

DIOCESE OF MOTHERWELL

FREE

FONTES

EASTER 2026 | ISSUE 24 | FREE

MAGAZINE



RECEIVING *the* FAITH

Elect get ready to be received into the Church this Easter

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NEXT EDITION

20/21 June 2026

Send your news, events and articles for the next edition to media@rcdom.org.uk.

Deadline for submissions - 29th May 2026

BISHOP'S DIARY

5th - 12th April

HCPT Pilgrimage to Lourdes

13th - 20th April

Visit to Royal Scots College, Salamanca

22nd April

9.30am Visit to St Michael's PS, Moodiesburn

11.30am Visit to St Benedict's PS, Easterhouse

7.00pm Diocesan Synodality Meeting

23rd April

9.30am Visit to St Aidan's PS, Wishaw

11.30am Visit to St Mary's PS, Hamilton

24th April

9.30am Visit to St Brigid's PS Newmains

11.30am Visit to St Mary's PS, Cleland

25th April

9.00am Divine Renovation Day at St John the Baptist Church, Uddingston

27th April

11.00am Episcopal Finance Meeting

3.00pm Meeting with Deans

28th April

9.30am Visit to Our Lady and St Anne's PS, Hamilton

11.30am Visit St Elizabeth's PS, Eddlewood

7.00pm Confirmations at St Michael's Church, Moodiesburn

29th April

9.30am Visit to St Teresa's PS, Newarthill

7.00pm Confirmations at St Aidan's Church, Wishaw.

30th April

9.30am Visit to St Columbkille's PS, Rutherglen

11.30am Visit to Fernhill School, Rutherglen

7.00pm Confirmations at St John Bosco, Easterhouse, for St Benedict's PS

5th May

7.00pm Confirmations at St Mary's Church, Hamilton

6th May

20th Anniversary Mass for St John Paul II Primary, Viewpark

7.00pm Confirmations at St Brigid's Church, Newmains

7th May

9.30am Bishops' Conference of Scotland

8th May

9.30am Visit to St Kenneth's PS, EK

11th May

9.30am Visit to St Timothy's PS, Coatbridge

4.30pm Diocesan Education Meeting

7.00pm Confirmations at St Mary's Church, Cleland

12th May

9.30am Visit to St Augustine's PS, Coatbridge

7.00pm Confirmations at Our Lady and St Anne's Church, Hamilton

13th May

7.00pm Confirmations at St Teresa's Church, Newarthill

15th May

9.30am Visit to St Vincent de Paul PS, EK

18th May

9.30am Visit to St Athanasius' PS, Carluke

19th May

9.30am Visit to St Mary's PS, Lanark

7.00pm Confirmations at St Columbkille's Church, Rutherglen, for St Columbkille's PS and Fernhill School

20th May

9.30am Visit to St David's PS, Plains

11.30am Visit to St Mary's PS, Caldercruix

7.00pm Confirmations at St Bride's, East Kilbride, for St Kenneth's PS

21st May

2.00pm Council of Priests Meeting

7.00pm Confirmations at St James Church, Coatbridge, for St Timothy's PS

26th May

9.30am Visit to St Brendan's PS, Motherwell

2.00pm Wellspring Implementation

Meeting in the Diocesan Offices

7.00pm Confirmations at St Augustine's Church, Coatbridge

27th May

9.30am Visit to St Edward's PS, Airdrie

2.00pm Wellspring Implementation

Meeting in the Diocesan Offices

7.00pm Confirmations at St Vincent de Paul, East Kilbride

28th May

9.30am Visit to St Joseph's PS, Blantyre

11.30am Visit to St Blane's PS, Blantyre

Trinity High School Festal Mass

7.00pm Confirmations at St Athanasius' Church, Carluke

29th May

2.00pm Caritas Awards Ceremony

31st May

3.00pm ASN Confirmations in Cathedral



Dear Brothers and Sisters...

I wish everyone a very Happy Easter, and hope you have benefitted from your participation in the liturgical celebration of the Lord's Paschal Mystery through Holy Week and at Easter.

I trust the Easter Vigil was a particularly joyful event for all who have been baptised, confirmed, and have received the Eucharist at the Vigils in parishes across the Diocese. I offer my own congratulations and blessings to you all and hope that the grace of the sacraments will enlighten and sustain you throughout your lives. I thank all who have organised and participated in the parish RCIA sessions, recognising your generous commitment in sharing your knowledge and love of the Catholic faith with our catechumens and candidates.

It is always special for the Bishop to concelebrate the Mass of Chrism on Holy Thursday with his priests, in the presence of the deacons, religious, and lay faithful, and this year we were again united as the Body of Christ here in Motherwell Diocese, acknowledging the gift of the sacraments and praying for the priests ordained to celebrate and administer them.

I thank you all for your generous response to the Lenten Appeals, particularly for your support for SCIAF through the Collection and the Wee Boxes. The Good Friday Collection for the support of the Church in the Holy Land is also vitally important, and your contributions are much appreciated. The Universal Prayers at the Commemoration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday strongly remind us of the Church's responsibility for praying for the whole world and people of all faiths and none. Fulfilling this mission, we must continue to pray for peace and an end to all war. Pope Leo has spoken strongly in recent times calling for an end to war in the Middle East:

"On behalf of the Christians of the Middle East and of all women and men of good will, I appeal to those responsible for this conflict: cease fire! May paths of dialogue be reopened! Violence can never lead to the justice, stability and peace for which the peoples are waiting."

May the peace of the Risen Christ reign in our hearts and in our troubled world.

+ Joseph Tool



New Deputy Lieutenant of Lanarkshire

Professor Christopher Moore, Principal of New College Lanarkshire, has been appointed Deputy Lieutenant of Lanarkshire.

Professor Moore is a parishioner of Sacred Heart and St Gerard's, Bellshill, and holds a number of important positions, including serving as a Director of the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency. He has been Principal of New College Lanarkshire since 2019.

Lord Lieutenant Lady Susan Haughey, who is also a parishioner of the Diocese, recently conferred the position on him at the Motherwell Campus and explained the duties of the position, including attending 100th birthday parties in Lanarkshire and overseeing citizenship ceremonies.

Professor Moore said he was deeply moved by the appointment. He continued, "I'm delighted to have this opportunity to do this for Lanarkshire and for our college and show the strength of community here."

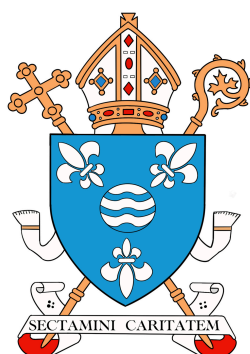
Bishop appoints new College of Consultors

Bishop Toal has recently announced the appointment of a new College of Consultors for Motherwell Diocese.

