cannot leave Gaza to visit family and friends without permission, and that permission is not readily granted. At Christmas many Christians wanted to go to Bethlehem or visit family in the West Bank. In some families the children were given permits to leave but not their parents.

In East Jerusalem, where in May this year the recent trouble flared up, we heard from human rights groups how in Palestinian neighbourhoods it is practically impossible to get planning permission or building warrants, yet Israeli settlers have no such problem. We were also told of the recent Israeli law which allowed Palestinians to be evicted from homes they had occupied since 1948. It was this issue that sparked the recent street protests.

And the West Bank, supposedly the basis of a future Palestinian state, becomes more and more fragmented as Jewish settlements increase.

Every Coordination visit is both uplifting and depressing. Depressing because each year that we go this situation gets worse and the living conditions of the Christians deteriorate and the longed for peace looks less likely. The Christians suffer from the discrimination that affects all Palestinians in Israel.



Bishops visiting East Jerusalem

What is uplifting though is that we meet so many good people. On my last visit in particular I was impressed by some of the outstanding women we encountered. There was the Jewish lady who told us all about the discrimination faced by the Palestinians in East Jerusalem. Her passion for justice and her desire for all communities to live together in harmony was evident. There were the Mother Theresa sisters in Gaza looking after severely handicapped children with great love and commitment. There were the Comboni sisters in Bethany working with Bedouin women and refugees who had suffered abuse.

But above all the great inspiration came from the parishioners we met in Gaza and Ramallah. Struggling to raise their families in difficult circumstances, facing discrimination, but showing a strength of faith by resisting the temptation to be bitter and resentful, and somehow or other keeping hope alive in their hearts.

For all Christians the Holy Land is important because it is the land of Christ's birth, but today, for the Christians living there, it is very much the land of the suffering Christ.



A Jewish human rights worker explaining the situation in East Jerusalem

"Soon afterwards Mary got ready and hurried off to a town in the hill country of Judaea."

I really like the Visitation story, it contains so much food for thought and reflection. At first sight, it seems out of place in the midst of the Easter season, Pentecost and celebrations of the Body and Blood of Christ. However, like a surprising number of our Feast days, it appears in its chronological place.

How vibrant is the opening sentence of St Luke's description of the Visitation. I often think it is like watching a TV drama. I can feel the rush of warmth and kindness, the sudden urgency of love that sent a young newly pregnant girl hurrying over the hills. Those early days, in which she rose so impulsively, were the days in which Christ was being formed in her; her impulse was his impulse. Many women, if they were expecting a child, would consider it foolhardy to hurry over the hills on a visit of pure kindness. The Mother of God considered no such thing. Elizabeth was going to have a child, too, and although Mary's own child was God, she could not forget Elizabeth's need – almost incredible to us, but characteristic of her.

I also think that Mary teaches us a lesson in *friendship and the gift of time*. She didn't arrive at her cousin's house and then immediately announce that she only had a short while to stay. She remained with Elizabeth for a long time. These prolonged visits are what most of us crave in this social media and pandemic period of fear and uncertainty. We miss the days of leisurely talks that invite us to laugh, to gaze, to sit in silence, to appreciate a sunset, to reminisce. Friendships based on frenetic busyness are sadly superficial and leave us in the wake of more loneliness. But when we can sit with another and just be together without needing to rush about and be somewhere else – that is, indeed, the true gift of charity.

In response to her cousin's greeting, Elizabeth reacts by speaking those graceful words, which countless voices will go



A mural from the Church of the Visitation in Ein Karem

on to pray, in countless languages, many billions of times in the centuries since and in the ages to come: "Blessed are you among women, and Blessed is the fruit of your womb."

Filled with the Holy Spirit she marvels aloud that she has been greatly honoured by a visit from the mother of her God. I sometimes wonder how did Elizabeth herself know

what had happened to Our Lady? What made her realise that this little cousin who was so familiar to her was the mother of her God? Did she too have a visit from the Angel? I like to think that she knew it by the child within herself, by the quickening into life which was a leap of joy. As yet unborn, John recognised and acknowledged his Messiah.

Elizabeth is a prophet; Mary is indeed blessed among women, and her fruit has indeed changed the world. Mary's humility instinctively deflects Elizabeth's edifying words and she breaks out in that sublime canticle of praise and thanksgiving, the Magnificat, proclaiming prophetically that henceforth she would be venerated down through the centuries. She praises the source of all goodness, God, rather than the goodness of her own generosity. Mary leads us back to discover anew the source of all truth, goodness, and beauty. Celebrating the Visitation is a fitting end to Mary's month of May.



We remember in our prayers all the children throughout the Diocese who are making their First Holy Communion this summer.

Things are not the same as usual but whether on their own or in small groups all the children will be welcomed into their parish communities. We assure them of our prayers and wish them well on their journey of faith.



The Magnificat in many languages in the courtyard of the Church of the Visitation

Sixty years of priesthood

Bishop Emeritus John Cunningham of Galloway celebrates the sixtieth anniversary of his priestly ordination on 29th June.

By Father Stephen McGrattan

During his years in Paisley diocese, Father and later Monsignor Cunningham was remembered as a kind, gentle and faithful pastor in the parishes and the convent he served. He was assistant priest in Our Lady of Lourdes, Bishopton (1964-69), chaplain to Moredun Convent (1969-74), assistant priest in St Columba's, Renfrew (1974-86), Officialis of the Scottish National Tribunal (1986-92), and parish priest of St Patrick's, Greenock (1992-2004). Father Cunningham was nominated prelate of honour in 1994 – bestowing on him the title of Monsignor – and a prelate of honour in 1999. From 1997-2004 he served as vicar general of Paisley diocese. He was nominated bishop of Galloway on 7th April 2004.

