

DIOCESE OF MOTHERWELL

FREE

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OCTOBER 2025 | ISSUE 21 | FREE

MAGAZINE

SCHOOLS MASS



DEANERY PILGRIMAGE



ORDINATIONS



NATIONAL PILGRIMAGE



Hope Renewed

JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS FILL DIOCESE WITH HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

INSIDE THIS EDITION

PAGE 3

A word from Bishop Toal

PAGE 4-5

News around the Diocese

PAGE 6-7

Joyful celebration as Fr Christopher Igwe is ordained

PAGE 8-9

Deacon Stephen Nevans ordained to Permanent Diaconate

PAGE 10

Archbishop Cushley leads National Pilgrimage to Carfin

PAGE 14-15

Young people celebrate Jubilee Year

PAGE 18-19

Gerard Gough speak to Fr Dominic Quinn about his experience of serving on the missions in Bolivia and Peru.

PAGE 21

Adrian Harkin gives an overview of the recent Diocesan Parish Renewal Forum

PAGE 24

Aid to the Church in Need host annual Youth Rally

PAGE 26-27

SCIAF mark 60 years at Church where charity was founded

PAGE 28

Pope Leo XIV publishes Apostolic Exhortation



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NEXT EDITION

December 2025

Send your news, events and articles to media@rcdom.org.uk

BISHOP'S DIARY

26th October

Mass at Holy Family Church, Mossend, for the Feast of John Paul II

27th October

3.00pm Executive of Council of Priests in the Diocesan Offices

4.00pm Diocesan Education Committee

28th October

2.00pm Wellspring Integration Meeting

7.00pm Confirmations, St Barbara's Muirhead

29th October

2.00pm Wellspring Steerco Meeting

7.00pm Confirmations, St Joseph's Stepps

30th October

CHAPS Conference in Glasgow

1st November

11.00am EOHS Mass in Honour of Our Lady of Palestine in Cathedral

3rd-6th November

Bishops' Conference of Scotland

6th November

1.30pm Pre-Confirmation visit to St Francis of Assisi PS, Baillieston

7.00pm Confirmations, Our Lady of Lourdes' East Kilbride

7th November

7.00pm Concert of Hope at St Columbkille's Rutherglen

10th November

7.00pm Mass for Deceased Clergy

11th November

2.00pm Diocesan Trustees Meeting

7.00pm Confirmation, Sacred Heart and St Gerard's Bellshill

12th November

7.00pm Confirmation, Holy Family Mossend

13th November

7.00pm Confirmation St Dominic's Craighend for St Rose of Lima

15th November

'Into the Margins' Conference at St Bride's Centre, Motherwell

18th November

11.00am St Margaret's HS, Airdrie, Festal Mass
7.00pm Confirmations, St Francis of Assisi Baillieston

19th November

2.30pm Spanish Mass at St Ambrose High School, Coatbridge
7.00pm Confirmations, St Bernard's Coatbridge

20th November

7.00pm Confirmations, Our Lady of Good Aid Cathedral, Motherwell

23rd November

11.00am Confirmations at St Bernadette's Church, Motherwell

24th November

7.00pm Annual Education Mass in Motherwell Cathedral

25th November

2.00pm Wellspring Integration Meeting

7.00pm Confirmations, St Bride's Church, Cambuslang

26th November

2.00pm Wellspring Steerco Meeting

7.00pm Confirmations St Bridget's Baillieston

27th November

2.00pm Council of Priests Meeting

7.00pm Our Lady's High School War Memorial Mass

28th November

11.00am Festal Mass at St Andrew and St Bride's HS East Kilbride

2nd December

11.00am Diocesan Fabric and Planning Committee

2.00pm Diocesan Finance Committee

7.00pm Confirmations St Monica's Coatbridge

3rd December

7.00pm Confirmations, St Patrick's Coatbridge

4th December

Pre-Confirmation visit to St Andrew's PS, Airdrie
7.00pm Confirmations St Thomas' Wishaw

5th December

11.00am Festal Mass for St Ambrose High School, Coatbridge

8th December

7.00pm Dedication of the Church of St Joseph's, Stepps, on the 150th Anniversary of the Parish and Church

9th December

7.00pm Confirmations St Cadoc's Halfway

10th December

7.00pm Confirmations St Aloysius' Chapelhall

11th December

9.30am Bishops' Conference of Scotland online
7.00pm Confirmations St Andrew's Airdrie

16th December

2.00pm Wellspring Integration Meeting

17th December

2.00pm Wellspring Steerco Meeting

A WORD FROM BISHOP TOAL



Dear Brothers and Sisters...

On the first Sunday in October the Church celebrated the Jubilee of the Missions and of Migrants.

In this joint celebration we recognised the Church's Commission from the Lord to go out to the whole world to preach the Good News, baptising in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, while also welcoming new people from other places, sometimes far away, who seek a new beginning among us. The Church's Mission then is clearly at home and abroad, and we are all called to be Missionary Disciples. The call, and the challenge, for

most of us is at home, which does require us to welcome the stranger and to care for them when the need arises. This seems to be questioned sometimes, but as followers of Christ we must adhere to what he teaches and be kind and generous in our loving support for those who reach out for our help.

Pope Leo XIV in his first Apostolic Exhortation, *Dilexi Te* [I have loved you...], again puts the Care of the Poor at the forefront of the Church's Mission, so I encourage all of us to read his words and to work together to apply them in our diocese and parishes.

An opportunity to consider how we do so will be offered at our forth-coming Diocesan Conference on Present-Day Poverty, *Into the Margins*, on Saturday 15th November. I encourage your attendance. That weekend the Church has its World Day of the Poor, inaugurated by Pope Francis and now strongly promoted by Pope Leo, who has spent a good part of his priestly and episcopal ministry as a Missionary in Peru.

+ Joseph Toal

Motherwell Diocese is hosting a conference to reflect on our understanding of the nature of poverty and marginalisation and to consider our continuing approaches to alleviating poverty. This conference will take place on

**Saturday 15th November 2025, 10:00am - 3:30pm,
St Bride's Hall, 31 Coursington Road, Motherwell, ML1 1PP**

The schedule of the day will include catering, time for reflection and discussion and lectures from guest speakers:

- **Sir Harry Burns**

Professor of Global Public Health and Scottish Chief Medical Officer 2005-2014

- **Professor David Hillier**

Associate Principal and Executive Dean of the University of Strathclyde Business School

Registration will be required for capacity and catering purposes.



**INTO THE
MARGINS**
Motherwell Diocese and our Response
to Marginalisation and Deprivation



Use the QR Code to register or visit
www.rcdom.org.uk/into-the-margins



Cathedral hosts Kirkin' of the Council

The North Lanarkshire Council 'Kirkin' of the Council' ceremony took place at Our Lady of Good Aid Cathedral in Motherwell on Sunday 21 September.

Led by Bishop Toal and Father Brian Lamb, the service was attended by Provost Kenneth Duffy, the Lord Lieutenant Lady Haughey, Council Chief Executive Des Murray and elected members and council officials.

The traditional ceremony celebrates the connection between the council and local communities, and it returned to the Cathedral this year, the place where the first Kirkin' of the Council ceremony, after North Lanarkshire Council was created, was held.

Provost Duffy said, "The Kirkin' of the Council is an important, long-standing tradition for the council, and I would like to thank the congregation of Our Lady of Good Aid Cathedral for making us so welcome."



Bishop joins newly weds to celebrate Sacrament of Marriage

Bishop Toal celebrated Holy Mass at St Augustine's Church, Coatbridge, for couples who have recently married or are celebrating a significant anniversary.

The Bishop gave God's blessing to those present, recognising them as witnesses of Christ's love in the world.

Following Mass everyone gathered in the parish centre to share food, a quiz, and music together.



SSVP marks patrons feast

BY MATT MEADE

Bishop Toal joined Vincentians at St Columba's in Viewpark on 29th September for the Society of St Vincent de Paul's Festival Mass.

He told members, "You give your time to attend to people in need, and that becomes a prayer, an offering to God. Tonight we give thanks to God, with the saints and angels, seeking their intercession, protection and inspiration to love and serve those who are most in need and to be kind and attentive to them."



Pioneers honour the Sacred Heart

BY PATRICIA GLANCEY

Earlier in the summer, the Pioneers Association celebrated Mass for the Feast of the Sacred Heart in St Francis Xavier's Church, Carfin.

At the Mass, several members were presented with certificates of membership, from new members to those celebrating silver jubilees. Among them was Fr Eamonn Sweeney, a retired priest of the Diocese, who was presented with a certificate by Fr Jim Thomson, marking 70 years of membership.

To mark the 350th anniversary of the first manifestation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to St Margaret Mary Alacoque, the association distributed Sacred Heart Door Shields to everyone at the Mass, with the 12 promises of the Sacred Heart to St Margaret Mary on the back.

Jubilee brings Hope to the Diocese

As part of our celebration of the Jubilee Year, the people of the Diocese of Motherwell came together in hope in recent weeks for a special Deanery Jubilee Pilgrimage.