The College is made up of Diocesan Priests chosen, as required by the Bishop, from the Council of Priests for a period of five years.

The new members are: Fr Raymond Breslin; Fr Brian Lamb; Fr Kenneth O'Brien; Fr Stephen Reilly; Fr Stuart Parkes; Fr Martin Delaney; Fr James Travers; Fr Mark O'Donnell; and Fr Kevin Lawrie.

Commenting on the appointments, Bishop Toal said, "I thank those appointed for taking on this responsibility and those now retiring for their extended service as Consultors." The change-over took effect from 14th March 2026.



OZANAM CLUB CELEBRATES VALENTINES' DAY



BY MARGARET DALY

A wonderful time was had by all at the recent Valentine's celebration at the Ozanam Club in the Viewpark Community Education Centre.

DIAMOND WEDDING CELEBRATION



Jim and Mary Wylie, parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes in East Kilbride, recently joined with family and friends to celebrate their diamond wedding anniversary. The couple are pictured above with parish priest Fr Kenny Campbell, giving thanks to God for the blessings of their 60 years of marriage.

SURPRISE PARTY FOR FR BERGIN'S 75TH BIRTHDAY



The young people of St David's Plains helped their parish priest, Fr Bill Bergin, celebrate his 75th birthday in style recently as parishioners gathered for a surprise party to celebrate.



Parishes across the Diocese get behind SCIAF's Lenten appeal to help make a better world possible

Parishes across the Diocese have been supporting this year's SCIAF Lenten appeal which is helping deliver life-changing water work in Ethiopia.

Members of St Margaret's and St Serf's Parish in Airdrie (left) have been promoting and supporting the WEE BOX appeal meanwhile 23 parishioners from St Vincent de Paul's and Our Lady of Lourdes Parishes in East Kilbride (right) completed the SCIAF Big Lent Walk for Water recently, supporting SCIAF's Lenten appeal.

Photos by SCIAF/St Vincent de Paul's East Kilbride

New image honours the Divine Mercy in Mossend

A new image of the Divine Mercy has recently been installed in Holy Family Church in Mossend.

During Mass on the Fifth Sunday of Lent, the new Divine Mercy image was formally installed and unveiled in the church. The parish has also received a relic of St Faustina which has been placed at the Sacred Heart Altar beside the new image.

In preparation for the installation of the new image, a retreat was held in the parish led by Sister Gaudia Skass and Sister Tobiana Domiter of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy from the Divine Mercy Shrine in Krakow, Poland. Various liturgies and talks took place over the three days in both English and Polish, helping provide an insight and understanding into the devotion of the Divine Mercy. The Sisters also visited Holy Family Primary and Cardinal Newman High, spreading the message of Divine Mercy with pupils and staff.

The new Divine Mercy image was blessed by Father Krzysztof Garwolinski, Parish Priest of The Holy Family and Chaplain to the Polish Community in the Motherwell Diocese who are based in Holy Family Church.

Above Left: The new Divine Mercy image is unveiled. Below Left: The Sisters join Fr Krzysztof, who carries the relic of St Faustina.

Photos by Sancta Familia Media/Holy Family Mossend



A sign of hope as Diocese set to receive over 100 new Catholics this Easter

As the Church in Scotland gets ready to receive over 600 new Catholics this Easter, Motherwell Diocese welcomes with great joy 112 new members



BY JENN WYLD

There are moments in the life of the Church that quietly reveal just how alive our faith really is. The Rite of Election in the Diocese of Motherwell is one of those moments. It is a profound and humbling experience. As part of the RCIA team in the Diocese, it is a celebration that never fails to move me. This year we welcomed 112 catechumens and candidates alongside their sponsors and families.

Each year, the RCIA teams and parish priests accompany catechumens and candidates through months of prayer, conversation, moments of doubt and learning. We hear their stories of why they came to the Church, what drew them to Christ, and how they have encountered God along the way. By the time the Rite of Election arrives, these individuals are no longer simply “enquirers”. They have become part of our parish family.

One of the most powerful moments is when the catechumens and candidates’ names are called and they are presented to the Bishop and inscribed in the Book of Elect. Hearing those names aloud is deeply personal. We have seen the faith and openness of these people grow; we have witnessed their courage to ask difficult questions and their willingness to begin a new chapter with Christ. They remind us that faith is never something we simply inherit; it is something we continually choose.

The Rite of Election in Motherwell Diocese is not just about those preparing for the sacraments. It is also a renewal for the whole Church. Seeing so many people step forward and say “yes” to Christ reminds us that the Gospel is still speaking to our hearts today.

By the time we leave the Cathedral that afternoon, there is a sense that something special has taken place. You catch a glimpse of joy, happiness and sometimes a tear on people’s faces. The journey continues through Lent, but the Church has spoken clearly; these catechumens and candidates belong, and we walk with them towards the joy of Easter and beyond.

For those who like me are privileged to accompany them, the Rite of Election is always a reminder that the Holy Spirit is at work, quietly calling people by name.



Catechumens from St Anthony & St Mark’s Rutherglen are presented with the Creed by Fr Stephen Reilly as part of their RCIA journey.



Scotland Rejects Assisted Dying and Affirms Human Dignity

MSP's vote against legalising Assisted Dying in Scottish Parliament

On March 17, following months of debate and careful consideration, MSPs voted against the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill. The bill was defeated by 69 votes against to 57 votes for, following four hours of impassioned and emotive debate.

After the result of the vote was announced, Bishop John Keenan, President of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland told MSPs that they can be "confident that they have taken the correct and responsible course of action. Their vote serves to protect some of Scotland's most vulnerable individuals from the risk of being pressured into a premature death."

The statement on behalf of the Bishops noted: "Every human life possesses inherent value. Genuine compassion is not expressed through ending a life but through accompanying those who suffer and ensuring they receive the medical, emotional, and spiritual support that recognises their dignity. No life is without worth."

Although the bill was defeated, there is still much work to be done to improve palliative care. Bishop John states, "As a society, our responsibility is not to address suffering by eliminating the sufferer, but to surround each person with care, respect, and dignity until their natural end. Today's decision moves Scotland further in that direction, and MSPs should be commended for this."

"However, we must continue to make progress. Our next priority must be to strengthen palliative care by ensuring that it is properly funded and accessible to all who require it."