Bishop Cunningham was ordained the seventh bishop of Galloway on 28th May 2004 in Good Shepherd Cathedral, Ayr. The principal consecrator was Cardinal Keith Patrick O'Brien with Bishop Emeritus Maurice Taylor and Bishop John Mone as co-consecrators. Fittingly, Bishop Cunningham's two brothers Canons James and Thomas Cunningham served as the assisting priests. The ordination Mass on a warm evening in late spring was an occasion of joy and celebration for the whole diocese, the last episcopal ordination having taken place a generation – some 23 years – previously. The priests of Paisley and Galloway dioceses gathered in great number along with clergy from other places, family and friends. Although Galloway's Cathedral had capacity for around 600 people, a marquee had to be erected in the grounds to broadcast the event to more of the faithful. Hospitality was provided afterwards in the suite at Ayr Racecourse.

Bishop Cunningham chose as his episcopal motto “Congregare in unum” (to bring together as one) from the Holy Thursday offertory antiphon *Ubi Caritas*. In his early days as bishop, he recognised the value that the ministry of permanent diaconate could bring to Galloway. Soon after, three candidates began their formation and were later ordained, and others followed the same path in subsequent years.

The condition of the fabric of Good Shepherd Cathedral had deteriorated over many years. Although Bishop Cunningham had fond memories of his ordination Mass there, he pursued the efforts of his predecessor to petition the Holy Father to move the *cathedra* (bishop's chair) to St Margaret's Church in Ayr. Permission was granted in February 2007 and the new Cathedral of St Margaret was re-dedicated on the following 14th September in a solemn Mass in the presence of the bishops of Scotland and large numbers of faithful from all parts of the diocese.

Bishop Cunningham took part in the diocesan pilgrimages to Lourdes and to the Holy Land, enjoying the spiritual and



pastoral opportunities as well as spending time socially with the priests and pilgrims. He also enjoyed the pilgrimages to Whithorn, a place he last visited as a young boy.

‘Embracing the Future’ was the name given to the discussions and preparations of priests and lay people to meet the needs of the future. Bishop Cunningham actively encouraged the groups involved in preparing for the pastoral, vocational and material needs of the years ahead.

When Bishop Cunningham travelled to Rome in 2010 to meet Pope Benedict for their five-yearly *ad limina* visit, the Holy Father confirmed he would meet them again with the Catholics of Scotland on their native soil later the same year. The Papal Visit inspired and strengthened the faithful in Scotland.

When Bishop Cunningham retired at the time of the appointment of Bishop Nolan, he carried the burden of poor health. He has spent the years of his retirement in the Little Sisters of the Poor in Greenock where he is well cared for and content.

As he reaches the milestone of sixty years of ministry, the Church in Galloway gives thanks for the fruits of his priesthood and wishes him every blessing.

Safeguarding In Galloway Diocese

Consider yourself invited

by Mari Biondi, a Diocesan Safeguarding trainer

It is always nice to be invited; whether it's a wedding, a party or just a coffee, it's nice to be included. I would like to invite YOU to be part of the diocese's team of volunteers.

I became a member of the Church 23 years ago, and if you had told me then that I would become a volunteer Safeguarding Trainer, I would have laughed. I wouldn't have thought I was qualified.

I became Parish Safeguarding Coordinator in 2005. A few years ago I decided to attend the 'Training for Trainers' course and, as they say, the rest is history. The course was daunting – what had I let myself in for? Tina Campbell (who ran the course) was excellent. The training was hard at times, but the chocolate helped, and the laughs we had and friendships we formed made it well worth it. All the trainers on the course came from different backgrounds, but we all had a willingness to learn and to support each other, and we still all keep in touch.

The part I love about being a trainer is meeting all the fantastic volunteers in our parishes. How lucky we are to have such dedicated people! It also amazes me how many years of volunteering have taken place in our parishes; some people have volunteered for more years than I have been born! As our Church communities begin to re-open fully, could you volunteer in your parish?

Please speak to your parish priest and parish Safeguarding Coordinator, who will explain our safeguarding induction process and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to find out more about joining our brilliant team of diocesan safeguarding trainers, please contact safeguarding.adviser@gallowaydiocese.org.uk, or call 01292 266750. Please, **consider yourself invited**.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Team cannot talk about Safeguarding in this issue without thanking Gerry McCabe, not only for his work over the past five years, but also for his support for the whole team, his words of wisdom, and his friendship.

Goodbye from Gerry

As I step back from the Safeguarding Adviser role I would like to take the opportunity to say thank you to so many of you for your work and commitment to Safeguarding in our diocese. Without that it would not have been possible to have promoted and progressed the positive culture that is now increasingly being evidenced in our parish communities.

Helena Rameckers, who many of you know, took over as Safeguarding Adviser from 1st May, and we will be finishing some elements of work before I head off at the end of the month.

The structure of Safeguarding, with clear strategic direction and operational management, is well placed to take on the challenges that will continue to be part of the Safeguarding mission of the diocese.

Please know that you have my sincere thanks for all that you do to keep Safeguarding live in our parishes.

Gerry McCabe



Close to my heart

Jim McKendrick remembers the Cathedral of Santiago..

The Camino de Santiago, or the Way of St James, is an ancient pilgrimage trail dating from the 9th century leading to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela where legend has it that the remains of the Apostle, Saint James the Great, were buried. The cathedral is also home to the famous Botafumeiro, a giant incense thurible dating back to the mid 19th century and is the largest censer in the world, with a weight of 80 kg and a height of 1.60 m.

It dispenses clouds of incense through the use of a pulley mechanism. Eight tiraboleiros, clad in red robes, pull the ropes and bring it into an intensely quick swinging motion. The Botafumeiro swings impressively across the Main Altar on special dates and special occasions. Luckily, the Mass I attended was one such occasion.

