



A VISION TO GROW THE CHURCH AGAIN

Turning crisis of faith into golden opportunity

THE CHALLENGE of building up the Church in Glasgow based on vibrant parishes with ample resources for ministry is being pursued with fresh resolve.

Archbishop Mario Conti reiterated his vision to grow the Church again at a special assembly of priests and lay people last month.

"Strong parishes are the foundation of the Archdiocese," he said. "When people are active in their community, confident in their beliefs and abilities, then we can make great strides in confronting the crisis of faith which surrounds us."

He added: "To make the Kingdom of God an ever greater reality in our daily lives, - that is my ambition. And we can achieve it by our working together."

"I am delighted at the enthusiastic response I've received from all quarters

By Vincent Toal

for the priorities which have been identified in many cases by parishes themselves."

These include:

- Expanded youth ministry and outreach programmes;
- Enhanced education and spiritual growth opportunities for adults;
- Continued promotion of the permanent diaconate;
- Development of catechetics, marriage preparation and pastoral support for parents;
- More in-service and ongoing formation for priests in parish ministry, as well as continued care of those in retirement;
- Decorating and restoring St Andrew's Cathedral - the mother church at the heart of the archdiocese.

"This is a golden opportunity to address immediate needs and build up a legacy which will benefit the Catholic community for years to come," the Archbishop stressed. "We have a responsibility to those who will come after us."

The ambitious vision has been cultivated and refined since Archbishop Conti took up the reins in Glasgow 30 months ago.

Already, the permanent diaconate and adult faith formation courses have sparked considerable interest with positive responses. St Paul's, Shettleston, in the east end of Glasgow, already has three prospective deacons and over 30 adults signed up to a faith formation course

Heritage

The introduction of pastoral councils in all 105 parishes has encouraged a fresh appraisal of local church resources with measures already being taken to address needs and stimulate initiatives.

Fr Billy Donnelly, parish priest of St Andrew's, Bearsden, said: "These areas have been identified by clergy and laity as matters of concern. They need to be addressed and properly resourced, transforming our parishes and energising Catholics across the diocese."

People also have concern for their heritage and the areas of social need within the diocese, he said.

Fr Aidan Martin, chairman of the Council of Priests and parish priest

of St Catherine's, Balornock, viewed the determination to progress the vision as a sign of leadership in action.

"Our faith can shine more brightly, and we can pass along to the next generation a stronger Church, but it requires commitment, shared priorities and decisive action," he said.

One of the key priorities is youth ministry, especially the need to bridge the gap between school and parish.

Already, in a series of one-to-one meetings, Catholic secondary school headteachers have assured Archbishop Conti of their support for his goals. And they have expressed their willingness to work to strengthen the bonds between schools and parishes so that young people are given the opportunity to use their energy and gifts in building up the Church.

Bill Horton, the diocese's RE advisor for secondary schools, said: "There are many good examples around the world of young people evangelising other young people. The challenge for us is to replicate that spirit here in Glasgow

Confident

"Providing training courses, with opportunities for gap-year work or voluntary service in the community will help young people to be more confident in their faith. This largely untapped area can be a tremendous power for good in Glasgow. This requires commitment, additional resources and collective effort."

Fr Stephen Connolly, parish priest of St Robert Bellarmine, Pollok, expressed the enthusiasm shared among the priests.

"The Archbishop's vision calls each of us to action. It is about evangelisation, confidence and local leadership

"We've been talking about things like youth ministry for years without doing very much about it. "We are now in a place where we can start looking to the future, and if the vision requires additional resources then let's be bold and hopeful."

Lived out with confidence in parishes and rooted in our daily lives, this vision will grow the Church again in Glasgow.

Flourish Comment - Page 7



ON THE DAY of Pentecost, Archbishop Conti confirmed new young apostles in to the Faith and the family of the Church. He encouraged them to be strong in their faith - sowers of hope and agents of mercy and peace in the world. *Picture: Paul McSherry*

Community comforts broken-hearted after factory explosion

PARISH RALLIES TO BLAST VICTIMS

NOON ON TUESDAY 11 May 2004 will be indelibly marked in the memory of those who lived through the horrific blast which reduced the Stockline Plastic factory and offices to a heap of rubble.

Nine people lost their lives in the explosion. Around ten are still being treated in hospital for their injuries - for them, and dozens of their colleagues, the trauma of surviving the building's collapse may take years to pass.

St Columba's Catholic church stands at the top of Hopehill Road, less than 200 yards from the scene of such devastation.

Like everyone else who was in the vicinity of the blast, parish priest Fr David Trainer felt the force of the sudden explosion. He rushed to the scene at the bottom of the street, but in the immediate confusion, amid the clouds of dust, he felt helpless to do anything.

But soon the extent of the tragedy began to emerge and along with local ministers, Rev Roy Henderson and Rev Paul McKeown, Fr Trainer was summoned to Maryhill Community Halls - a well-used local facility for which the church leaders form part of the management committee.

For the next 70 hours, until the last of the bodies was recovered from the rubble, the halls provided a round the clock refuge for families waiting

anxiously on news and for the emergency services to grab a breather.

Within that time, Fr Trainer - like others - could count on the fingers of one hand the hours of sleep he managed to snatch.

"Nothing really prepares you for a situation like this," he reflected. "You just do what you think is right and try to respond as best you can to people's needs."

"People are grieving the tragic loss of their loved ones - but it is a very public loss. Others think they know how they feel because it is on the news or in the papers, but that doesn't take away from the personal nature of a family's loss. In many ways it makes it all the harder when it is surrounded by so much media exposure."

As he walked between the parish church and the community halls, Fr Trainer ran the gauntlet of journalists' cameras, recorders and notebooks. Often unaware of what was already public knowledge, he admitted to feeling intimidated by some of the questioning with his anxiety not to betray the confidences of the bereaved and the other victims.

An experienced mountaineer, the conscientious priest described the experience as like being exposed on an imposing rock face without the security of a rope.

Among the dead were two young



By Maria Gilmore

women whom he knew from his days as chaplain to St Augustine's Secondary school in Milton. Families sought him out as they were confronted with their loss.

In the week after the explosion, he concelebrated the funeral Mass for Tracey McLairne, a young mother who left an eight month-old child, at St Theresa church, Possilpark.

The next day, at St Columba's - where nine candles stood lit in memory of the dead - the funeral Mass of 34 year-old Annette Doyle was celebrated by Fr Trainer.

He reflected on how the scene of the tragedy at the bottom of Hopehill Road had been transformed into a carpet of flowers. "Real flowers - not artificial - with all their alluring beauty; but also fragile, easily crushed and destined to wither."

But he pointed to the great outpouring of love and the spirit of selfless service manifested in the wake of the blast, which claimed lives and left so much injury, as a sign of God's enduring goodness which is the foundation of Christian hope.

Above the entrance to the church a banner proclaimed a community's faith in God's comforting presence - "The Lord is close to the broken-hearted".

This expression of faith from within a caring community will help ease the pain and trauma which erupted on May 11.

Thanks for tireless workers

In the wake of the Maryhill factory tragedy, Archbishop Mario Conti expressed his sincere gratitude for the work carried out by the emergency services.

He was speaking at the bi-annual Mass in St Andrew's Cathedral to remember deceased police officers which took place in the week of the fatal blast.

"As we gather together this morning, the impact of the work of the police force, the fire service and other emergency teams is being felt very keenly in this city which has been struck in recent days by a fearful tragedy," he said.

"It is only in moments like this that the very real appreciation of the public is made manifest, and I should certainly like to add, in the name of the whole Catholic community of this city, my sincere gratitude to the emergency services for the work that has been undertaken in recent days to save life and offer comfort at the scene of the factory disaster in Maryhill."

The Archbishop, who had been in Crete at the time of the explosion, visited the scene on his return to Glasgow. At St Columba's church, just yards from the factory he offered prayers for the dead, the injured and the bereaved.

The Mass in St Andrew's Cathedral on Saturday 15 May was attended by serving and

former police officers and their families and friends.

Archbishop Conti told them: "People like to recall the days of the friendly village bobby on the beat and there is a nostalgia for a return to such an era. Those calls though, tell of a very real affection for the service provided by the police, a respect and appreciation for your role and your presence."

"Often it is only in moments like this, when the community has been shaken by adversity and tragedy that those sentiments resurface."

"I suspect that it is only the magnitude of the occasion and the scale of the tragedy which enables people to find the vocabulary of appreciation which, if truth be told, is felt every day of the week, when in quiet, unpublicised encounters, members of the emergency services bring comfort, reassurance and peace to those facing difficulties in their own lives."

Extolling the ideals of public service, the Archbishop recalled the words of the prophet Isaiah, which he said seemed to describe the often hidden but appreciated work of the emergency services

"He does not grow tired or weary, his understanding is beyond fathoming. He gives strength to the wearied, he strengthens the powerless."

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Harvesters' lads weekend away

Ever wonder how you are supposed to function as a man of faith in today's world?

A few days at Stonyhurst College in the height of summer could be just the positive experience you need.

Harvesters, a Catholic men's network, has pencilled in a date for the lads from 16-18 July.

"This is a chance to get away for a weekend with other men, meeting

with like-minded people who want to grow in their faith, encourage others and be encouraged," said Iain Archibald, a member of the steering group.

"This weekend in the rolling hills of Lancashire has been going for several years and each time has attracted about 100 men who gather to sing, pray, have a laugh, eat heartily, listen to talks, play various sports, go for walks, relax. You'd be most welcome to swell the Scottish contingent.

"We have returned home stimulated, invigorated and re-envisioned to take up our lives as singles, husbands, fathers, celibates; working, retired; old, young; Scots, English.

This year's main speakers are Fr Chris Thomas, a priest in the Diocese of Liverpool, and David Wells, director of adult formation in the Diocese of Plymouth.

They will talk about ways of growing in faith and self-confidence as Catholic men and making a differ-

ence in society.

A series of seminars will examine issues of prayer, fatherhood, stress and anger management, improving your marriage, sexual temptation, and seek answers to "Who is the Holy Spirit?"

Bishop Bernard Brain of the Diocese of Salford will celebrate the Sunday eucharist with the group

• For more details, contact Iain Archibald, tel: 0131 445 5699.

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TUNING IN TO THE VOICE OF GOD

FAMILY MATTERS

LOOKING FOR ANSWERS, seeking direction - help is at hand for young people wanting to know the purpose of their lives.

For a radical new discernment process gets underway in the Archdiocese of Glasgow this month with an invitation to anyone aged 17-30 to give it a go.

And Archbishop Mario Conti has vowed to be alongside them every step of the way.

"I have great confidence in the desire for good among so many younger people today," he said.

"But they are up against it with so many competing messages and conflicting values coming at them from all sides.

"No wonder it is hard for them to decide the right direction with so many voices, images, slogans and brands vying for their attention and their loyalty. Often they can be left

dispirited and resigned to asking - 'why bother?'"

But the Archbishop encouraged: "One young man who experienced the same kind of confusion was Samuel. He heard all sorts of voices calling him, but wasn't sure where they were coming from or what they wanted.

"But he stayed tuned in, persevered, asked questions, sought answers. Eventually he recognised God was calling him and he responded positively to the task of being a prophet."

As the Biblical account of Samuel's call makes clear, the young man was supported in discerning the call of God by the elderly priest, Eli. It was he who asked the questions and steered him in the right direction.

This story of Samuel is the blueprint for the Samuel Group which is being promoted for the first time in

Glasgow launches Samuel Group to help direct young people's choices

Scotland.

A novel way of giving direction and support to young people seeking their goal in life, it has proved successful in dioceses around the world since it was first introduced in Milan, Italy, in 1987.

Archbishop Conti said: "It is my fervent hope that the Samuel Group will provide this kind of supportive and prayerful listening for young people in Glasgow. We need their gifts and their generosity, at the heart

of our church life and at the service of the wider world, as a witness to the message of Christ."

In a relaxed, friendly atmosphere young adults aged 17 to 30 are encouraged to meet together once a month over the course of a year.

The meetings combine reflection on Scripture - including the call of Samuel - inspirational talks, group discussion, liturgical prayer and socialising.

Between the meetings, participants will be provided with a spiritual director to help them reflect on the experience of prayer and to explore responses.

The directions young people will be supported in include decisions on relationships - the prospect of marriage and parenthood - study or work options, service within their community, voluntary projects or the particular call to ministry as a priest or to religious life.

The Samuel Group is a joint project between the Archdiocese of Glasgow, the Jesuit community at St Aloysius, Garnethill and the Ignatian Spirituality Centre.

After an opening weekend in

September, the group will then meet on the first Sunday of each month until July 2005.

Chris Docherty, Youth Officer for the Archdiocese, said: "The Samuel Group is not a new organisation as such. It is the experience of a reflective journey which bears fruit in the vocational commitment of the young people who take part."

All the gatherings will take place in the Ogilvie Centre attached to St Aloysius Church, Rose Street, Glasgow between 4-9pm on the Sunday evenings.

Anyone who is interested in the prospect of taking part, is curious about it or thinks this might be the thing for a friend or family member can go along to a taster evening.

These will take place in the Ogilvie Centre on Wednesday 16 June and Tuesday 22 June at 7pm. Anyone interested in joining the Samuel Group can get more information from Chris Docherty, Youth Officer, 196 Clyde Street, Glasgow G1 4JY. Tel: 0141-226 5898, email: chris.docherty@rcag.org.uk.

MATTERS WHICH CAN disrupt the harmony of family life will be examined at a gathering in Dundee this month to mark the 'Year of Life and the Family'.

Organised by the National Social Care Commission of the Scottish Bishops Conference, discussion will go beyond the ideals to look at issues which can cause friction in relationships.

The day of listening and workshops on issues affecting families takes place on Saturday 12 June in the Pastoral Centre, Lawside Road, Dundee, from 9.30am-3.30pm.

The main speaker for the day is Fr Jim Lawlor, parish priest at Our Lady & St George's, Penilee, who will reflect on the often harsh reality of family life when the bonds are broken through imprisonment, marriage disputes or financial hardship.

Workshops will cover a number of issues affecting family life - bereavement and loss, conflict resolution, employment difficulties, spirituality, media influence and crime and punishment.