Concluding his statement, Bishop Keenan paid tribute to the MSPs, saying: "I would like to express my gratitude to all MSPs for their serious engagement with this issue and for the thoughtful and considered attention they have given to the bill. I am especially grateful to those who upheld the principle of human dignity and advocated on behalf of the vulnerable. Your principled commitment has not gone unnoticed."

The Catholic Church in Scotland was a strong opponent to legalising Assisted Dying and in the days prior to the vote, Bishop Keenan called the bill "a serious threat to vulnerable Scots, including the elderly, disabled, those who suffer from poor mental health, and victims of domestic abuse" and told MSPs that they either "vote to allow some citizens a new autonomy or they vote to protect thousands of vulnerable and fearful Scots who do not want this legislation and who will suffer most if this Bill passes".

Bishop Keenan also said that "true compassion is not found in killing but in walking with those who suffer, ensuring they receive the medical, emotional, and spiritual care that affirms their inherent worth. Every person—regardless of age, illness, disability, or circumstance—is a gift from God. There is no such thing as a life without value. Our task as a society is not to eliminate suffering by eliminating the sufferer but to surround every individual with love, support, and dignity until their natural end."

MSPs had already voted down an institutional opt-out which would have meant, had the bill been passed, Catholic hospices and care homes would be forced to close rather than provide assisted suicides in a hammer blow to an already creaking palliative care system.

Permanent Diaconate: Humble service in the Life of the Church

BY DEACON BILL MCMILLAN

This year the Church marks the 800th anniversary of the death of St Francis of Assisi, one of the most loved saints in Christian history. Many people are surprised to discover that St Francis was not a priest but a deacon. He deliberately chose to remain a deacon, embracing a life of humility and service to the poor. In many ways, his life reveals the true heart of the diaconal vocation: a call to serve God and His people with simplicity and love.

St Francis once said, "What we are before God, that we are and nothing more."

These words capture the spirit of the diaconate: a calling not to honour or position, but to humble service of God and His people.

AN ANCIENT MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH

Today the Church continues this ancient ministry through the Permanent Diaconate.

Often the diaconate is thought of only as the final stage for seminarians preparing for priesthood. These men serve for about a year in a parish as transitional deacons before being ordained priests.

Alongside this, however, there is the Permanent Diaconate, a vocation that goes back to the earliest days of the Church. In the Acts of the Apostles (6:1-6), the first deacons were appointed to care for widows and those in need, ensuring that the vulnerable members of the Christian community were supported while the Apostles devoted themselves more fully to prayer and preaching.

WHO CAN BECOME A DEACON?

A man may be admitted as a candidate for the Permanent Diaconate whether married or unmarried. Normally he will:

- be at least 25 years old, and
- be under 65 at the time of ordination, although the Bishop may exercise discretion regarding age.

Within parish life the special and beautiful role of our parish priests is well understood. However, many people may not realise that priests are often supported in their ministry by deacons, who share in the Church's mission in distinctive ways.

FORMATION FOR THE DIACONATE

The Permanent Diaconate was restored to the life of the Church during the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).

Men preparing for this ministry undertake five years of formation, which includes a Propaedeutic Year, followed by four years of intellectual formation carried out in conjunction with St Mary's University, (SMU), Twickenham. This formation takes place through part-time and distance learning, allowing candidates to continue their family and professional commitments.

The other pillars of formation i.e. Spiritual, Human and Liturgical formation sessions, are carried out in St Mary's Monastery, Kinnoull, Perth, by students attending a summer school and three residential weekends. At the end of the five year formation plan,



they are ordained as deacons and given an appointment by the Bishop.

A THREEFOLD MINISTRY

Permanent deacons are called to a threefold ministry of Word, Altar and Charity.

Their service may include:

- assisting the priest in the celebration of the liturgy
- proclaiming the Gospel and preaching
- helping with catechesis and parish formation
- bringing Holy Communion to the sick and housebound
- celebrating Baptisms
- officiating at funerals
- witnessing marriages outside of Mass

Most deacons continue in their ordinary professions or are retired. Some also serve as chaplains in schools, hospitals, universities, or prisons.

A GIFT TO THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

The Permanent Diaconate continues to be a great gift to the life of the Church, enriching our parishes through the ministry of Word, charity and service.

As the Church commemorates the 800th anniversary of the death of St Francis of Assisi, his example invites us to reflect again on the beauty of humble service in the Church.

If you think God might be calling you to serve as a deacon, why not take the first step in faith and find out more? Speak to your parish priest or contact the Diocesan Director for the Diaconate:

Deacon Bill McMillan

deaconmcmillan@rcdom.org.uk



Kieran gets ready for Ordination



The Diocese looks forward to the Priestly ordination of Deacon Kieran Burt who will be ordained by Bishop Toal on 19th June in his home parish of St Joseph's Blantyre.

Deacon Kieran studied for the priesthood at the Scots College in Rome and has spent the last year preparing for ministry by serving as Deacon in the parishes of St Joseph's Stepps and St Barbara's Muirhead.

Last year, shortly after his Diaconate ordination, Deacon Kieran had the honour of meeting Pope Leo XIV in Rome, just weeks after his election to the papacy.

Synodality enters implementation phase

Will Ross maps out the path ahead as the Diocese continues on synodal journey

In 2021, the late Pope Francis began a process whose name we did not – at that time – recognise readily. It was not long, however, until the whole Church learned the word ‘Synodality’ and, over the next few years, we all began to take steps along that path – our parishes, dioceses, various groups and even individuals.

THE PATHWAY SO FAR

With the death of Pope Francis in April 2025, some wondered if his successor would continue with the journey of Synodality. Since his election as the new Holy Father, Pope Leo has made it very clear that his intention is indeed to continue with it. Clarifying his view on exactly what ‘synodality’ is, Pope Leo has said - “It’s a way of being and a way of being Church. It’s a way of promoting an attitude, which begins with learning to listen to one another.”

And its function, says the Holy Father, “is to help the Church fulfil its primary role in the world, which is to be missionary, to announce the Gospel.”

Not all dioceses and not all nations are walking at the same speed along this path of Synodality and they have not all covered the same distance – but this is not really what matters. What does matter is that there is forward motion, that we are walking that path and going forward in step with the Holy Father and the entire Church.

