



Galloway Diocese NEWS

Summer
Edition

June
2022

Celebrating the Mass of Chrism



Archbishop Nolan returned to St Margaret's Cathedral, Ayr, on Tuesday 12th April for the Mass of Chrism. At the Mass Archbishop Nolan blessed the Oil of Catechumens and the Oil of the Sick, and consecrated the Sacred Chrism. It has been three years since all the priests could gather together to celebrate the Chrism Mass in the Diocese due to Covid restrictions and at this Mass the priests of the diocese, who were able to be present, renewed their Priestly Commitments.





Words from the Administrator

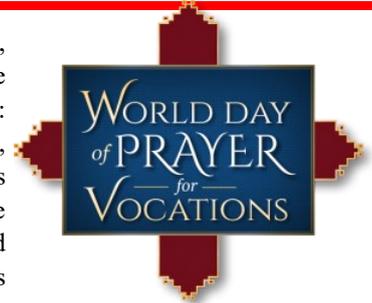
Father William McFadden hopes that the vision of vocation presented by Pope Francis is alive in the Diocese of Galloway

It can sometimes be difficult keeping up with the correspondence that comes daily via email, texts, WhatsApp groups etc, and so it is easy from time to time to overlook some important message. This is particularly the case where the Vatican is concerned, since the different offices and departments are all publishing and communicating, often at the same time. I'm pleased though that I didn't ignore the message of Pope Francis for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations which came out just before the celebration of that day on Sunday 8th May.

In his letter the Holy Father was very strong on the fact that vocation is something that belongs to all of us, not only those called to minister as priests or religious. He stated: "The word "vocation" should not be understood restrictively, as referring simply to those who follow the Lord through a life of special consecration. All of us are called to share in Christ's mission to reunite a fragmented humanity and to reconcile it with God." This is not a new message, but it is one that has to be continually repeated so that its truth is fully embraced.

Pope Francis went on to affirm that our vocation is collective as well as individual: "As Christians, we do not only receive a vocation individually; we are also *called together*... This is the mystery of the Church: a celebration of differences, a sign and instrument of all that humanity is

called to be. For this reason, the Church must become increasingly synodal: capable of walking together, united in harmonious diversity, where everyone can actively participate and where everyone has something to contribute."



In emphasising our shared vocation as well as our particular one, the pope is reminding us of our responsibility to one another, and to the communities from which we come. We are called to "work together in bearing witness to the truth that one great human family united in love is no utopian vision, but the very purpose for which God created us." Our shared vocation as members of the diocesan community means that we are not congregational, nor parochial, but connected to one another as the local Church in the Diocese of Galloway.

If we were somehow able to embrace this vision of vocation presented by Pope Francis, then what an exciting prospect that would present for our new bishop when he is appointed as shepherd and pastor in Galloway.

Father Martin Chambers recalls the highlight of a recent visit to Rome

Deacon Kevin and myself have Archbishop William Nolan to thank for our meeting with Pope Francis. When the Archbishop knew I was visiting Kevin, our seminarian, in Rome he arranged for us to meet the pope.

At the Wednesday Audience, we were seated down the front of the Hall and, after the pope's talk and the Blessing, we were ushered forward to meet the Holy Father. Because of my years in Ecuador, I was able not only to speak to the Pope in Spanish but also to speak about common acquaintances and friends. I then introduced Kevin and said that he was due to be ordained Priest for our Diocese of Galloway on 1st July. Kevin then spoke to Pope Francis in Italian, telling him how keen he was to begin his work in the Diocese. The pope, who has met several Scots seminarians and priests over the years, said that we should always remember "*when celebrating Mass, use wine and not whisky!*"

It was an emotional meeting with the pope for which we will always be thankful.



The first day of July marks the ordination to the priesthood of Kevin Rennie for the Diocese of Galloway. For Kevin, his family and the entire diocese, this will be an occasion of great joy and celebration. It will also mean the closing of one chapter in his life and the opening of another. In an article as part of Vocations Week 2016, Kevin, in his second year at the Pontifical College, shared some insights into his vocation. Starting university to study Engineering at Edinburgh University coincided with the first stirrings of a call to the priesthood for Kevin. Two Dominican Friars at the Catholic chaplaincy were instrumental in his growth in faith and love of Christ. By the end of his third year, he couldn't really see himself doing engineering as a profession. Through prayer and conversation, both with priests and friends, he made the decision to start the Seminary Applicants' Year at the same time as his final year of university. Seminary life provides a varied formation for priesthood. Kevin has spent seven years in Rome living a full-on life of prayer; formal studies; gaining experience in a variety of pastoral situations and living as part of a community of faith.

Although rising daily at 5.30 am and around eight hours of classes a day was demanding, Kevin also enjoyed some opportunities in Rome. Firstly, access and an opportunity to develop a real personal love for the saints and for the Holy Father. In Rome, there is a body of a saint in many Churches – Saints Matthias, Jerome, Peter, Paul and Thomas – to name a few. Writing in the December 2021 edition of the Galloway News, Kevin spoke of a pilgrimage to San Giovanni Rotondo when the life and witness of Padre Pio made a deep and lasting impression on him. Also in Rome, I am sure Kevin learned to love the Holy Father. He is a familiar part of life in Rome. You can hear him on a Wednesday morning or a

Sunday at noon. He's there, part of the daily experience, teaching from there the word of truth that is the final measure of everything that is taught by the Church.

Learning about the Church from Holy Father

The priesthood "is not a career, it is a service," Francis told nine men, ordained last year for the Diocese of Rome. The service to which priests are called must reflect the way God has cared and continues to care for his people, a "style of closeness, a style of compassion and a style of tenderness." Pope Francis told the new priests that they must never forget they were called from among God's people to be shepherds. "Be shepherds like Jesus", he said. "Shepherds of the holy, faithful people of God. Shepherds who go with the people of – sometimes ahead of the flock, sometimes in the midst of it or behind it, but always there with the people of God."

Mission in the Church

"God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission." St John Henry Newman.

For Kevin, the day of his priestly ordination will be a day he remembers all his life and all of us in the diocese will be chuffed to bits. When he returns to the diocese, he will be supported, nurtured and counselled by his brother priests I am sure that Kevin heard Pope Francis' sermon on Vocations Sunday and took to heart his words on synodality, vocation of all the baptised and an evangelising community. Just like Newman he will, in the fullness of time, come to recognise his priestly mission and the definite service God intends for him. Pope Francis has helpfully provided a few clues!



Before the Chrism Mass the priests and the Archbishop shared a meal together and Archbishop Nolan was presented with a small gift from the priests in thanks for his leadership and friendship during the last seven years as our Bishop.

Synod on Synodality in Galloway Diocese

A Reflection by the Diocesan Team

*Lord, take our hands to do your work and our voices to speak your words...
and then turn our water into wine!*

Being an integral part of the early stages of the Synod has been an immense privilege, as well as a significant responsibility. From the very first conversations held in September 2021, a combination of St Teresa of Avila and the Gospel of John has permeated the work of the lay team: *Lord, take our hands to do your work and our voices to speak your words...and then turn our water into wine!* This was the understanding on which we began our work — that we would each give what we could, as generously as we were able, but that we were all too aware of our own limitations.

Our first task, to circulate the ten “thematic questions” provided by the Vatican, resulted in such a volume of responses that the time we had originally allocated to analyse the data wasn’t enough. As this coincided with half of the team members catching Covid, we had to frantically search our calendars to find more available time. Somehow, with copious amounts of tea, coffee and food consumed, children hastily entertained, and a loudly protesting dog locked up to enable a house Mass to be celebrated to help us in our work, we got through it — no doubt by God’s grace alone.