Jean Urquhart, Chair of the National Commission for Social Care, said: "The plans for this event contain all the elements of a lively and interesting day. The richness will be provided by the people who attend and who bring their own life experience of family relationships. It will be a day of listening, learning and participation. Don't miss it!"

For more information telephone the Social Care commission office on 0141-331 0083.



Year of life and the family



Run for Pro-Life cause

THE ANNUAL GLASGOW women's 10K run gained a new lease of life this year.

For, last month's race around the city witnessed a team of mixed ability athletes taking part to raise funds for the Cardinal Winning Pro-Life Initiative. And their sweat and tears paid off as they totaled over £1000 in sponsorship.

The ten-strong outfit was led by the Initiative's co-ordinator Sister Roseann Reddy who described the experience as "a stroll in the park". Only later, did she admit that she had walked the route which began and ended in Bellahouston Park.

"The top elite athletes had finished the course before I even reached the start line," she conceded.

However, the rest of the team, including Sister Roseann's colleague Sister Andrea Fraile, did not let the side down - coming home in very commendable times.

Sister Roseann admitted that she was skeptical about the exercise and

had tried to duck out of the challenge at the last minute. But having finished the race, she's determined to enter again next year.

"I'll even put in the training so that I can at least jog round," she promised.

"It is also a wonderful opportunity to give publicity to the Pro-Life Initiative and to get our work seen."

Meanwhile, the Initiative, which has supported over 1000 mothers in their pregnancy since its launch in 1997, is limbering up for a marathon exercise in promoting the pro-life message.

Using the first Scottish Day for Life (31 May - the Feast of the Visitation) as its starting block, the Cardinal Winning Initiative is seeking to encourage more people to be active advocates in the defence and promotion of life.

In a letter to clergy in the Archdiocese, Archbishop Conti wrote recently: "We must never allow our people to lose sight of the

scandal of abortion - the legalised killing of the very young.

"It strikes at the very heart of our human society since it violates that most fundamental of human relationships, the relationship of mother and child.

"Scandalously, 200,000 babies are aborted annually in the UK."

In attempting to counter the practice of abortion, the Archbishop said it was not enough simply to condemn it.

"Cardinal Winning's Pro-Life Initiative, Life, The Innocents and other groups have seen the need to understand the mentality of those tempted to abort and to offer them a realistic alternative and practical support, giving them back the dignity of parenthood.

"We should encourage our people to support such organisations and others which campaign to change the law on abortion, euthanasia, cloning and embryo experimentation."

Gianna - a woman of our times

GIANNA MOLLA who was canonised last month, only 42 years after her death, has been held up as a model for the pro-life movement.

A young Italian doctor with three children, she discovered when carrying her fourth child that she had a uterine tumour. She resisted the option of abortion which might have saved her life and carried her baby daughter to term. A week after giving birth, the 39 year-old mother died.

Today her youngest daughter is a doctor specialising in the care of the elderly and was present in St

Peter's Square to witness her mother's canonisation.

Archbishop Conti said: "Gianna is an inspiring saint for us in a world where abortion is practised most often for purely social reasons. Her love for God and for life triumphed in her sacrifice.

"Her love lives on - as does the love of a young Glasgow mother who was with us last year in Lourdes, and who, in like manner, postponed treatment, even painkillers, so as not to harm her unborn child.

"She like St Gianna, gave powerful witness to the Gospel of Life."



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Changing face of Clyde Street



The planned Piazza, in front of St Andrew's Cathedral

AMBITIOUS PLANS to develop the land opposite St Andrew's Cathedral on Clyde Street have won the backing of the Archdiocese of Glasgow.

The area which combines Custom House Quay, Custom House Gardens, and Carrick Quay, forms Glasgow city centre's main frontage to the River Clyde.

The proposed £200 million development will include a mix of residential, leisure and retail facilities designed to regenerate the riverfront. At present the site, which is dominated by shrubbery and a walkway, is deemed 'run-down' and largely avoided by the public.

Consultations between the developers, Clydeside Properties, and the Archdiocese have taken place throughout the planning stages. The plans were lodged with Glasgow City Council last month.

DEVELOPMENT TO INJECT NEW LIFE INTO HEART OF THE CITY

Archbishop Mario Conti said: "Any scheme that offers accommodation in a prime location, and extends the commercial and leisure areas of the city centre to the banks of the river, deserves consideration. "While the loss of the river promenade in Clyde Street would, in itself, be regrettable, it does not in fact attract any significant number of people and is regarded as unsafe."

He added: "The developers are trusted to ensure in their proposals that the Cathedral is not obscured by inappropriately scaled buildings, and that the end result is a harmonious, stylish and lively addition to the city's life."

There have been strong objections from other Clyde Street resident groups to the planned development which includes:

- * A four star hotel with approximately 120 rooms.
- * Six residential buildings, plus a landmark tower building, providing a total of 348 one and two bed apartments and penthouses.
- * A 'key worker' building providing affordable housing to public sector workers.
- * Galleries, cafes and shops at ground floor level along the waterfront.

The residential buildings will be in two blocks of three with a square between corresponding to the width of St Andrew's Cathedral on the other side of Clyde Street.

David Newton of Clydeside Properties said "We are dedicated to bringing the best design for this site in recognition of its importance to Glasgow.

"Many cities worldwide have benefitted by refocussing on their

waterfronts. Sydney, London and Amsterdam, are good examples of waterfronts that lay derelict for years after heavy industry and waterborne trade declined, leaving strips of land suffering from out-moded infrastructure, becoming public 'no go' areas.

"We believe Custom House Quay will support Glasgow's new and bold international image."

He said the development would redefine the quayside and provide flood protection unlocking the potential of the site to become one of Glasgow's prime locations, enabling its people and visitors to experience the river as an active part of the city centre.

"Once complete Custom House Quay will be a focus of retail and leisure activity from 7am till midnight creating a safe and enjoyable environment for both residents and visitors."

Ken Crilley, Director of Development for the Archdiocese, said that the diocese has been consulted throughout the planning stages and was satisfied that the development would not impair the status of St Andrew's Cathedral as an historic landmark on Clyde Street.

If the plans are given the green light, it could take up to three years to complete the development.

LANDMARK... the Cathedral is the only remaining building from 25 years ago



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How Clyde Street might look, with Cathedral on the right

Crete meeting offers fresh horizons on ecumenical journey

A RETURN TO spiritual roots is necessary if ecumenical dialogue is to bear fruit.

That was the message Archbishop Mario Conti brought back home after a week-long meeting of Christian leaders on Crete.

The setting on the Mediterranean island where St Paul landed on route to Rome was highly poignant and provided significant pointers to the journey of faith ahead for the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches.

For the past six years, Archbishop Conti has been co-moderator of the group, having been appointed by the Vatican after the last assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1998. The other moderator is Bishop Jonas Jonson, Lutheran Bishop of Strangnas, Sweden.

Formed in 1965 following the Second Vatican Council, the JWG is charged with initiating, evaluating and sustaining the many forms of collaboration between the Holy See and the World Council of Churches.

Archbishop Conti said: "I was delighted to be able to welcome to the group Bishop Brian Farrell, the Rome-based secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity. He led us in a fresh examination of the Vatican II document on ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, on the

occasion of the 40th anniversary of its publication and his insights were extremely encouraging.

"We were also able to mark, as a group, the feast day of Saints Cyril and Methodius, Apostles to the Slavs and Patrons of Europe, by celebrating vespers and the holy liturgy in the Orthodox Academy chapel dedicated to the two brothers.

"Each morning and evening, participants gathered for prayer in the Academy's chapel. On the Sunday, we attended the holy liturgy at the Monastery of Chrysopigi in Chania, and were introduced to the life and work of the convent by Mother Theoxeni, superior of the community."

Following the meeting three documents will be presented to the Vatican for approval dealing with the issues of baptism, the purpose of ecumenical dialogue and Catholic participation in local councils of churches.

Archbishop Conti said: "The document on baptism has already provided the joint commission on doctrine of the Catholic Church and the Church of Scotland with substance for its agenda. This has proved very stimulating and opened up new horizons of shared vision and co-operation."

The co-moderators expressed the gratitude of JWG members for the warm hospitality of the Orthodox Academy of Crete and the kindness and encouragement of all who had welcomed them to the island.



Bishop Jonson and Archbishop Conti with the Joint Working Group delegates

SUMMER SOUNDS

GLASGOW'S FAMOUS Phoenix Choir is performing at a special charity concert in St Andrew's Cathedral, Clyde Street.

And the proceeds will support the work of the Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice on the opposite bank of the river.

The 'Songs on a Summer's Day' festival takes place on Sunday 13 June at 2pm.

Fr Hugh McGinlay, assistant priest at the Cathedral, said: "I am delighted that the Phoenix Choir will grace the cathedral with the gift of their music. The concert affords the opportunity to support the work of the Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice in its care for people living with terminal illness.

The world-renowned choir will perform a varied programme of musical pieces ranging from sacred and classical to traditional and popular.

Tickets priced at £7.50 can be obtained from Jennifer Easson at The Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice on 0141 429 5599.



Bene Merenti... Bill Farrell, centre, with his brother Fr Robert, the Archbishop, Michael Martin, Gerry Leonard, Fr Sullivan and the Altar servers



The new First Communicants with Headteacher Tom Connor and Fr Joe Sullivan

Jesus in the city

THE EXPERIENCE of church life in cities across the UK will be examined at an urban mission congress in Glasgow, this month.

Some 200 delegates to 'Jesus in the City' will discuss how they can challenge their churches to work more effectively in today's multi-cultural and more ethnically diverse cities.

"Our time together will draw on the biblical themes of faith, hope and love in ever-changing communities," said Jane Winter, one of the organisers of 'Through the Glasgow Looking Glass'.

"Celebrating our faith and learning from each other will be key to a lively and challenging programme."

The congress runs from 17-21 June.

IT WAS A DAY of gifts and blessings as St Philip's, Ruchazie, celebrated its Golden Jubilee of foundation as a parish.

Even the sun shone as friends old and new joined parishioners for the Mass of Thanksgiving on Sunday 16 May.

Sharing the limelight were seven youngsters who the week previously had made their first Holy Communion.

They were among a large group of pupils from St Philip's Primary school who graced the occasion with their singing and participation in the Mass.

For headteacher Tom Connor and his staff it was a bittersweet moment as the school closes its doors for good at the end of this month.

One man who has witnessed most of the ups and downs of St Philip's parish life over the past 50 years is Bill Farrell.

He moved to Ruchazie from St

GOLDEN DAY OF GIFTS



Mungo's, Townhead, in 1956, taking with him his new-found commitment to the Legion of Mary.

Although the parish no longer has its own praesidium, Bill is celebrating his Golden Jubilee of membership of the spiritual movement this year. Still going strong, he is president of the branch in neighbouring St Maria Goretti, Cranhill.

In honour of his service to the Legion and his witness to the Church's social teaching as a member of the Trade Union movement since the age of 16, the 74 year-old stalwart was presented with the Bene Merenti Papal medal by Archbishop Conti.

The Archbishop thanked parish priest Fr Joseph Sullivan and the parishioners for their efforts to sustain St Philip's in lean times. He exhorted them to persevere, saying the evident spirit of prayer was a sure sign that the parish will grow again.

Among the special guest at the celebration were the Speaker of the House of Commons Michael Martin, MP for the area, and local councillor, Gerry Leonard.

Just one Cornetto...

A PICNIC PROMISING a real taste of Italy takes place at Colzeum Park, Kilsyth, on Sunday 13 June.

Organised by Glasgow-based Italo-Scozzesi association the 'Scampagnata' will get off on a high note with the celebration of Mass at 11am.

Accompanying the picnic, which follows, will be live Italian music and plenty fun activities for the 'bambini'.

The following Sunday, Cochrane Park in Alva will host a sports day for Italian-Scots from across the country. Expect some tough tackling on the football pitch.

REMEMBERING THE HEATHER PRIESTS

THE ANNUAL MASS at the old seminary in the hills at Scaln takes place on Sunday 4 July at 4pm.

Each year hundreds travel from across Scotland and elsewhere to the site where, throughout most of the 18th century, scores of young men were trained for the priesthood. They were known as the "heather priests".

Set amid the rugged beauty of Glenlivet, the old college is maintained through the Scaln Association which is hosting the Mass and continues to support critical restoration work.



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THE SHAME OF ABU

EVEN THOSE WHO continue to dispute that it was a crime are increasingly hard-pressed to deny that it was a blunder. Iraq is a nightmare.

It is well over a year since a triumphant George Bush, ostentatiously dressed in battle fatigues, stood on the deck of an aircraft carrier proclaiming to the world that the war had been won, the mission accomplished.

Today, both he and Tony Blair are vehemently insisting that the Coalition will not simply "cut and run", even while they scramble desperately for any face-saving exit strategy - the very denial they feel constrained to make is a sure sign of the predicament they now find themselves in.

Mission accomplished. What mission was that? To overthrow Saddam Hussein? To find and destroy those much talked-about weapons of mass destruction which could be deployed within 45 minutes? Turn Iraq into a Jeffersonian democracy? Put an end to torture and abuse within Iraqi prisons and to extend the shield of human rights to an oppressed people? Bring peace and order to the Middle East? To strike a decisive blow in the war against terror, thereby making the world a safer place?

Disorder

Well, Saddam has certainly been toppled and is now in American custody. As for the other war aims, only the most brazenly impudent propagandist would dare to claim that we are in sight of achieving any of them - the truth is that the war, so precipitately, unjustifiably, unnecessarily launched, has made the prospect of achieving them far more difficult than ever.

Even the fall of Saddam, the one single gain to set against all the other failures - even this loses some of its lustre if we are to believe the words of King Abdullah of Jordan, the closest to an ally that the Coalition has in the region. He warns us that the next ruler of Iraq must be a strong, autocratic leader if the country is not to be torn apart by its rival religious and ethnic groups. Saddam was such a ruler that his fall would inevitably lead to these problems of disorder and disintegration.



Patrick
REILLY

There was, after all, ample cautionary precedent when that other strong man, Tito, died and the Yugoslavia he had held together broke up into its warring factions, leading to conflict, ethnic cleansing, and a flood of asylum-seekers in western Europe. But the lessons were ignored. So eager were Britain and America to overthrow Saddam, with or without the UN resolution, that they rushed to war in the deluded belief that the peace would somehow take care of itself.