Here in the Diocese of Motherwell, a lot of work has already taken place over the last few years, including the events which took place at Carfin and the various gatherings in the parishes, much of it recounted in a number of articles published here in *Fontes* previously. Central to all this was the work of the diocesan Synodality Group. This original group disbanded at the time of publication of the Final Document from the Synod in Rome, when our remit had been fulfilled and we had completed the work with which we had been tasked by Bishop Toal.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

At this present point in time, Rome and the Holy Father have released a new document entitled “Pathways For The Implementation Phase Of The

Diocese of Motherwell



Synodality - Implementation Phase 2025-2028

Synod, 2025-2028”. This new document outlines clearly what is now being asked of the Church as a whole and within each of the particular dioceses. The Implementation Phase aims to examine new practices and structures that will make the life of the Church more synodal – in other words, this intends to be a very practical and concrete expression of the discussion and work which has preceded it so far.

The document begins by reminding us all that “The synodal form of the Church is at the service of its mission, and any change in the life of the Church is intended to make it more capable of proclaiming the Kingdom of God and witnessing to the Gospel of the Lord to the men and women of our time. It is the urgency of this mission that drives us to implement the Synod, a task for which all the Baptised share responsibility.”

Commenting on this mission of the Church, Pope Leo said, “I would like to invite all of you ... to reflect upon what synodality is about and to invite the priests particularly, even more than the bishops, to somehow open their hearts and take part in these processes.”

The ‘Pathways’ document lays out a framework to make it easier for the Church to walk along this path of Synodality as a unified whole, and it promotes dialogue within the Church. This present part of the synodal journey leads us ultimately to an Ecclesial Assembly in October 2028. Prior to this, there are four broad milestones along the way -

- June - December 2026: implementation activities in the local Churches
- Early 2027: evaluation Assemblies in the various Dioceses
- Later 2027: evaluation Assemblies in the national and international Episcopal Conferences
- Early 2028: continental evaluation Assemblies.

In many respects, this replicates the format of the work undertaken in the earlier stages of the Synodal process – discussion at local levels, gradually moving up to broader levels.

THE PATH AHEAD

Mindful that there is work to be done, the original Synodality Group for Motherwell Diocese, with the addition of a few new faces, have recently had several meetings with Bishop Toal where ideas and proposals have been discussed. The Bishop is very clear that he wants our Diocese to embrace the direct invitation of Pope Leo and to continue along the Synodal pathway. Ever practical and with the wisdom of a shepherd, Bishop Toal wants this Synodality Group to be opened out across the Diocese, with an open invitation to all the faithful to consider becoming part of the group in order to plan the way ahead for our Diocese.

And so to this end, a special event has been arranged to which the people of the Diocese of Motherwell are cordially invited.

At 7pm on Wednesday 22nd April, an informal gathering will take place in St Brides Hall, Coursington Road, Motherwell (opposite the Cathedral). The purpose of this gathering is to invite the faithful to prayerfully consider becoming part of the new Core Synodality Group, who will work closely with Bishop Toal and be tasked with arranging synodal events in the Diocese across the four milestones leading to the Ecclesial Assembly in October 2028. No special qualifications are necessary for this work - all that is required is goodwill and a willingness to become an active part of the work of the Diocese regarding Synodality.

We would ask that all of you, the people of the Diocese, consider whether this might be something you are able to be part of -

and if so, come along to St Brides Hall on 22nd April. Even if you just want to hear a little more about the work of Synodality in the Diocese, please come along and join us. Further information on this gathering will be published in due course nearer the time.

And for all who are reading this, we would ask something which everyone is capable of giving – your prayers. Synodality is, as the later Pope Francis reminded us often, a spiritual endeavour before all else; consequently, it requires prayerful support so that all of us, in the different dioceses and in the Church as a whole, respond openly and humbly to this moment of grace offered to us today by the Holy Spirit, Whose work Synodality is.

Will Ross is a retired nurse who lives in St Bride's Parish, Bothwell. He was one of the members of the original diocesan Synodality Group.

Trust in God Still...
Celebration of the Catholic Church in Scotland

A Festival of Synodality

2026

BISHOP ALAN MCGUCKIAN
Bishop of Down & Connor

SANDRA CHAOL
Director of Discerning Leadership

FR. DAVID MCCALLUM SJ
Executive Director Discerning Leadership

SATURDAY 6TH JUNE
9AM - 4PM

Glasgow Caledonian University

Cost £65
Scan the QR Code to book a place:

Bishops Release Election Briefing Pack for 2026 Scottish Parliament Election

Voters to go to polls on 7th May



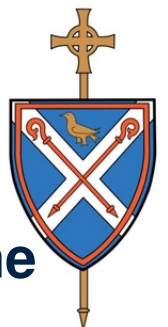
The Bishops' Conference of Scotland has published an Election Briefing Pack ahead of the 2026 Scottish Parliament election. This comprehensive resource aims to guide Catholics in Scotland to engage thoughtfully and prayerfully in the democratic process, reflecting on their responsibilities as citizens and disciples of Jesus Christ.

The briefing highlights key principles of Catholic Social Teaching, including human dignity, the common good, solidarity, and subsidiarity, and addresses critical moral issues such as the protection of life, care for the poor, accessible healthcare, environmental stewardship, and the defence of religious freedom. It also provides suggested questions for candidates, encouraging voters to engage with political representatives on topics such as poverty, family, education, and peace-building.

The pack includes a pastoral letter from Scotland's Catholic bishops, urging voters to approach the election with faith-formed consciences and a commitment to justice, compassion, and unity. The bishops emphasise the importance of electing a Parliament with integrity and which prioritises the dignity of the most vulnerable in society.

Additionally, the pack offers practical resources, including a guide to hosting hustings and a link to find local candidates. A special prayer for the election is included, inviting Catholics to seek God's guidance in their voting decisions.

For more information and resources, visit rcpolitics.org/scottish-parliament-election-2026/



Bishops of Scotland Meet at Schoenstatt Shrine

The Catholic Bishops of Scotland met at the Schoenstatt Shrine from 16th to 18th March for their Spring Plenary Meeting. The gathering included discussion, decision-making and updates on a wide range of matters affecting the life and mission of the Church in Scotland.

The bishops received reports and updates from the Scottish Catholic Parliamentary Office and the Scottish Catholic Education Service. They also considered papers relating to secondary education provision and the work of the Board of Religious Studies.

A number of items relating to liturgy and sacramental practice were discussed, including reports from the national Liturgy Commission, developments in liturgical texts currently being prepared by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), and pastoral questions surrounding some specific rites.

The bishops also received reports and updates on prison chaplaincy, justice and peace work, ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue, Missio, and the Scottish Catholic Archives.

Safeguarding matters were discussed, alongside reports relating to ministry and formation, including the permanent diaconate and proposals concerning seminary formation and the preparation of candidates for priesthood.

The Church's developing communications and evangelisation strategy was also a focus, alongside preparations for future synodal initiatives within the Church.