I have so many glorious memories of this holy place. The stunning cathedral; embracing the statue of St James, worn thin in places by the hugs of thousands and thousands of pilgrims; descending behind the main altar into the crypt and viewing the remains of St James; the huge Botafumeiro belching out clouds of incense as it swings up and down the main aisle.





Charity in Action

The Ecuador Trust

the Impact of the epidemic

Many parishes, schools and individuals in the diocese support charitable and fundraising projects in the UK and around the world. In this edition we read about the **Ecuador Trust**, set up in 2006 by Father Martin Chambers to support those who live in the poorest conditions in Ecuador.

It's not every day that Ecuador makes the front page of UK newspapers but that was the case last April as stories started to emerge of how Covid was affecting the poorest people in the shanty towns of Guayaquil. At the outbreak of the pandemic, pictures emerged of coffins piled up in the streets with hospitals and morgues at full capacity in Ecuador.

There is no national health system so any medicines or hospital treatment costs money which the poor people do not have. Often if they have to choose between buying

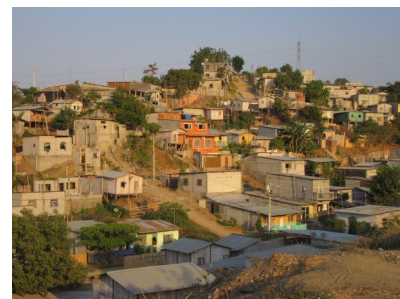


medicine or buying food for the family, they will choose to feed their children; they can worry about their health at a later stage. Furthermore, the conditions in the shanty towns only worsened during the pandemic: many houses are made of bamboo-slatted walls where the air-borne Covid can easily spread.

Like many other countries, education in Ecuador moved online. However, this caused further problems as families couldn't afford the necessary laptops or even pay for the internet connections. All of this on top of the great unemployment in the area which has forced families to sell their own furniture to feed their children. They will have debts for years to come.

At the same time, though, there has been an incredible sense of resilience and hope: communities come together to help the poorest in their midst. Families who do not have a lot to their name stretch out the hand of love to those nearest to them who are in greater need. Once again it is the poorest people in our world who are teaching the wealthier nations what values are truly necessary for living: dignity, solidarity and service.

In the midst of the pandemic, the Ecuador Trust has been able to help people in various ways such as: paying the school fees of the poorest children, feeding school children at a take-away lunch club, and giving food parcels to needy families.



How can you help? Please send your donations to:

Father Martin Chambers,
St Matthew's Church, Grassyards Road, New Farm Loch,
Kilmarnock, KA3 7SH.

Cheques should be made payable to the 'Martin Chambers Ecuador Trust'.

You can also donate online at: www.justgiving.com/mcet

Get Out to Help Out

St Joseph's Academy doesn't let lockdown stop their fundraising efforts.
report by Joseph Davidson, S3

The PE Department at St Joseph's Academy, Kilmarnock, organised a fundraiser during Lent called 'Get Out to Help Out' to raise money for SCIAF's 'WEE Box, Big Change' campaign. Pupils and staff walked, cycled and jogged. As well as raising money for a fantastic cause, the initiative helped staff and students to keep fit and healthy during lockdown. It was also a competition between the three House Groups, with each pupil reporting on how many miles they had travelled each week. Well done to the winners, St Andrews House!

The whole school community took part, with people sending in photos and videos of themselves on their walks... no matter the weather! Due to lockdown, the school was unable to organise their usual in-person events. However, this did not stop them and all together, they traveled an incredible 4,747 miles! A fantastic £1,180 was raised for SCIAF, which will be doubled by the government. A huge thank you to everyone who donated!

ST JOSEPHS ACADEMY – GET OUT TO HELP OUT CHALLENGE	
HOUSE GROUP – WEEK 3	TOTAL DISTANCE COVERED (MILES)
ANDREW HOUSE	1735
COLUMBA HOUSE	1545
MARGARET HOUSE	1467
SCHOOL TOTAL	4747
CHARITY TOTAL	TOTAL MONEY RAISED SO FAR £780



If your parish or school supports a charitable project please let us know at the Galloway Diocese News and we will bring your efforts to a wider audience. Email gdnews@gallowaydiocese.org.uk





*Prayer for the fifth anniversary of
the encyclical 'Laudato Si'
for Earth and for Humanity*

*Loving God,
Creator of Heaven, Earth, and all therein
contained.
Open our minds and touch our hearts,
so that we can be part of Creation, your
gift.*

*Be present to those in need in these difficult
times, especially the poorest and most
vulnerable.*

*Help us to show creative solidarity as we
confront the consequences of the global
pandemic.*

*Make us courageous in embracing the
changes required to seek the common good.
Now more than ever, may we all feel
interconnected and interdependent.*

*Enable us to succeed in listening and
responding to the cry of the Earth and the
cry of the poor.*

*May their current sufferings become the
birth-pangs of a more fraternal and
sustainable world.*

*We pray through Christ our Lord, under
the loving gaze of Mary Help of Christians.*

Amen.



*“What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come
after us, to children who are now growing up?”*

‘Laudato Si’ Schools Scotland’ is an exciting new initiative, introduced by SCES, SCIAF and Justice & Peace Scotland in response to Pope Francis’ call to integrate Ecological Education into all Catholic schools. ‘Laudato Si’ Schools’ is not an award or charter, but rather a pledge or commitment to make a change for good within schools, enabling children and young people to respond to the call to be stewards of God’s creation. The initiative uses the teaching of the Church to explore topics such as learning for sustainability, children’s rights, outdoor learning and equity.