No thought was given to the aftermath. It was wrongly assumed that everyone in Iraq, a scattering of Saddam loyalists excluded, would welcome the coalition troops as liberators in much the same way as the Allies were greeted in Paris. We see now, to our bitter cost, how fatuously mistaken this was. Not just the Sunnis, predictably enough, have risen against us, the traditional enemies, the Shiites, persecuted under Saddam, have also joined in the struggle.

Wherever the Coalition troops are, there is resistance. The most peaceful region of Iraq is the Kurdish sector in the north where there are a mere 300 Coalition troops. Everywhere else is disorder. The more troops, the less stability. Far from subduing the disorder, they are, by their mere presence, provoking it.

The abhorrent truth begins to break upon us. We are not the army of liberation we flatteringly conceived ourselves to be; we are an army of occupation. Baghdad is not the Paris of 1945, the troops are not being greeted with joyous abandon by people deliriously happy at having been freed from a tyrant.

No wonder Bush and Blair are bewildered and anxious: it is we who are unwelcome and

unwanted. If the Coalition leaders genuinely believed that their troops would be embraced as liberators, this is simply another measure of how poor their intelligence was and how removed from reality they were - it underscores how dangerous it is to believe that something is true, simply because you want it to be so.

Despite Mr Bush's claims, the war has not been won. More precisely, a new and very different war has taken its place. You can choose the kind of war you want to fight, but you can't force your opponents to oblige. The war presently being waged is one that we neither wanted nor expected, but that is just one more misjudgement in the catalogue of errors that has littered our policy on Iraq all along.

Sunk

Once the Iraqi army had been defeated and Baghdad had fallen, the Iraq people should have laid down their arms and co-operated with the conquerors in the task of rebuilding their devastated country. This, clearly, is what the Coalition leaders had in mind. But it did not happen and a sense of aggrieved dismay increasingly possesses the minds of the victors: we won, why can't those who lost be sensible and accept the result?

Instead, the death-count of soldiers and civilians alike continues to mount. The Americans are reduced to bombing Fallujah, a heavily-populated city, burying civilians under piles of rubble. Is this what is now meant by giving back their land to the Iraqis?

We are not winning the war in a military sense. And we are assuredly losing it in a moral sense.

Poison running through Scottish society

By Gerry Coyle

THE LARGE yellow-painted letters stand out garishly in the morning sunlight on a leafy West End street.

Local residents look on bewildered. It is not every morning that they wake up to find sectarian slogans and death threats plastered on their doorstep.

By mid afternoon this latest and very public intimation of 'Scotland's shame' will have been scrubbed clean, erased from sight - but not from memory. And especially not from the memory of its intended target, Celtic footballer Neil Lennon.

Since his arrival in Glasgow four years ago Lennon has been subjected to an appalling campaign of harassment. Last year, he was assaulted by two men in an unprovoked attack in a street near his home. Earlier this year his car was forced off the road by another driver, who later admitted in court that he had deliberately targeted the player.

Some will argue that Lennon is a victim of a culture that is endemic to the city - a culture of aggression and lack of respect for others that sits uneasily alongside Glaswegians' reputation for friendliness and generosity. However, to dismiss the attacks on the Irishman as mere neddery would be both foolish and dishonest.

The sectarian motivation behind the abuse was there, writ large outside his front door for all to see.

Alongside the death threat were the words 'No surrender' 'UVF' 'RFC' and 'Fenian'.

Before dismissing the wording as simply part of Glasgow's sectarian vocabulary, we should ask ourselves why those terms appear alongside each other in this particular context.

A death threat to a Northern Irish Catholic and the letters denoting a loyalist paramilitary organisation do, it has to be said, have a certain logical connection. To the Neanderthals who painted them, the letters RFC (Rangers Football Club) it would appear fall into the same category.

By including them in their vile threat the bigots responsible besmirch the name and reputation of one of Scotland's biggest and most powerful sporting institutions.

Doubtless those who sit in the Ibrox directors box, as well as a significant number of Rangers fans, will share Neil Lennon's disgust at this latest offensive intrusion on his privacy. But they might well wish to reflect on their club's shameful and longstanding policy of not signing Catholics which has in no small measure contributed to Scotland's sectarian culture and, although no longer practised, still evidently remains entrenched in the minds of some who adhere to that culture.

One football club and its tradition of religious discrimination, no

matter how influential, however, can not be held solely responsible for the disgraceful treatment that Neil Lennon has been forced to endure.

Lennon's cardinal sin is that he combines being vehemently Celtic minded with an Irish Catholic background - credentials that have made him a hate figure not just at Ibrox but also in many football grounds throughout the country. The argument - purveyed by some pundits - that it is the Irishman's aggressive style of play that is to blame for his unpopularity does not stand up to scrutiny.

If that were the case, why do other players of similar ilk not get the same abuse? Certainly Celtic manager Martin O'Neill - a man who is normally guarded when speaking on such matters - is under no illusions that the abuse his fellow countryman has suffered is anything other than racially motivated and has publicly stated as much.

Anti-Irish racism in Scotland's national sport has a long history, with its prejudice reaching to the heart of the Scottish football establishment.

Events of recent weeks, including the criticism of Celtic teenager Aiden McGeady for opting to play for the Republic of Ireland in preference to the country of his birth, have shown that Scotland's football culture has yet to divest itself of its endemic anti-Irish prejudice. Yet sections of the Scottish media are conspicuously

culpable of ignoring it.

The media in a democratic society has the opportunity and also an obligation to expose the ills that exist within that society when and where they occur. Yet we find that, while Scotland's mainstream media is content to report sectarian acts of an anti-Irish/Catholic nature, such as those on Neil Lennon, their implications in relation to Scottish society are seldom explored.

By sweeping 'Scotland's shame' under the carpet we are not going to make it simply go away. Scots composer James MacMillan - who first coined the phrase in a lecture at the 1999 Edinburgh Festival - continues to reiterate this point with a regularity that is clearly unpalatable to some. His recent return to the fray in an interview in The Herald provoked a predictable avalanche of criticism.

One correspondent to the paper's letters page urged Mr MacMillan to "move on and leave behind this deeply held, all-absorbing poison". Such comments epitomise the twisted mentality of those who would deny what is plainly there for all to see.

There is certainly a poison in Scottish society, but it is not James MacMillan and his ilk who are guilty of espousing it.

• Gerry Coyle is a freelance writer.

GHRAIB PRISON

When will we realise that you cannot unchain the beast in man and still expect decency and self-restraint? God knows we have been warned often enough, have seen it verified often enough

Chaos in Iraq, terror on the increase, the world less safe than ever, the reputations of America and Britain sunk to bathymetric levels. The battle for hearts and minds is a sick joke as the appalling photographs of the abuse of prisoners in Iraq are released to a shocked world. The disclosures of Amnesty International and the Red Cross have undermined whatever claims to moral superiority we advanced to justify our invasion of the country.

Shock and awe have given way to shock and disgust. Back in the heady days when all seemed to be going well in the war against terror, a truculent Donald Rumsfeld bullishly told us that Guantanamo was no country club and that the Geneva Conventions were outmoded in the post 9/11 world.

Abu Ghraib prison is clearly no country club either, at least for the detainees, though the American jailers seem to be enjoying themselves hugely, if we can trust the photographs they took of themselves while sexually humiliating their prisoners. What we saw was bad enough, but there are apparently many more images of abuse so vile that American Congressmen left the video presentation in Washington sickened and shaken. Lawyers have advised the Pentagon not to release these pictures for fear of the damage they might do in the world at large.

But the advice comes too late. The damage has been done and the good name of America is in tatters. One of the chief war aims - to win the approval of the Moslem world for the toppling of Saddam - has been lost, certainly for a generation, perhaps for ages to come.

Especially damaging is the element of sexual abuse in the humiliation of the prisoners. We hear much about the conservative, almost evangelical nature of the Bush administration, its almost ritualistic recruitment of God as an ally in the project of spreading democracy by conquest - conquer we must, for our cause is just.

Revoluting

But the methods used in the prisons, the sex sessions and pornographic videos, the pyramids of naked prisoners, the unspeakable coercion of Moslem men to perform acts of masturbation - all of this derives from the liberal, permissive side of American society, from its sex industry and its cable porn, its completely untrammelled right to free speech and free expression, its defiant determination to let it all hang out.

Well, it's all hanging out in Abu Ghraib and it makes for the most revolting viewing. The prison is a pornographer's paradise, a pervert's Elysium, where fantasies usually confined to the back room of sex shops can be enacted upon real, live, helpless human beings. It offers, everything else aside, a devastating insight into the nature of the American adult entertainment industry.

For many years hard-line Moslems have been denouncing America as the Great Satan, the enemy of God. These photographs will only serve to convince many of their moderate co-religionists that this is a correct judgement.

So who is to blame for the abominations that have occurred in the prisons of Iraq and that are alleged to have occurred also in Afghanistan? Some would have us believe that it is all the responsibility of a few bad apples, a handful of "low grade guys and gals", of moral retards and trailer-trash from the backwoods of American society. America should not and must not be put in the dock for the sins of a few benighted hillbillies.

Others, more sceptical, derisively ask if it is credible that Lynndie England and a few others suddenly decided on their own to act as they did without some kind of hint, permission or even instruction from above. The only question for the sceptics is: from how far up?

How far up the chain of command does the guilt climb? Orders, by definition, come from above. Who

was the topmost issuer of orders in this process of torture and degradation? The sceptics insist that there was a deliberate, systematic programme of abuse, a torture-machine in which Lynndie England and her like were no more than minor cogs. They want the trail to be pursued straight to the Pentagon and, beyond that, to the White House itself.

Of course, it is crucial to decide which of these views is correct, is it all attributable to a few disgraceful deviants or are the higher echelons of the American politico-military establishment implicated? And yet, in another sense, it doesn't matter. For even if, after all the proper investigations, it is proved that the trailer-trash are the sole culprits how many people throughout the world, especially in Moslem communities, will believe that they are not simply being made scapegoats, hung out to dry for implementing a policy agreed at the highest levels?

Tarnished

One thing is certain, whatever the outcome of any investigations, the myth of our moral superiority - the one surviving justification for our war against Saddam - has been irretrievably tarnished. We are implicitly admitting this in our insistence that the United Kingdom Human Rights Act does not apply to British actions in Iraq and in our claim for immunity from prosecution for all Coalition troops when the transfer of sovereignty takes place. This is not the behaviour of governments with nothing to fear and nothing to hide.

Meanwhile what kind of message does this send to the Moslem world? Cynics will say it is small wonder that the US refused to sign up to the International Criminal Court at the Hague; only Americans will try Americans, only Americans will decide who is and who is not guilty. The Lynndie Englands may suffer for their sins; but be sure that those at the top of the American politico-military establishment will not be among the accused.

When will we realise that you cannot unchain the beast in man and still expect decency and self-restraint? God knows we have been warned often enough, have seen it verified often enough.

Almost three centuries ago, Jonathan Swift in *Gulliver's Travels* flayed the hubristic folly of Western (particularly English) man for presuming that he was the pinnacle of creation and, as such, mandated by God or History or Progress to carry civilisation to the so-called dark places of the earth, by fire and sword if necessary. Iraq would have struck Swift as simply one more instance of the same old delusion.

Delusions

Just over a hundred years ago Joseph Conrad taught the same lesson in *Heart of Darkness*. At the Congress of Berlin the leading European powers had awarded the Congo to Belgium so that the light of western civilisation should be introduced to darkest Africa. It turned out to be a screen for rapacity and exploitation.

Kurtz, the central character of the book, is the emissary of Europe to the Congo and he is no hillbilly, no redneck from the sticks. Musician, painter, writer, orator, philanthropist, he is the knight-errant of European culture, none better qualified to carry our light into their darkness.

We have sent our best and may confidently expect our best to be good enough. What we witness instead is the moral debacle suffered by Kurtz and the civilisation he represents as he succumbs to the darkness within his own heart, the real heart of darkness.

The lesson is not the excellence of the West, but it's conceited enslavement to twin delusions: that it has conquered the darkness within itself and is, accordingly, qualified to dispel it in others.

It is so dangerous to set oneself up as an armed light-bearer, a bringer of light by force to those in darkness. Mr Bush and Mr Blair are finding that out today.



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Glasgow grannies shine the light of hope

ON THE DAY of his appointment to Glasgow, Archbishop Conti was brutally honest about the challenges facing the Church.

A "crisis of faith" was his stark summation. And few disagreed.

He urged renewed vigour and fresh hope. Already, he had vision of strong vibrant parishes, of people active and interested in their faith.

His visits to over 70 parishes in the past 30 months have reinforced that vision.

The wisdom of a-thousand-and-one Glasgow grannies is hard to argue against, after all. These are the little people, going daily to Mass and lighting their votive candles, who have kept the flame of faith and hope alive. They are the pillars of strength in their homes, as well as our churches.

Now, younger generations of committed Catholics are needed to take up the torch, to fan the flame and shed light in areas of darkness.

Like our grannies, we have to make time in our busy schedules for God.

Do we care about youth ministry, educating adults, supporting the clergy and safeguarding important symbols of our heritage for future generations? Simple,

fundamental questions, requiring a response from each of us.

It is our responsibility to become more knowledgeable about the faith, to educate ourselves about its traditions and its teachings. This will give us the confidence to talk with one another more openly. To do things in the community that, up to now, we simply haven't dared.

Courage and confidence. These are what give us the nerve to live out the Gospel of life - denounce injustice, care for the vulnerable and be a force for good in society.

Today's is a difficult world for the evangeliser. But if we are to make the Kingdom of God an ever greater reality, we have to be ambitious. We have to be bold.

By commitment to working together, making the most of new opportunities and acting decisively in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Church in Glasgow will grow again.

Marriages will grow stronger, parishes thrive, vocations increase, our churches fill up and our people go out with conviction to spread the faith. Even the young teams who menacingly hang around our churches could be a part of it.

That is the type of vision which transforms 'crisis' into hope.

Taking up Samuel invite

AMID THE cacophony of sound and flash of images which vie for young people's attention it is hard for God to get a look in.

Like advertisers trying to sell their product, God has to fight for a share of the market.

That is why the Samuel Group, which launches this month in Glasgow with a couple of taster evenings, is so vital. It is an opportunity that has to be seized.

Like others, young people are afraid of making decisions, especially if they demand any sort of long-term commitment.