During the meeting, the bishops also celebrated Mass together each day and prayed the Liturgy of the Hours at the Shrine.

Ensuring the Church is more Missionary, Christ-centered and Collaborative

Bishops' set to begin process reflecting on structures of the Church in Scotland

Following a request from the Holy See, the Bishops of Scotland have been invited to reflect on how the structures of the Church in our country can best serve her mission in the years ahead, specifically whether the present situation of eight dioceses is suitable.

We are all aware of the challenges before us — fewer clergy, changing patterns of practice, and increasing pressures on our diocesan resources, among other things. Yet our mission remains unchanged: to proclaim the Gospel and to lead our people to Christ.

Two possible pathways are being proposed for careful discernment: developing deeper cooperation and the sharing of resources across dioceses within our present structures, or the merging of some dioceses.

In order to best inform ourselves and the Holy See, each bishop will engage with his diocese over the coming months for the first part of this process. Everyone will be given the opportunity to pray, reflect, and contribute.

Following on from the presentation of a discussion paper, responses from each diocese will contribute to the initial findings which will be given to the Holy See in the autumn.

This is not simply an administrative exercise. It is a pastoral and missionary response to our changing landscape. This process will ensure our Church in Scotland will continue to grow ever more missionary, more Christ-centred, and more collaborative in the service of God's people.

Entrusting this work to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and to the intercession of Our Lady, we move forward together with confidence and renewed hope.





One year of Pope Leo XIV

When white smoke rose above the Sistine Chapel in May 2025, the Catholic Church entered a moment of history few had predicted. The cardinals had chosen an American—Pope Leo XIV—to lead the world’s 1.3 billion Catholics. Born Robert Francis Prevost in Chicago and shaped by decades of missionary work in Peru, the new Pope arrived in Rome carrying both the expectations of a global Church and the curiosity of a watching world.

The election followed the death of Pope Francis, whose reform-minded papacy had transformed the Church’s priorities toward social justice and outreach. As the cardinals gathered inside the Sistine Chapel, speculation swirled about who the next pope would be.

The answer came in the form of a quiet Augustinian missionary.

When Prevost stepped onto the balcony of St Peter’s Basilica as Pope Leo XIV, his first words set the tone: ‘Peace be with you.’

Throughout his first year as Pope, the Holy Father has continually called for peace in the world and an end to all war and conflict. In recent weeks, Pope Leo launched an appeal to those responsible for the ongoing conflict between the US and Israel and Iran: “In the name of the Christians of the Middle East and of all women and men of goodwill: Cease the fire! Let paths of dialogue be reopened!”

Violence can never lead to the justice, the stability and the peace that peoples are awaiting,” Pope Leo said, recalling that “the peoples of the Middle East have been suffering the atrocious violence of war” for weeks.

“Thousands of innocent people have been killed, and many others have been forced to abandon their homes. I renew my prayerful closeness to all those who have lost their loved ones in the attacks that have struck schools, hospitals, and residential areas,” he added.

Pope Leo has also expressed his great concern for the situation in Lebanon: “I hope for paths of dialogue that can support the country’s authorities in implementing lasting solutions to the serious crisis underway, for the common good of all the Lebanese people”.

Whilst some have remarked on continuity with Francis’ emphasis on synodality, mercy, and care for the marginalized, others have detected subtle shifts in tone and priorities.

In a return to the tradition of his predecessors, last month, Pope Leo officially moved into the traditional papal apartment in the Apostolic Palace.

The Vatican announced: “Pope Leo XIV will take possession of the apartment in the Apostolic Palace, moving, with his closest collaborators, into the spaces previously occupied by his predecessors.”

Images: © Mazur/cbcew.org.uk

Since his election, Pope Leo continued to live in the Palazzo del Sant'Uffizio, a residence inside Vatican City where he already lived while serving as Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops, to allow renovation work to be carried out in the Papal Apartment.

The Papal Apartments have lain empty since the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI in 2013, with Pope Francis choosing instead to live in the Vatican guesthouse, Casa Santa Marta.

Unlike the dramatic gestures that sometimes defined Francis's papacy, Leo's approach has been quieter. Those who know him say it reflects his years as a missionary in Latin America, where leadership often meant walking alongside communities rather than issuing instructions from above.

Though American by birth, Leo XIV's worldview is distinctly international. His years serving in Peru shaped his understanding of the Church as a truly global institution.

That is reflected in the Vatican's recent announcement that the Pope will travel to Algeria, Cameroon, Angola, and Equatorial Guinea from April 13 to 23, 2026, marking his third Apostolic Journey outside of Italy since the beginning of his pontificate. Pope Leo made his first Apostolic Journey in late 2025 to the Middle East, visiting Türkiye and Lebanon. On March 28 he made his next Journey to Monaco, and the Pope's third visit will bring him to four African countries.

As well as meeting the Presidents of the four countries and other political and civic representatives, the Holy Father will visit a number of hospitals, prisons, universities and parishes during his visits. Pope Leo is also scheduled to visit the Great Mosque of Algiers, one of the biggest in the world, and meet with members of the Augustinian Order, of which he is a member, and celebrate Mass in the Basilica of St Augustine.

One of the defining moments of his first year came with the release of his first apostolic exhortation, *Dilexi te* ("I have loved you"). In it, Leo called on Catholics to renew their commitment to the poor, migrants, and those on society's margins.

The message continued a central priority of the Francis era: that the credibility of the Church depends on its closeness to the vulnerable.

After twelve months, it is clear that Pope Leo XIV's papacy so far has been marked by a quiet determination to keep the Church focused on its spiritual mission: proclaiming hope, serving the poor, and promoting peace.



Pope Leo's Prayer Intentions

Every month, The Holy Father asks Catholics around the world to pray for a particular intention.

APRIL

FOR PRIESTS IN CRISIS

Let us pray for priests going through moments of crisis in their vocation, that they may find the accompaniment they need and that communities may support them with understanding and prayer.