Find out more at sces.org.uk/laudato-si-schools-scotland

Ahead of COP26, we want to hear about YOUR Laudato Si’ school! Email us: gdnews@gallowaydiocese.org.uk

***St Anthony’s Primary School in Saltcoats is
already a ‘Laudato Si’ school.***



We here at St Anthony’s Primary School in Saltcoats are currently a ‘Laudato Si’ school. This is an invitation to all schools to respond to the call to be stewards of God’s creation. We felt that this ties in very well with one of our school values of Respect. We want to show respect to all of God’s creation. We are also an Eco School and have been awarded our Green Flag on five occasions. The principles behind Laudato Si Schools and Eco Schools go hand in hand and are ones that we embrace daily here at St Anthony’s.



Congratulations to Deacon Kevin

After six years of study, Kevin Rennie was ordained to the Order of Deacons as a Transitional Deacon on Sunday 2nd May.

Kevin reflects on that day and looks forward to the future

A question that is often asked is what a Transitional Deacon is. We are all familiar with the role of the deacon from the several who serve throughout our diocese, and in the coming year, I will serve as a deacon alongside them. The role of the Transitional Deacon is essentially no different to the role of the Permanent Deacon insofar as we all assist at the celebration of Mass, with proclaiming the Gospel and preaching. In addition, we also assist with bringing the Eucharist to the sick and housebound and the celebration of some of the sacraments. The principal difference however is not in the role we play, but rather that as a Transitional Deacon I am a deacon only for a time before, God willing, being ordained a priest. This is in difference to the Permanent Diaconate which is lifelong service as a deacon.

Over the last six years, I have been studying at the Pontifical Scots College in Rome and will remain here for a further year to complete my final studies for a Licence qualification in Moral Theology. This is after having done two years of studies in Philosophy, and then three in Theology before I started the Licence this year.

It was wonderful to be ordained to the Diaconate, the culmination of years of formal study, and before that both formal and informal discernment growing up. In a year that has been unique with things being 'different' it will come as no surprise that the Diaconate celebration was quite different to normal. Normally the college would be busy in the week running up to the ordination and following as we welcome friends and family from Scotland, as well as several priests from our respective dioceses. Sadly, this year travel was not



possible and so the numbers were somewhat reduced, although it was a joy to be able to welcome friends from the city of Rome to the college – the first time that we had been able to welcome guests since January 2020.

The Mass and Ordination were celebrated by Archbishop Arthur Roche, the secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship here in Rome. In his homily to us, the Archbishop reminded us of our duty and the commitment we were making to follow, aided by the Spirit, in the mission of the Apostles to preach and teach, as well as to lead by word and example. To conform our lives more closely to Christ as our exemplar. His words were particularly poignant and beautiful, in reminding the four of us being ordained of our vocation to service of the people of God. I mention them here however, as they also reflect the Universal Call to Holiness which we are all, by virtue of our baptism, called to. Whilst the Archbishop was addressing us in particular by virtue of our ordination, it is something that I believe is very important for us all to take to heart in a particular way as we come out of Covid and lockdowns, and start looking with more confidence and hope towards the



The four new deacons: Malcolm Hutchison (Diocese of Dunkeld), Joshua Moir (Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh), Kevin Rennie (Diocese of Galloway) And Edward Toner (Archdiocese of Glasgow)

future. We are invited to rebuild something of community which at times has been strained during Covid, in which people may not have seen one another in a long while, and so in a particular way we are all called to follow the example of the Apostles in word and deed. We are all called to ensure that our interactions with one another reflect charity and love of neighbour so that we may endeavour to encourage one another in Christ, and to rebuild stronger.

appreciative and encouraged by all of the messages I received from people across the diocese. I look forward now to returning to the diocese in the coming weeks and assisting as a deacon over the summer months before I return to Rome in September.

I would like to thank everyone who participated in the Diocesan Novena in anticipation of my ordination, and was very aware of the number of people spiritually present with us all at the Ordination Mass. Thank you also for the prayers and support I have received, not only of late, but throughout my vocation journey leading up to this point. I would ask for your continued prayers for myself and Michael who is finishing his third year of studies, as well as for vocations to Holy Orders in our diocese. I assure you all of my continued prayers.



I was particularly struck by the beauty of the Litany of Saints. During the litany, we all lie prostrate on the floor, symbolising our total dependence on God, and on His Saints. Indeed, in life in order to best succeed we must always cooperate with God, and during the litany we are imploring the help of the Saints to aid us in our ministry as we embark on a new chapter in our lives entering Holy Orders. I find it easy to become disheartened thinking that I am not able to do a task, lacking in the knowledge and skills, but during the litany I was reminded in a particular way, that God will send us challenges, but also the graces necessary to overcome them. In the Saints we often find examples of those who have faced even greater challenges and overcome with the help of God, and so too are we all invited.

The ordination itself was a wonderful day; it was tinged with sadness not being able to celebrate in person with friends and family, however I was very



The Church in Galloway continues to pray for Deacon Kevin and for Michael Kearns who is approaching the end of his third year of study. We keep them in your prayers as they journey forward in faith.

St Ninian, pray for them and pray for us all.



Planning a Staycation?

With the country emerging from lockdown, thoughts are turning to summer staycations. With a wealth of history, culture, and wildlife to explore on your doorstep, staycations are the perfect way to spend this summer.

Amelie Davidson recommends five religious sites in Scotland to visit.

St Margaret's Memorial Church, Dunfermline

St Margaret's RC Memorial Church is the home of a precious first-class relic of St Margaret of Scotland. St Margaret was Queen of Scotland during the 11th century and on her death in 1093, she was buried in Dunfermline Abbey alongside her husband, King Malcolm Canmore. The tomb of St Margaret was destroyed in 1560 during the ransacking of Dunfermline Abbey but some relics of her body were secreted abroad. The reliquary containing the relic is now housed in the altar within the Lady Chapel of St Margaret's RC Memorial Church where it can be freely venerated.