"They panic at the thought of irrevocable choices. The same word 'irrevocable' in marriage terrifies them, and so they need help and support," stated Cardinal Martini, who set the ball rolling with Samuel in Milan to great success.

Support in making life choices is what the group offers. Reassurance that you are

not alone, that you are not going to be cast adrift.

Others have been here before, and look at what they achieved. Scriptures and the Church's tradition is full of their good news - if only we give their story an airing.

If you are a parent, a teacher, guardian, friend of a young person whom you know has great potential for good, then let them know about the Samuel Group.

Don't be afraid to invite them. Pose the question. Give them a chance to respond.

If you are of the 18-30 generation and think this might be for you - don't make excuses. Take courage to go along and test it out.

The taster evenings are Wednesday 16 June and Tuesday 22 June at 7pm in the Ogilvie Centre, next to St Aloysius church on Rose Street - just up from Sauchiehall Street.

TOP LAWYER'S BRIEF FOR NOTRE DAME LEAVERS

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BORN IN 1478 HE WAS BROUGHT UP BY CARDINAL MORTON. HE WENT TO OXFORD AND HE STUDIED LAW. VERY SOON KING HENRY VIII RECOGNISED HIS INTELLECT AND INTEGRITY AND HE WAS APPOINTED LORD CHANCELLOR. THE KING ENJOYED VISITS TO MORE'S FAMILY HOME AND THEY WERE CLOSE FRIENDS. HENRY CONSULTED THOMAS ABOUT THE SUPPOSED INVALIDITY OF HIS MARRIAGE BUT HE EXCUSED HIMSELF FOR LACK OF EXPERT KNOWLEDGE. WHEN ROME REFUSED THE KING A DIVORCE HENRY DECIDED TO CALL HIMSELF THE 'SUPREME HEAD OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND' THOMAS REFUSED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THIS AND THE KING COMMITTED HIM TO PRISON. AFTER A MOCK TRIAL HE WAS SENTENCED TO DEATH. THOMAS WAS BEHEADED ON TOWER HILL ON 6th JULY 1535. HIS LAST WORDS WERE: "I DIE THE KING'S GOOD SERVANT - BUT GOD'S FIRST" HE WAS CANONISED IN 1935 AND IS BURIED AT ST. DUNSTON, CANTERBURY.

Pray to St Thomas More for a strong faith!



SOLICITOR GENERAL Elish Angiolini has praised Glasgow's Notre Dame High School for instilling the confidence needed to help transform society.

And she has encouraged the newest batch of Notre Dame 'old girls' never to give up on the dream of giving of their best in public service.

Mrs Angiolini was speaking at an end of year conference, titled 'Citizenship', for sixth-year pupils at the popular all-girls school in the west end of Glasgow.

"When I was in my final year I had no inclination that one day I would have such a grand title as 'Solicitor General for Scotland'," she assured her young audience. "But there was a vote of confidence put in you which strengthened your desire to go out there and be all you can be.

"Notre Dame brings out the very best in you. While you might struggle with exams or worry about what you want to do in the future, the possibility of achieving your best is always presented to you."

The Solicitor General who attended the school in the 1970s -



Solicitor General with Notre Dame Headteacher Mrs McLaughlin, Headgirl Lorna McCann and Carly Tomlinson

By Maria Gilmore

walking most of the way from her home in Govan - admitted that she wasn't always on the right side of school rules and was not immune to a ticking off.

But it was her appearance in court when only 16 as a witness to a house break-in that sowed the seeds of her ambition to transform the Scottish court system. Understanding little of what was going on, she resolved to make justice work better for the victims of crime.

Courage

And already, while still a student, she had set-up a small advice clinic in her local church hall for people looking for answers to daily problems in the community.

"Things do not always have to be as they are. That is the huge optimism that being at Notre Dame injected into me," she told the sixth-year pupils whose time at the school

ends this month.

"We should always question whether things can be made better, and what we can do to achieve change. If we see something that is wrong then we have to have the courage to challenge it and not acquiesce in it."

The conference at the Hilton Grosvenor Hotel highlighted the contribution the pupils are called to make as they move out of the protective atmosphere of the school.

Headteacher Mary McLaughlin said: "We feel that preparing pupils to take their place in the wider society means that, in addition to achieving high quality exam results, young people must have the opportunities to take responsibility and contribute to their community.

"The conference has given our students a chance to look at a number of issues and develop their understanding of their place in the world. I am confident that they can all go on to make a worthwhile

contribution in various walks of life, knowing that that is what they are capable of."

Among the other guest speakers was Pauline McNeill, MSP for Glasgow Kelvin, who spoke of her work in the Scottish Parliament. Earlier this year, she visited Notre Dame to attend a meeting of the school's pupil council.

Dreams

The pupils also took part in workshops on challenging sectarianism and international trade issues. And the school's own Amnesty International group demonstrated how pupils are already working to tackle injustice and effect change in society.

Head student, Lorna McCann - a Govan girl like the Solicitor General - thanked all the participants for their contribution to the day and assured that the Notre Dame class of 2004 would strive to live up to the dreams the school has for them.

Responding decisively to God's call

VINCENT TOAL examines the origins of the Samuel Group

IT IS 15 years since Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini formed the first Samuel Group in Milan, Italy, where he was Archbishop.

He was inspired to create the group by the biblical story of Samuel - the young boy who discovered his call from God to be a prophet for his people.

A renowned biblical scholar and teacher, Cardinal Martini wanted to open up the Scriptures to young people and allow the word of God to direct their lives and the choices they make.

"I launched the appeal at a youth gathering in the cathedral in September 1989, and immediately about 200 replied saying that they were completely ready to embark on this journey," he told an inter-

national meeting on vocations in 1997.

Within its first ten years, well over a thousand young people had taken part in the Milan Samuel Group, and the scheme has spread to dioceses around the world.

"In my experience there are still young men and women who are extraordinarily generous, determined, available," said Cardinal Martini. "There are a lot of them, not vast numbers perhaps, but certainly as a group there are plenty.

"But they are afraid. They panic at the thought of irrevocable choices. The same word 'irrevo-

cable' in marriage terrifies them, and so they need help and support.

"Right from the very first meeting, I have always made it clear that a search for one's true vocation lies in being at one with the divine plan of salvation and God's designs, and finding one's own purpose in life bit by bit by listening to His word."

Once a month for a year young people between the ages of 17 and 25 who have made no firm choice about their lives gather on a Sunday evening to listen to and reflect on scripture texts from the Book of Samuel and the gospels. They are accompanied by the bishop and supported by individual spiritual directors.

In the course of the year, participants are asked to limit their use of television or anything else that might distract from listening to and interpreting God's call.

"In observing the divine plan of salvation in the light of Samuel, one can see the ways in which God calls, accompanies, encourages, helps, sustains and enables one to overcome all trials," said Cardinal Martini. "That is what we mean by integrating our lives with God's plan."

Reflecting on the experience of over a decade of engagement with young people, the Cardinal outlined some of the positive results to emerge from among the young people.

"Many of them underline that finally they have put a bit of order into their lives and above all into their minds. Many young people, even the best of them, are very confused, impulsive, victims to instinct. They have never had a mental discipline.

"A further benefit is the ability to recognise and overcome the ordinary trials which accompany the spiritual life. Having made themselves live a life in the Spirit, they learn that it is through trials, obscurities, desolations, dryness, that you begin to enter the dynamic of the spiritual life. They learn something of the meaning of perseverance."

By the end of the year, each member of the group is encouraged to make a definitive choice about pursuing their vocation in life.

Among the participants in the first Samuel groups in Milan, 31 affirmed their commitment to marriage, ten entered seminary and 24 joined religious communities.

Others pledged themselves to a year of voluntary charitable work, social work, pastoral and missionary activity. Three chose to change their jobs and three chose to work in politics.

"These young people have had to make big sacrifices," said Cardinal Martini. "They have had, for a start, to sacrifice a Sunday afternoon and evening, cut out other obligations or pleasures, refuse to go out with a girl or boy friend, make a choice of undertaking a spiritual discipline."

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"There are still young men and women who are extraordinarily generous, determined, available."

Cardinal Martini

Lunchtime Faith talks

VOCATION IN THE CHURCH is the theme of this month's talks in the Faith in Glasgow series organised by the West End Deanery.

The popular Wednesday series has been running throughout the year at the Multi-cultural Centre on Rose Street, next to St Aloysius church, Garnethill.

Among this month's talks and speakers are:

9 June - St Columba and the Iona Connection, by Fr David Trainer.

16 June - Vocation of the Permanent Diaconate, by Fr Paul Murray.

23 June - Vocation of Marriage, by Mrs Elizabeth Robertson (head-teacher St Patrick's Primary, Anderston).

30 June - The Universal Call to Holiness, by Fr Dominic Robinson SJ.

The talks begin at a 1.10pm, with a free lunch provided.

Catholics and the press

THE NEXT MEETING of the Newman Association (Glasgow Circle) is a panel and discussion on "Catholics and the Press in Scotland".

On the panel will be Rennie McOwan, writer and broadcaster; Harry Conroy, Editor of The Scottish Catholic Observer; and Kevin McKenna, Deputy Editor of The Herald.

The meeting will be on Thursday 24 June at 7.30pm in Strathclyde University Chaplaincy, 90 John St (corner of Martha St/John St) Glasgow.

GAPS APPEARING IN THE FAMILY ALBUM



Katie GRANT

THIS IS the month that our oldest child leaves school. In fact, by the time you read this, it will all be over bar the shouting, since her exams will be finished and only the mucking about until the end of term left.

A hugely important chunk of her life has passed and, to crown it all, she will be 18 just as it happens.

Although she cried when school was over - a tribute to the Glasgow Academy, where she has been blissfully happy and academically most productive - she is quite ready for new things.

We couldn't be more proud of her, not only for all she has achieved, but because she has been a joy to live with, being neither afflicted with the grumps (unlike her mother) or the worries (unlike her father).

But goodness, I feel old. How can I be organising an 18th birthday party and putting her on the car insurance?

It's a tricky time for parents when the school uniform (completely wrecked - what do they do with their blazers?) is in line for the bin rather than the wash.

Now comes the test of all the

values and behaviours you have tried, rather ham-handedly, to instill.

It's a bit like letting go of the bicycle the first time the safety wheels are removed. You hope the child has gained enough momentum to keep going in a forwardly direction without falling off.

The wheels may wobble - that is to be expected - but provided balance is quickly restored, disaster can still be averted. But what happens if there is a disaster and you are not there to pick up the bicycle and set them going again? That's the nightmare, even for a not very motherly mother like me.

Although I am sure my children don't believe it, I really do wake in the night worrying about whether people will be nice to them and how they will cope with the inevitable scrapes as well as rather more practical concerns, like whether they will ever go to the dentist again.

I am only reassured by the indisputable fact that millions of parents have similarly agonised and their offspring seem to have managed perfectly well and kept all their teeth.

But it is not only my husband and myself who will be affected when Clementine (named after Clemmie Churchill, a bit of a heroine of mine) leaves for gap year then university. Her sister and brother will feel her absence very keenly.

It is the good fortune of the oldest child in most families seldom to experience 'empty chair

a family living together full-time is hardest of all, for the atmosphere can never be recaptured, only mullered over and remembered.

I now curse my hatred of cameras since we don't seem to have nearly enough pictures to do justice to a childhood now past. One picture we do have, however, is of Clemmie at her First Communion, an event witnessed by my parents and my parents-in-law, Douglas and Audrey Grant.

It was a glorious summer's day, one of those described so well in Laurie Lee's *Cider With Rosie*. We had Mass in the family chapel in Lancashire and Douglas and Audrey, although loyal members of the Kirk, never batted an eyelid.

I remember thinking at the time that this was true ecumenism, not the kind that involves watering down the liturgy until it resembles nothing so much as a soggy sponge-cake, but the kind that listens politely, says its own prayers privately and keeps its misgivings to itself.

At lunch afterwards, fortified by the contents of my father's wine cellar, we talked about all the things that are forbidden, principally religion and politics, and

laughed a great deal. Then we walked round the garden, disparate people with disparate beliefs brought happily together by a little girl and a sacrament.

Now both my mother and my father-in-law are dead and Clemmie has come of age. *Tempus fugit* - time really does fly.

This strong sense of endings will very soon, I know, be overtaken by an equally strong sense of new beginnings, and in that way, feeling a little wistful is quite enjoyable.

But how grateful I am that my marriage has not foundered and that, at this strange time, my husband and I can be self-indulgently maudlin together, thinking of our shared past. Meanwhile, Clemmie gently scoffs and reminds me that when she goes, there will be less shopping, less cooking and less washing - all things I absolutely loathe.

Ah, I say, but I will have to walk the dogs, something she has done without complaint for the last four years at least. Then we shake ourselves. It doesn't do to get too sentimental about life's rites of passage.

She's not off quite yet. We have a holiday in France to enjoy all together first. And anyway, her boyfriend's on the phone.

The end of being a family living together full-time is hardest of all

syndrome' - that sometimes crippling sense of loss when, even for the best of reasons, a sibling's place can no longer automatically be laid at the supper table.

For some children, it can feel like the whole world has caved in. Others seem unmoved, but nevertheless wander round looking dejected and get cross if you ask them why.

The end of something is always hard to take, and the end of being



Young Scots ready to serve at the annual Archdiocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes

But it is identifying the obstacles that young people confront and supporting them to overcome them that the Samuel Group experience bears most fruit.

"At bottom, the fundamental difficulty is the fear of making definitive decisions, the desire to put off, put off and put off. The fear of making mistakes. They would love the will of God to be immediately clear.

"Boys and girls who are excellent from every point of view are available for anything - in theory. But they are extraordinarily indecisive. It is a sign of the times and makes us realise how even 20, 22 and 24 year-olds need help. The

fear remains and so continual support is needed even after the year is over."

He added: "However, it is important that there has been a change in direction in their lives, and under spiritual direction and with a deeper spirituality, they can and will arrive at a decision. But they still need help.

"It is very difficult, especially in western Europe, for young people to make decisive choices. They are not so much under pressure - the family keeps them, they continue their studies. There is no pressing urgency in their lives, so they don't jump, they don't throw themselves out of the boat. Peter throwing

himself out of the boat when he saw the risen Lord is an example I put before them.