The most remarkable feature of the initial responses is the consistency between them. While individual people stated personal preferences and opinions, the underlying themes that emerged are largely compatible. A sense of excitement and hope for the future of the Church, as a result of the opportunity this Synod affords, has been shared time and time again. The resulting positivity is summarised by team member David: “The feedback from the encounters has been largely positive and constructive. We should start to see direct change in our diocese as a result of the feedback we have received. It has been an honour to be a part of this.”

While the initial responses provide abundant ideas on ways in which we can journey together in communion, participation and mission, *how* to structure and undertake much of the work that will be required needs further communal discernment. Grateful thanks must be given to everyone who facilitated, or participated in, a swift second round of encounters to begin to address this. It is clear that there are many people with ideas and gifts that will enable us,

as a diocese, to move forward in the synodal way encouraged by Pope Francis. We are hearing stories of parishes who have embraced the opportunity and are already organising dedicated groups to map out their path forward. It is exciting and heartening to know that fruits are already beginning to be borne, before we have even completed the first phase.

To bring the diocesan phase of the synod to a close, the Vatican recommended a “Diocesan Pre-Synodal Meeting”. This meeting took place successfully on 28th May in Kilmarnock, attended by approximately 50 people from around the diocese. The meeting began with Father William McFadden joining via video link for an opening prayer, and after a presentation from the team, participants were given an opportunity to share reflections on their experience of the Synod so far. The draft diocesan synthesis was then presented to participants to read and feed back on; responses were again largely positive, with acknowledgement from participants that the diocesan phase of the Synod has been a “Herculean task!”



Ideas and suggestions were put forward for amending the synthesis before it is submitted to the Bishops’ Conference in June, all of which are being considered by the team as the final draft of the synthesis is prepared.

The Diocesan Pre-Synodal Meeting ended with a liturgical celebration in St Joseph’s Church, led by Father Stephen McGrattan, to give thanks for the process so far and to invoke the Holy Spirit as we discern how to move onwards as a diocese on this synodal journey. One participant said of the event, “this afternoon was a major step forward and the closing Liturgy was the icing on the cake.”

The diocesan synthesis will be submitted to the Bishops’ Conference of Scotland in mid-June, and will be made available for everyone to read; please keep an eye on the diocesan website for its publication.

Your Galloway Diocese News

At the Galloway News we *want to hear from you, the priests and parishioners of Galloway*. You can send your news items to the editor at any time or ‘reply’ to the reminder email.

Send your contributions before 12th August for inclusion in the St Ninian edition to:

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

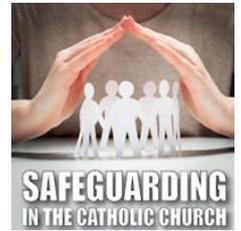
Email: gnews@gallowaydiocese.org.uk

RC Diocese of Galloway, charity number [SC010576](#)

Safeguarding In Galloway Diocese

Requirements For People Volunteering In Parish Ministries

by Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser: Helena Rameckers



As we emerge from the pandemic and our parishes begin to renew and rebuild, a large number of volunteers are being recruited for ministries. Our ministries cannot function without the generous commitment of so many people who give freely of their time and gifts, and the Diocese of Galloway is grateful for all our volunteers. One important aspect of ministry is a good knowledge of safeguarding — in other words, how to keep our volunteers safe, and how to keep the people they minister to safe. This article is a reminder of the basic requirements that all volunteers in regulated ministry must undertake **before** starting in ministry. Please direct any questions to your parish Safeguarding Coordinator (PSC), parish priest, or to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

What is regulated ministry?

Regulated ministry is any ministry working with children, e.g. Children's Liturgy, Youth Groups, anyone working with altar servers, or adults who are considered to be vulnerable because of old age, a disability, or illness, e.g. SSVP, Eucharistic Ministers who visit people's homes or care homes.

My new ministry fits the definition of regulated ministry – what do I need to do?

There are three steps that must be taken before you can begin in a regulated ministry.

First, you are required to complete an application form, which tells us your personal details, and provides us contact details for two referees. We will keep your personal details on record in the diocesan office, and we will ask both your referees to fill in a short form to tell us whether they think you are a good match for the ministry you wish to do. Application forms can be obtained from your PSC.

Second, you must apply for membership to the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme; this must be done even if you already hold a PVG for your workplace or another charity. This application can be processed quickly and easily online, and does not cost you anything. Your PSC will notify the diocesan office that an application needs to be processed for you. You will need to show your PSC or someone from the

diocesan safeguarding team three pieces of identification — one must be photographic (such as a passport or photocard driving license), one must show your current address (such as a driving license or utility bill), and a third must also be shown (such as a birth certificate or a national entitlement card). Your PVG must be updated every five years to keep it current.

Third, you must attend Safeguarding Induction Training Part One. This is a 90 minute introduction to safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Scotland. This can be arranged via your PSC, or by contacting any of the safeguarding trainers listed at gallowaydiocese.org.uk/training.

Once all three steps have been completed the diocesan office will issue a letter of approval to you, your PSC and your parish priest. At this point, you may begin ministry. After 18 months, you will be required to attend Safeguarding Induction Training Part Two.

I have already begun ministry and wasn't aware of the above process – what should I do?

Don't panic! Let your PSC and parish priest, or the diocesan office, know and the process will be begun. The diocesan office will always try to move applications through the system as quickly as possible when an application is flagged as being urgent, so it is a good idea to keep us in the loop.

Please direct any questions to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser: Helena Rameckers, tel: 01292 266 750 (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday), Email: safeguarding.adviser@gallowaydiocese.org.uk

Sodality - The Initial Experience of Just One Pilgrim

He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth'

In March parishioners of St Bride's Church, West Kilbride, met for a two session 'Synodal Encounter', the first part with of fourteen parishioners, all arriving, no doubt, with different levels of expectation. One thing was apparent from my perspective; all comfort zones would be challenged. I felt we all had an understanding of both the aim and ambition of this spiritual exercise; to dynamically interact with each other, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And to submit our findings as a contribution to the greater good of the Church going forward or in the words of Pope Francis "... what the Holy Spirit wants our Church to be in this Third Millennium".

As anticipated, this was not a totally comfortable experience, in the first instance at least. In many ways even the concept was rather foreign This was clearly not an academic exercise, it was something NEW. With various emotions in play, the atmosphere was a mixture of resigned intent and stoic efficiency. The second, a week later. And armed with greater understanding and an undoubtable sense of 'Presence', the atmosphere quickly developed into one of peaceful effectiveness. Both the importance and privilege of the pope's global initiative seemed to prevail.

Perhaps it was the comfortable sense of togetherness, the 'oneness' that was the greater success of this initial experience of Syndodality. The awareness and knowledge that no one person or gathering, can achieve God's Kingdom on earth. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in the comfort of our neighbours, we have the freedom, the courage and the opportunity to not only dream dreams but to address the challenges of our Church, in our time. To sing the same song – in harmony.





from around the Diocese

Looking forward to Holy Communion

On Tuesday 26th April, Canon Poland led a pre-Communion Mass with all 33 candidates as they prepared to receive the Sacrament of First Eucharist in May at Saint Mary's, Saltcoats and Saint John's, Stevenston. Canon Poland shared and discussed the significant parts of Mass: Liturgy of The Word and Liturgy of The Eucharist. The children were uplifted and excited by this celebration and are now very much looking forward to their special day.



Congratulations to Jack



Young parishioner and Altar Server at St Luke's, Moffat, Jack Martin, has been nominated for a Child of Britain Award. Last July Jack suffered a frightening accident when he was knocked over in the town causing multiple fractures in his leg not to mention more than a few cuts and bruises. Jack was rushed to hospital where he was operated on a number of times. Throughout his ordeal and recovery he has remained such a positive and happy young man and everyone is very proud of him for dealing with the situation with such a wonderful spirit. We are delighted that his school, Moffat Academy, put his name forward for this much deserved recognition. We wish Jack well as his recovery continues and as he now heads to London in June for the show-biz style Awards Ceremony.