St Andrew's Cathedral

St Andrew's Cathedral was Scotland's largest cathedral and most magnificent church. It took nearly 150 years to build and was consecrated in 1318 by Robert the Bruce. It is only the ruins that are left, with the Scottish Reformation resulting in the abolition of Catholic Mass, which then led to the ransacking of the cathedral. Amongst the ruined remains of St Andrew's Cathedral, St Rule's Tower was created to keep St Andrew's relics. Standing tall at 30 metres, it was used as a guiding beacon for pilgrims in search of the Apostle's relics. You can climb up to the top of St Rule's Tower for panoramic views across St Andrews. If you are interested in religious history and art, then you should take time to visit this museum to see the St Andrew's Sarcophagus.

Glasgow Cathedral

Glasgow Cathedral, also called St Kentigern's or St Mungo's Cathedral, is the oldest cathedral in mainland Scotland and is the oldest building in Glasgow. Just 10 minutes walk from the city centre, it is the only medieval cathedral on the Scottish mainland to have survived the 1560 Reformation almost entirely intact. It is thought to have been built on the site of St Kentigern's tomb and marks the birthplace of the city of Glasgow. St Kentigern was the first bishop within the ancient British kingdom of Strathclyde, and the present cathedral was built during the 13th - 15th centuries. The cathedral was the seat of the Archbishop of Glasgow until the Scottish Reformation. The cathedral has an audio guide which transports you through the history of the cathedral through pieces of music.



Carfin Grotto

Carfin Grotto, situated in the Parish of St Francis Xavier's in the village of Carfin, near Motherwell, is Scotland's National Shrine to Our Lady of Lourdes. The shrine was built, by hand, by local parishioners on a site opposite the St Francis Xavier's parish Church. Many of the builders were coal miners from Carfin and neighbouring villages, out of work during the 1921 Coal Miners' Strike. Opened in 1922 by Monsignor Thomas Canon Taylor, the Grotto welcomes over 70,000 pilgrims each year from across the world.



Becoming A Catholic Teacher

In this new series, Amelie Davidson (a Primary Education student at the University of Glasgow) writes about her journey to becoming a Catholic teacher.

In the first part of the series, she writes about why she decided that she wanted to become a teacher

It is one of the biggest decisions that we make in life – what do I want to be when I grow up? I always knew that I wanted to do something that would make a positive difference in the world. I attended St Joseph's Academy where one of the school values is 'make a difference' and that was always instilled in me. Becoming a teacher gives you the opportunity and privilege of making an impact on society by shaping the next generation through providing them the tools and knowledge to form their own opinions, make a contribution, and influence society in the future. Teachers do much more than simply teach English or maths. It is the job of a teacher to teach problem solving, teamwork, to encourage initiative



and to build self-esteem. A teaching career is not just being an educator.

In particular, I chose to become a Catholic teacher so that I can contribute to the faith development of children in my care. The first question that I was asked at my university interview was: *What do you consider to be the role of the Catholic teacher in the Catholic school?* This is something that I have carefully considered. I think that ultimately, the role of the Catholic teacher in the Catholic school is to be an ambassador and messenger for the Catholic community by helping children to develop their faith, help them with sacramental preparation, encouraging them to pray and to treat everyone with love and respect. I chose to become a Catholic teacher because I want to reveal the message of God not only by my word but also in my every action and behaviour – this is what I think makes the difference between a school where religion is

only seen as an academic subject like others, and a school which is permeated by the Christian spirit. As Catholics, we have one true teacher – Jesus – and just as Jesus is at the centre of the Bible, he is at the centre of Catholic schools. Jesus was a great teacher because he recognised the importance of listening, particularly to God. He was a great teacher because he loved people and he wanted to help people learn about God. He was a great teacher as he knew how to make things more interesting by explaining them in simple, clear ways. By following Jesus' example, the role of a Catholic teacher can be summed up in three aspects: to be a good listener, to love, and to help children learn about God. This is what I hope to achieve when I become a teacher.

I have three years to go until I become a teacher and I hope that you will enjoy joining me on this journey!



Iona Abbey

If you would like to travel further afield, Iona is a tiny and beautiful Hebridean island off the west coast of Scotland. Iona has been at the heart of Scotland's religious life since St Columba landed there from Ireland in AD563 and founded a monastery that was to become one of the most important in Europe. Iona Abbey is known for its peaceful location, beautiful granite buildings, unique cloister carvings and Celtic crosses. Over the centuries, it has attracted many thousands of people on their own pilgrim journeys. One of the highlights of visiting Iona is seeing the four Celtic 'high crosses'. These extraordinary crosses are among the finest pieces of pre-medieval art in Europe. The crosses are dedicated to St John, St Oran, St Matthew, and St Martin. A replica of St John's cross stands outside the abbey church, and is recognisable for the astonishing size of the cross head and arms. The replica is made of concrete but exactly duplicates the original cross.



“Embracing change through the new evangelisation - The Sycamore Course”

Supporting parishes towards a pastoral response in the post-pandemic period

William R. McFadden (Diocesan Adult Education Co-Ordinator)

In response to an initiative by Bishop Nolan, and after discussion with the Council of Priests, a small group has been formed to promote the use of the Sycamore Course for parishes wishing to use this as a pastoral resource when we enter into the post-pandemic period. As we begin to move out of our physical restrictions and socially distancing constraints, we can view this time as a privileged moment which offers us new opportunities for evangelisation and mission. The Sycamore Course is one way in which we might engage people in reflecting on their faith, and offer them a resource in their formation for discipleship. It is a flexible programme, and can be used with groups meeting in person, or online.

Needless to say, no one course can fulfil all the pastoral needs of our parishes, but the Sycamore Course does offer a package which can be accessed easily, and which covers a breadth of topics. Each session is made up of different sessions of short video clips followed by the opportunity for sharing and discussion.