Led by Bishop Joseph Toal, the pilgrimage saw the Jubilee Cross journey from Motherwell Cathedral to a church in each deanery of the diocese. At each church, Bishop Toal celebrated Holy Mass with local clergy, parishioners and representatives from nearby schools, creating a powerful expression of the Church's unity across our communities.

The pilgrimage was also a time of deep prayer and reflection for the whole diocesan family. Alongside the deanery celebrations, the Schools Mass at Carfin Grotto brought together Primary 7 pupils from schools throughout the diocese. Gathering at the National Shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes, the pupils joined in prayer, thanksgiving and joyful song — a reminder of the importance of faith in the lives of our young people. (Read more on page 18.)

Another highlight was the National Pilgrimage Mass at Carfin Grotto, which drew pilgrims from across the country and was led this year by Archbishop Leo Cushley with the Bishops of Scotland. (Read more on page 10.)

The Deanery Pilgrimage concluded on a fitting note with the Annual Vocations Mass at Our Lady of Good Aid Cathedral, Motherwell, celebrated on the Feast of St Ninian. This final liturgy gave thanks for the gift of priesthood, diaconate and religious life — particularly our two new priests ordained in the Jubilee year, Fr Christopher Furmage and Fr Christopher Igwe, and our new Permanent Deacon, Deacon Stephen Nevans — and prayed for new vocations within the diocese.

The Jubilee Pilgrimage has been a grace-filled journey — one that has strengthened the bonds of faith and community throughout the Diocese of Motherwell, reminding us that we walk together as a pilgrim people, united in Christ.



Motherwell & Central Deanery in Sacred Heart, Bellshill



Wishaw Deanery in St Thomas', Wishaw



Rutherglen & East Kilbride Deanery in St Bride's, Cambuslang



PIONEER ASSOCIATION - SCOTLAND

ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO KNOCK

Friday 22nd to Monday 25th May 2026

Three nights Bed, Breakfast, and four-course dinner in the Knock House Hotel, a beautiful boutique hotel located in the tranquil grounds of the International Marian Shrine village of Knock, Co Mayo.

Accommodation: Double, Twin and Triple Rooms.

Group Pilgrimage Package: Group Mass every day in Apparition Chapel, also Rosary, and Stations of the Cross on Sunday morning followed by participate in the Sunday Ceremonies at the Shrine of our Lady of Knock.

On Saturday 23 May there will be an outing to Galway City Coach and Stena Ferry return Cairnryan to Belfast

Cost £475.00 per person sharing.

Deposit of £60.00 payable with booking to confirm your place.

To make a booking or for any further information please contact:

Patricia Glancey: 07801 500714 or 07729 520519

Patsy Loney: 01236 425882

Susan McBride: 01698 375950





Joy fills Cathedral as Fr Christopher ordained

Father Christopher Igwe, the first African Priest ordained for the Diocese, reflects on his journey to the priesthood

BY FR CHRISTOPHER IGWE

Ordination, a beautiful gift from Christ to His Church. An unmerited gift which God has continued to pour upon us all and a beautiful treasure. It's hard to fully express in words the gratitude I owe to God that I, Christopher Chibuikwe Igwe, an Igbo and Nigerian by birth and a proud member of the vibrant UK community in Glasgow has been given this gift and honour to serve.

On the 3rd of September, I had the privilege and joy of being ordained as a Catholic priest by the Bishop of Motherwell, Rt Rev. Joseph Toal—a day that marked the culmination of years of deep reflection, formation, study, and spiritual preparation.

Growing up, my faith was always a central part of my life. Thanks to the lovely environment where my family and local church community helped to guide and support me. Moving to the UK added another layer to my spiritual journey, exposing me to the Scottish culture and other diverse cultures and rich traditions within the Catholic Church. I found my spiritual and academic home both here in the Diocese and at Oscott College, and I'm so grateful for the support and guidance I received.

The ordination itself was a whirlwind of emotions that will forever be encrypted in my heart. Imagine stepping into the church, surrounded by people who have been part of your journey—family, friends, mentors, and parishioners—all gathered to support and celebrate with you. One of my greatest blessings is to have my Mum, Dad and Sister present at the



ordination. The liturgy, the songs, the dancing, and the happiness and joy that was felt in the Cathedral that evening left me with a deep sense of God's presence, love and gratitude. As the Bishop laid his hands on me, I felt an overwhelming sense of peace and a renewed commitment to serve the Church both here in Motherwell Diocese and the Universal Church at large.

Following the ordination, I celebrated my first Thanksgiving Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes East Kilbride, which was nothing short of magical. It was a joyful occasion filled with music, prayer, and a strong sense of community. Standing at the altar, I felt a profound happiness but also unworthiness—not just for the journey that brought me here, but for the amazing people who walked alongside me.

Looking ahead, I'm eager to embrace the challenges and joys of

priesthood with an open heart and mind. I'm committed to being a servant leader, helping others find their path and strength in faith. I am sure that our Mother Mary will look after me. This journey is not just mine but one I share with every person I meet along the way. To those who have supported me—thank you. Your encouragement and love are the foundations upon which I stand today. May God bless you!

I invite you to follow my journey, to pray for me and join me in celebrating this exciting chapter, as I look into the now and the future with a firm assurance and hope of a happy priesthood. I am blessed with Fr Stephen Reilly, who I am currently working with, and all the parishioners of St Anthony's and St Mark's Parish in Rutherglen.

Here's to the journey ahead and the beautiful connections we'll create together!

”

I felt an overwhelming sense of peace and a renewed commitment to serve the Church





Following in his uncle's footsteps

Stephen Nevans ordained to the Permanent Diaconate



BY DEACON STEPHEN NEVANS

The evening of Friday, 29th August this year, on the Feast of the Beheading of John the Baptist, saw for me the end of one journey and the beginning of another. In St Benedict's Church in Easterhouse, I was ordained deacon for the Motherwell Diocese by Bishop Toal, bringing to a close my diaconal formation and beginning my diaconal ministry. My own path to this ministry wasn't straightforward, having taken an extended break due to a bereavement partway through my formation, but the result has been wonderful.

My uncle, Deacon John Nevans, has been a Permanent Deacon in Motherwell Diocese for several years, and when I first discovered the Permanent Diaconate, for those men not pursuing a priestly ordination, it reignited something I had felt as a teenager when I went to junior seminary with a desire to serve God as a priest. As a young man I decided that married and family life was my vocation; however, being married and having a son, I still felt a calling, and the focus of the Diaconate is one of service. With encouragement from my wife, my parents, and two other deacons, I decided to pursue this path to serve God and his Church as a deacon.

On the evening of my ordination, I was very grateful to be joined for the occasion by more than twenty



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deacons from all over Scotland. This demonstrates the strong bond that is created by being in formation together, and during the Mass, after being vested and formally ordained by the Bishop, I was greeted with the Fraternal Kiss by all the deacons in attendance. This was a tremendous experience. To then become the Deacon of the Altar for the remainder of the Mass was a great honour. After communion, sitting alongside the bishop, I looked out and saw my family, friends and parishioners who had all come to share in this celebration, and I felt a great peace.

The Bishop has since appointed me to the parishes of St John Bosco, Easterhouse, and St Dominic's, Craigend, where I have spent my placement, and I am very grateful to be able to serve these parish communities as deacon.

For men reading this who are interested in learning more about the Diaconate or considering a vocation to the Diaconate, they should contact Deacon Bill McMillan, Diocesan Director of the Diaconate, at

deaconmcmillan@rcdom.org.uk.



Above: Deacon Stephen with his wife and son, Left: Deacon Stephen with fellow Deacons from across Scotland, Page 8: Deacon Stephen with Bishop Toal and his uncle, Deacon John Nevans.



Photos: Martin McCready

Faithful gather at Carfin for National Pilgrimage

Archbishop Cushley recalls forty years of ministry at National Pilgrimage

This year's National Pilgrimage to Carfin Lourdes Grotto, Scotland's National Marian Shrine, took place on Sunday 7th September.

The principal celebrant was Archbishop Leo Cushley, Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh, who was invited to celebrate the Mass in his home diocese by Bishop Toal as he marks the 40th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood.

The Archbishop was joined by the Bishops of Scotland and many clergy from east and west, north and south of our country, with over two thousand faithful from across the country gathering.

The National Pilgrimage coincided with the canonisations of St Carlo Acutis and St Pier Giorgio Frassati.



Speaking to the congregation during his homily, the Archbishop said, "I'm honoured to be able to do this in my home Diocese of Motherwell.

"As some of you may know, I served six years in Motherwell Diocese as an assistant priest and as a chaplain in our high schools. Six years. Meantime, I have now served 12 years in the Archdiocese of Saint Andrew & Edinburgh. But don't worry: I feel very much at home in both east and west...!

Recalling his vocation story, Archbishop Leo continued: "My vocation, my calling to the priesthood, takes me back 50 years to 1975 and to something very simple: being persuaded by a teenage friend to go on a school trip to Rome.

"I can remember thinking, 'Well, I'm prepared to give myself to being a priest, but there are one or two things I don't really want to have to do.