MAY

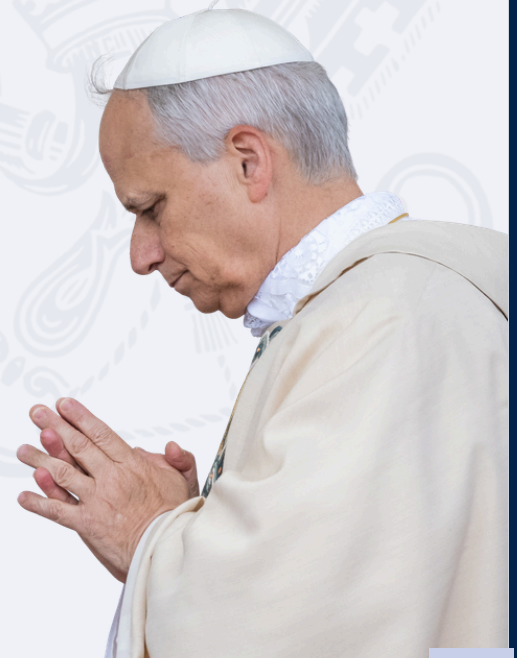
THAT EVERYONE MIGHT HAVE FOOD

Let us pray that everyone, from large producers to small consumers, be committed to avoid wasting food and to ensure that everyone has access to quality food.

JUNE

FOR THE VALUES OF SPORTS

Let us pray that sports be an instrument of peace, encounter, and dialogue among cultures and nations, and that they promote values such as respect, solidarity, and personal growth.



Youth group's fundraising for Medjugorje trip continues apace

BY ELISSA SOAVE

The third Sunday of Lent saw the youth group of St John the Baptist Uddingston out in force once more as they served up breakfast for the congregation after 10.00am Mass.

This was the latest in a series of events undertaken by the group, with the aim of funding their trip to Medjugorje this summer. Under the leadership of Raymond Kawase and Adrian McKenna, the young people have already run a successful coffee morning as well as helping the Parish Social Development Committee, which organised a hugely popular Q&A night with Celtic stars Stephen McManus and Anthony Ralston. The players gamely answered questions ranging from favourite coaches to best opponents they ever faced. The session was followed by an auction, with items such as hospitality tickets for the Walfrid Lounge at Celtic Park, a 4-ball at Gleneagles, and signed books by sports writer Tom Brogan all up for grabs.



With just over five months to go till their pilgrimage to Medjugorje, the hard work and enthusiasm of the group's members have ensured they are well on their way to funding the trip. They would like to thank everyone who has supported their efforts this year and look forward to reporting back from their travels.

St Andrew's take victory in Caritas Cup Netball Final



The Caritas Cup Netball Final for Motherwell Diocese took place at Ravenscraig Sports Centre in March with a Coatbridge Derby as St Andrew's High took on St Ambrose High.

Once again it was a fantastic match, with a great atmosphere created by students from both schools!

Funds were raised to support the work of SCIAF as the schools capped off a great tournament. Congratulations to St Andrew's, who won 32 – 26 to lift the Caritas Cup for the first time!



Joe's faith inspires next generation of pupils

As reported in the Lent edition of Fontes, the faith of Lanarkshire teen Joe Wilson, who died in 2011 continues to have a profound influence today and is inspiring countless people both locally and across the globe.

The story of Joe Wilson resonates in particular with young people, as Joe was only 17 when he unexpectedly died. Recently, two high schools within the Diocese held Devotional Evenings in honour of Joseph Wilson.

At Taylor High in New Stevenson, the school that Joe himself attended, students and staff gathered for a heartfelt devotional event in honour of their former pupil. This gathering featured reflections from pupils about Joe's inspiring example, along with insights shared by staff and Joe's former school chaplain, Fr. Kenny Campbell.

Meanwhile, members of the Cardinal Newman High community in Bellshill also united recently for an evening dedicated to prayer and reflection on Joe's impactful life, led by pupils and chaplain Fr. Stuart Parkes.

Photos by The Joe Wilson Association



Top left: Taylor HS pupil leads a reflection, Centre: Joe Wilson, Right: Fr Kenny Campbell. Above: Cardinal Newman Pupils with Joe's father, Alan.



St Teresa's Primary, Newarthill

St Edward's Primary, Airdrie



Schools join parish communities to celebrate St Patrick's Day

**CONTRIBUTIONS BY
DANIEL SMITH & LORRAINE MCDADE**

The Mini Vinnies from two primary schools have recently helped their school and parish communities celebrate St Patrick's Day in style.

The Mini Vinnies at St. Teresa's Primary School in Newarthill recently ran a very successful St. Patrick's Day tea to raise money for Lenten charities. Invitations were extended to the local parish and wider community, and over £177 was raised for the school's Lenten fundraising drive. Many thanks must go to all who supported this event, especially those parents and grandparents who provided home baking and raffle prizes.

Meanwhile the Mini Vinnies from St Edward's Primary School, Airdrie, hosted a joyful St Patrick's Day Coffee Morning at St Edward's Church, raising funds as part of their Lenten activities.

It was a wonderful example of a Catholic school community living out the spirit of Lent, encouraging young people to support others through acts of charity, service and generosity.

As part of their Lenten journey, pupils at St. Edward's in Airdrie have been finding meaningful ways to begin their day in prayer and service. Mrs Bollen has been leading the Rosary Club every Tuesday and Thursday, and it has been wonderful to see so many children attending, helping pupils prepare their hearts and minds for the day ahead.

The Mini Vinnies group also came together for a special prayer breakfast, where they shared time in prayer and discussion. During the meeting, the children planned ideas for Lenten charity fundraising to support the school's chosen charities, MISSIO Scotland and SCIAF. The group is excited to organise activities that will support these important causes and make a difference to those in need.

St Patrick's Primary celebrate Inspection success



St Patrick's Primary School, Coatbridge, have recently celebrated after receiving a very positive inspection report.

Inspectors highlighted the school's caring culture, the strong relationships between staff and pupils, and the high quality of learning across both the school and nursery.

The school received a "god" evaluation for learning, teaching and assessment and for raising attainment and achievement.

A wonderful achievement and a real testament to the dedication of staff, pupils and the wider school community. Well done to you all.

CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENTS



Confirmations – St Louise’s Primary, East Kilbride



Confirmations – St John’s, Blackwood & St Mary’s, Larkhall



Confirmations – St Ignatius’ Primary, Wishaw



Confirmations – St John Paul II Primary, Viewpark



Confirmations – All Saints Primary, Airdrie



First Reconciliation – Holy Family Primary, Mossend



First Reconciliation – St Louise’s Primary, East Kilbride



First Reconciliation – St Ignatius’ Primary, Wishaw

The Scriptures

by FATHER THOMAS MAGILL



Easter Sunday Year A **5th April 2026**

Acts of the Apostles 10.34a, 37-43; Psalm 118; Colossians 3.1-4; John 20.1-9

Peter confesses his belief in Christ. His words contain the kernel of the Christian proclamation (what is called the kerygma) – Jesus who suffered and died, is risen from the dead and brings forgiveness to whoever believes in him. (1st reading) In Christ we too die to this world and our lives are now hidden with him in God. (2nd reading) At the news from Mary of Magdalene about the empty tomb, Peter and the Beloved Disciple rush to the place. As he enters, the Beloved Disciple sees the linen cloths which had covered the dead Jesus and comes to belief. (Gospel) “He sees and believes” – we witness to our faith when others can see the crucified and risen Lord alive in our lives and in the life of the Church.