"At a certain point, in order to live, you have to jump out of the boat. If you want to be always sure that you are not making a mistake in the choices you make, the loser is not in what you choose, but in choosing to live."

In taking this decisive action to heed the voice of God and obey his call, opening up scripture is crucial.

Like Samuel, young people begin to make sense of the world, of their roll within it and are encouraged to respond decisively to God's call.

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Phil McMahon, centre, founder of Jim's Trust, gets help to load the next cargo of aid.



Pupils at a school in Hoima, Uganda

EXPERIENCE TEACHES that for those who have learned to care for others, the ability to extend that care seems to come more readily.

In 1998, Phil McMahon was reduced to tears watching a documentary about famine in Africa.

"I don't know," he confided, "whether the tears would have come had it not been for the fact that I had only recently lost my brother, Jim." Jim had suffered all his life from both physical and mental handicaps. "Seeing all those poor, suffering people - men and women, adults and children, but most especially the children. It just broke my heart."

Having lost both his parents in his late teens, and with his older siblings married and living away from home, Phil took on the responsibility of caring for his older brother in the family home in Holytown.

Through his role as a carer, Phil became involved with the Motherwell Diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes and there, in 1976, he met two young women from Mossend - Annie Tully, now Sister Benigna, and Anne Marie Fraser, since 1980 Mrs Phil McMahon.

As a result of his friendship with Sr Benigna, Phil got to know about the work of the Sisters of St Peter Claver who have a house in Mossend. And it was through the Sisters that he first met Fr Charles Nawanda a priest from the Diocese of Hoima, Uganda, who was supplying in Scotland at Corpus Christi, Calderbank, in the summer of 1997. The following year, his Ugandan colleague Fr Matthias Baguma also came to Lanarkshire for the summer to supply.

Both Frs Charles and Matthias had talked to Phil about the problems faced by the people of Hoima. A rural diocese in western Uganda, most of its population is dependent on subsistence farming, earning less than £100 a year.

For most families, access to books, clothes, medical supplies and household goods is hard to come by.

Therefore, as one of nature's carers, having watched the documentary on Africa, Phil dried his eyes and rolled up his sleeves.

"Uganda might not be a famine area, but at least I knew people there who needed help," he said. "I had kept in touch with Fr Charles and Fr Matthias, and the Sisters of St Peter Claver had contacts in Uganda too. So one of the three problems was easily solved - what to send."

He added: "What I needed now was to find out how to organise collecting the material and then work out a way of shipping it to Uganda. To be more precise, I had to get a way of shipping it free of charge. There was no money to

AID M

HUGH M CLOUGHLIN talks to charity founder who has dedicated his care mission to memory of his late brother

pay for it.

"Funnily enough, I found a solution to the latter, what I thought to be the more difficult problem, first."

A private shipper in Birmingham promised to deliver shipments to Africa free of charge if Phil, a postman in Airdrie, could get them to him. His bosses at the Royal Mail suggested he contact their sister organisation, Parcel Force, and they agreed to help.

"Unfortunately," Phil explained, "after a while the private shipper decided to move his operation to Africa. But he kindly gave me six months advance notice so that I had time to try to make other arrangements."

Determined not to be beaten, he wrote to British Airways who agreed initially to carry the shipment that he had ready, with the proviso that further assistance would be decided on the merits of the application.

In November 2000, the first shipment of Phil's aid winged its way to Entebbe and was delivered to Fr Matthias.

And what an assortment of goods. Clothing, including jackets, shirts, sweaters and caps; school equipment - bibles, dictionaries, pencils, box files, video tapes and CD players; Easy Stitch home sewing machines, screw drivers, toilet brushes, a camera tripod and a body massager!

Within a month, the Board of Directors of British Airways voted to guarantee Phil free transport for his shipments under their in-house charity, St John's.

"I cannot praise too highly Mary Brew and Paul Amey at British Airways. They have been a tremendous help to me."

Towards the end of last year, 53 year-old Phil took early

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When confronted with the task of having to make funeral arrangements for a loved one, many people have preconceived ideas of what arrangements they must make, or perhaps more significantly what arrangements they are expected to make.

People will often say that they must place an intimation in the newspaper or provide a number of floral tributes; similarly they might say they would be expected to provide a funeral car as transport for every member of the family or that they have to provide a meal for after the service. Naturally it is important that the wishes of the deceased person and their closest family are taken into account along with the practices of their religion and church, but after that there are no hard and fast rules on what arrangements must be made.

A funeral can be as simple or as elaborate as you wish and any funeral director should be happy to offer all types of funeral to you. Nowadays for convenience many people use their own transport for the funeral so a large number of official cars is not required; people often have to return to work after



attending the service meaning that something simpler than a meal such as a buffet may be more appropriate. In many cases a newspaper notice may not really be required at all as family and friends will already have been notified of the arrangements, and while many people like to give flowers, in a lot of cases it may be preferable to donate the money instead to a favourite charity or organisation.

Whatever type of funeral service is chosen it is important to remember that no one should ever feel pressurized by anyone else into making funeral arrangements that they don't want, don't need, or can't afford; the most important thing is that the deceased is given a fitting and respectable funeral which they themselves and their immediate family would be happy with.



MISSION TAKES OFF

retirement from the Post Office.

"I got talked in to going to Uganda and Rwanda to see for myself what was happening with the stuff we send out. To see the people who are benefiting," he said.

Inspired by the experience, he is now devoting his energies full-time to his charitable exploits.

And in honour of his brother for whom he cared so much, he has registered the organisation as Jim's Trust.

"I have been able to build things up to the point where we are shipping out six 2000kg cargoes a year. It takes me six to eight weeks to prepare each one."

As the aid effort has built up with the support of a number of parishes in the North Lanarkshire area, so has the list of beneficiaries. From their depot at the Holy Ghost Father's house in Carfin, the team is working on shipments for a hospital and care centre in Nigeria and project in Poland. Another two shipments will be winging their way to Brazil by August.

Reluctant to refuse requests for help, Jim's Trust has agreed to help establish the St Charles Lwanga Secondary School at Mityana in Uganda. All this, of course, presents new problems, not the least of which is money.

To date, the Trust has developed on a wing and a prayer, thanks to the goodwill of British Airways and the assistance of priests and family.

"I know there is such a thing as charity fatigue," Phil observed ruefully. "I have approached a couple of prominent people asking them to act as trustees and sponsors. Despite the fact that I know they must be being asked for help every day of the week, their replies have been encouraging."

"With their help, and with the help of the ordinary Catholic in the pew and their neighbours of whatever persuasion, I am hopeful that we will be able not only to maintain our present level of activity, but to increase it."

He stressed: "The aim is to help the poor people of Africa, Latin America, or wherever. The damage done by lack of food, clothing, health care and education is all too prevalent."

But does this type of aid work?

Last November, Martina Boylan of the Congregation of Our Lady, e-mailed Phil from Entebbe to thank him on behalf of the Uganda banana tree project, Bega kwa Bega - Swahili for 'Shoulder to Shoulder'.

Through Jim's Trust, 73 knitting machines and wool were distributed between six different centres to support workshops for women's groups run by Angelina Campbell from Wishaw.

Each centre caters for groups of women drawn from four villages. After training they go back to their villages and train others to use the machines - enabling them to fend for themselves. Machines were also delivered to two schools for Aids and war orphans, and to one for disabled young people, all run by nuns.

"Well over 100 women have already benefited from this very special service given to the widows and orphans of Uganda," wrote Martina

Cardinal Keith O'Brien, who visited Rwanda and the Congo, earlier this year, with SCIAF, has thanked Phil for having "taken on single-handedly a wonderful task - that of ensuring that people who want to give some material goods to the Missions can have them transported very readily".

He added: "Much must be accomplished before the goods are transported and for this I thank you most sincerely."
P h i l ' s

local MSP has also endorsed his efforts.

"This is a very worthwhile initiative which has my full and wholehearted support," said Michael McMahon, a distant relation.

Most important to Phil is that through the work of the Trust his brother Jim's memory lives on.

It is in his name that Phil is continuing to care for people in Uganda, Rwanda, Nigeria, Poland and Brazil - as well as at home in Holytown.

Jim's Trust

Philip McMahon, 12 Park Avenue, Holytown, Motherwell ML1 4XT
Tel: 01698 833467
Email: philmcmahon@btopenworld.com



Fears grow for a million fleeing brutal attacks in Western Sudan

AN INTERNATIONAL appeal to help people fleeing violence in Sudan has met with an immediate response from SCIAF.

Scotland's Catholic aid agency donated £30,000 to help the thousands of people who have fled attacks in Darfur, Western Sudan.

In a struggle for precious resources in the impoverished region, armed militias have terrorised the region, causing a

million people to flee their homes. Over 150,000 are sheltering in neighbouring Chad and SCIAF's funds will help support refugee camps which have been established in the area.

The appeal for help was launched by Caritas Internationalis, the international network of Catholic aid agencies of which SCIAF.

Duncan MacLaren, Secretary General of Caritas and former Director of SCIAF recently visited the camps in Chad and listened to the stories of refugees.

"We need to increase the speed of aid for tens of thousand of refugees who have crossed the border and are facing a life or death situation once the rains come and the roads are blocked," he urged.

The refugee camps managed by Caritas Chad supply much-needed food, water and health care services. They are also establishing a school. But once the rains begin in early June the camps will become inaccessible for up to six months.

Stephen Martin, SCIAF's Africa Project Officer said: "This is an

international problem not a local one.

People in Scotland can help by making donations to SCIAF which will be sent directly to the camps where they are needed most."

Djimya Mohammed Ali, a 26-year-old mother of three, left her village in Darfur last November after it came under attack from Arab militias. She said that the militias arrived on horseback, shooting at the civilians, and killing several people. She is suffering from a bullet wound to the knee.

She fled to Chad to find food for her family, but was worried about the journey so left her eldest son with her mother in Sudan. She does not know if they are alive or dead.

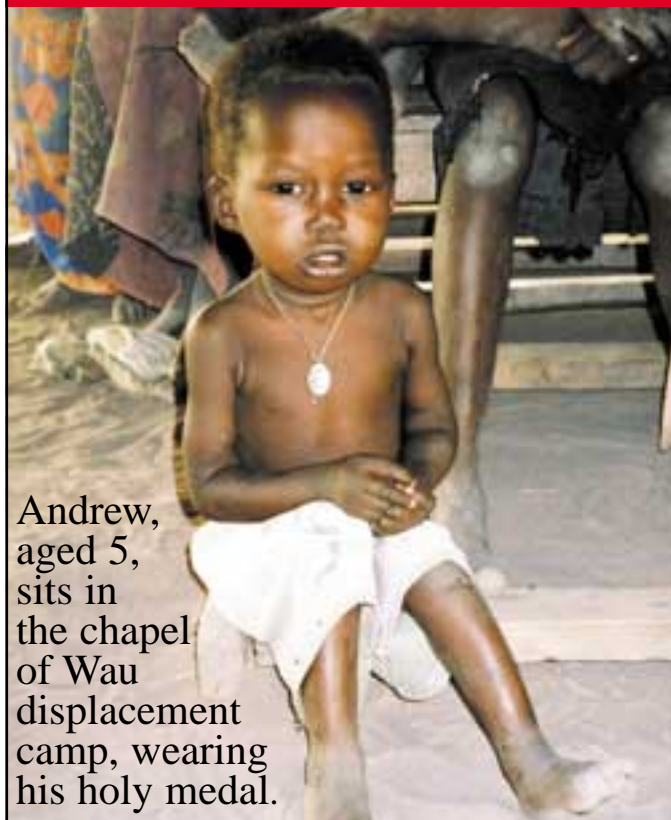
"Of course I want to go home, but here I feel safe. Until my home is safe, I want to stay here," she cried.

The refugees in the Caritas camps are currently in a good condition, but there is a growing shortage of tents, and fears over the rise of diseases like meningitis and polio. The livestock are all dying, raising concerns over contaminated water supplies.

Fears are also growing for the 850,000 people in Sudan who have been displaced by the inter-ethnic fighting. They have no access to food, medicine or shelter, as aid agencies have been unable to reach them.

"We need the international community to open up a humanitarian corridor into Sudan to enable aid to be brought to these people as soon as possible," said Duncan MacLaren.

Please Pray for Sudan



Andrew, aged 5, sits in the chapel of Wau displacement camp, wearing his holy medal.

1 million have died in this region of Sudan.
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PICK N' MIX OF LITURGICAL ABUSES

When I read your editorial (May 2004) in which you claim that "few of us will have come across most, if any of the (liturgical) abuses which the Vatican congregation has specifically addressed..." I was reminded of the comic genius of PG Wodehouse who once said "I don't owe a penny to a single soul - not counting tradesmen of course".

Liturgical abuses are everywhere in the Archdiocese of Glasgow.

Ad-libbing by priests, who will say just about anything except "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world", lay people joining in the doxology at the end of the Eucharistic prayer, distributing Holy Communion and even being left to cleanse the sacred vessels are among the multifarious common abuses in our parishes condemned by the Vatican.

Only if the Mass would be "excessively prolonged" should lay people be used to help distribute Holy Communion and never to cleanse the sacred vessels. Yet such abuses are part and parcel of everyday parish life in Scotland in open defiance of the Vatican.

Anyway, since parishes with more than one priest continue to use these lay distributors, the Vatican prohibition on seeing this task as a "ministry" is clearly being flouted. Priests mysteriously emerge at the end of Masses to chatter to people as they leave but do not appear in the sanctuary to help distribute Holy Communion during Mass which is,

THANK YOU for your front page coverage of Redemptionis Sacramentum, the latest document on the liturgy to emanate from the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments.

However, I can't help but feel you bottled out of full and frank coverage of the issue for fear of treading on the toes of the diocesan clergy.

My reason for suggesting this is that you choose to highlight abuses that generally don't happen in the Archdiocese of Glasgow - 'self-intinction', lay people gathered around the altar, lay people reading the gospel.

As for the abuses that are widespread? No real mention.

As anybody who attends Mass in the Archdiocese could testify there are many other abuses you could

self-evidently, much more important.

The 1997 Instruction on the Laity forbade the extraordinary ministers receiving Holy Communion "apart from the other faithful as though concelebrants", yet this happens all the time. Indeed, I've never seen extraordinary ministers receive Holy Communion any other way.