"As I'm going to be a priest of Motherwell Diocese, I won't be going to the missions, I won't be working in other dioceses in Scotland, I won't need to travel far, and I will always be a 20-minute car ride from my mum and dad's house.

"Little by little, however, I began to realise that the Lord had other plans for me. I began to realise that what I thought was my vocation to the priesthood turned out to be the Lord's vocation to the priesthood.

"Without thinking about it, every time we say the Our Father, we say, 'Thy will be done' – we usually don't give it a second thought, but it is at the very heart of what it means to be a disciple and what it means to be a priest of Jesus Christ.

The Archbishop concluded, "We must endeavour, every day, in our prayers and in our actions, to find the will of God for us and to embrace it willingly and lovingly whenever the call comes and wherever it leads us."

We must endeavour to find the will of God for us and to embrace it willingly and lovingly.

ARCHBISHOP LEO CUSHLEY

New Hymn Honours New Saint

The joy at the recent canonisation of Saint Carlo Acutis and Saint Pier Giorgio Frassati was beautifully expressed at the end of the recent National Pilgrimage in Carfin when, at the conclusion of Holy Mass, the congregation was treated to the very first rendering of a brand-new hymn dedicated to Saint Carlo Acutis. This moving hymn was sung by the Motherwell Diocesan Choir.

The lyrics of this new hymn were written by Sister Josephine of the Sacred Heart, a Carmelite sister residing in Kirkcaldy. The music was composed by former Director of

Music at the Grotto, Kevin James Cameron. Both Kevin and Sr Josephine have combined on two previous occasions, composing sacred texts and accompanying music for important occasions: one composed in 2023 to celebrate the Centenary of the Carfin Grotto, and another in honour of St Francis Xavier on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Carfin's parish church, dedicated to Saint Francis Xavier. Their latest work, written in honour of Saint Carlo Acutis, continues this tradition of uniting faith, music, and celebration in a way that draws hearts closer to God.

Jubilee of Choirs: Raising Voices in the Jubilee of Hope

As the Church throughout continues to celebrate the 2025 Jubilee of Hope, music will have played a central role in drawing hearts and voices together in prayer and celebration. Among the many initiatives planned, one of the most joyful will be the Jubilee of Choirs, an event dedicated to those who give of their time and talent to enrich the liturgy through music. Fittingly, this Jubilee of Choirs will be held around the Catholic world to coincide with the Feast of Saint Cecilia, patroness of musicians, whose own witness reminds us of the power of music to lift souls to God. Locally, the celebration will be held at St Francis Xavier's Church, Carfin, on Sunday, 23 November 2025.

All who contribute to the ministry of music are warmly invited—parish choirs, music groups, cantors, organists, instrumentalists, and anyone who helps to lead the song of the Church. This is an opportunity not only to celebrate the gift of music but also to recognise the service of those who bring beauty and joy to the liturgy week after week.

The evening will begin with a shared rehearsal from 5.45 to 6.45 pm, offering musicians a chance to come together and prepare. The main celebration itself will commence at 7.00 pm, open to all the faithful. Styled in the spirit of a "Songs of Praise" service, it promises to be a vibrant evening of thanksgiving, where familiar hymns and new music alike will resound with the voices of many.

For those wishing to take part more actively, music scores, MP3 files, or YouTube links will be shared in advance to aid preparation. Anyone interested is encouraged to get in touch by emailing frgrant@rcdom.org.uk

As the Jubilee reminds us, hope is at the heart of Christian life. What better way to proclaim that hope than through the voices of God's people, united in song? The Jubilee of Choirs is not simply a concert or performance—it is a prayerful celebration, a chance to lift our hearts together to the Lord, and to let our music become a true echo of the joy of the Gospel.



Photo: Martin McCready

Newly composed hymn to St Carlo Acutis

(Words by Sr Josephine ODC
Music by Kevin James Cameron)

Carlo, friend of all who need you,
need your shining eyes and smile:
walk with us on Heaven's Highway,
eyes on Jesus all the while.
Daily nourished at the Altar
In His Eucharistic Feast,
You became His true apostle,
and your burning love increased.

*Dear Saint Carlo, friend of Jesus,
teach us how to work and pray.
On the Highway to God's Heaven -
walk beside us every day.*

Carlo, teach us love unbounded,
without prejudice or fear,
for each person – saint or sinner –
holding each uniquely dear.
Your own charity, so Christ-like,
spoke the truth, at times reproofed;
but your wise and simple counsel
rarely left a soul unmoved.

Deep within, the Holy Spirit
through your childhood and your youth
guided you to use your talents,
to proclaim Eternal Truth.
Teaching through creative website,
Jesus' Presence you made known,
miracles of love revealing
at the Mass and Monstrance Throne.

Pilgrims walking on life's pathway,
on our journey show us how
not to waste a single moment.
help us imitate you now.
May we share your love for Mary
trusting in her gentle care;
and the Saints, our friends and models,
Smooth our pathway by their prayer.

Parishes give thanks for decades of faith

In recent weeks Bishop Toal has joined a number of parish communities as they celebrate significant milestones in the lives of their parish community.

Beginning the Deanery Jubilee Pilgrimage, a Mass of Thanksgiving was held in St Monica's Coatbridge, on their patronal feast day, to mark the 75th anniversary of the founding of the parish.

Mass was celebrated by Bishop Joseph Toal, accompanied by parish priest Fr Ghislain and a number of priests and deacons who have served in the parish and from the local deanery. Many invited guests also attended, including local MP Frank McNally and local dignitaries and friends of the parish.

One local parishioner said, "It was an occasion filled with joy and hope for the future seeing our newly refurbished sanctuary and our hopes for the continued refurbishment of the church in the near future.

"We thank God for all the parishioners who, over the years, have given so generously in so many ways. We remember those who are sick and those who are no longer with us, and thank them for the sacrifices and generosity of spirit which was part of the foundation of the Parish and



Bishop Toal and clergy at St Monica's Coatbridge

Church, which has brought us to where we are today in being able to celebrate this wonderful occasion."

In Motherwell, Bishop Toal joined Fr Alex Stewart and the community of St Bernadette's, who are also celebrating the 75th anniversary of the founding of their parish.

The parish has been serving the community of North Motherwell since its founding in 1950 with the founding parish priest, Canon Peter Sexton. It was 10 years before the parish had their own church, however, with the present church opening in 1964.

Speaking ahead of the Mass, Fr Stewart said, "We pray in a particular way that the flame of faith will burn brightly in St Bernadette's parish for many years to come. May this Jubilee Year be a time for many graces for the

present and future generations of parishioners."

Meanwhile, back in Coatbridge, another much older parish was also marking a special anniversary. The well-known parish of St Patrick's marked the 180th anniversary of their founding with a Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated by Bishop Toal along with parish priest Fr Kevin McGoldrick, former parish priest Fr Eamonn Sweeney, and a number of local clergy. The Thanksgiving Mass followed on the back of a week-long mission in the parish led by the Redemptorists.

Fr McGoldrick thanked all who took part in the celebration, saying, "The Mass was a truly fantastic celebration and one I'm sure we will remember for a very long time."



Bishop Toal, Fr Stewart and parishioners at St Bernadette's Motherwell



Bishop Toal and clergy at St Patrick's Coatbridge

New Youth Ministry at St John the Baptist's

BY SUSAN HENDERSON

It is well-known that the issue of how to keep the more youthful members of the Church engaged is a perennial problem, not just in the Motherwell diocese, but across the Church as a whole. Indeed, the mass exodus of young people from the Church was highlighted at the Youth Ministry Summit hosted by the Diocese of Motherwell earlier this year.

St John the Baptist in Uddingston are tackling the issue head-on, having announced in August the appointment of a Youth and Evangelisation Officer, Raymond Kawase.



Raymond, 26, is originally from Uganda, where he was a missionary with the National Evangelisation Teams (NET) ministries, engaging in school and parish outreach work with the youth and young adults across the country. He initially came to Scotland as a missionary with Craig Lodge Family House of Prayer in Dalmlally and decided to stay when the opportunity arose to work with Scottish young people.

Through outreach work within the parish of Uddingston and local schools, Raymond's mission is 'to encourage this generation of youth and young adults to live a sacramental life that is deeply rooted in Christ, helping them to

build an authentic community and step boldly into the world with compassion and clarity of purpose.'

The first youth Alpha group (pictured) is already underway, and through discussion, prayer and the fostering of a sense of shared community, Raymond and his volunteer helpers are confident they can help this group grow into resilient, compassionate disciples ready to shine in the world.

If you or anyone you know is interested in getting involved with St John the Baptist's youth ministry, please get in touch with Raymond at youth@saintjohnbaptist.org

Celebrating Faith and Community at Our Lady of Fatima

Over recent months, Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Larkhall & Blackwood, has been alive with faith and community spirit through a series of joyful gatherings and liturgies.

On Saturday 16th August, more than 130 parishioners came together for the annual Parish BBQ and Social, raising an impressive £3,000 for parish funds. Meanwhile, two young parishioners, Louisa and Bethany, held a "Jams & Scones" fundraiser after Sunday Mass, quickly selling out and raising £353.05 for the St Vincent de Paul Society.