In order to be ready to offer the programme at the earliest possible opportunity, preparations need to be taking place now. Initially it is hoped to build up a base of lay leaders from different parishes who would then be familiar with the course in order to promote it locally. If we can do the groundwork, and have people organised and at ease with the

The logo for the Sycamore Course, featuring the word "SYCAMORE" in a white, sans-serif font. The letter "O" is replaced by a white circle. The logo is set against a dark, rectangular background.

course, then hopefully it can be rolled out in the autumn. Although parishes can always choose times and dates which suit them best, it is suggested that if as many places as possible use the six

-week period between 11th October and 19th November, then a sense of diocesan unity might be experienced.

As we come out of this Covid-19 lockdown experience our focus of attention has to be more than about getting people back to Mass. It must be about forming disciples in our parish communities who will have outreach and mission at the core of their pastoral agendas. It is about supporting people in recognising their unique personal vocation, and in using their gifts and talents in developing their personal relationship with the Lord. The Sycamore Course is one way in which we might seek to evangelise both people and structures, and it provides us with an opportunity to engage in a process of seeing what we might become, rather than simply languishing in what we have always been.

Participating in Sycamore as part of our diocesan response can demonstrate our strength in unity, while at the same time respect the diversity of local parishes and deaneries. Please look out for further information on the Sycamore Course in your local parish communications, as well as via the diocesan social media channels, and do consider taking part in this initiative.

Covid Update – moving forward slowly

What will be the pace of our emerging from this pandemic remains as yet unclear. What is clear is the challenge we face of bringing our communities and the practice of the faith to a still greater expression and strength. Since the last issue of the Galloway Diocese News, the cap of 50 people has been lifted and people can fill a building at two metres physical distance between households. This only increases capacity, however, in a small number of larger church buildings.

Congregational singing

Congregational singing (with face coverings) may resume in levels 0 and 1 from Monday 31 May. This will apply to all acts of worship, including weddings and funerals. Small groups of singers and instrumentalists can perform at levels 2, 1 and 0.

Funerals and weddings

In level 1 the maximum number of people at a funeral or wedding increases from 50 to 100, increasing further to 200 in level 0. At the time of writing there is a review taking place on physical distancing across all sectors, and places of

worship will be considered as part of that.

Childcare guidance

Unregulated childcare guidance has been updated and capacity may now be based on physical distancing (note that physical distancing does not apply to those aged 12 and under). Unregulated childcare includes babies and toddler groups and church run groups for children. Please note that different guidance applies to regulated childcare settings which are groups registered to the Care Inspectorate or other registered body. The numbers in this setting will be limited only by physical distancing and other mitigating measures following a risk assessment.

Indoor activities

From Monday 31 May, organised adult indoor activities can take place in level 2 areas. Organised activities follow the same rules as indoor organised sport and exercise which require them to have a Covid Safety officer and follow physical distancing capacity rules. This does not include informal social activities. The guidance on indoor organised adult activities will be updated in due course.



The Teaching of Pope Francis

by Father William McFadden

In acknowledgement of the role of lay people in the Church Pope Francis has introduced a new 'ministry of catechist'

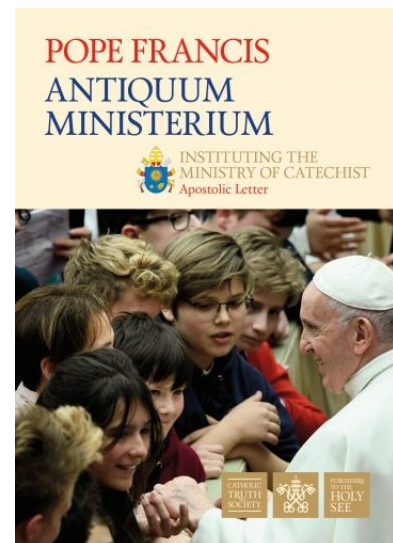
On 11th May, Pope Francis issued an Apostolic Letter formally creating a new official ministry in the Church. It is the ministry of "catechist," and the document, *Antiquum Ministerium* ("Ancient Ministry"), describes how this lay ministry is intended to respond to the urgent need for evangelisation in the modern world.

From the earliest times, a catechist has been someone who has taught the core principles of the faith. In later centuries these were often priests or members of religious orders, but the pope acknowledges that today they are now predominantly lay people. With this recognition, he gives an official Church status to "those lay men and women who feel called by virtue of their baptism to cooperate in the work of catechesis."

At the launch of the document, Archbishop Rino Fisichella, the President of the Pontifical Council for the New Evangelisation, said that the formalisation of the ministry "signals an important innovation." He added: "The institution of a ministry by the Church is confirmation that the person invested with that charism is performing an authentic ecclesial service to the community."

With *Antiquum Ministerium*, lay catechists are now to be acknowledged for what the pope calls their "stable form of service rendered to the local Church." Their ministry is one which contributes to "the transformation of society through the 'penetration of Christian values into the social, political and economic sectors.'" It is obvious, therefore, that Pope Francis is asking all of us to recognise the importance of lay men and women who collaborate in the service of catechesis, and who go out to "encounter all those who are waiting to discover the beauty, goodness, and truth of the Christian faith." He stresses that this ministry "will emphasise even more the missionary commitment proper to every baptised person," and he adds that the ministry "must, however, be carried out in a fully "secular" manner, avoiding any form of clericalisation." What Pope Francis wants are "men and women of deep faith and human maturity, active participants in the life of the Christian community, capable of welcoming others, being generous and living a life of fraternal communion."

With this innovation, Pope Francis is yet again challenging us to take seriously the task of evangelisation. While not rejecting the role of the ordained in evangelising, he



places this mission firmly in the hands of lay women and lay men. He is continuing to move us beyond the mindset which promotes and sustains a clerical model of Church, and instead invites us to see collaboration, dialogue and shared responsibility as pillars for spreading the message of the Gospel.