WORLD YOUTH DAY
LISBON
 PORTUGAL

We hope to begin recruiting in June 2022
 WATCH THIS SPACE
 E: youth@gallowaydiocese.org.uk
SUMMER 2023

Farewell to the Sisters of Marie Reparatrice

It was with gratitude that the parishioners of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Kilmarnock, recently gathered to say a 'proper farewell' to the Sisters of Marie Reparatrice who had served in Kilmarnock since 1987. The Sisters left the parish during the pandemic and the Sunday Mass on 22nd May was the first opportunity for some of the Sisters to revisit the parish so that the parishioners could give them a heartfelt thank you. Each of the Sisters who served in the parish left their individual mark but this was a parish opportunity to say thank you to the entire Congregation for the work that had been done over many years.

Sisters Theresa, Barbara and Stephanie made the journey and during the Mass, Sister Theresa gave the following words of gratitude to God:

I would like firstly to thank Father Martin, Father Eddie and my wonderful friends of this parish for your warm welcome this morning. I am delighted to have this opportunity to be among you once more. Certainly, many years have passed by since I began my faith journey to share ministry with the priests and parishioners of Our Lady of Mount Carmel parish and of Our Lady and St. John's, Stewarston.

Sister Margaret Gaffney and I were warmly welcomed to our new home in Mossie Place, Kilmarnock, on October 8th 1987 (which happened also to be my 59th Birthday).

Today, as I glance around the church, I see many people to whom I owe a debt of gratitude for the encouragement, support and appreciation which my efforts received. This was especially true when I initiated something new such as the Family Mass at 10 am on Sundays, the Children's Liturgy and the parish Youth Group.

I admire Alice Brown and her team of young parents for their perseverance and hard work to ensure the continuation of the Children's Liturgy to this day. It is also rewarding to



Father Martin blessed a plaque to commemorate the arrival of the Sisters of Marie Reparatrice. Pictured are Sisters Theresa, Barbara and Stephanie

see that some members of the original 1988 Youth Group who live in this parish continue to worship in this community.

Sharing ministry with all the priests requires a special mention. It was a joy to share ministry with them and to be inspired by their commitment to the people of God and how unselfishly they gave their energy, their time and their gifts in the service of others. My 29 years of ministry in our two parishes were deeply enriching. I became more focused on Gospel Values and to giving the important hours of my day to meditation and to reflection on the blessings God bestowed on me.

These blessings empowered me with energy and good health so that on leaving here in 2016 for our sisters' house in Wimbledon, I was inspired to take on a new ministry of befriending refugees and migrants. This work is ongoing and in recent months, I was introduced to young girls from Hong Kong who are fleeing the injustices and restrictions imposed on them by a communist government.

May God continue to bless you and inspire you in your parish life!

Love, acceptance and peace to all

A very personal story from Lorraine Corrigan who was Confirmed on Easter Sunday at St Bride's Church, West Kilbride

I am a Catholic now, it's true, I can't believe it happened to me, I'm very happy to share my story with you I just look the same, but I feel different inside, like a warm hug it makes me smile inside and out.

I've been on a bit of an adventure, a guided tour of reflection that needs a torch to shine through awkward corners, but you don't need to be afraid of the dark because you can map out your own way, in your own time It can feel really deep and heavy, but the weight becomes lighter the more you trust yourself and accept God willingly.

As Easter Sunday got closer to my Confirmation, I began to feel that I was not ready, but I was reassured in my prayers that I was and had the strength so it finally happened. A gathering of family, friends and St Bride's community gave me all the blessings possible to make my special intentions to God.

I was confirmed with the name of Martha and took Holy Communion; a very special gift from God. It was a wonderful

moment in time when at last you know you belong. It feels so good, it makes me calm, comfortable and

complete and I know this particular story has no end, yes there is more to give, more to share and more to love.

I will remember in my prayers how grateful I am for this life specially sharing my married life with husband Paul who has supported me always and the joy of motherhood that gave us our awesome son Glenn. Special thanks to Sister Rosemary for being my sponsor and her patience when I wanted to do all the talking, to Father Gerry Hamill for wise words and St Bride's congregation for welcoming me so kindly. A huge thank you to Father Duncan McVicar for inspiring me to forgive and let my heart sing, it released my bell to ring louder than I ever thought possible.





Reaching out to Ukraine

The parishioners of the Diocese of Galloway – and the whole of Scotland – have responded generously to the plight of the people of war torn Ukraine. Here are just a few of the acts of kindness – a sample of the many throughout the country.



We have all been by turns appalled, horrified and deeply saddened by the war in Ukraine and the continuing plight of the ordinary people displaced, made refugees and separated from their husbands, parents and siblings as they see their country destroyed around them. There are few of us now who will remember the blitz, the bombing of British cities, the hardship and rationing of the Second World War and yet this is happening, in Europe today, in a country which some of us may have visited and, thanks to modern communications, it is being played out in real time on our televisions every evening.

No wonder then that the people of Scotland – and the rest of the UK – have responded so quickly and so generously to help, even in a small way, the people of Ukraine.

Parishes

Many individual parishes have ‘done their bit.’ We reported in the last edition that the parishes in Lockerbie, Moffat, Annan and Dumfries collected clothing and medicines, and took up special collections; the response was so great that the Ukrainian Church in Lockerbie was full to overflowing in a week or so.

The house at St Mary’s Church, New Abbey, is prepared and is ready to receive a Ukrainian family as soon as their visa application is approved.

As part of their Micah Project St Meddan’s Church, Troon, re’solved to provide aid to Ukraine. At the end of March, a team of six volunteers drove from Troon to near Warsaw in Poland,



to take aid, encouragement and a commitment to Ukrainian refugees. As a community, they raised over £20,000 which will be used to continue supporting the Ukrainian community. The group are planning another trip to Warsaw and are excited to see what can be achieved this time.

And, of course, every church in the diocese – and many individuals – have contributed to the SCIAF emergency appeal.

SCIAF

As a member of Caritas Internationalis, the international Catholic humanitarian network, SCIAF is able to provide direct assistance through Caritas partners in the region who have a long



track record of providing humanitarian services to their local communities. The many thousands of pounds raised from the emergency appeal will go to Caritas Ukraine which is supporting people displaced by the conflict inside Ukraine. Caritas Ukraine’s work has expanded from eastern Ukraine to helping people country-wide. Caritas is also assisting people at Ukraine’s borders as they wait to leave the country.

As the photographs show, Caritas Spes Ukraine, despite the most adverse conditions, continues to distribute relief supplies throughout in the country.

SCIAF’s Ukraine appeal has received a major donation of £500,000 from the Scottish Government. This will go directly towards helping people in Ukraine as they continue to face attacks from Russia. This donation provided immediate assistance to people who

have been forced to flee their homes and were in urgent need of food, water, safe accommodation, transport and information.



Alistair Dutton, Chief Executive of SCIAF, said: “We are appalled to see the brutal invasion of Ukraine and we stand in friendship and solidarity with its people. The Scottish Government’s donation was a great start to our much-needed appeal. It has provided immediate assistance to Ukrainians who have been forced to flee their homes in the face of war and are in urgent need. As a member of the international Catholic aid network – Caritas – this funding will go directly into the hands of local humanitarians on the ground in Ukraine. It is an extremely volatile situation with people in need of food, water, shelter, support and more as they face an uncertain future. We continue to urge people to give as generously as they can to our appeal at sciaf.org.uk/ukraine.