A highlight of parish life was the International Mass and Meal on Friday, 5th September, celebrating the diversity and unity of the parish with 20 countries represented. The evening was filled with colour, song,

and dishes from around the world. It was a great celebration of the many cultures and countries which make up the Catholic Church in our little part of the diocese.

From 7th to 9th September, the parish hosted its annual Forty Hours Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, with many visiting for quiet prayer and reflection, including pupils and staff of St John's Primary. Highlights included Solemn Choral Vespers led by the Schola Benedicti and a Closing Mass accompanied by the newly formed Youth Choir.

The month concluded with a flourishing event in St John's Community Garden, which hosted a Climate Action Festival on Friday 12th September. Pupils and staff from St John's Primary, parents, carers and members of the parish



and the local community attended as well as representatives of the local Men's Shed, Second Chance charity shop, Our Lady & St John's SSVP conference, our neighbours at the Co-Op and the Blackwood Estate Community Association.

Pilgrims of Faith:



Primary Schools gather for Jubilee Mass at Carfin Grotto

BY CLAIRE O'NEILL

On Thursday 4th September, the Diocese of Motherwell marked a milestone in its Jubilee Year as over 2,000 Primary 7 pupils gathered at Carfin Grotto to celebrate a special Mass with Bishop Toal. The event, which drew children and staff from schools across the diocese, was a joyful and memorable occasion that placed young people at the heart of the Jubilee celebrations.

Music for the liturgy was led by the Diocesan Children's Cathedral Choir, founded last year through the Schools Singing Programme. In preparation, diocesan choral director Mr James Greechan ensured every school was equipped to take part by sharing the Mass music widely in advance.

The celebration began when four pupils from Taylor High School carried the Diocesan Jubilee Cross into the sanctuary. The cross, which has been on pilgrimage across the deaneries of the diocese, symbolised the shared journey of faith that unites all communities.

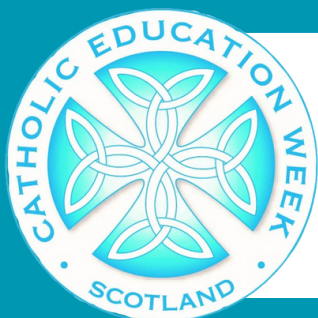
Every school cluster was represented in the liturgy. Pupils contributed as readers and in the offertory procession, highlighting the collaborative spirit of the day. A particularly moving moment came at the conclusion of Mass, when all the children, led by the diocesan junior Cathedral choir, joined together in singing the official Jubilee hymn, Like a Flame My Hope is Burning.

Bishop Toal's homily focused on "Luce", the official Jubilee mascot, who appeared in the Mass booklet. Dressed as a pilgrim, Bishop Toal told the children that Luce carried the symbolism of the journey of faith: a yellow raincoat for protection, worn boots marking the path already travelled, a missionary cross as a sign of hope, and a pilgrim's staff in hand. He pointed out Luce's shining eyes, representing the light of hope and the desire for connection with God. On a day of unsettled weather, Luce's presence seemed like a fitting reminder of perseverance and joy along the pilgrim path.

This special Mass is sure to remain a treasured memory for the Primary 7 pupils of the diocese and was only made possible by Fr Grant and his wonderful volunteers who ensured the day ran smoothly. It was a truly wonderful day for the Diocese of Motherwell.



Photos: Martin McCready



Catholic Education Week takes place this year from 16th November (Feast of St Margaret of Scotland) to 30th November (Feast of St Andrew).

The annual Diocesan Education Mass takes place on **Monday 24th November at 7.00pm in Our Lady of Good Aid Cathedral, Motherwell.**



Walk of Hope:

Young People Walk Together on Pilgrimage of Hope



BY CLAIRE O'NEILL

Friday 29th August was a special day for over 500 young people from secondary schools from across the Diocese, as they came together for a Walk of Hope to mark the Jubilee year.



The day began in St Francis Xavier Parish Church, Carfin, where Bishop Toal welcomed pupils and teachers from 12 secondary schools. During the prayer service, candles marked with each school's badge were blessed. These candles became an important symbol of the journey that followed.

With the Bishop walking alongside them, pupils set off on foot from Carfin Grotto to Our Lady of Good Aid Cathedral in Motherwell. The sight of so many young people walking and praying together was powerful, showing a real sense of unity and faith.



When they arrived at the Cathedral, the pilgrimage ended as it had begun, with prayer. The school candles, first blessed at the start of the day, were lit inside the Cathedral. Their light reminded everyone of the hope that the Jubilee Year celebrates. Afterwards, each candle was taken back to school to continue shining as a sign of faith and hope for the future.

For many pupils, the pilgrimage was not just a walk but an experience of togetherness, reflection, and joy and a day they will long remember.

Legacy of Faith:

Late Parishioner's Religious Collection Enriches Schools

BY CLAIRE O'NEILL

An extraordinary collection of statues, nativities, and other religious artefacts has been generously donated to the Diocese of Motherwell's RE Department by the family of the late Sarah Teresa McGuiness, a devoted parishioner of St Kevin's, Bargeddie, who passed away in July.

Sarah, who had been honoured with the Bene Merenti medal for her dedication to the Church, spent many years gathering her collection during travels and pilgrimages. After her passing, her brother Frank, along with her two nieces—both named Mary—contacted Claire O'Neill, RE Coordinator, to ask if the collection could be used in the diocese.

The timing was providential, as Claire had just begun work on establishing a Jubilee Lending Library of Religious Artefacts for schools. The collection will now form a significant part of this initiative, giving children across the Diocese the chance to encounter sacred art in a tangible way.

Claire expressed her gratitude, saying, "We are so grateful to Frank and his two nieces, who have generously shared this wonderful collection with the Diocese. Some of the statues are already in pride of place in our schools, and we look forward to many more schools benefiting from the legacy of Sarah's collection."

Access to the Jubilee Lending Library is free of charge, with schools asked only to remember Sarah and the Holy Souls in their prayers. For more information on the lending library, or to donate a large statue or religious artefact, please contact Claire O'Neill at primaryre@rcdom.org.uk



Our Lady's celebrate 150 years

Historic Motherwell
High School celebrates
150 years of Catholic
Education



A special Mass of Thanksgiving was held in Motherwell Cathedral on Thursday, 4 September, to mark 150 years of Catholic education in the town—centred around the historic legacy of Our Lady's High School.

For 150 years, the school has been a place of learning, hope, faith and opportunity in Motherwell. Our Lady's is more than just a school—it is a family, a community, and a living testament to the enduring power of Catholic education.

At Our Lady's High School, the values to promote the common good, foster relationships, be leaders of faith and have love in all things, shapes every aspect of its work.

The school's mission, *"Growing together, achieving together, with Christ at our centre"* is as relevant today as it was 150 years ago.

For a century and a half, Our Lady's High School has been a cornerstone of the Motherwell community. From the countless alumni who have gone on to lead, serve, and inspire, to the partnerships forged with local charities and organisations, the school has certainly left an indelible mark.

The school have celebrated successes together, weathered challenges together, and grown stronger together. The 150th celebration of Mass provided a moment to reflect on that legacy and to renew the commitment to being a force for good in the community.

The Mass was presided over by Bishop Toal and concelebrated by Father Christopher Morris, the school chaplain, and Father Colin Hughes, Vicar Episcopal for Education. The liturgy drew a large congregation, including former headteachers Mrs Kathleen Sinclair and Mr Dan Cardle, current and former pupils, staff, representatives from neighbouring schools, and local dignitaries such as the Chief Officer for Education, Mr James McParland, North Lanarkshire Provost Kenneth Duffy and Education Convener Councillor Michael McBride.

During the celebration, two long-serving members of staff were honoured with Diocesan Medals in recognition of their outstanding service to Catholic education. Mrs Lyn Zambonini, recently retired as Faculty Head of Health and Wellbeing and Mrs Anne O'Donnell, Senior Clerical in the school office, were both commended for their 30

years of dedication to the school and its Catholic ethos.

Headteacher Louisa McGraw reflected on the significance of the evening: "Leading Our Lady's High School for the last 3 years has been an absolute honour and privilege. It has been lovely to celebrate this milestone with our school community. Seeing so many familiar faces and recognising the contributions of our staff made it a truly special evening. A special thanks also goes to Mrs Kathleen Smith (Principal Teacher of Religious Education), Mrs Anne O'Donnell (Senior Office Clerical), Mrs Anne Munro (Parent Council) and Father Morris, who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make the event a success."

The school choir, led by Faculty Head of Expressive Arts Mark McVeagh, accompanied by former pupil and organist John Pitcaithley, provided beautiful music which complemented the liturgy.

The Mass marks the beginning of a year-long programme of celebrations for the school's 150th anniversary. Events will include an exhibition showcasing the school's history and a special visit from Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal.

“Ora et Labora”, thy children sing to thee!