2nd Sunday of Easter Year A **(Divine Mercy) 12th April 2026**

Acts of the Apostles 2.42-47; Psalm 118; 1 Peter 1.3-9; John 20.19-31

The first followers of Jesus show how faith and daily living are deeply united -- when they meet for the “breaking of the bread” (Eucharist) in their homes, they share with each other from what they have. They experience a deep fellowship (1st reading) and are born again to a living hope through the Resurrection. (2nd reading) This is the hope kindled in the hearts of the Apostles when the Risen Christ appeared to them and gifted them with peace, forgiveness of sins, and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. (Gospel) Thomas comes to

belief as he contemplates the wounded body of the Lord and knows that God in Christ has entered deeply into a suffering and broken world. The Church continues to see him present in the wounds of all men and women and to proclaim the healing he brings.

3rd Sunday of Easter Year A **19th April 2026**

Acts of the Apostles 2.14, 22-23; Ps. 16; 1 Peter 1.17-21; Luke 24.13-35

Here, Peter develops the kernel of the first Christian proclamation. He references the Scriptures of the audience, the Old Testament, to show how the death and Resurrection of Jesus was already outlined there, especially in the words of King David. (1st reading) He respects the beliefs of those listening and then leads them to a deeper understanding. The 2nd reading does something similar. It doesn't rest its argument on Jewish Scriptures, but rather on the fact that Christ was foreknown since the foundation of the world, something that would have been more palatable to a Gentile audience. As we read between the lines, we see how the early Christians adapted and expanded the basic proclamation (the kerygma) according to the experience and understanding of those listening. We see the Lord do the same as he meets the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. In fact, they are running away from Jerusalem, escaping the pressures and challenges being experienced by those first followers of the Lord. Jesus walks with them and gently enables them to talk about themselves and how their hopes had seemingly been shattered.

(Gospel) Only then does he show how all the Scriptures pointed to him. The Church's proclamation of Christ will always illuminate and deepen our lived experience, no matter how negative it may seem, and allow us to recognise this Lord who walks with us under so many guises.

4th Sunday of Easter Year A **26th April 2026**

Acts of the Apostles 2.14a. 36-41; Ps. 23; 1 Peter 2.20b-25; John 10.1-10

The Acts of the Apostles describes how faith in Christ gradually spread from Jerusalem to Rome throughout the Mediterranean world. It shows how the Good News, witnessed to by those early Christians, was immensely attractive to so many with its proclamation of Christ and his gifts of forgiveness and the Holy Spirit. (1st reading) Christ bore our sins in his body on the cross, empowering us to die to sin and be opened up to God's righteousness. (2nd reading) He is the door who grants us access to God himself and gifts us with that abundance of life which is already a participation in the divine life. (Gospel) This is the message still entrusted to the Church to bring to the ends of the earth.

5th Sunday of Easter Year A **3rd May 2026**

Acts of the Apostles 6.1-7; Psalm 33; 1 Peter 2.4-9; John 14.1-12

With its increase in numbers, the early community of believers had to face a variety of issues and make some decisions. Here there is some tension between converts from Judea and those from the larger Greek world. (1st reading) Tensions

and new problems will always be present in the Church but can be tackled and overcome when we remember who we are in Christ, living stones building up a spiritual house, a royal priesthood and God's own possession. (2nd reading) The Lord reminds us that there are many rooms in his Father's house. He is a spacious and "roomy" God with enough space for all of us in our diversity, variety, and differences. Like Philip, we can so easily become tetchy and dissatisfied when our way of looking at things is challenged and shown to be partial and limited. In a Church at ease with this Lord, men and women with all their rich diversity can find a deep communion with each other.

6th Sunday of Easter Year A 10th May 2026

Acts of the Apostles 8.5-8, 14-17; Ps. 66; I Peter 3.15-18; John 14.15-21
Philip is greeted warmly by the Samaritans who welcomed the word of God. Peter and John follow up this visit to confer on them the Holy Spirit after their baptism. (1st reading) Like Philip, all Christians should be ready to explain their faith and give reason for their hope to others but always with gentleness and respect. Christ suffered for all, both righteous and unrighteous. (2nd reading) As he prepares to say farewell to the disciples, he assures them of his gift of the Holy Spirit through whom the Father dwells in them and they in the Father. (Gospel) In our baptism, we were taken up into the life of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit so that already here on earth we live our lives in God and he in us. This is the faith and hope the Church brings to the world.

The Ascension of the Lord Year A 14th May 2026

Acts of the Apostles 1.1-11; Psalm 47; Ephesians 1.16-23; Matthew 28.16-20
As Matthew concludes his gospel, he describes how the disciples return to Galilee, where it had all started, to encounter the risen Lord. As then, so now the Church is sent out by Christ to the whole world to make disciples, to baptise, and to teach. This is the moment in

Matthew, when the Church begins its worldwide mission and is assured by the Lord of his abiding presence. (Gospel) Luke has a similar message in the 1st reading from Acts. It is the Holy Spirit who is this abiding presence of God and who strengthens the Church to go to "the end of the earth". At the heart of the Church is the beating heart of God – Christ is the head of the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. (2nd reading)

7th Sunday of Easter Year A 17th May 2026

Acts of the Apostles 1.12-14; Psalm 27; I Peter 4.13-16; John 17.1-11a
The glory of Christ is a central theme of John's Gospel and it is with this image we end the Easter season. Christ's glory is his communion of love with the Father, which he shares with his disciples. This glory is most fully revealed by Christ when his "hour" comes, that is, his crucifixion. (Gospel) It is as he hangs on the cross and enters deeply into human suffering and the brokenness of the world that he most fully discloses the beauty and majesty and splendour of God. Here is the heart of the Church's proclamation. It is in failure and abandonment, in suffering and heartbreak, in incomprehension and unknowing, that God in Christ shares his glory with humanity. (2nd reading) Like the disciples in that upper room, sometimes we must wait with patience to encounter Christ rising out of suffering. (1st reading) When that happens, we are truly glorified in him and already participate in the eternal life of God himself.