Antiquum Ministerium is a document about lay ministry, and as such integrates thoroughly with all that Pope Francis is seeking to do to develop the concept of synodality in the Church. He sees a Church of co-operation, and in bringing this about, the laity, and lay catechists in particular, have a pivotal role to play.

The Galloway Diocese News

Last March, when it became clear that churches would have to close and people would not be able to congregate, the editorial team decided to publish the Galloway Diocese News online only. We are aware that this means that fewer people might be able to access it but we hope that it continues to offer news and information, as well as spiritual and thought provoking articles and we hope very soon to be able to revert to the printed version.

As always, we welcome your input to the magazine. We invite parishes, schools and individual parishioners to contribute news, ideas for articles, photographs for the Galloway Glimpses feature, information for Charity Corner

and anything else of interest to the wider parish community.

At the time of writing it is unclear whether the annual pilgrimage to St Ninian's cave will take place. Regulations are easing but it may not be logistically possible (or financially viable) to maintain any sort of social distance, especially given the number of buses required. Look out for any information in parishes later in the summer. In the meantime, if you have memories of past pilgrimages and you would like to send a photograph and a short accompanying paragraph we will feature it in the St Ninian edition in September if we have no live pilgrimage to report.

The editorial team hope you continue to enjoy the magazine and look forward to issuing printed copies, as well as the online version, in the near future.

The deadline for the St Ninian edition is mid August. Look out for the email and you can also send your contributions to The Editor The Galloway Diocese News, Candida Casa, 8 Corsehill Road, Ayr, KA7 2ST. Email: gdnews@gallowaydiocese.org.uk

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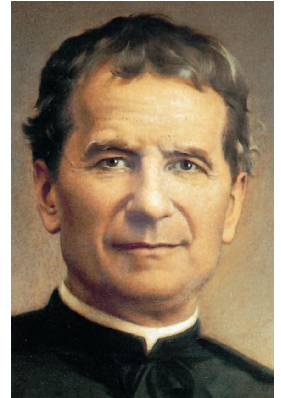


Praying with the Saints

By Father Martin Chambers

Saint John Bosco is a patron saint for young people and the founder of the Salesians of Don Bosco and the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians

From an early age, I knew that Saint John Bosco was a patron saint for young people. In the junior seminary at St Mary's College, Blairs, each year group was asked to choose a patron saint; at the age of 14, we chose Saint John Bosco as our Patron. This meant that we got a day off classes on his Feast day of January 31st (*something to look forward to in the bleak Aberdeen winters*). Later on, while working as a priest, I came into contact on a fairly regular basis with Salesian priests and religious sisters. From all of this, I was reminded of Saint John Bosco's work with young people, leading young people towards a set of values that would benefit them greatly as they made their way in the world. More recently, though, the Salesian Sisters based in Glasgow have come to Kilmarnock each summer to lead a VIDES youth camp; as well as the fun activities they lead, there is always a sense of prayer and reflection flowing through each day of the camp. Salesian prayer is based on the prayer life of the Saint himself and it is that prayer and spirituality of Saint John Bosco that I will look at in this article.



Saint John Bosco was born on the 16th August 1815, the youngest of three sibling brothers. When he was little more than two years old, his father, Francesco, died, which meant that his mother was left to support her three sons. From that point, his mother played a central role in John Bosco's formation and personality and was an early supporter of her son's ideal and desire to serve as a priest. In 1825, when he was still nine, Bosco had the first of a series of dreams that would play an influential role in his outlook and work. He himself said that this first dream "*left a profound impression on me for the rest of my life.*" In the dream, John Bosco apparently saw a multitude of very poor boys misbehaving and blaspheming while a man, who "*appeared, nobly attired, with a manly and imposing bearing*" said to him, "*You will have to win these friends of yours not with blows, but with gentleness and kindness. So begin right now to show them that sin is ugly and virtue beautiful.*" This dream stayed with him and was the catalyst for his eventual work

with young people. His childhood was spent in poverty since the area of Piedmont in northern Italy where he lived had been devastated by the Napoleonic Wars. For this reason, he was never really able to pursue any proper education. However, in his teenage years, he came into contact with Father Joseph Cafasso who spotted his keenness to learn. This priest spoke to John Bosco's mother who was able to earn enough money to send her son off to seminary where he stayed for six years after which he was ordained a priest in 1841. Thereafter in his priesthood, his ministries included visiting prisoners, teaching catechism, and helping out at many country parishes. However, it is for his work with young people that he is best remembered.

In terms of spirituality, he was a follower of Saint Francis de Sales and a big devotee of Mary, mother of Jesus, under the title Mary Help of Christians. That is why he dedicated all his works to de Sales when he founded the Salesians of Don Bosco, based in Turin. And then, together with Maria Domenica Mazzarello, he also founded the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, a religious congregation of nuns dedicated to the care and education of poor girls. That congregation is commonly known as the Salesians Sisters.

Most recently, especially through the Salesian Sisters that have come to Kilmarnock, I have grown to understand a little more about the spirituality of Saint John Bosco which has influenced the lives of the Salesians down through the years. I would now like to share with you some few central ideas from the prayer life and spirituality of Saint John Bosco.

Holiness is a gift available for all.

What strikes me about this spirituality is that it is not complicated at all. The gift of God is open to all people regardless of circumstances or age. Saint John Bosco always told people that they should offer themselves over to Jesus on a daily basis in ordinary acts of faith, hope and love. This involves small, daily choices where a person is invited to find meaning and purpose through love, serenity and patience. Holiness is to be found through accepting that everyone is a good person, created by God.



One of the Salesian Youth camp leaders

Christian charity at heart.

Saint John Bosco believed that the Christian faith is not something to be lived by withdrawing from the world but by rather immersing yourself in daily life, helping other people to find Jesus through the struggles of life. Community becomes a central focus of the Salesian life. He summed up the purpose of Salesian work as: *to help people and do good to our neighbours, especially educating young people, bringing them up during their challenging years, instructing them in sciences and arts and guiding them in the practice of Religion and virtue.*

Meeting Jesus in shared sacraments.