Harry Potter composer pens new hymn for Easterhouse school

BY JAMES GREECHAN

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, Cinderella, Brave, Thor, Sense and Sensibility, and St Benedict's Primary, Easterhouse... An unusual list, some of you may think, but they all have one thing in common – Mr Patrick Doyle.

Over his 50-year career, the Lanarkshire-born composer and actor has composed music for some of our most beloved films and can now add St Benedict's Primary's new school hymn to his list. On Friday, 5th September, Canticum Benedicti, written by Mr Patrick Doyle with words by Mr James Greechan (the school's Choral Director), was sung publicly for the first time to mark the 60th Anniversary of St Benedict's Church. Present were members of the parish community, Salesian sisters of the parish, the school community, and Mr Patrick Doyle himself.

Mass was celebrated by Father James Thomson, who spoke in his homily about the gifts and talents we are all granted by God. These gifts and talents are not to be kept

selfishly to ourselves, serving only our own ego, but they are to be offered in service of the other, in a spirit of selfless giving, a giving which finds its fullness in the Lord's total giving of Himself on the cross. Giving of musical talents is a big feature of life in this parish.

Three years ago, St Benedict's was one of the first schools to join the Diocesan Schools Singing Programme and has become a shining example of the inspirational and aspirational qualities of choral singing. The school choir has a membership of around seventy children and sends choristers to the Cathedral each week who are part of the Junior Choir.

At the end of Mass, all joined in singing the new school hymn to St Benedict, led by the school choir. It was an intensely emotional and deeply moving occasion. Mr Doyle said, “It was such a privilege and a joy to write this hymn for St Benedict's. The inaugural Mass was deeply moving; the kids gave it their all! I hope the whole school community enjoys the hymn for many years to come.”



Along with Mr Doyle, it is our hope that this hymn will be sung by many generations of Benedictine children to come and that this great Saint will watch over this community, bringing all to a deeper love of Jesus and His Holy Church. Mrs Parkinson and the school community would like to express their heartfelt thanks to Mr Doyle for this joyful and meaningful gift to their school. St Benedict, pray for us!



Eco-friendly pupils make it 10 in a row for St Bernard's

BY DEACON BILL MCMILLAN

Congratulations to the children and staff of St Bernard's Primary School, Coatbridge, on achieving their 10th consecutive Eco-Schools Green Flag Award — one of only a few schools in Scotland to do so!

The Green Flag is an international recognition of schools committed to environmental education and sustainability through the seven-step Eco-Schools programme.

Well done to all our children for their hard work in making the world a better place!

St Teresa's Mini Vinnies

BY DANIEL SMITH

Well done to St. Teresa's Primary School Mini Vinnies who represented the school at the vigil Mass in Newarthill recently and spoke about their good works and how they use the “See, Think, Do” approach in school life, living out Gospel Values in this Jubilee Year of Hope.

Thanks to their families, the SSVP members, and especially Mrs Bridget Ann Devanney for her continued support of the Mini Vinnies across the Motherwell diocese.



Faith and mission moving mountains in Bolivia

To mark Mission Month, **Fr Dominic Quinn** shares his mission experience in Bolivia and Peru with **Gerard Gough** from Missio Scotland

“What a lot of people might not know is that I’ve climbed 180 out of 283 Munros,” Fr Dominic Quinn said. “It’s a wee badge of pride, because I love the mountains and the outdoors. I’m no Chris Bonington, but I’ve done my best!”

That love of mountains and the outdoors would serve the Glasgow-born priest well during years spent on mission in Bolivia and Peru, but little did he know his faith would hit new heights then too.

The young Dominic Quinn, who grew up in East Kilbride—along with his four brothers and two sisters—originally had designs on being a singer and then latterly a lawyer until ‘the Lord intervened’ with a Plan C, which was no doubt bolstered by a family that was not only rooted in the Catholic Faith but which also had a missionary history.

“We were very involved in the life of the Church, and we would say the family Rosary at home during the week and so on,” Fr Dominic said. “My Uncle John was also a missionary priest. He was a

Salvatorian, and he worked in Tanganyika as it was at that time. So, we did feel very much part of the Church and connected. Our faith was really important to our family and to me growing up.”

“As a teenager, I got involved with charismatic renewal and going along to prayer groups,” he recalled. “That really was a big turning point for me, I think, in terms of considering a vocation. I had lots of good influences with the priests in our parish—both St Brides and Our Lady of Lourdes were outstanding examples and really joyous people.

“Also, in the mid to late 1970s, there was a movement in schools known as Caring Church Week when various priests and religious would come to visit the school and share their own lives and so on, and they were great salesmen and saleswomen because they were clearly very happy about their own lives and wanted to share that.”

Family values

So, a strong faith at home and some excellent witnesses to that Faith in the Church were crucial to the

young Fr Dominic taking up his vocation, which would begin at Blairs College before moving onto the Scots College in Rome. But his Irish background and the many qualities and characteristics associated with that had a massive impact not only upon his decision to become a priest, but they would also subconsciously imbue him with many values that would prove to be vital while on mission.

“All four of my grandparents come from Ireland—County Fermanagh and County Leitrim,” Fr Quinn said. “I’m very, very proud of my Irishness, being Scots-Irish, you know.

“My mother gave us so much, really,” he added. “She came from a family of four and grew up on the farm. It was a very simple lifestyle that they lived, but it was all underpinned by their life of faith to an extraordinary degree. It was just woven into everything that they did; for example, everyone would stop to say the Angelus at midday or in the evening at six. There was no distinction between faith and life; it was one and the same thing.

"So many values came from my Irish background that I could probably write a book about it all, but certainly from my mother and from my Irish roots, those things were conveyed to us as children from a very young age: a great sense of fairness and using your talents for the benefit of others. Those are things which I think remain with me."

Vocation

That connectedness with God and its ongoing nature is something that Fr Dominic feels aptly describes the term vocation, 'taking the Lord's hand in some way and walking with him for a lifetime.' And that is exactly what he has done in his various parishes in the Motherwell Diocese and eventually on mission with the St James Society to Bolivia and Peru. During that journey though, there was a spell in jail... as he became Chaplain to Shotts Prison, something he looks back on as a hugely important role.

"It's a very isolating experience for people, and the Catholic priest has a unique role," he said. "It's different from other chaplains, I think, because of the connotation of confidentiality, and it ties in with the perception of the priest. So, the role of the priest in the prison is particularly important. And just at a human level, it's important to have a trustworthy person to confide in. With regards to faith, it's important too because when people are in prison, sometimes there's a resurgence of feelings of faith and

it's good to be able to respond to that."

This no doubt re-emphasised the importance of 1 Corinthians 13:13, the scripture passage that featured on Fr Dominic's ordination card: "And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love." Meeting people with faith, giving them hope and treating them with the love of a father is something that would colour his experience in Bolivia and Peru, but the response of the South Americans was reciprocal.

Faith parallels

While there were differences in culture between Fr Dominic's experience and that of the Bolivian people whom he served in the historic, rural parish of Paria, some 12,500 feet up in the Andes, there were many things that united them. There was a shared love of football (which tends to be a universal language) and having a knees-up, but more importantly a shared faith, which unearthed a love of Our Lady in Fr Dominic that was replicated by the Bolivian people too.

"I do have a special love for Our Blessed Lady, and that's something which has really grown from childhood when I didn't quite understand the importance of Our Lady," Fr Quinn said. "I would pray the Rosary and so on, but something clicked with me in South America about the place of Our Lady in the life of a Christian and from that

time, my understanding has just grown so much. In an emergency, the first person I call on is Our Blessed Lady.

The Bolivians—and the South Americans in general—have a huge devotion to Our Lady, and I think it's connected to the cultural value that they place on motherhood. The mother of the family is a hugely influential role. It's a very male-dominated culture in general terms, but in terms of domestic arrangements, the mother has a huge role to play in the family, and there's huge respect for mothers, grandmothers and so on."

"That got me thinking about where I saw Our Lady in my own life," he reflected. "Was my devotion to Our Lady more on the intellectual side than in the emotional side? Through my experience in South America, I think I managed to connect emotionally with Our Blessed Lady as the Mother of Jesus and our mother too, and not in a kind of overly pious way, but just a real, natural feeling that Our Lady wasn't otherworldly; she was our mother, and like our earthly mothers, she cares for us in an active way and is influential with the Lord. That all kind of crystallised in my own spiritual life in Bolivia, and it was a real blessing."

I think having organisations like Missio Scotland is a constant reminder that we are part of something bigger and that we are asked by the Lord to show care for our neighbour

FR DOMINIC QUINN



Connection and mission

Conscious of the importance of generosity and openness, Fr Dominic has been fulsome in his praise of Missio Scotland's support for projects in Bolivia this year. Having supported agriculture projects, clinics, children's feeding programmes and an orphanage via the St James Society in the country, he is acutely aware of the depth and variety of need that exists in Bolivia.

"I know that the people in Bolivia are hugely grateful for the solidarity that people show them, and it's not in terms of a superior helping an inferior—they have a real sense of the human family," he said. "So, any assistance that can be given to Bolivian people in need is really important. It's important for us to find ways to show solidarity to Bolivians, sure, but to all the people around the world who don't enjoy all those things that perhaps we take for granted here.