Prayers

We can’t all travel to Poland, or host a family, or, in these financially difficult times, give as much as we would like, but we can continue to help the people of Ukraine with our prayers.



SPRED Galloway

Annie describes a busy year so far at SPRED Galloway, with special thanks to all the volunteers



Our groups will all be back face to face over the coming weeks; with Kilmarnock Group at last being reformed. I know that our Friends and Faith Friends cannot wait to get back together again. Our aim of opening a group in Dumfries has taken a knock but we hope to keep it viable. Our new Lectio Divina approach to the Word in our sessions has been a great success. Not only have our Friends found it enjoyable and useful, our Faith Friends have also found the benefit of pausing, contemplating and listening to the upcoming Gospels. The conversations which have been had between our Friends and Faith Friends have been both humbling and inspiring. In March we welcomed Laura into the office and into the family of SPRED. We hope she will be very happy in her new role.

At the end of May, we welcomed Gail Williams from Caritas St Joseph in the Westminster Diocese. This is a lifelong learning centre for over 200 people with intellectual disabilities. It was a great day at St Margaret's Cathedral Hall, and we learned more about sharing our faith, and helping our Friends deepen and explore their faith.

It will soon be time for our, now annual, Bake for SPRED – where teas and coffees flow, cakes are shared, gardens are full of chat and laughter and please God, the sun will shine. Keep a look out for an event happening near you soon!

We are so thankful to all our volunteers. Honestly, without them, SPRED would not exist. Please consider becoming a volunteer, or a committee member. Most of all, please pray for us. Pray that we can continue to help our Friends and Faith Friends on their Journey of Faith. We do not lead our Friends in their faith, we are privileged to accompany them; we are companions on the journey to the heart of Jesus.



Media Watch

In this occasional feature we will review recent films, TV shows, books or pieces of music. It doesn't need to be explicitly Catholic – Just with a Catholic theme! If you would like to review something that you have recently watched or listened to us, we would love to hear from you. Email us at: gdnews@gallowaydiocese.org.uk

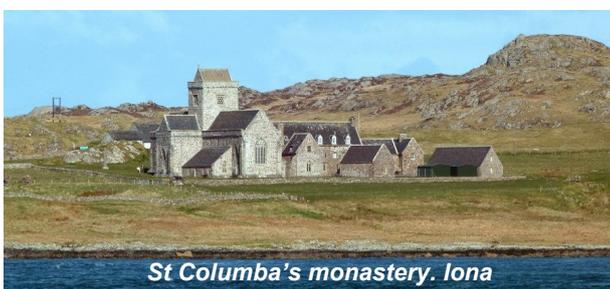
For our first review Amélie Davidson reviewed 'The Pilgrimage: The Road to the Scottish Isles,' a three part series on BBC Two which is now available to watch on iPlayer.

The programme is fourth in the BBC religious series, with other series seeing celebrities walk to Santiago, Rome and Istanbul. This part follows seven celebrities walking 1,600 km in the footsteps of St Columba as they travel across Ireland to Scotland. As they walk, they reflect on their relationship with faith. Interestingly, the celebrities taking part are of all faiths and none. They include England Cricketer and practising Sikh, Monty Panesar; TV presenter, Scarlett Moffatt, Christian; and comedian and Muslim, Shazia Mirza.

During the programme, the group follow ancient pilgrimage walking trails starting from Donegal and then travelling by boat to western Scotland. The pilgrims visit many fascinating sites from seeing monks at a Benedictine monastery performing plainchant in Latin to visiting the Callanish Standing



Callanish Standing Stones



St Columba's monastery. Iona

Stones. The final destination is Iona, the site of St Columba's monastery. I thoroughly enjoyed this programme as each celebrity follows a different faith and therefore the group have a wide variety of perspectives. This results in interesting conversations about some big questions such as the meaning of life and whether there is an afterlife. It was valuable to hear the opinions of people from other religions which many of us would not have the opportunity to hear in our day-to-day to life. I have also now added Iona to my list of places to visit



Seven Years in Rome

After seven years of study, Deacon Kevin Rennie will be ordained priest in July.

In his final article from Rome he reflects on his time in the seminary and on what his studies have taught him, both about theology and about himself

In order to be ordained a priest, it is necessary to undertake seminary formation lasting anywhere between four to seven years; for older men entering seminary, it is possible to complete their training in four years at the Pontifical Beda College, whilst for younger men the programme, at the Pontifical Scots College, typically takes seven years. Having entered formation in September 2015, I am now coming to the end of my time in Rome as I rapidly approach my Priestly Ordination on 1st July.



Starting out in 2015, seven years seemed like a very long time – I had just completed four years of University studies, and the prospect of another seven, whilst offering an interesting challenge, was also a bit daunting but I looked forward to it. Over the seven years of formation, I have studied two years of Philosophy, followed by three years of Theology, and then two years of Licentiate studies (these latter studies are focussed studies in a particular area of the church and her teaching – in my case, moral theology). The philosophy presented something of a challenge for me, having come from engineering, philosophy did not offer black and white answers – rather, it provided the tools to aid me as an individual to learn more deeply the truths around the individual and the existence of God. Moving on to Theology, I had the opportunity to break open the rich heritage of the Church’s tradition as well as scripture. I was able to understand more deeply not only what it means to be Catholic, but to grow in an ever deeper relationship with God. It has been these Theology studies which have equipped me to not only know myself and God better, but to have the tools to more readily teach and preach these truths to others. In the final two years, my studies in Moral Theology have sought to emphasise the pastoral dimension of Theology – considering

many of the challenges faced in society today, and how we as Catholics can respond to them in a compassionate manner whilst holding to the truth of Faith. For me, my academic studies have been a source not only of great knowledge, but also enabled me to grow personally in my faith.

But seminary is not all about academics. The *Ratio Fundamentalis* which serves as a guide for bishops in organising seminary formation highlights four key dimensions: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. Indeed my time in Rome has enabled me to grow not just in my knowledge of God, but also in my prayer life – through the retreats and formation organised in the College, I have experienced a wide variety of different forms of prayer. Having experienced these different forms of prayer, I have been able to find the forms which best suit myself (whilst not negating the beauty of the diversity of different prayer types existing in the church’s rich history and tradition). These opportunities, coupled with spiritual reading recommended by the College, have enabled me to seek to conform myself more perfectly to Christ. This is something which we are all called daily to do, and something which seminarians are graced with the opportunity of doing in a particular way. Whilst often in life we all seek to conform ourselves to Christ in the everyday, and to live as Christ in our relationships with others, as seminarians the Church requires us to undertake retreats and spiritual direction to daily see Christ as our example for future ministry. To approach our future priesthood as not being our own, but rather participating in the priesthood of Christ – and so we are called to be vessels of God’s love, mercy and tenderness to all people.

In the area of human formation, I have had the opportunity to work with some wonderful people from both Scotland and Rome who have sought to guide myself and indeed all in the seminary in understanding ourselves more deeply. Through their invaluable input they have sought to offer us the necessary tools and resources to not only be effective priests for Christ in the future, but also to be able to





know ourselves and to be able to look after ourselves. In so doing, they have sought to enable us all to recognise our ministry not as being distinct from who we are as individuals, but rather to enable us to integrate our whole selves. In this way, each of us are encouraged to bring our own gifts from God to our ministry and to use these, as all Catholics are called to do, to build up the Church as the Kingdom of God here on earth.