Since the 1997 Instruction has been completely ignored, there is absolutely no reason whatsoever to expect that the instructions in the latest Roman document will be implemented.

Further, the crucial abuse of the

have bravely highlighted.

For example - the habitual use of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, the labeling of these extraordinary ministers as "eucharistic ministers" or "special ministers", constant deviation from the prescribed texts of the Mass, the use of lay people to open the tabernacle, purify the sacred vessels. The list goes on.

All of these abuses are dealt either by Redemptionis Sacramentum or previous documents of recent vintage.

Now, there's a little campaign against a genuine problem that you could highlight. Takes a wee bit of courage though.

Scott Ogilvie,
Dumbarton

intensely distracting, not to say insulting to the intelligence of the average adult, and it is easy to see how some people who should not or would not go up to receive Holy Communion are too embarrassed to stand out in their row as the only person not going up to join the undignified supermarket-style queue.

No, those who think that we are free from liturgical abuses in Scotland, dream on. Contrary to your optimistic editorial headline, the liturgy has, indeed, become a battleground.

Patricia McKeever,
80-83 Princes Street,
Edinburgh

* Editor notes: The reference to an order 'to refuse Communion to those in public office who support abortion and otherwise flout Catholic teaching on faith and morals' is nowhere mentioned in the Instruction issued in April. What the document does say is "anyone who is conscious of grave sin should not celebrate or receive the Body of the Lord without prior sacramental confession". It adds: "It is certainly best that all who are participating in the celebration of Holy Mass with the necessary dispositions should receive Communion. Nevertheless, it sometimes happens that Christ's faithful approach the altar as a group indiscriminately. It pertains to the Pastors prudently and firmly to correct such an abuse."

Dismay at excesses of 'new improvers'

MY SON REMARKED, after his second visit to The Passion of the Christ, "If this film does nothing else, it will separate the Liberals from the Catholics!"

As the credits finally rolled I sat still with my heart crushed and all the theology and history learned in my life reduced to so much straw. Only one person I have so far actually met was left unmoved, and she was a shallow woman of the kind whose opinions are borrowed from the trendy columnists who dominate our Christ-abhorring media.

The only other deriders I have come across have been in the media. I think of the incredible statement made by an English academic who, after confiding that he had been emotionally engaged by the Passion - and was embarrassed to admit this - went on to describe the Gospel of John the Beloved as, "a gospel of hate". Thus he dismissed that gentle carer of Mary, whose sonship

was created from the mouth of the dying Christ and includes us all. How deftly had my son perceived the first effect of the Mel Gibson movie.

Of, course those who like to see themselves as Liberals - by which we have learned to recognise nothing more or less than hubristic disdain for the authority of the Church - will always be with us. What fascinates me is that until the aura of the Passion fades they seem hell bent on defining themselves by it.

I had started collecting some of these waspish vignettes of the hate The Passion phenomenon has aroused when I came on the perfect specimen in Flourish (May 2004). Here in one article by Joseph Kelly was everything of the trendy mix; beginning with the inevitable contempt for - or ignorance of - the facts.

Kelly's claim that "many of the depicted details of Christ's Passion came from the visions of Catherine Emmerich... which have no recogni-

tion from the teaching church," is baffling, for Catherine was a holy woman, a bride of Christ, and stigmatic. Her writings have never been condemned by the "teaching Church". So, forget the rambling implication that she was a crank and a danger to the Faith.

Mr Kelly wonders how we dumb movie-goers were to "filter out the elements of the horror movie genre that Gibson included in order to make the depiction of suffering more graphic." He is equally contemptuous of our unenlightened fidelity to the Holy Week liturgy where our fixation with the Passion of Jesus is dismissed as "haemorrhagic hymnody".

However, Mr Kelly isn't all that bothered about such prosaic complaints about Mel's movie; it's "where it's coming from" that really upsets him.

To the righteously exercised writer from our Pews danger lurks in an unwholesome provenance - the Tridentine Rite. That is the rite of Roman worship of our dads and mums, granddads, great grandmas and on down to the terrors of the bloody Reformation. What a terrible threat indeed! Does he not know that Pope John Paul II has blessed and confirmed the continuation of worship in this ancient and holy rite for those who wish to cling to it?

It is not even Mel Gibson but his father who kept to that older Catholic way. Gibson the elder certainly reacted; but he did so to protect the faith of his family against the excesses of the new "improvers". Like me he had watched his children deprived of catechism, dogma, and Christ-like formation as our schools lost sight of

their primary purpose - to produce, in tandem with family and Church, articulate young Christs. Did not the Popes themselves weep at these outrages, at those who had usurped the work of the Holy Spirit and led entire dioceses away from obedience to Rome?

That the fanatical "improvers" were helped by the folly and intransigence of Archbishop Lefebvre is neither here nor there, for whether he had existed or not they would have invented him. Nothing in their eyes must hinder this decapitation of our liturgical history and the demonising of all genuine Catholic teaching that had gone before - trusted customs and norms, and the human apparatus which had identified us as one historical body with the Apostles.

The beloved Rosary was mocked, Benediction ridiculed, the confessing of sins less than murder was considered a waste of time. Now there is no hell, no Devil, no real reason for the agony of the Christ. More was achieved in seminaries to pervert priestly formation with mocking asides than Luther and Calvin managed in 400 years of Protestant theology and the destruction of Catholic-minded universities. And all that because the Mass that I and my father heard had been allowed to become a sick joke, a thing that ought never have been, a monstrosity.

An individual's psyche could not handle such a reversing of sacred values, how could an entire people, and a people under the net of the consumerist, sex mad, gimme or die brave new world.

Joe Barrett,
Houston
Renfrewshire

Right to the Point



Hugh DOUGHERTY

CHURCH AT THE HEART OF THE WORLD

Mortgage rip-off demands justice

LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, my heart went out to the people and families caught up in the recent Maryhill plastics factory disaster.

And, as a press officer, who trains with the emergency services to deal with just such a situation, and who was out with police and emergency planning staff doing the media work on a suspect device left on a train on Glasgow's south side just a week before, the true impact of the tragedy hit right home.

The emergency services, especially fire brigade chief Brian Sweeney, have been widely praised not only for their work in rescuing people and recovering the dead, but also for their media awareness.

But what was equally encouraging and praiseworthy was to see the church fully involved. Right there, where it mattered, bringing comfort and solace to those in need.

There was Father David Trainer, lighting candles and praying at nearby St Columba's on Hopehill Road. Along with local ministers, he was there round the clock in Maryhill Community Halls keeping vigil with families as they anguished over the fate of their loved ones.

Above and beyond the call of duty, he also fielded questions from the waiting media. Strathclyde Fire Brigade chaplains, Rev Neil Galbraith and Fr Jim Thomson were at the heart of the rescue operation, working with the rescuers, supporting them and encouraging them. And in hospitals around the city, chaplains joined with nursing and medical staff in bringing care and comfort to the injured.

The media responded positively to the sight of the clergy in action, at the sharp end, dealing with the bereaved and those challenged with the rawness of sudden, untimely death and disablement.

Priest and minister were seen where they were expected to be, where they were needed, comforting people and offering the love and hope which their faith inspires. On a visit to the site of the explosion, Archbishop Conti spoke words of sympathy and solidarity which the cameras conveyed to the country.

It was good to see the church being given its place by the media, right in the heart of suffering and anguish, and it was a very posi-



tive message that was put over. This was an excellent advert for practical Christianity in action, and for the church as a community that cares for all.

People turn to God in times of tragedy, and it is good that the church is there for them.

But, at the same time, you have to be able to take a step back and acknowledge that too often the church is just a useful crutch to be clung to when it suits, and is otherwise dismissed as redundant.

Alongside the instinctive good neigh-

bourliness and eagerness to help, a church on the frontline, at the heart of the people, was evident amid the rubble and destruction of the Maryhill blast.

One lesson in all of this is that the church needs to be seen doing what she already does much more.

We need to raise the public profile, to convince more people that what is so eagerly accepted in times of tragedy is not only offered but is relevant to all life's events.

It is amid the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of our

day, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, that the Church's mission is lived out.

But we should not expect or ask those who are already fully committed to the task of comforting the bereaved and accompanying the anxious also to carry the can of handling the demands of the media.

Perhaps, as a church, it is time that we too got into the business of emergency planning, so that priests and others on the frontline are not left isolated, carrying the burden on their own.

IT WORRIES ME, just a bit, that I've been stopped by more Flourish readers than have ever chinned me about my page on any subject you like before, to ask me about a piece I wrote on endowment policy recently.

What is it about money? It certainly seems to have attracted the attention of many more people than when I write about spirituality!

The article seems to have hit home with people in their 50s - the same boat as me - as well as with older parents, whose children have been ripped off so cruelly by the financial advisers, banks and building societies in their rush to make excessive profits.

Just for the record, our first endowment, amazingly, did pay up - an astounding £4,000 more than expected. So we were able to pay off a wee chunk of the balance. But the bad news is that the second mortgage won't come up with anything like that in 2013. So, now we've converted a chunk of the balance into a repayment mortgage, effectively paying double to deal with the debt.

Meanwhile, Standard Life, the company whose ability with my funds I dispute, hands its former chief executive - the man who failed to answer adequately my letters asking for an explanation - a pay-off and pension which are, quite frankly, obscene.

We're not in the worse scenario by any manner of means. There are still thousands out there who are really struggling to make ends meet because of the great endowment robbery.

I can think of people who stretched themselves to buy their council houses, or young couples who push it to afford any home at today's prices, who have, in effect, been robbed by the big business of finance.

And robbed they have been. Their trust has been abused and many are left to contemplate elderly years which, far from being carefree, will be blighted by mortgage misery.

No matter how you look at it, this is a justice issue that won't go away.

Please if anyone's listening, the prophetic Church must say something soon and very loud about a rip-off that flies in the face of natural justice and which concerns so many across all sections of the community.

Finish line for Dr Jimmy

ONE OF THE larger than life characters on the Glasgow Catholic scene passed away recently.

Dr Jimmy Boyle, a marathon runner of some standing, who ran hundreds of miles for charity, but only after he was well past 65, reached his own finishing line at the age of 86.

A stalwart of Christ the King Parish, King's Park, the good doctor put his best foot forward for charity towards the end of a lifetime's work as a medic in Pollok. I first interviewed him over 20 years ago for a piece in the local paper, when the story was of a marathon man getting on the road when most people were retiring.

Dr Jimmy was the man behind the foundation of perpetual Eucharistic adoration in Christ the King and encouraged the spread of the devotion across Glasgow. He also turned out for brains trust events in the parish hall, when he dispensed his down-to-earth and medically well-read wisdom on a variety of topics.

He was a sort of man who inspires others and couldn't be still for long. Somehow, the invocation of resting in peace doesn't seem appropriate for this outstanding modern day 'doctor of the church'.

Indifference to condom culture reaps anti-life harvest

IT'S A WHILE since I've had a go at the condom culture that has taken such a grip on our society.

For, probably like you, I've given up trying to do anything about it as condom



machines sprout in every public toilet and packets of the foul things are on open display in supermarkets and petrol stations.

Tribute to a culture which says that sex is recreational and the more casual the better, these devices pollute our world in a way that we would never have allowed 20 or even 10 years ago.

Condoms are now conventional. They're accepted as the essentials in sex education programmes. They're the save-all against unwanted pregnancy and sexually-transmitted diseases.

And, this summer, once again, health boards will be squandering public money, handing them out to young people jetting off to the Costa Promiscuity and the like.

This tacit acceptance of the subliminal message from the condom machine in the public toilet, or the rack of Durex above the sweets in the petrol station, is largely our own fault.

Our resolve to do something about it has been worn down. Like you, I have to confess to having admitted defeat.

It must be 10 years since I last objected to condoms being on open sale in our local petrol station. Then I insisted on waiting until an embarrassed manager agreed to move them.

But, now, I probably wouldn't have the courage. No one else sees it as an issue. No one thinks it's wrong that boys and girls, buying their sweets, can lift a packet of the wretched things off the same shelf.

Combat

This is why we shouldn't really be shocked about girls of 14 being sent by their schools for abortion. For, now, anything goes.

And, although the church is marking the annual Day of Life, it also needs to strengthen its message to combat the very factors which destroy life.

Condoms, with their devil-may-care, lets make merry message writ large across them, are part of that destructive influence which denies life and obstructs the loving relationship between man and woman.

This in-your-face approach to the marketing and promotion of these little pieces of rubber is a resounding victory for the libertarian lobby, which promotes sex without love and sex without outcome as its ideal.

I make no apology for being back to sex again on this page. We seem to have forgotten the fight in so many ways, and

have largely given in to the status quo.

When did you last write to the managing director of your local supermarket about the condom displays on its shelves? When did you take up the issue of condom machines in pubs with your local licensing board, and when did you last write to the health board to object to the free hand-out of these devices to young people going off on holiday?

We need to take two steps back and look at what our indifference has brought in its wake. Soaring teenage pregnancy levels, unprecedented numbers of young people infected by sexually-transmitted diseases, and the myth of safe sex, cynically promoted by the condom industry with government backing, not just intact, but very profitable in the pocket thank-you very much.

So, is the battle lost? Is condom culture here to stay?

Not if we were serious about putting over the counter-cultural message which roots sex firmly within a faithful marriage, as an expression of creative, life-giving love. Off-the-shelf, slot-machine sex is a con. And condoms are selling us all short.

G'day for life of St Francis

A CATHOLIC FOLK musician is praying that he'll be playing to full houses when he visits Glasgow this August.

You may not have heard of Australian guitarist Peter Kearney, but chances are you've heard his most famous hymn sung in church.

For he is the author of the well-known liturgical song 'Fill my house unto the fullest', written as he started out as a composer in his student days

in the 1960s. It has even been sung in the presence of the Pope when on a visit to Peter's native Sydney in 1995.

On a working sabbatical in Ireland, where his wife Madge hails from, the 57 year-old minstrel will be in Glasgow for a week in late August.

And he has invited any schools, parishes or spiritual groups to get in touch if they would like to host a concert and workshop.

"My concerts or recitals are

usually simple, local, small-scale, easily organised, with flexible financial arrangements - affordable even by small communities," he assured.

A firm devotee of St Francis of Assisi, Peter has pencilled in a concert at the Franciscan parish of Blessed John Duns Scotus, in the Gorbals, as the highlight of his Glasgow mini tour.