"It's really what mission is all about—solidarity, universality and trying to live out our faith in whichever set of circumstances we find ourselves, and the mission applies to every single person."

"For me, it applies as much here in the parish of St Leonard's as it does to those who go, for example, out to Bolivia to work in faith communities there. It's key to how we should live our lives as Christians, going out and finding ways to bring, in practical terms, our faith and God's love to others, whether that means creating a prayer group

or organising a food bank, all those things, for me, are mission. It's the recognition that we have a responsibility to go out of ourselves."

"Supporting Missio Scotland's work can act as a conduit for that," Fr Dominic continued. "In Bolivia, the Church is one of the institutions that people know they can depend upon. They have lively participation in the lives of their own faith communities, and they also have a great understanding of the universality of the Catholic Church and the Pope.

"It's important for us to be part of that effort, because one of the great commandments is to love God and to love our neighbour as ourselves, and through supporting other people, it's an expression of love.

"I think having organisations like Missio Scotland is a constant reminder that we are part of something bigger and that we are asked by the Lord to show care for our neighbour. So, Missio Scotland's work is vital and will be greatly appreciated by the Bolivian people."

Fr Quinn is parish priest of St Leonard's East Kilbride and recently appointed Diocesan Director of Missio.

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Celebrating Mission Month through song, dance, and prayer

BY ANDREA GRANT

Corpus Christi Church in Calderbank was filled with colour, joy, and prayer as the school community gathered to celebrate the Missionary Children's Mass, marking the beginning of Mission Month.

The children brought the liturgy to life as they led the school community in song, dance, and heartfelt prayer, making use of the resources provided by Missio Scotland.

The Mass was celebrated by Fr Christopher Igwe, who in his homily invited the children to reflect on what it means to be a hero: who the heroes are in their own lives and how they, too, can become heroes by following Jesus and living lives of kindness, faith, and service.

This special celebration highlighted not only the faith of the young people but also the important place they hold in the Church's missionary outreach. As the mandated children's charity of the Catholic Church in Scotland, Missio Scotland encourages every Catholic primary school to celebrate a Missionary Children's Mass on the first Friday of October to remind children that they are part of a global family of faith and mission, united in prayer and solidarity with young people around the world.



Fr Quinn distributes Rosary beads to the Missio Champions from schools across the Diocese at the recent commissioning service in Carfin Grotto



Wellspring Missions making an impact

BY ADRIAN HARKIN

Bishop Toal led 23 parishes in the 3rd Parish Evangelisation forum on 30 September. As ever the event was very interactive with excellent feedback from the attendees, of whom there were more than 60. Having covered off “the what” and the “how” of Parish Evangelisation, this was a very practical meeting at which 4 Priority Mission Leaders gave a quick overview of the multitude of pastoral events and resources that are being produced for use across the Diocese.

The impressive output from these 4 Missions – together with the equally impressive output from our other many Missions – are contained in a newly released Diocesan Parish Directory (you can access it via the 1st QR code below). This directory is a living document that will be updated weekly, and the current version of the document will be sent out weekly to everyone who has signed up for diocesan news via our mailing app (which you can sign up for via the 2nd QR code below).

All of the content and programmes here are supported by Deanery Coordinators, lay people who support a handful of parishes in the deaneries that comprise the Diocese.

The next Parish Evangelisation event will take place in January 2026. The focus of that meeting will be on parishes themselves, outlining the progress they have each taken and sharing successes and learnings.



Youth

Fr Stephen Reilly, who spoke about how the core Youth Group across the Diocese have grown from

monthly Masses in Motherwell Cathedral (the next 2 Masses are 12 Oct and 9 Nov, both at 7:30pm, with a focus on learning, praying and socialising) into an impressive programme of pilgrimages, programmes and initiatives (Lourdes, Salamanca, Caritas, “Lifeteen” and a Parish Youth Ministry Summit). There are huge resources available to all parishes to help with development of their youth ministries and all youth (from S6 to age 30) are very, very welcome to join the group



Marriage, Family & Life

Deacon David Harper, who described how the Mission has developed a series of practical and

programmatically responses to St Pope John Paul II’s writings on the role of the Christian Family in society and the church. These include an extremely successful pre-marriage preparation course; post-marriage celebration events; family events, leading to the National Family Conference; the monthly Mass for Life (7pm on the last Thursday every month at St Francis Xavier’s Carfin); and the Torchlight procession for Life (30 October 6pm, George Square, Glasgow)



Education

Fr Colin Hughes, who outlined the key initiatives that the Education Mission is delivering, including

“Baptismal Packs” (gifts for babies and children coming forward for baptism that contain beautiful books and a Celtic Cross, that show new parents how to pray with their children (cost £12, available from Fr Colin at St Bride’s, Bothwell)); SALT – an Australian methodology and immersive toolkit to support Children’s Liturgies and school learning; Examen (a Jesuit praying methodology that been rolled out to the 62 Primary Schools and 11 Secondary schools across the Diocese); and work to align Caritas programmes across the diocese



Adult Formation

Fr Martin Delaney, who spoke about the role of Alpha in parish evangelisation (core to many parishes

who have already made enormous progress in their own journeys), and a diocesan-wide event to help parishes understand Alpha and consider how it could apply in their parishes; a transformational programme – Called and Gifted (global in nature) – under which adults undertake a series of events, readings and discernment in order to discern their own God-given charisms (i.e., what talents they have been given from the Holy Spirit) that will enable them to understand how best to live out their own vocation in the Faith

Diocesan Pastoral Directory



Sign-up to mailing list



The Scriptures

by FATHER
THOMAS MAGILL



Solemnity of All Saints Year C 2nd November 2025

Revelation 7.2-4, 9-14; Psalm 24; 1 John 3.1-3; Matthew 5.1-12

There's a beautiful linkage in all the readings between the "already" and "not yet," between the joys and sorrows of this present world and the glory yet to come. The blessedness of the Beatitudes is the experience of divine wisdom and not the logic of the world. (Gospel) They reveal our own powerlessness and make room for the power of the Cross; they enable us to get in touch with our misery and glory and so give a foretaste of the heavenly reward. They tell us that we are already the children of God and that when Christ is fully revealed we shall be like him (2nd reading). In the meantime, we should have a real vision of humanity fully restored in the beauty of Christ in the company of all the Saints which fills us with hope as we make our pilgrim way. (1st reading) A synodal Church is a Church which brings hope to an alienated world corrupted by the relentless logic of power and consumption.

Dedication of the Lateran Basilica 9th November 2025

Ezekiel 47.1-2, 8-9, 12; Psalm 46; 1 Corinthians 3.9-11, 16-17; John 2.13-22

The Lateran Basilica in Rome is the Pope's Cathedral and so is the Mother Church for all Catholics. The readings today invite us to reflect on what the Church is. The Lord talks of the destruction of the Temple and of it being raised up in three days. (Gospel) It is he, of course who is the Temple, no longer limited to one particular

place but now accessible to all humanity, the sacred space in which the divine and the human are made one. Ezekiel's vision of the river flowing from the Temple and watering the whole earth (1st reading) is an anticipation of the water that would flow from Christ's side on the Cross filling everyone to the brim with God's love. Paul tells us that in Christ we are God's temple, and that temple is holy. A Synodal Church will always be centred on Christ in her service to the world, bring freshness to a tired earth, and enabling all of us to spread the holiness of God to all.

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time C 16th November 2025

Malachi 4.1-2; Psalm 98; 1 Thessalonians 3.7-12; Luke 21.5-19

The destruction of the Temple, foretold by Jesus, was a moment of deep crisis and utter despair for the people of his day. (Gospel) It was the Temple which gave them a sense of identity and belonging; it was the centre of their faith. All this was reduced to dust. As this happened, there were wars and famines, plagues and environmental disasters. Everything they held dear was going, and the world was falling apart. In the midst of this the Lord tells them to persevere, to endure, not to be led astray but to witness to their faith. He is telling them that in the midst of change and even collapse, God is at work building something new out of the rubble of life. The arrogant and wicked of the earth who impose their own empires will not withstand this God who brings healing in his wings (1st reading). As we are unsettled by change in the

Church and the world, even as we lose hope, there are always people of faith whose life we can imitate and be encouraged by, people in whom we can see Christ at work. (2nd reading) A synodal Church reminds us that we are not alone, that we are on this journey together, and that it is Christ who leads us.

Solemnity of Christ the King C 23rd November 2025

11 Samuel 5.1-3; Psalm 122; Colossians 1.12-20; Luke 23.35-43

The presence of God's Kingdom was at the heart of the proclamation of Jesus. His life and death revealed that this was not like earthly kingdoms, which relied on wealth and power and status. At the heart of God's Kingdom is the Cross of the Lord, through whom God enters deeply into the sufferings of this world. (Gospel) Christ exists before all things; in him all things hold together, and through him the whole of creation is delivered from the domain of darkness. He is the one who brings peace. (2nd reading) In our present world, "Christ is King" is becoming a motto of those who want to create an exclusionary and intimidating Christianity, who want to divide and sow hatred. This is diametrically opposed to Christ the Shepherd King (1st reading), who gathers and leads all of humanity into one flock. A synodal church will always welcome, include, and serve a world riven by discord, suspicion, and enmity.