Formation is however not just limited to what we do in Rome. It can be very easy on the long days getting up at 0530 in the morning to forget the end for which we are all studying – that is to be priests in Scotland – but for me, that is why I have found my time in parishes around the diocese so important. In a sense, going to Rome can be a bit artificial and distant – the formation provided by the seminary is invaluable, but it does remove us from actually meeting parishioners in parishes. One of the great joys of formation for me over the last seven years has been in the summer to join the diocese on pilgrimage to Lourdes and Rome, and to be in parishes around the diocese as well. Over the last seven years I have met so many wonderful people throughout the diocese whose witness to Christ and to the church has been both humbling and inspiring for me: to be welcomed into homes and schools to meet so many different people of different ages and backgrounds, and to hear their own stories and experiences. Even just standing at the back of the Church and greeting parishioners on their way out – every one of these experiences and encounters has shaped who I am as a Deacon today, and will shape who I am as a Priest in the months and years to come. Meeting the faithful of Galloway Diocese has been a wonderful experience which Rome cannot replicate, and it’s one of the things which has kept me grounded in my time in Rome.



And as well as all of the aspects of seminary formation, it has also been a wonderful seven years personally. I have had the privilege of living in Rome, at the heart of the Catholic Church and to experience Masses and events at the Vatican, as well as to explore Italy. I have also had the opportunity to train alongside many other seminarians, both from Scotland and across the world, and learn from Theologians from around the world. All of their witness, friendship and support has been invaluable and I have indeed made many new friends through my experiences here and learnt a huge amount about the Church in different parts of the world.

And so, what would I say to anyone thinking about seminary? There are many things I could say, but I think the main thing would be: “If you feel called, don’t wait for an invitation, get in touch for guidance and support in discerning where God might be calling you, because no time spent searching for God is time wasted.”



I look forward now to returning to the Diocese of Galloway in the coming weeks, and to my Ordination on the 1st July. The Ordination Mass will be celebrated on Friday 1st July at 7 pm in St Teresa’s, Dumfries, followed by my First Mass on Saturday 2nd July at noon in St Andrew’s, Dumfries. Both are open to anyone who wishes to attend, and so you would be most welcome at either or both celebrations. (Both will be streamed on the parishes’ YouTube channels.)



If you would like any more information about seminary, please feel free to contact me at kevin.rennie@gallowaydiocese.org.uk or our Diocesan Vocations Director, Father Martin Chambers at martin.chambers@gallowaydiocese.org.uk

The Whithorn Trust

Re-envisioning Whithorn's Mediaeval People

Julia Muir Watt tells the fascinating story of the forensic reconstruction of the face of Bishop Walter of Galloway



In 2022, an important Whithorn Trust research project, involving partners from National Museums Scotland to the University of Cambridge's world-renowned Crick Institute, will come to fruition. During 2021, scientists at the University of Bradford have created 3D scans of the skulls of some mediaeval personalities, including three Bishops or high-ranking clergy. Now, the first of these is about to be revealed, thanks to a full-scale facial reconstruction of Bishop Walter of Galloway, who died in 1235.

The Bishops' graves were excavated in the 1950s, just near the high altar of Whithorn's great mediaeval cathedral, by Roy Ritchie, then of the Department of Works and now Historic Environment Scotland. The status of the burials was made clear by their position nearest to the shrine of St Ninian, but also through the grave goods which were found within the stone-carved coffins. One of these included the magnificent Whithorn Crozier, which is sometimes loaned to the Whithorn Trust but is regularly on display at National Museums Scotland. The artistic creativity fostered by the mediaeval Church and the richness of the interiors of the Cathedral are revealed by the quality of workmanship on items like this.



In 2022, the Whithorn Trust commissioned a forensic cranio-facial anthropologist, Dr Chris Rynn, who was formerly in charge of the MSc programme at the University of Dundee, to recreate the faces of four mediaeval personages, including Bishop Walter. Dr Rynn uses years of experience and a haptic computer arm to layer on muscles and texture skin, to produce a face from the 3D scans of the skulls. He says that he never knows how the face will turn out, until the layers are complete: it is not a matter of imagination, but of science, as to how the person appears. Between January and March, Dr Rynn has been working on recreating the face of Bishop Walter, and this is nearing completion. To do so, he used the basic biological and a few biographical facts we know about him.

Bishop Walter had been chaplain to Alan of Galloway when appointed to the bishopric in 1209. This indicated that, when he died in 1235, he was probably not a young man. Biological indicators showed this to be a

person of over 45, but Dr Rynn's instincts on seeing the 3D scans and the likely age for someone being appointed to a Bishopric indicated a person likely to be 60 or over.

We also had some information from earlier scientific tests: in 2008-9 Historic Scotland (as it then was) commissioned scientists to radiocarbon test the Bishops' remains to obtain information on their dates, origin, age and diet. Bishop Walter was one of those who turned out to be most local and potentially of Galloway origin. All clergy had a diet rich in fish, owing to fast days, and a higher protein diet than ordinary people.

Bishop Walter seems to have lived well: there was an unusual amount of adipocere (or grave wax) in his burial, which may indicate that he was a large man, as does the position of his arms out from his sides. HS experts believe that he may have been destined for one of the smaller stone tombs (stored in the crypts) but that by the time of death was too large and the largest (square) tomb, number three, was used for his burial. He had some herniated discs in the spine, which may be a further indicator for a heavy build.

Analysis shows that he suffered from Forrester's disease, also known as diffuse idiopathic skeletal hyperostosis (DISH) which is a condition that causes ligaments to become calcified and hard. It usually affects the ligament around the spine. He may have appeared rather stiff-necked in his older age. All these factors have been fed into Dr Rynn's reconstruction, which will be revealed shortly. Bishop Walter's skull has been loaned to the Whithorn Trust by National Museums Scotland, who provide expert couriers to accompany all human remains to museums. We have also borrowed some grave goods found in his tomb, which include a ring and precious stone and silver chalice, which not only showed his high office but may have signified purity and assisted with his passage through Purgatory. A film showing the reconstruction of his face and the final results will be

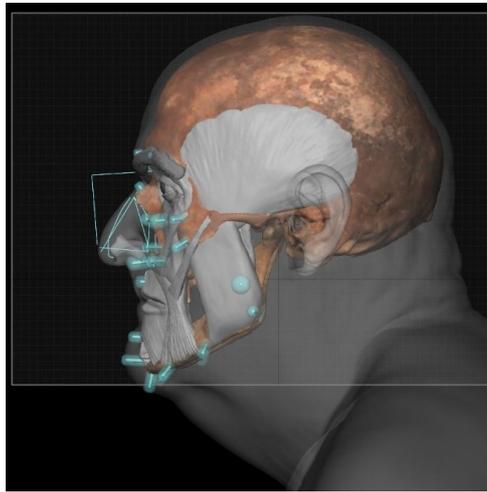
launched in the next few weeks and shown in the Whithorn Trust Visitor Centre. What we have not yet been able to do is to add in eye and hair colour, because these results are still being analysed by Cambridge University, who are world leaders in the analysis of ancient DNA.

Before we finally reveal his face, we are asking Whithorn Primary School pupils to predict his appearance, by giving them



The bishops' graves

the same facts as were offered to the team of scientists, and to see how they foresee his face. We have also started a creative writing challenge with the Douglas Ewart High School, asking them to tell the stories of two other personalities about whom we have no biographical facts at all, but merely the biology. One is SK8, a high-ranking clergyman (or possibly a bishop) with a cleft palate – indicating that mediaeval people were more accepting of speech impediments than we have once thought. This clergyman would have been responsible for celebrating Mass and speaking out on Whithorn’s great feast days. The second is SK1049, an unknown young woman, aged around 21-2, who was buried lower down the hill in an important position for the laity: her burial was above a layer of white shells.



Assisted by Urbancroft Films, who visited the High School in April, the pupils are creating a monologue articulating the lives of these two people in the first person. The winning entries, apart from receiving a prize and trophy, will be

dubbed to a film of the 3D faces. The High School’s head of English, Graeme Davies, has been hugely enthused by pupils’ reactions to the challenge and some very high quality writing has come out of this and will be perfected in the next month, before being launched at Wigtown Book Festival as the Whithorn Trust’s contribution to the Year of Storytelling 2022.