Saint John Bosco said that celebrating the Sacraments would let each of us recognise the debt we owe to our loving creator, God. In God we find our salvation and our promise of eternal happiness and fulfilment. It is through the Sacraments that we experience God's voice and His life-giving grace.

Christian meditation.

Saint John Bosco encouraged the emerging Salesian community to see that the focus of prayer is not on a set of words to be recited but rather the focus is on a person – Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is always looking upon us, loving us and seeking to unite with us. In prayer we are inviting the Holy Spirit to help us to be present to Jesus who leads us to the Father. In this way, we allow ourselves to be loved by God and transformed by the experience. Often when you join Salesians for prayer there is an extended period of silence where we are simply being invited to respond to God's love.

Also at the centre of Salesian spirituality is devotion to the Eucharist and prayer To Mary, help of Christians. Even in the VIDES week with youth camps, I saw this played out as the Salesian youth leaders would attend Mass each day and pray the Rosary together. Of course, this spirituality goes back to Saint John Bosco himself. I came across an account of another 'Dream' from John Bosco which explains how he felt about the Eucharist and the place of Our Lady. In the dream John Bosco saw the Church as a large ship in the midst of a storm. The ship was being bombarded on all sides by attacking worldly enemies who were promoting selfishness, bitterness and in-fighting. Out of the stormy waters John Bosco saw two giant pillars which would guide the ship to safety. On top of one of the pillars was the Eucharistic Host and on top of the other pillar was Mary, Help of Christians. From the moment of that dream, the place of the Eucharist and of Mary were assured in the saint's life and within the Salesian family.

Above all, Salesian prayer is simple. It is open to all and intends to lead people to a joy of life. There is always a sense of celebration to it trying to lead people to meet Jesus in moments of silent prayer and also in the midst of our everyday situations.



PS. One of the unique aspects of praying with Salesians is their ***"Goodnight Prayer"*** which they use to end the day. Basically it is a short moral story or a thought which would highlight a good Christian value. It is that thought that you are invited to carry with you throughout the night. So – have a good and blessed night!

SPRED Galloway

Janette Douglas, Coordinator of SPRED Galloway, looks forward to easing out of lockdown and meeting friends and volunteers again.



SPRED Cross

Jim McKendrick tells the story of a far travelled carrying cross

The easing out from lockdown is becoming an exciting time at SPRED Galloway and we have started to plan for the re-introduction of the SPRED Groups from September 2021. There is a lot of work to be done prior to the groups commencing but we are very much looking forward to welcoming all our friends and volunteers back. Zoom SPRED Session and DVDs have been a wonderful way of keeping in touch, but there is nothing like the actual contact with everyone that is bringing lots of smiles to the faces of Annie and I. I recently met Mary, a friend member, and her carer, at St Paul's in Ayr, they had popped by to see how they could book a place at a future Mass and when I told them that due to a cancellation there were a couple of spaces available that morning Mary eyes lit up. She was so delighted to be back in church and was so excited to have participated in the Mass. The joy, Mary felt at being back at Mass is how we imagine each of the volunteers and friends are going to feel when coming back to SPRED

We are presently planning how we can keep all of our friends and volunteers safe as well as the people using the parish halls after us. Whilst we will be following the SPRED Method, some changes are inevitable: The priority for SPRED Galloway at this time is to have the groups back in situ from September of this year and to be able to hold SPRED Masses around the Diocese.

Dumfries

Further discussion has been undertaken with Father Jim Hayes and Father Gerald Donnelly and a SPRED Group in Dumfries is looking very promising; volunteers have been identified, a schedule of meetings and training is in the process of being developed. Myself and Annie and a group of friends and volunteers are planning to visit the St Teresa's and St Andrew's parish churches in Dumfries in June to enable parishioners to learn about SPRED from those who attend and those who volunteer

When he was elected to the Papacy, Pope Francis decided to keep the original pectoral cross he had worn as a bishop and a cardinal, because it held a special place in his heart. When he held his pectoral cross in his hand it was a reminder to him that he was called by God to be a shepherd to his people especially the poorest of the poor. The details of the cross are rooted in the parable of the Good Shepherd and the lost sheep. In the centre is the figure of a man who represents Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who has found one of his sheep and carries it while the other sheep follow closely. At the top of the cross, the dove representing the Holy Spirit descends from God the Father to God the Son, helping those who are lost and in darkness, and bringing them new life!



While visiting Fatima, Fathers Philip Kitchen and Stephen McGrattan came across a carrying cross identical to the Pope's pectoral cross. After much fretting and deliberation, they decided to purchase it; only to discover it was too big to fit in their cases. Relief came as they realised it consisted of three sections. Sadly, however, the three sections were still too big for their cases. To the rescue came Deacon Bill Corbett with a suitcase big enough! Back in Scotland, they were discussing what to do with the cross and when they realised that every parish church would already have a carrying cross, they generously decided to gift the cross to SPRED Galloway.

Recruitment

SPRED is seeking to recruit to the following positions:

Chair: someone who is passionate about working with people with disabilities and who has experience of effective leadership, with the skills to develop and increase the charity's profile.

Volunteers: a number of volunteers are needed. skills required are those of patience, compassion, personality and time. Full training will be provided.

Trustees: two trustee positions are presently available; skills required include fundraising, governance, human resources and media. Trustees meetings are presently held monthly apart from July and December and via Zoom. A blended approach of Zoom and personal attendance is being taken for all future Trustee meetings.

For further information or an informal chat for any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact Janette Douglas at SPRED Galloway – Telephone 01292 738068 or email Janette.Douglas@spredgalloway.org.uk

The Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Thursday 24th June at 6.00 pm via Zoom.