1st Sunday of Advent A 30th November 2025

Isaiah 2.1-5; Psalm 122; Romans 13.11-14; Matthew 24.37-44

The first Christians expected the Lord's second coming to happen in their lifetime. Gradually, they understood that this coming happens not just at the end of time, but in the present moment and in all the circumstances of life. Advent is a time when we learn that to be Christian is to "stay awake" and "be ready" for all the ways Christ comes to us. Baptism and faith give the believer a deeper awareness and

heightened consciousness of Christ's presence in our midst, and it warns us of the danger of dulling our senses through consumption of the things of this world. In Advent we "wake from our sleep", "put on the Lord Jesus Christ (2nd reading) and continue walking in the light to the house of God. (1st reading) A synodal church will experience through the Holy Spirit a deepening awareness of the continuing presence of God in Christ and bring that presence to the world.

2nd Sunday of Advent A
7th December 2025

Isaiah 11.1-10; Psalm 72; Romans 15.4-9; Matthew 3.1-12

John the Baptist, with his strange clothes and even stranger diet, appears suddenly from the wilderness and anticipates the words of Jesus with his demand for conversion and the coming of the Kingdom. (Gospel) Like Lent, Advent is a time when we "change our ways" and "make our paths straight." Conversion is an ongoing experience of being transformed by the Lord through the fire of his Holy Spirit. This Holy Spirit refines and purifies us, straightens our thinking so that we see and perceive in a new way, take on the mind of Christ, and live the values of the kingdom. The Pharisees wanted what John offered but were incapable of receiving his message because of their unwillingness to

change. This denied them the gifts of the Spirit and the reconciliation and peace which comes from them. (1st reading) With conversion comes the encouragement of the Scriptures, a deep harmony of life, and the desire to glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2nd reading) A synodal Church will always have conversion of mind and heart at her core.

3rd Sunday of Advent A
14th December 2025

Isaiah 35.1-6, 10; Psalm 146; James 5.7-10; Matthew 11.2-11

There's a big difference between the John we met last week and the John presented today. Last week he was talking of axes, winnowing forks and unquenchable fire. Now this wild man who wandered about uninhibited is in prison. Last week he spoke with utter certainty; this week he's very unsure. (Gospel) His certainty about the Messiah now crumbles in the face of the reality of Jesus. He had misunderstood that God's vengeance mentioned by Isaiah, in which God "gets his own back", would be accomplished through the healing he brings about. It is not the mighty and strong who will have the upper hand. (1st reading) John needs a radical rethink; he too needs the conversion he proclaims. He must leave the prison which prevents him from seeing this Messiah who comes through compassion,

healing, new life, and hope. As we continually encounter this Lord who comes to us (2nd reading) we too are opened up to a deeper experience of who he is and learn patience as gradually he leads us deeper into God.

4th Sunday of Advent A
21st December 2025

Isaiah 7.10-14; Psalm 24; Romans 1.1-7; Matthew 1.18-24

Like John the Baptist in last week's gospel, so too Joseph has to deal with the unexpected and unimagined nature of God's plan. He needs a radical rethink and conversion. Yes, he would have been waiting for Emmanuel that descendant of King David of whom Isaiah had prophesied. (1st reading) But the conception of Jesus confounds all his preconceptions. This child would not only be a son of David, but he would be Son of God in power and holiness. (2nd reading) When he understands that the Holy Spirit is at work, he is able to make the necessary change. Previously he had been set on sending Mary away; now he is ready to be with her as they both submit to God's will. Both stand ready to be led by the Holy Spirit into the new and unforeseen. They show how those who follow the Lord must also be shaped and formed by the Spirit as they go forward into the future as a synodal Church.



Diocese of Motherwell

Mass for Deceased Clergy

Monday 10th November - 7.00pm

Our Lady of Good Aid Cathedral, Motherwell

All Welcome





FAITH, FREEDOM & A FIGHT FOR HOPE

TikTok priest hosts 600 young Scots as North Korean defector Timothy Cho shares story of daring escapes and finding God.

BY PETER DIAMOND

Aid to the Church in Need held the biggest event for young Catholics in Scotland on September 9, in Hamilton's Townhouse, which saw them bring a North Korean defector to share his story of escape and how he became a Christian.

Timothy Cho, once trapped in North Korea, sat before 600 pupils from 16 Catholic secondary schools across Scotland, and he had them hanging on his every word.

In a nation where religion is forbidden, bibles are banned, and worship outside the state cult can mean 20 years of hard labour or even death, Timothy's escape and survival were nothing short of miraculous.

Timothy shared with the young people how he first fled the dictatorship as a desperate teenager, driven by hunger and fear. He described sneaking across the heavily guarded border into China, but his freedom was short-lived. Caught by authorities, Timothy was sent back to North Korea, where punishment for fleeing is brutal and includes torture, prison camps, starvation and even death.

"I thought I would never see the outside world again," he said. "I thought my life was finished."

He described the overcrowded prison cells where there was no

space to lie down. Prisoners slept sitting up, packed together back-to-back like sardines.

"One morning I woke because it felt like a boulder was pressing into my back," he said quietly. "But it wasn't a rock. It was the body of the prisoner behind me. He had died during the night after being tortured by the guards."

From there, Timothy told how he eventually escaped for good, embarking on a journey that led him to South Korea, then the UK — where he rebuilt his life in freedom. However, his story didn't end with survival. Whilst in prison he encountered Christianity through an unlikely source, a South Korean gangster whom he shared a cell with.

"In the silence of my fear, I began to pray. And in prayer, I found freedom far greater than crossing any border," he said.

Today, Timothy lives safely in Britain, a devout Christian who campaigns tirelessly for human rights, shining a light on the persecution of believers around the world.

The rally was compered by none other than the "TikTok priest", Fr James Anyaegbu, parish priest of St Mary's in Beaulieu, whose viral videos have made him a social-media favourite among young Catholics. With his trademark humour,

warmth and songs, he kept the packed hall buzzing between powerful witnesses of faith, prayers and music.

The Scottish Youth Rally, celebrating its 10th anniversary, opened with an apostolic blessing from Pope Leo XIV, read by William More, Manager of Operations in Scotland for ACN, praising the Rally for its mission to inspire the next generation and offering the Pope's prayers for every young person gathered.

In the afternoon, FireCloud led a time of Eucharistic Adoration, guiding the young people in prayer, whilst a 17-strong African choir from Aberdeen and Christian pop-rock band Ooberfuse also featured. ACN has long been a lifeline for persecuted Christians worldwide, working in 140 countries with over 5000 projects, and if the charity had hoped to spark a fire in Scotland's young Catholics, they succeeded.

The following day, Timothy travelled with Joe Kelly, Youth and Schools Lead for ACN Scotland, to Trinity High School in Rutherglen and Taylor High School in New Stevenston, speaking to more than 200 pupils, with hundreds more watching via livestream, once again leaving the young people challenged, inspired, and determined not to take their freedom for granted.

Fr James dances on stage with Fr Stephen Reilly



Diocese of Motherwell Youth

YOUTH MINISTRY TRAINING WORKSHOP II SPEAKING TO EVANGELISE

BY MISHAL NOVANI

After the success of the Youth Summit, Mishal hosted the 2nd training workshop for youth ministers, **Speaking to Evangelise**, bringing together passionate youth leaders from across the diocese who are dedicated to nurturing the faith of young people, specifically learning techniques in sharing the Good News.



The evening provided a mix of inspiring talks, practical training, and shared discussion, equipping participants with tools and confidence to strengthen youth ministry in their home parishes. With moments of prayer, fellowship, and laughter, the workshop also fostered a renewed sense of connection and purpose among leaders who share the same mission—to accompany young people on their journey of faith.

Many participants commented on how encouraging and energising the day was, offering both spiritual and practical insights they could take back to their parishes. One participant commented, "The structure, the resources, the attention to detail. It was easy to understand. The end task of using the template was a good confidence builder."

This initiative marks another exciting step in building a supportive network of youth ministers across the diocese—one that seeks to form, inspire, and empower those working with the next generation of the Church. Workshop III is already in discussion and will be hosted next year – keep an eye out!



HOPE *has a Name*

Advent Retreat

FOR S6 PUPILS & YOUNG ADULTS

2nd Dec 2025

ST BRIDE'S HALL,
MOTHERWELL, 7PM - 9PM

Talks - Live Music
Adoration - Confessions
Fellowship - Food

TO REGISTER EMAIL:
mishal@rcdom.org.uk



ADVENT RETREAT For S6's and Young Adults (16+)

Step away from the noise of December and enter a space of peace, prayer, and preparation. Join us for an evening to encounter Christ through Eucharistic Adoration, live worship, inspiring reflections, and time to connect with others seeking something deeper this Advent.