The Whithorn Trust has been supported through Dumfries and Galloway Council’s Regionwide Coastal Fund, and Museums Galleries Scotland Year of Stories Fund. The collaboration has involved Dr Adrian Maldonado, Dr Matt Knight and Dr Alice Blackwell, National Museums Scotland; Dr Curtis Summers and D Adrian Evans, the University of Bradford; Dr Chris Rynn, who carried out the facial reconstruction and Dr Tom Booth, The Crick Institute, University of Cambridge.

You can find more information about the Whithorn Trust at www.whithorn.com and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/thewhithorntrust

Walking the Way in Memory

Four teachers from St John’s Primary in Ayr recently completed the Whithorn Way in memory of a colleague

Four teachers from St John’s Primary in Ayr have recently completed the ‘Whithorn Way’ pilgrims’ route. Mr Winning, Miss Casey, Mr Mullan and Mrs Kean walked all stages of the 149-mile hike throughout the season of Lent, making their way from the starting point at Glasgow Cathedral toward the Ayrshire coast and on to St Ninian’s Cave by Whithorn.

The teachers walked in memory of a colleague, Miss Joanne McCaulay, who sadly lost her battle with cancer in November of 2021. The walk helped to raise awareness and funds for four charities; SCIAF, Missio Scotland, The Ayrshire Hospice and Friends of the Altnagelvin (Ward 50) Altnagelvin Hospital in Derry, who cared for Joanne in her final weeks.

They were delighted to finish the challenge at midday on Holy Thursday, where they were met by family and colleagues at the Whithorn Trust and received certificates for finishing the challenge. They are extremely proud to have made the pilgrimage, making for a memorable and faith-filled Lent.

The teachers involved have received support and generous donations from the local parishes, pupils, and the extended school family. Some of the cluster primary schools from the Queen Margaret Academy cluster joined on the Troon to Ayr Section of the Pilgrimage. Thankfully, the weather remained dry and sunny for the duration of the walk with children and



parents showing great strength and resilience to complete the almost 10-mile hike.

Recognising the importance of prayer during the season of Lent, children in the school wrote their own prayers which teachers reflected on before they completed each stage of their journey. All the children were keen to pop their intentions in ‘The Whithorn Way’ box.

Nearly £5000 has been raised and will be split between the four worthy charities. The proud pilgrims would like to thank pupils, parents, parish priests and parishioners, family and colleagues. A special thank you also to Gerry and Martin from the ‘Whithorn Way’ and staff at the ‘Whithorn Trust’ who helped them to share their journey with their online community, and to everyone who joined us on sections of the pilgrimage for extra encouragement.

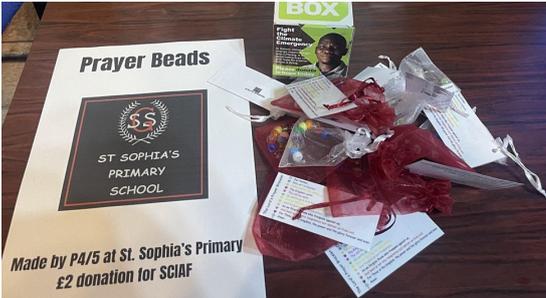


Becoming A Catholic Teacher

In this series, Amélie Davidson (a Primary Education student at the University of Glasgow) writes about her journey to becoming a Catholic teacher. In this part Amélie writes about the RE lessons she taught during her placement with Primary 4 / 5 at St Sophia's Primary, Galston.

In March, I began a seven week placement at St Sophia's Primary, Galston, with Primary 4 / 5. Here are some of the RE lessons that I taught during the placement.

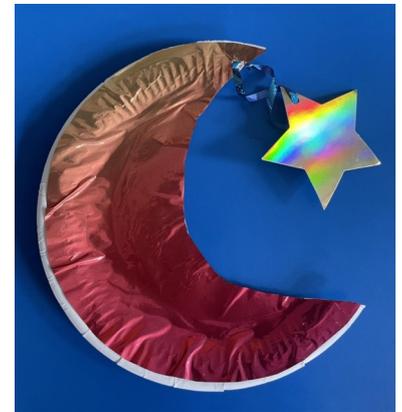
SCIAF Prayer Beads



During Lent, each class in St Sophia's Primary led a fundraising initiative to raise money for SCIAF such as 'guess the name of the bunny' and 'guess how many sweets are in the jar.' Primary 4 / 5 made prayer beads. Each bead was a different colour and represented a line of the Our Father. The children sold them in school as well as in St Sophia's Church and St Joseph's Church. The class really enjoyed making the beads and taking part in the other classes' activities too. Overall, the school raised a fantastic sum of £627.62 for SCIAF!

Festival of Eid

Primary 4 / 5 enjoyed learning about what Eid is and why the moon is important for Muslims. Firstly, we learned about Ramadan and why Muslims fast. This led to us learning about how Muslims celebrate the end of Ramadan with Eid. We watched a video where a girl spoke about Ramadan and Eid – how her family celebrates it and what the Muslim traditions are, such as decorating your house, painting Mehndi on your hands and sharing food with family. Then, after learning that Eid starts when the new crescent moon is sighted, the class made these 'moon and star' crafts out of paper plates and foiled paper. On the star, they wrote a message to someone they love.



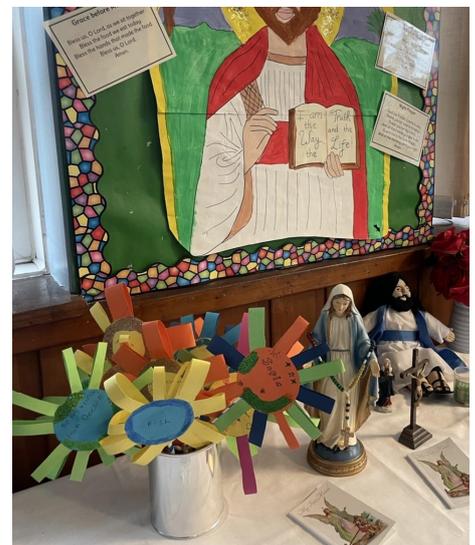
Judaism

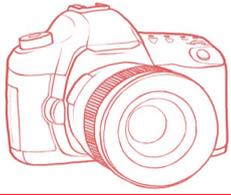


Primary 4 / 5 enjoyed learning about a different religion during RE – Judaism. The pupils learned about what Jewish people believe in and where they go to pray. The children learned that the Ten Commandments were given to Moses by God for all Jewish people to follow and then the children created their own Ten Commandments for the classroom. Some of the class commandments included 'Always include your friends,' 'Always have polite manners' and 'Always respect your teachers like family.' The class also learned about the key features of a synagogue and they were then tasked with a challenge to design and create their own stained glass window for an imaginary new synagogue being built in Galston. The windows turned out beautiful, especially when the sun is shining!

Month of Mary

To learn about why May is the month of Mary, the children went on a Spring Walk around their playground to look for signs of Spring. They were to identify what they could see, hear, feel and touch. We discussed being able to see the trees, flowers, insects and clouds. My favourite answer was "I can hear the sound of children playing." Afterwards, we went back into the classroom and discussed why Mary is the Queen of the May and Queen of the Flowers. Whilst listening to the hymn 'Bring Flowers of the Rarest,' the children made these beautiful, colourful flowers to sit on the class sacred space. Each flower has a prayer intention on it that we remember every time we pray.