Here he will treat his audience to sounds from 'Good Morning, Good People' - his own musical tour de force relating to the life of St Francis. The concert will take place on Monday 23 August at 7.30pm

He describes St Francis as an inspiration - "a loveable yet challenging man, of perfect joy and profound sorrow, a dancer on wounded feet inviting us to join him in the dance".

Peter's songs reflect his concerns. While most are written for adults, with the themes of justice and reconciliation featuring strongly, many songs are for children.

Most of his concerts are performed in schools. He encourages the children to explore their own talents, sending tapes in advance so the students can learn the songs before they perform together before parents and the wider community.

"The number one thing I want is for people to be engaged with the stories and songs and have a good time," he said. "It sends lots of good little ripples out when people enjoy themselves at these concerts. Hopefully, the Spirit is present in those gatherings."



Peter Kearney

It was while at Sydney University in 1966 that Peter's gift for song-writing was recognised and encouraged by the chaplain Fr Ted Kennedy. In the space of just six weeks he penned 14 religious songs, which captured the spirit of the age and were published under the title 'Songs of Brotherhood'. Of those songs, 'Fill My House' and 'The Beatitudes' are still going strong.

"In new collections of songs, I have tried to link our tradition of faith with contemporary issues and concerns," he said. "I am as excited as ever by the songwriting process, more aware of it as a gift, and have no further need to be convinced of the power of song to communicate."

- If you would like Peter to demonstrate his art in your school or parish, contact him at: Apartment 3, 'Assisi', Chapelstown, Tullow Rd, Carlow, Ireland. Tel: 0353 5991 46955 Fax: 0353 5991 46943

CAST EURO VOTE TO MAKE VALUES REAL

VOTE TO MAKE Christian values bear fruit across Europe.

That is the encouragement given to voters across the continent by the Catholic bishops of Europe on the eve of the elections to the European Parliament.

And they warn against dismissing the Parliament as a 'talking shop' as it is popularly portrayed in the British media.

"By voting in this election, each one of us will benefit from the privilege of peace and democracy that was denied to our forebears," say the bishops, in the run up to the elections which take place in Britain on Thursday 10 June.

"The legitimacy and authority of Members of the next European Parliament to represent the values and interests of EU citizens will depend on the commitment of those citizens to go out and vote. For this reason, we all have both an interest and a moral duty to participate in the European elections."

The bishops have identified a series of issues which the new Parliament will be able to decide upon or influence. And they have drawn up guidelines from the Gospel and the Church's social teaching to help Catholics assess candidates' positions.

These issues include respect for life and the environment, solidarity and the common good, support for education and the family, the treatment of migrants and asylum-seekers, justice for the world's poor and the promotion of peace and international law.

The bishops also say that honesty in public life, respect for subsidiarity and dialogue with religions are of importance for the future of Europe and therefore should be taken into consideration.

With the recent accession of ten new member states into the European Union, the 732 MEPs elected in June will represent some 450 million people across 25 countries.

One of the first tasks of the new Parliament will probably be to adopt a recommendation on the new Constitutional Treaty of the European Union.

"We take this opportunity to renew our commitment to uphold the values enshrined in the Constitution and to recall the proposal we have made with other churches for an open and inclusive reference to Europe's Christian heritage in the preamble," said the bishops who represent episcopal conferences in Europe.

"At stake in these European elections therefore are fundamental values."

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SURPASSING ALL TARGETS, St Ambrose Primary school in Milton have raised a whopping £2600 for charity.

The magnificent sum was collected by pupils, staff and parents as their Lenten alms appeal, through a variety of activities and sponsored challenges.

And their good deeds are already benefiting children around the world.

For sharing in the award of the bumper Ambrosian cheque were Missionary Children Scotland, SCIAF, Barnardos and Across - which takes children and adults on pilgrimages and holidays.

Mrs Denise Pacitti, St Ambrose head-teacher, said: "This was a truly magnificent effort by the whole school community.

"We are delighted to know that our little sacrifices during Lent will help make a difference to the lives of children and adults who have to struggle every day of the year."



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St Aloysius College - building on tradition of Jesuit education

A READINESS to move on to fresh challenges is a key feature of the Jesuit vocation.

And after nine years as Headmaster of St Aloysius College in Glasgow, Fr Adrian Porter SJ is ready to take up a similar role at Wimbledon College in London.

But his departure from Scotland's prestigious Jesuit school is not quite part of a well-established cycle.

For, with his return south, St Aloysius will begin the new term in August without a member of the Society of Jesus at the helm. For the first time in its almost 150-year history, the College is to have a lay headmaster.

Rather than bemoan this break with history, Fr Porter prefers to see the arrival of Mr John Stoer, the first lay head, as a new beginning, building on a rich, well-tested foundation.

"I genuinely don't see it as the end of an era. Across Britain we have five Jesuit schools, four of which will now have lay heads. In the first instance, this has been the case for the best part of two decades and the school has been clearly successful in Jesuit terms."

"The Society has strongly backed this process of lay leadership and encouraged a shift of mindset so that we can positively support people in promoting and developing Jesuit education without being on the frontline as headmasters of schools or presidents of universities."

"I am confident that the appointment of a lay headmaster to St Aloysius will not diminish the status of the school as a provider of excellence in Catholic education within the Jesuit tradition. After all, we already have a predominantly lay staff which has contributed greatly to developing and promoting the distinctive character of the school."

Throughout his nine years at the helm, Fr Porter has overseen a period of rapid growth and major development of the facilities at the city-centre campus.

In 1998, the new St Aloysius College Junior School building was opened with younger pupils from St Francis, Merrylee, joining the existing P4-7 classes of the old St John Ogilvie Hall on the award-winning Hill Street site. Four years later, the ambitious Clavius building, housing the maths, science and technology faculties, opened its doors offering much improved curriculum opportunities for the students.

"The school needed to move on and to invest in new resources," Fr



Vincent Toal talks to Fr Adrian Porter SJ, departing Headmaster of St Aloysius College

Porter reflected on a renovation project which cost over £7million. "You can't afford to stand still, especially when more and more people are knocking on your door wanting to get in. We had to expand to accommodate the growing demand for places at the school."

With over 1300 pupils, St Aloysius is now granting the benefits of a Jesuit inspired education to more young people than at any time in its long history. This is a fact of which Fr Porter is justly proud.

"As long as parents aspire to have their children educated within the Jesuit Christian tradition and we have a staff committed to sharing our vision then there will be a Jesuit school in Scotland."

Ensure

It was just this type of grassroots support which ensured the College survived when in the late 1970s the local education authority made clear it didn't want the school to continue. Determined to ensure the Jesuit tradition lived on in Scotland, as in so many other countries around the world, the Society chose to make St Aloysius fully independent.

And, despite the charges of elitism which are often leveled at it, the College has remained true to its founding vision of forming men and women for others through the benefit of a good Catholic education.

"Through a Trust fund built up over the years, we provide a generous bursary scheme which ensures that we do not turn anybody away simply because their parents might not be able to meet the fees," said Fr Porter.

"If a child has demonstrated the

ability to pass the entrance exam, then we will offer them a place and support them."

Over 10 per cent of present pupils in the College's senior school are supported by bursaries with benefits extending to cover travel, uniform and trips away.

"We have a good social mix at the school, with a lot of first generation of families and a wide geographical spread from Ayr and Helensburgh in the west right through to Edinburgh in the east."

Among his present young charges and the hundreds of students who have gone on from St Aloysius in the past nine years, Fr Porter detects and great confidence and enthusiasm for life.

"This generation has grown up with greater economic prosperity and political stability, which has given them a deep-rooted confidence and security. For them, the world is a place of opportunity."

"At the same time, they are more aware of the majority of the population of the world and the difficulties others face. They are also more reflective and focussed."

In his time in Glasgow, Fr Porter has helped develop the social outreach programme which fosters a spirit of service among the pupils, encouraging their involvement in supporting other people and various good causes as part of their education and life experience. The list of projects is impressive - children with disabilities, pro-life awareness, justice and human rights issues, hospice care and children with terminal illness, homeless clubs and soup runs.

As a Jesuit school St Aloysius

focuses on the all-round formation of each person. Opportunities for theological reflection, days of recollection, short retreats, or adaptations of the Spiritual Exercises are readily available to the school community, through the school chaplaincy team which is served by the Jesuit community.

Like the eagle which adorns the College crest, there is no doubting the ambition St Aloysius' and the other 2000 Jesuit schools worldwide have for their students.

The Jesuit school-leaver profile drawn up by the Society is mightily impressive.

"By the end of their time in a Jesuit school it is hoped that young people are:

- developing and deepening a relationship with God, and are able to find God in reflection on their own experience;
- happy, friendly, and self-confident, with a sense of humour and an awareness of their God-given gifts and the need to fulfil their potential for good;
- seen to have a generosity of spirit and a readiness to place their talents at the disposal of others, especially the most needy;
- in the process of deepening their understanding of who Christ is and of living out their faith more fully;
- well prepared to take their place in wider society unmotivated by prestige or selfish ambition and aware of how fully they can contribute to the common good;
- ready to ask 'What more can I do, what more can I give?' in every area of life;
- proud of having belonged to a Jesuit school community with respect for its values and those who taught them.'

"We have to be up front and confident about what we are trying to achieve in a Catholic school," Fr Porter asserted. "It is idealistic and a tall order, but it is not unreflective."

"We review the effectiveness in relation to each of our 6th year students and ask if we have succeeded. Where we haven't achieved, we seek answers to what we need to change to do so. So it is not some pie in the sky mission statement, but something we earnestly strive for."

Available

Just as he is moving on to a fresh challenge, Fr Porter is keenly aware that many of the supports offered to students at St Aloysius are not so readily available when they leave.

To help continue their formation, the Society has formed the Young British Jesuit Alumni (YBJA) organisation which arranges gap-years for leavers from Jesuit schools.

Participants spend some time in a first world country (usually Australia) helping in one of the Jesuit schools and then some time in a third world country (ranging from Southern Africa to India to Nepal) working on a Jesuit mission.

There are also periods of reflection, celebration, team-building and learning to teach English as a foreign language at the YBJA base in London.

The programme is run by 'old Aloysian' Fr David Stewart SJ - one of many former pupils who have gone on to serve the Church and promote Gospel values in wider society.

As he takes his leave, Fr Porter is confident about the future of St Aloysius College well beyond its 150th birthday in 2009.

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The challenge ahead

THE NEW Headmaster of St Aloysius College is Mr John Stoer. His appointment by the Board of Governors was announced last October.

His background reflects a rich mix of Catholic education traditions. Educated by the Benedictines at Douai Abbey School, he went on to study theology at Bristol University.

After teacher training, he taught in various London schools and in 1989 was appointed deputy head of the Jesuit founded Campion School in Hornchurch.

In 1994, he became the first lay

headmaster of St Joseph's College, Stoke-on-Trent, which is in the trusteeship of the Congregation of Christian Brothers.

In his time at the helm, the school has tripled in size and built up an excellent reputation in all areas of its life.

He is married to Janet, and they have two teenage children. As well as school leadership, he is particularly interested in understanding how children learn.

Welcoming his successor on a visit to St Aloysius College, last month, Fr Adrian Porter SJ said: "Mr Stoer is well able to take on

the challenge of leading the College as it builds on its years of solid tradition. He was first lay headmaster at his present school and will bring that experience to his new post in Glasgow."

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FLOCKING TO ROME

THEY SAY ALL roads lead to Rome. With the advent of cheap air fares the route to the Eternal City is now easier than ever.

And one man promising to make the journey as often as he can is Scotland's Cardinal Keith O'Brien.

Not only does he have to attend meetings of the Vatican committees on communication and the care of migrants, but the Archbishop of St Andrews & Edinburgh also now has his own parish in Rome.

Although he is just a year short of his 40th anniversary of ordination, it wasn't until last month that the Cardinal got his first taste of being a parish priest.

And it is quite some parish. With 18,000 people in its care, it has more Catholics than some of Scotland's dioceses.

The church of St Joachim and St Anne was gifted to the Cardinal as his titular parish in the diocese of Rome by Pope John Paul II at the consistory, last October.

Set in a modern housing estate in the Toscolana district on the southern outskirts of Rome, Cardinal O'Brien officially took possession of the church last month

By Joseph Kenny

And the Romans took their new Scots 'Paracco' to their hearts.

To the surprise of his hosts and the 100 or so Scots pilgrims who had travelled over for the ceremony, the Cardinal offered his first Mass in the parish in Italian. He even delivered his homily in the people's native tongue.

Pointing to the patronage of Sts Joachim and Anne, the parents of Mary, Mother of God, he highlighted the need to uphold the Church's teaching on marriage and family life, and drew parallels between the falling birth rates in both Scotland and Italy.

Concelebrating the Mass were the resident parish priest Fr Dario Gervasi, his assistant Fr Carlo Purgatorio and members of the Pontifical Scots College staff.

As he presented the Cardinal with a 16th century painting of Our Lady of Prayer, to whom there is a strong devotion in the parish, Fr Dario said: "We know you are a man who has given his life to the service of the Church and we all now look on you as the father of our parish family."

In his first weekend as 'parish priest', Cardinal O'Brien celebrated

the Saturday evening Vigil Mass and two Masses on Sunday morning in the church which seats over 600 people.

And he got to know the different generations of parishioners as he toured the parish nursery school and the local state school, before visiting the sick in their homes. He was thankful that the lifts were working in the eight-storey apartment blocks.

The lively parish has its own outreach programme to sponsor orphaned children in the slums of Brazil with pray and financial assistance towards their education.

"The parish is vibrant and alive - the way a good parish should be," the Cardinal said of his titular Roman parish. "There is a lot happening and the people seem to enjoy getting involved with parish life. The priests must be commended because it is through their dedication that this happens."

As a memento of his first official visit as 'parish priest', the Cardinal gifted a shepherd's crook - a reminder of his duty of care to the people of Toscolana and their duty to pray for their Scottish shepherd.

And full of the good intentions of any fresh recruit, he assured his new parishioners that he would not be a

stranger to their homes.

While the Cardinal has vowed to visit as often as possible, it is not all one-way traffic.

In August, Fr Dario and Fr Carlo will be guests of the Cardinal on a visit to Edinburgh, further cementing the Scots-Italian bonds of friendship.