There will be:

- Beautiful live music, Scripture and Quiet reflection
- Testimonies, candlelights and moments that move the heart
- Confessions available
- Fellowship and Pizza afterwards

 Date: 2nd Dec 2025

 Venue: St Bride's Hall, Motherwell

 Time: 7pm - 9pm

 Free entry

To register email : mishal@rcdom.org.uk

Let this Advent be more than a countdown to Christmas.
Come and encounter in Whom all hope is found.

Making a better world possible... for the last 60 years

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM CLAIRE COOK AND MICHAEL MCGRATH



The world has been through a lot over the past 60 years ... climate change, conflict, chaos in our politics. But where there has been injustice, where there has been pain and suffering, SCIAF has been there, standing side-by-side and supporting the most vulnerable communities.

Since 1965 SCIAF has given millions of people around the world a hand up out of poverty: empowering the hungry to grow more food, uplifting women and girls out of oppression, opening up education for those who are excluded and offering hope in the darkest of times.

And it all started in a classroom in Rutherglen...

Last month a very special celebration of all the love that SCIAF has brought to the world over the last six decades took place in the same parish in which the charity was born – St Columbkille's in Rutherglen.

SCIAF Chief Executive Lorraine Currie said, "They came from far and wide – SCIAF supporters, staff past and present, so many of our amazing volunteers and of course the good people of Rutherglen, where it all began.

"SCIAF, and everyone associated with it, believes that a better world is possible – and it's their mission to bring that vision to life.

"From Rutherglen to Rafah, Aberfeldy to Addis, and Benbecula to Bogota, the SCIAF family is there, building a better world. The Mass was truly a joyful day where it was clear that SCIAF has a special place in the hearts of many."

The Mass was celebrated by Bishop Brian McGee, SCIAF's current Bishop President, and concelebrated by past President Bishop Joseph Toal, Parish Priest Father Bernard Mournian and many other priests who have been associated with the charity over the years.

Children and young people from local schools were also represented – St Columbkille's, St Mark's, Trinity High, Holyrood Secondary and Fernhill School – welcoming people, taking part in the Mass and singing in the choir.

Over time, SCIAF also became part of Caritas Internationalis – a family of 162 national Catholic relief and development agencies working across the world. Using the Latin word for 'love' or 'charity', Caritas

Internationalis (CI) is based in the Vatican, and SCIAF is a 'small but mighty' part of this humanitarian network.

Lorraine added, "It's being part of this amazing Caritas family that allows us to be able to help almost immediately when disasters strike. We work through these partners to bring relief where and when it's needed. It happened when Ukraine was invaded in 2022. It's also happening right now in Gaza, where we're providing support when the conditions allow, amid the tremendous suffering there.

"SCIAF has also produced two CI Secretary Generals – firstly Duncan MacLaren and also the current head Alistair Dutton – proving that SCIAF is truly small but mighty in the world of humanitarian work."



Local artist brings SCIAF 'journey' to life

SCIAF's Rutherglen roots and 60 years of worldwide humanitarian work has been immortalised by one of its local supporters – artist Mark Armstrong.

Mark (54), who has lived in Rutherglen since he was a child, decided to mark the charity's anniversary by creating and donating a painting which summed up its history and meaning. To make it all the more meaningful, Mark also involved local schoolchildren in the process.

Mark said, "I was at a SCIAF film launch back in January where I met up with Claire Cook, an old school friend who now works for the charity. We got chatting, and I came up with the idea of creating a special piece of art to mark this milestone anniversary. That's when it all got going.

"Since then I've met with SCIAF's community team to get some ideas flowing. I also joined Mark Booker on a visit to my old school, St Mark's, as well as Fernhill School, to tell the children more about SCIAF's work.

"A few weeks later we went back, and I asked the children to help me come up with ideas for the painting. They were so keen to help, and it was great to see what SCIAF meant to them."



Mark, who runs a social enterprise company helping budding artists in the East End, has always enjoyed art, but it was only three years ago when he joined Dens# Art Classes in Dennistoun to hone his oil painting skills. Since then, Mark's gone from strength to strength and now creates Van Gogh-inspired pieces with a difference – famous Glasgow scenes, through his brand GlasGogh.

SCIAF's Claire Cook said, "Mark's amazing creation was unveiled at our 60th anniversary mass a few weeks back, and we were all over the moon. 'Journey' really sums up what we are all about: caring for our common home, nurturing communities and reaching out in love when people need it most. A huge thanks to Mark for creating this very special piece of SCIAF history."

'Journey' traces sixty years of faith, action, and compassion through the story of SCIAF.

At its beginning stands St Columbkille's Church, a reminder of the charity's birthplace in Rutherglen. From its doorway, a river of life flows — winding through valleys and fields, carrying with it seeds of change, symbols of growth, and the enduring mission of justice.

In the foreground, the founding figures, Monsignor Rooney and teacher John McKee, stand together, visionaries who first sowed this work of faith in action. Their gaze is joined by countless others across the decades, embodied here in the bright patchwork of fields, homes, and communities that unfold across the canvas. To the right, we see a statue that stands in St Columbkille's church itself; his eyes scan the flowing river and its wonderful work.

Along the river we see children surfing — recalling SCIAF's work with young people in Colombia, where sport offers hope and new beginnings. We see farmers' crops flourish, animals nurtured, and trees rooted in renewal, each a testament to the lives changed through sustainable farming and care for creation. At the right-hand side of the canvas, we see a stack of Wee Boxes, a well-known fundraising tool for SCIAF. In the painting they have become a place of learning, representing generations of solidarity built from simple acts of giving. We see goats and sheep, pupils learning, trees sprouting and the SCIAF river running right through, pouring out in three waterfalls, continuing its work.

The journey through the valley to the thriving present, symbolised by the colours and fields, sixty years of growth, resilience, and shared humanity. Through every turn of the river, the call remains the same: to walk together in hope, faith, and love.

Local church team scoops the SCIAF Shield



A football team made up of parishioners from The Sacred Heart in Salsburgh and St Aloysius in Chapelhall scooped the first-ever SCIAF Shield.

The SCIAF Shield is a new 5-a-side tournament that brought together

16 teams for an exciting afternoon of sport in support of SCIAF's life-changing work overseas.

Parish Priest Fr Mark O'Donnell, who led the team that beat Nun The Wiser to lift the trophy, said, "It was great to be there supporting SCIAF, which does such great work around the world.

"We all really enjoyed the day – we had a good couple of games, a great tournament and some lovely (rainy) Scottish weather, so we can't complain too much!"

Dilexi te

Pope Leo XIV issues first Apostolic Exhortation on love for the poor

The Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi te* "I have loved you" (Rev 3:9), focused on love for the poor, was signed by Pope Leo XIV on October 4, 2025, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, and published on October 9.

"I am happy to make this document my own – adding some reflections – and to issue it at the beginning of my own pontificate, since I share the desire of my beloved predecessor that all Christians come to appreciate the close connection between Christ's love and his summons to care for the poor. I too consider it essential to insist on this path to holiness, for "in this call to recognise him in the poor and the suffering, we see revealed the very heart of Christ, his deepest feelings and choices, which every saint seeks to imitate," writes Pope Leo XIV.



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In the Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi te*, the Holy Father affirms: "I am convinced that the preferential choice for the poor is a source of extraordinary renewal both for the Church and for society, if we can only set ourselves free of our self-centeredness and open our ears to their cry" (DT 7) But he points out that "this 'preference' never indicates exclusivity or discrimination towards other groups, which would be impossible for God. It is meant to emphasise God's actions, which are moved by compassion toward the poverty and weakness of all humanity. Wanting to inaugurate a kingdom of justice, fraternity and solidarity, God has a special place in his heart for those who are discriminated against and oppressed, and he asks us, his Church, to make a decisive and radical choice in favour of the weakest" (DT 16).

Dilexi te also highlights the importance of being "a Church for the poor" and emphasises that "this is not a matter of mere human kindness but a revelation" (DT 5). It is in this perspective that "we can understand the numerous pages of the Old Testament in which God is presented as the friend and liberator of the poor... « God's heart has a special place for the poor [...] T

he entire history of our redemption is marked by the presence of the poor »" (DT 17).

The Holy Father highlights that "no Christian can regard the poor simply as a societal problem; they are part of our 'family'. They are 'one of us'. Nor can our relationship to the poor be reduced to merely another ecclesial activity or function" (DT 104) and recalls the teaching on work of Saint John Paul II to reflect on "the active role that the poor ought to play in the renewal of the Church and society, thus leaving behind a certain 'paternalism' that limited itself to satisfying only the immediate needs of the poor" (DT 87).

Furthermore, *Dilexi te* explains that "the poorest are not only objects of our compassion but also teachers of the Gospel. It is not a question of "bringing" God to them, but of encountering him among them" (DT 79) because "while it is true that the rich care for the poor, the opposite is no less true. This is a remarkable fact confirmed by the entire Christian tradition. Lives can actually be turned around by the realisation that the poor have much to teach us about the Gospel and its demands" (DT 109).

Read the full document at:
dilexite.org

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