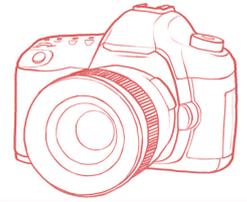




Galloway Glimpses

Around our region in your photographs

*Glad to be out and about again, regular contributor
Amy Kinnaird took these lovely photographs*



Top left:
The River Afton near its
start coming from the
Afton Dam, New
Cumnock.

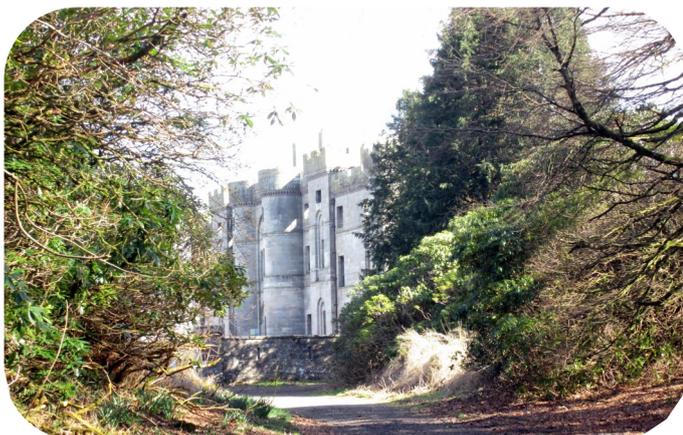
Top right:
The River Ayr in spate.



Left:
the path beside the
River Ayr Walk at
Auchincruive.

Bottom left:
the ruins of the old
Dalquarrhan Castle at
Dailly

Bottom right:
an 18th century tree in
Dumfries House estate.





Praying with the Saints

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

By Father Martin Chambers



Many of us have been fortunate to go on pilgrimage to sacred places and to be inspired by the Holy Land, by Rome, by Lourdes and by many other religious sites. In the months before the Covid pandemic, we had a ‘reverse pilgrimage’ in Scotland when, instead of going to Lisieux to pray at the shrine of Saint Thérèse the Little Flower, the relics of the popular Saint came to Scotland. In the autumn of 2019, Saint Thérèse’s relics were taken all around Scotland, through the eight Scottish Dioceses and were in Galloway Diocese from 1st to the 4th September that year. Many hundreds came to St Margaret’s Cathedral in Ayr and to St Teresa’s Church, Dumfries to venerate the relics and leave petitions and roses

had spent too much time worrying about so many little things when all the time she should have concentrated simply on God’s love.

In this Little Way, Saint Thérèse gives us all an inspiration. When we begin not with our worries, fears and anxieties but with the love of God, then we are inspired to face whatever life throws up at us. God, as Saint Thérèse said, who became a little child in the manger at Bethlehem, is actually to be found in the smallest events of our daily lives. The ‘Little Way’ puts holiness of life within the reach of ordinary people who can recognise that each day and each event of life is a gift from God.

Her Prayer Life – Love

Saint Thérèse’s prayer life within the convent walls had a familiar rhythm to it: the Eucharist; the Liturgy of the Hours; and the Rosary. Yet she herself said that she felt certain dryness at times in her regular prayer life. So she started focusing on the love she felt from God, taking the spirit of her prayer into her daily life. She said that, since God is love and is found in everything, then any time she found love through the simple events of life, then she had found God.

In the regard of prayer, her great focus in prayer was to reflect on the person of Jesus Christ shown through the Gospels. Her starting point was to see Jesus Christ in the manger at Bethlehem. The innocence of the Son of God who did not seek high privilege but sided always with the needy and with the humble showed Saint Thérèse that she was called to do the same. Find God in the humble avenues of life and you have found happiness and fulfilment in life.

Saint Thérèse and Suffering

We know that Saint Thérèse knew suffering in her life: she had lost her mum at the age of four; she was bullied at school; she had seen many relatives contract serious illnesses and die; she suffered from hyper-sensitivity in her teenage years. And, of course, she contracted tuberculosis, an illness which took her life. The suffering that she and others experienced was in the 19th century when there wasn’t the same amount of medical treatments or even therapy sessions available as there is now. The only response to suffering that era was to ‘grin and bear it.’

at the shrine of the Little Flower.

From an early age, I had always heard of Saint Thérèse, of her simplicity, of her practical approach to life and how she died at a young age. Her Feast day in the Church falls on October 1st. Yet who is this Saint and how can she inspire each one of us in 2022 in our own faith lives and on our prayer journey?

Who is Saint Thérèse of Lisieux?

Thérèse felt an early call to religious life and, after overcoming various obstacles, in 1888, at the age of 15, she became a nun and joined two of her own sisters in the cloistered Carmelite community at Lisieux in France. Over the next nine years she fulfilled various simple tasks in the community including being Sacristan and being Novice mistress. However, she then contracted tuberculosis and, in 1897, died at the young age of 24.

Her life in the convent was not always pleasant for the young saint. The regime was very austere and strict. The homilies at Mass were more often than not centred on the evils of sin, the sufferings of purgatory and the pain of hell. Added to this, some nuns were unkind to Thérèse and talked about her behind her back. However her reaction to this was simply to smile back at the Sisters in question.

Her Little Way

She always wanted to be a saint but, in her early years within the convent, she realised how far away from sainthood she was. She saw clearly the limitations of her efforts. And it was from such humble foundations that she gave one of the greatest gifts to the Church: her Little Way.

Saint Thérèse felt that too much emphasis was put on ‘fear of God’ and on how we must please this remote God. The emphasis, she said, should be on how much God loves us. That is the start and the end of our Christian lives: God loves us! She realised as she undertook her convent tasks that she





The Teaching of Pope Francis

by Father William McFadden

Pope Francis continues to motivate and encourage us to be a Church where our direction is the future, rather than the past

One of the truly inspiring things about Pope Francis is his ability to look to the future rather than be tempted to admire the past. This is particularly remarkable for a man who is 85 years old, as we are well aware that the older we get the easier it is to allow our minds to dwell on former times rather than to focus on what lies ahead.

In a discussion with more than 520 women religious of the International Union of Superiors General meeting in Rome focusing on the theme, “Embracing Vulnerability on the Synodal Journey,” the pope invited them to be imaginative and forward looking.

Acknowledging the situation facing many ageing religious congregations, he stated: “The challenge is that consecrated life has to be integrated into a Church – not a frozen Church, but a real Church.” He added: “The Church does not want frozen nuns. That’s useless.”

In his conversation with them he compared their congregations to trees, urging them to look to their roots in order to move forward with the challenges of today. He called on them to be women who accompany others, especially those most rejected, and to “hold hands silently” rather than try to offer solutions.



He appealed to the

sisters to be active in the imaginative and prophetic Synodal process taking place in the Church today. He said: “I count on you, dear sisters, to accompany God’s holy people” as “experts in building communion, in fostering listening and discernment.” He added: “I count on you, so that the synodal process that we are living in the church may also take place within your institutes, where young and old exchange their wisdom and visions of consecrated life; where all cultures sit at the same table of the kingdom; where stories are processed in the light of the risen Jesus and his forgiveness; (and) where the laity can participate in your spiritualities’.”

He encouraged the Sisters “not be afraid in this search for new ministries and new ways of exercising authority evangelically.” They are to be vigorous and energetic, not in “a theoretical and ideological search,” but in a very practical and effective way based on serving others and walking alongside their wounded sisters and brothers.

Even though these words were delivered specifically to women religious, they are certainly relevant to every single member of the Church. We are all challenged to look ahead rather than backwards, to commit ourselves to a more collaborative and less clerical way of being Church, and to embrace change and renewal without fear or anxiety.

Pope Francis continues to motivate and encourage us to be a Church where our direction is the future, rather than the past, and as he continually reminds us, this Church is to be a “field hospital”, rather than a “museum.” An exciting and stimulating future lies ahead if only we would concentrate on the future rather than try to glorify the past: how humbling that it is an 85 year old man who continues to remind us of this truth.