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Amen to end of do-it-yourself and come-as-you-please Masses

THE NUMBER 40 looms large in the Scriptures.

God promised Abraham that He would not destroy Gomorrah if 40 just men could be found, while Moses led the Israelites through the desert for 40 years. Jesus was in the desert for 40 days being tempted by the Devil.

Scripture goes out of its way to make an association between 40 and discomfort.

Certainly for some Catholics within our communities, the past 40

View from the Pew



Joseph KELLY

years have been uncomfortable ones. As time has passed, they have felt growing and greater discomfort.

Worst of all, they have felt this unease in the most public and sensitive area in which we express ourselves as Catholics - the liturgy. For those Catholics, December 2003 was a time of good news. It saw the 40th anniversary of the Constitution of the Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium, the first and most far reaching of the Council documents.

Under-40s may not appreciate the upheaval that changing the liturgy caused, for they have grown up in their belief and in the celebration of the Eucharist, praying in their own language. Over-40s in some respects have the drop on them.

They have seen the before and after, and while they are the majority of practitioners today, not all are completely happy with what passes for liturgical celebration. Nor for that matter are the authorities in Rome who ultimately decide the forms that worship will take, as 'Flourish' of May indicated.

Rome has taken advantage of Sacrosanctum Concilium's 40th anniversary to tidy up the liturgy, starting with a translation of the Roman Missal - the prayers that make up the Mass. The project should be completed some time next year.

From then the words we use at Mass and in worship will be more faithful to the original Latin in which they were couched. Two examples that have been suggested in leaked reports have congregations saying, not "We believe", but "I believe" - the exact translation of 'Credo' - during the Creed, and responding to the invitation "The Lord be with you" by saying "And

with your spirit", rather than the present "And also with you".

Once again, congregations can look forward to a time of change, minimal perhaps in comparison with the 1960s and 1970s, but change nevertheless.

Our pastors did not get 10 out 10 for the way far-ranging and permanent innovation was handled over the settling in period when liturgy altered last. Perhaps they will do better this time.

In the recent Instructions issued from Rome, there is much talk of abuses in the liturgy. One man's abuse may be another man's eye opener, but one discernible trend that could be defined as an abuse is the development of a style of celebration that could vaguely be called 'presidential'.

Shallow

I wonder if this is a conscious or unconscious follow through from the 'Instruction on the Laity' of 1997 that set out clearly and unequivocally the boundaries between the ministerial priesthood and lay people, between ordained and non-ordained.

Perhaps the most dissonant of its manifestations is the shallow greeting of "Good morning" which has become fashionable with some priests. It detracts immediately from the importance of the ritual and sadly trivialises it.

Wherever it comes from, the 'presidential' style can grate on the solidarity of worship, the 'we're all in this together' approach that public celebration of Mass demands, sometimes creating a glass wall between celebrant and congregation.

Another such trend is the 'personalism' that has crept into the celebration of the Eucharist. Initially I found this individual approach

refreshing. Now I feel irritation that some phrases are added, some subtracted, some gestures multiplied, some divided in half, as if the celebration were a mathematics exercise.

Sometimes too the cruel and unusual punishment of letting a congregation stand while the readings are paraphrased is tacked on to the introduction to the Mass. My personal record is 15 minutes - although not in this diocese. Word overload in the liturgy, described by Cardinal Ratzinger as a "cascade", means that there can be little time for periods of silence - something sadly lacking.

Abuses in the liturgy are not all one-way traffic. The dark underside to celebrant abuse is congregation abuse.

The custom of reverential silence before and after celebrations appears to have died out completely. A growing number of worshippers appear unwilling to join in hymn singing - which may say something about the quality of the hymns - while others make no attempt at responses or join in the common prayers.

The practice of thanksgiving after receiving Communion appears to figure less prominently, while in congregations lacking a tradition of order in approaching the altar the impulse to recreate the Charge of the Light Brigade seems irresistible.

Cardinal Arinze, speaking to a meeting of American Liturgical Commissions, said that "repeated and laid down action is part of ritual".

He also said elsewhere that the age of the do-it-yourself Mass is over. Amen to that. He might have added that the age of the come-as-you-please congregation should be ended too.

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Points of View on 'the Pew' - Page 12



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BAGGAGE CHECK ON THE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

THIS IS ANOTHER month with plenty of variety in the liturgy - Trinity Sunday, body and Blood of Christ, Peter and Paul, and two "Ordinary Sundays"! Once again, we can take each of these as "one off" celebrations, or we can try to find a thread that links them all.

One possible link can be found if we start with the gospel passage for the last Sunday of this month (Sunday 13).

Here, Luke (9:51-62) tells how Jesus' ministry reached a crucial turning point - "he resolutely took the road to Jerusalem".

This simple, easy to ignore, phrase contains a wealth of insight into the person of Jesus and his mission. It points to the inevitability of his death and his acceptance of it.

But the question arises - why not stay a bit longer in Galilee? After all, it's not long since the feeding of the 5000 (Luke 9:11-17 - the Gospel for the Body and Blood of Christ on June 13), and just after that, Peter had identified Jesus as the Christ of God (the passage for the 12th Sunday of Year, June 20)).

Other people might have thought Jesus was John the Baptist, or Elijah, or another prophet come back to life, but at least Jesus has made progress with Peter. Or had he? Luke does not record Peter objecting to Jesus' predictions about his death, but does Peter really know what it means to call Jesus "the Christ of God"?

We find out that it means going to Jerusalem, to the inevitable cross. We discover when Jesus sends out the 72 disciples, they are to bring nothing for the journey.

Only the cross is carried on the road of discipleship. All of a sudden, we can see more clearly why Jesus is so harsh with the would-be disciples who have excuses for postponing joining him on the journey. When Jesus has set out resolutely towards the cross, there is no time for prolonged family gatherings!

In our celebration of the Trinity (Sunday 6 June), the scripture readings do not give us a well-worked out theology of the Trinity - the preface of the Mass does that better for us. But what the readings do remind us of is that we, like Jesus, take up the cross because it leads to resurrection.

The cross leads us to a full participation in the life of God. The Father who tells us about himself in Christ, and who lets us respond through the Holy Spirit, is the God who has destroyed the power of sin and death through the death and resurrection of Christ.

In Peter and Paul, whose great feast we celebrate on June 29, we have the image of the cross close by. Peter dies on the cross, and Paul has run the race, finished the course which he set out on with his conversion to Christ.

June 6 Most Holy Trinity Proverbs 8:22-31

This and other books from the "Wisdom literature" make Wisdom out to be some kind of person, present since before the world was made. Often called "Lady Wisdom", she is presented as the go-between for God and humanity. Today's reading opens us to the idea of God reaching out, revealing Himself to humanity.

Romans 5:1-5

This short reading tells us of the peace of God, redemption through Jesus Christ, and the love of God poured out by the Holy Spirit.

John 16:12-15

Yet another passage from the Last Supper discourse. In this, the author manages to depict the relationship between Jesus and his Father, from whom Jesus receives everything, and of the work of the Holy Spirit who will lead all to the complete truth, because he will tell only what he has learnt.

June 13 Body and Blood of Christ Genesis 14:18-20

Melchizedek seems to come from the tradition of the City-King (in this case the City of Salem, or Jeru-salem) who was priest as well as king. He

Sunday Scripture

By Fr Robert HILL



was, therefore, responsible for all matters spiritual and temporal. He is the forerunner of Christ, who was anointed priest, prophet and king, and his offering of bread and wine foreshadows the Last Supper.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

This is the earliest account in the scriptures of what happened at the Last supper - written before any of the gospels were written. Notice Paul stresses the tradition of the Lord's Supper; he is passing on what had been passed on to him.

Luke 9:11-17

The feeding of the 5000, which precedes the Transfiguration, is part of the culmination of Jesus' ministry in Galilee. The Eucharist, which he institutes just before his passion in Jerusalem, is the culmination of his entire ministry. Likewise, our celebration of the Eucharist is the culmination of all we do in the name of the Lord.

June 20 12th Sunday of year

Zechariah 12:10-11; 13:1

This prophecy looks to the descendant of David as the suffering one. The phrase "they will look upon the one whom they have pierced" is quoted in John's passion narrative.

Galatians 3:26-29

This letter is Paul's early attempt to show that Jew and Greek can equally be 'clothed in Christ' as he says here.

The arguments would be re-worked later, and in greater detail, in his letter to the Romans

Luke 9:18-24

This passage reinforces the Eucharistic nature of the feeding of the 5000. Immediately following the miracle, Jesus is described by Peter as the 'Christ of God'.

It is necessary for the Christ to suffer, be rejected, put to death, and raised up on the third day. In other words, the Eucharist, the Christ of God, and the Cross are all bound up in each other.

June 27 13th Sunday of year

1 Kings 19:16-19-21

There seems a superficial link between the first reading and the gospel today in Elisha's request to return and say goodbye to his family, and the people who want to do the same in the gospel.

But the real link is in cutting ties with the past, and going forward to embrace the future which is God's plan. The comparison is between Elisha and Jesus. Both are prepared to make life-changing decisions. Although Jesus' leads to death, it is ultimately life-giving

Galatians 5:1. 13-18

Paul stresses that the challenge of discipleship which Jesus presents us will bring us to that freedom enjoyed only by the children of God.

By contrast, self-indulgence can turn us into prisoners.

Luke 9:51-62

A short phrase at the beginning of today's gospel marks the turning-point in Luke's gospel. When Jesus sets his face towards Jerusalem, he embraces his death.

There can be no half-measures here! No wonder he has little time for the would-be disciples who would like to follow him, but not just yet!

June 29 Solemnity of Sts Peter and Paul

Acts 12:1-11

Even amidst hardship, Peter has no doubt that he is cared for by God.

2 Timothy 4:6-8. 17-18

These words, attributed to Paul, were probably not written until after his death, but they are another expression of the need for the cross. Paul has run the race, finished the course - he has taken up the cross.

Matthew 16:13-19

It is probable that Matthew's gospel was written for Jewish Christians who had suffered persecution for their beliefs.

There are signs of conflict between this community and the Jewish leadership; they may even have been expelled from the synagogue.

So, Matthew wishes to show that Jesus is the true law-giver, the new Moses. Jesus' words to Peter here draw from a formula produced by the rabbis, who believed they had the power to interpret and to authenticate interpretations of the Law of Moses. Here Peter, the Rock, is given the authority to interpret the Law of Christ.

Spirit of enthusiasm

WHAT DID the old Jewish feast of Pentecost mean for Jesus as a boy? It was a feast day, with a word that meant "fiftieth" - one more than seven times seven, a strong hint at completeness!

In practice it was linked with the feast of Passover. "You shall count off seven weeks; they shall be complete. You shall count until the day after the seventh Sabbath, fifty days; then you shall present an offering of new grain to the Lord" (Lev.23:15).

So probably it was originally a feast of thanksgiving to celebrate the harvesting of wheat. At the family level, it became the occasion for a celebratory family meal, a special time of thanksgiving for the gift of abundant food (Tobit 2:1-2).

In its public manifestation, the feast developed into a time for pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem, an occasion to thank God openly for the gift of love sealed in the Covenant (2 Macc.12:30). Later Judaism would have witnessed the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in AD 70, and so, instead of a pilgrimage feast, they would use the feast to celebrate the giving of Law to them through Moses on Mount Sinai.

When we come to read John's Gospel, we learn that it was on the evening of Easter, not Pentecost, that Jesus appeared, and there and then imparted the Spirit to them (John 20:22).

Like Mark and Matthew, John does not mention Pentecost as having any special significance. Only Luke gives us the deeper meaning of the traditional Jewish feast.

He does so using the powerful symbols of tongues of fire and gale-force winds! The fearful silence of the apostles gives way to outspoken words of courage and to deeds that displayed the variety of gifts but always the same Spirit.

This outpouring of the Spirit has been a long time in coming.

In Genesis the Spirit moved over the chaos of the waters and what was the result? Light! (Gen. 1:3).

Come Holy Spirit, come to the chaos of our experience today and bring your light for our voyages.



Everybody's Bible

By Dr Noel DONNELLY

Then we hear how the Spirit came and imparted God's authority on Joshua when Moses formally laid hands on him and consecrated him for leadership (Deut. 34:9).

Come Holy Spirit, guide the leaders you have empowered for service among us by the laying on of hands!

The Spirit of artistic creativity was given to Bezalel when God "filled him with divine Spirit, with skill, intelligence, and knowledge in every kind of craft, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, in every kind of craft. And he has inspired him to teach. He has filled them with skill to do every kind of work done by an artisan or by a designer or by an embroiderer in blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and in fine linen, or by a weaver—by any sort of artisan or skilled designer" (Exod.35:31).

Come Holy Spirit, continue to inspire our artists, musicians, embroiderers, architects and teachers, so that the on-going beauty of your creation may continue to be opened up to us for our responsible enjoyment in your service!

The Spirit came upon kings like David: "Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward" (1 Sam. 16:13).

Come Spirit, truly enlighten our political and religious leaders in their work of service!

The Spirit filled Prophets, like Isaiah, who spoke of a successor to David: "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord" (Isaiah 11:1).

The prophet Ezekiel dreamt of a great future when the Spirit would re-energise the dry bones of God's community (Exek.37: 31).

Come, Spirit, give renewed energy to your prophets today so that they may speak out powerfully to our churches and nation today!

Finally, we remember how the Spirit overshadowed the Virgin Mary at Nazareth (Luke 1:35) and worked through Jesus as he announced his manifesto in Nazareth: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free" (Luke 4:14).

Come Spirit, strengthen us too to be Good News to the poor, blind and oppressed today, beginning with ourselves!

In John, the dying Jesus breathes out his Spirit on the Woman and the Beloved Disciple, the New Eve and the New Creation at the foot of the Cross. In Matthew and Luke this Community will be commissioned by the Risen Lord to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth till the end of time, knowing that it is not alone, since the Lord Jesus is Emmanuel, God-with-us.

When we realize that the Bible mentions the Spirit in various ways over 500 times (200 in the Old Testament) it becomes clear how much God has desired to share the Living Spirit with us.

The theme-word for our still on-going Pentecost is surely "enthusiasm" - a word which literally means "God-is-in". Can we match God's enthusiasm with our enthusiasm?

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and renew the face of the earth!

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