Praying with Saint Thérèse – continued

However, once again Saint Thérèse found a faith response to the pain of her suffering. She did this in two ways:

- ◆ She said “*if I can concentrate on other people and on their needs, then even in the face of sufferings, I will find love and happiness in others.*”
- ◆ She looked to Jesus in the Scriptures and saw Jesus hanging on the Cross. She knew that Good Friday was not the end of the story. For Saint Thérèse Easter Sunday and the Resurrection showed that hope and love will always triumph; stay with Jesus Christ who will lead you through the darkness of life to the redeeming moment of Light.

Reflections on Saint Thérèse

Even in the course of researching and writing this article I have found a sense of peace from Saint Thérèse, our modern-day Saint. Her prayer life is our first inspiration. She always started prayer focusing on the person of Jesus Christ. Saint Thérèse says that, if we can see Jesus close up through the Gospel stories (what He says, how He reacts to people), then our prayer life will not be dry.

And then there is her inspirational ‘Little Way’. In our modern world which says that power and prestige are the way to happiness and fulfilment, the humility of this Saint gives us all hope. She reminds us that we do not have or even need the answers to all life’s questions. She teaches us that we can find fulfilment in doing the small tasks of life well. Her ‘Little way’ stands in contrast to a modern way and is a path that you and I can follow each day of our lives. Her ‘Little Way’ invites us all to find our own LITTLE WAY OF GOD’S LOVE.



A View from Westminster

Philippa Whitford MP discusses the Nationality and Borders Bill and why we need to ensure that when we talk about our 'brothers and sisters across the world' we really mean it.



The first Queen’s Speech to be delivered by Prince Charles received extensive media coverage but there was less exploration of the impact of proposed legislation nor the repercussions of bills passed in the last days of the previous session. Taken together they are concerning as they greatly strengthen the power of UK government ministers while diminishing the ability of Parliament, the judiciary, protesters or voters to hold them to account.

The Nationality and Borders Bill which, sadly, has now passed into law, undermines the UK’s commitment to the 1951 Refugee Convention. Within this was contained the underpinning which would enable the controversial policy of sending “illegal” asylum seekers and refugees to Rwanda for their asylum claim to be processed.

Under the refugee convention, no asylum seeker is illegal, regardless of how they have travelled to the country in which they seek safety. As the legislation provides no safe and legal route to claim asylum or refugee status in the UK, outwith limited special programmes, those seeking safety from persecution could easily be defined as “illegal.”

The appalling Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the atrocities being committed against civilians, have brought home to all of us the reality and horror of war. We see how quickly normality for Ukrainians was replaced by violence and destruction and have only to think what we would do in the same circumstances. The answer is fairly clear – gather our children and loved-ones and try to get them to safety.

While we see a welcome outpouring of sympathy for the suffering of the people of Ukraine, why does that not extend to those from other parts of the world facing the gruesome destruction and violence of war?

While the “Homes for Ukraine” programme has its administrative frustrations, it demonstrates the generosity and sympathy of ordinary people across the UK for those seeking sanctuary from war.

However, where is the “Homes for Afghanistan” scheme for those fleeing the Taliban? The schemes that do exist are very limited and do not include all those who are now in mortal danger due to having worked for western military forces or charities. Nor is there any ongoing provision for those seeking refuge from the long running wars in Syria or Yemen.

The failure of the Nationalities and Borders Bill to provide permanent safe routes by which to seek asylum in the UK means there is simply no provision for those facing persecution for their religious beliefs, sexual orientation or opposition to an authoritarian government. They could easily find themselves deported thousands of miles away to Rwanda, a country condemned for the recent shooting of protesting refugees and from which the UK has actually been accepting asylum seekers.

While the original announcement claimed this expensive policy would apply to the ‘processing’ of asylum applications, it has since been made clear by the Home Secretary, that those found to have a justifiable claim will not be granted asylum in the UK, but in Rwanda.

This inhumane derogation of the UK’s responsibilities under the Refugee Convention does nothing for its international image or relationships with other major nations.

To offer sanctuary was a key role of churches throughout history and the turning away of those in the greatest distress, does not reflect our Christian values. The images from Ukraine vividly demonstrate the fear and desperation that drives people away from their home and community, with only what they can carry – a decision no one makes lightly!

We are not called to sit in judgement regarding who to help based on the colour of their skin, their culture or their religion, but to reach out to all. When we pray the ‘Our Father’, we are recognising that he is Father to all and that the words ‘thy kingdom come’ do not just apply to those in a specific community or church, but the whole of mankind.

This time of Pentecost commemorates the formal founding of the universal catholic church, when the apostles were given the Holy Spirit and sent forth to bring Christ to the wider world. We too are called to bring mankind towards Christ and God’s Kingdom but, for that, we must aspire to channel his love for every soul he has created, whether they are homeless people in our community or those fleeing poverty, conflict or persecution on the other side of the globe.

Whether trying to ensure equity of access to Covid vaccines or a more just response to the climate crisis, as members of that universal and catholic church we need to ensure that when we talk about our ‘brothers and sisters across the world’ we really mean it.



Doctor Philippa Whitford is a parishioner of Our Lady of the Assumption and St Meddan in Troon. She is the MP for Central Ayrshire and SNP Health Spokesperson at Westminster. In these articles she hopes to convey how her faith informs and impacts her politics.



Galloway Diocese Children's Liturgy



THE MONTH OF THE SACRED HEART



June is dedicated to the Sacred Heart. The Sacred Heart is a symbol of Jesus Christ's love for every human person. The Feast of the Sacred Heart will take place on Friday 24th June.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus

D	T	U	V	Q	W	Q	B	D	P
D	I	P	F	R	P	L	S	O	C
F	I	O	U	B	J	R	J	V	S
L	M	V	D	I	U	L	V	J	A
A	B	Y	I	B	N	O	F	E	C
M	V	G	B	N	E	V	U	S	R
E	X	D	U	C	E	E	G	U	E
S	E	M	F	A	I	T	H	S	D
O	B	K	S	U	P	S	T	U	P
A	D	S	C	Z	H	E	A	R	T

Flames
Faith

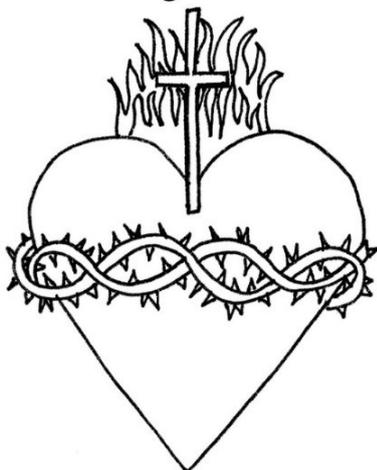
Sacred
Heart

Divine
June

Jesus
Love

COLOURING SHEET

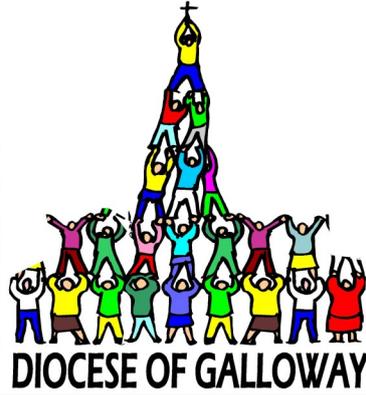
Sacred Heart of Jesus



Have Mercy on Us



**Dear God,
I love you and give you
my heart. Help me to
share your love with my
family and friends
through acts of kindness.
Amen.**



Youth *for* Lourdes



Age: current 4th year to 23 years.

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 will begin to meet soon-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/CupsmYMygBDZBIXY7>**



**For an 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)**

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