Pentecost Sunday Year A 24th May 2026

Acts of the Apostles 2.1-11; Ps. 104; I Corinth. 12.3b-7, 12-13; John 20.19-23
There's quite a contrast between Luke's account of the gift of the Spirit (1st reading) and John's (Gospel). For Luke it's about the rushing of a mighty wind, the licking of tongues of fire, and the proclamation of God's mighty works made comprehensible in the various languages of those listening. It's a powerful

presentation of this mighty Spirit transforming the apostles. John has the risen Lord break through the barred doors and shuttered windows of the room in which the frightened disciples have barricaded themselves. The Holy Spirit is gifted through the gentle breath of the Lord on the faces of the disciples. He displays his still fiery wounds between his twofold greeting of peace. As they are filled with the Spirit they are charged with bringing God's forgiveness to the world. The wounds of Christ are the opening onto the wounds of a world deprived of peace and forgiveness. It is through the wounds of Christ that the divine breath reaches a broken and afflicted world. It is only in standing with and in the midst of the pain of the world that the disciples and the Church can bring the peace and forgiveness of Christ. When we experience this peace and forgiveness and bring it to others, it is then that we "drink of the one Spirit". (2nd reading)

Trinity Sunday Year A 31st May 2026

Exodus 34.4b-6, 8-9; Daniel 3; II Corinthians 13.11-14; John 3.16-18
The Paschal Mystery of the Lord (his life, death, and Resurrection) reveals that God is a communion of love given and received, a deep mutual self-giving, and a fullness and surfeit of life which overflows itself into creation and redemption. We live in God himself through the grace of Christ, from the love of the Father, and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. (2nd reading) This divine love tells us that we are created for eternal life with God. (Gospel) Through Christ and in the Spirit, God lives in us and we in God, and already we experience eternal life and the very fullness of God. His love and presence permeate and hold together the entire cosmos. And it is a gracious and loving presence, steadfast and faithful. (1st reading) This is the Good News with which the Church and each one of us is entrusted to bring to our struggling world.

DIOCESE OF MOTHERWELL



MASS FOR LIFE

LAST THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH

CARFIN LOURDES GROTTTO

Rosary, Confessions and Adoration 7pm
Holy Mass 7:30pm

Diocese of Motherwell

Diocesan Music Group



The Diocesan Music Group is made up of musicians and singers from parishes across the Diocese. You do not need to be a trained singer or musician! We are always looking for new members to come and be part of our group and you can be assured of a warm welcome!

What we do:

- Fortnightly rehearsals in Sacred Heart Church, Bellshill
- Provide music for various Diocesan Events and Liturgies
- Support parishes with music for special occasions



Contact Kris: 07747867003



DIVINE RENOVATION

WHAT DOES PARISH RENEWAL LOOK LIKE FOR US?

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Saturday, 25th April 2026 9:30 AM - 5 PM

Register today at

divinerenovation.org/events



Keynote Speaker

Fr. James Mallon

Founder: Divine Renovation Ministry

CONAGHAN



Please pray for Kathleen Conaghan, a much loved Wife of Gerard, Mum, Gran and Sister, who sadly passed away on the 14th of May 2025.

Prayers from the family who loved you.

Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Therese pray for her.

Inserted by her loving family.



INTIMATIONS

If you would like to remember your loved ones anniversary in Fontes, email media@rcdom.org.uk for more info.



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From Captivity to Calling

Father John Tata appointed Auxiliary Bishop in Cameroon by Pope Leo

The Vatican recently announced that the Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, has appointed the Reverend John Berinyuy Tata, until now rector of the Catholic University of Cameroon in Bamenda, as Auxiliary Bishop of the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Bamenda, Cameroon, assigning him the titular see of Casae Nigrae.

Msgr. John Berinyuy Tata was born on 18 December 1975 in Mbuluf-Shisong, in the Diocese of Kumbo and studied philosophy and theology at Saint Thomas Aquinas Interdiocesan Major Seminary in Bambui, Bamenda. He was ordained a priest on 30 March 2005.

For many years, Father Tata spent his summer months serving in Motherwell Diocese, providing supply for priests in various parishes across the Diocese. He is still held with great love and affection by many priests and people across the Diocese today.

In late 2025 (as previously reported in Fontes), Fr Tata was kidnapped in Cameroon whilst returning home from the local university and held in captivity for two weeks until his safe release.

In his homily during the Ordination Mass, Archbishop Andrew Nkea said, "You have been appointed Bishop after your encounter with kidnappers who did not arrest you but to whom you surrendered your life for the sake of your brother priest.

By that sacrifice, you have moved from being a prisoner to a Bishop in Bamenda. The work of a Bishop is that of a pastor willing to give his life for his sheep. Do not be distracted by earthly thoughts, because the office to which God has called you is one of service."

Following news of his appointment, Bishop Toal wrote to the now Bishop John Tata to express the congratulations and prayers of the people of the Diocese of Motherwell.

In response, Bishop Tata wrote to Bishop Toal saying: "It was a great joy to receive your kind message of congratulations and your assurance of prayers from the Diocese of Motherwell. I am deeply touched by your thoughtfulness as I prepare for my Episcopal Ordination on this upcoming Solemnity of St. Joseph."

He continued: "My time spent in Scotland remains very close to my heart. Knowing that you, the clergy, and the lay faithful of Motherwell will be united with



me in prayer gives me great spiritual strength. As you rightly noted, the ministry of a Bishop is a daunting challenge, but I trust entirely in the Lord's promise that His grace is sufficient for what He requires of us."

Bishop Tata also expressed his hope to be able to visit the Diocese again one day, saying, "I am especially moved by your kind invitation to return to Motherwell. The affection I hold for the people there is mutual, and the hospitality I received in the past was a true blessing. While travel is indeed more complex these days, I certainly hope that, in God's time, I will be able to visit you all again—this time to express my gratitude in person as a brother in the Episcopate."

The newly ordained Bishop concluded his letter by conveying his "warmest greetings and my blessing to the priests, religious, and faithful of your Diocese. I ask that you continue to keep me in your prayers as I begin this new chapter of service in the Archdiocese of Bamenda.

Bishop Tata's Episcopal Ordination took place on Thursday 19th March 2026, the Solemnity of St Joseph.

Pope Leo is due to visit Cameroon from 15th to 18th April as part of his Apostolic Journey to four African countries, during which time he will celebrate Mass in Bamenda.

Pilgrimages in 2026

Jim McKelvie shares some of the pilgrimages planned from Motherwell Diocese this year

At the conclusion of the Holy Year of 2025, Pope Leo asked us to continue beyond the Jubilee as pilgrims of hope in the world. "A pilgrimage has a vital part to play in our life of faith, for it removes us from our homes and our daily routines and gives us time and space to encounter God more deeply. Such moments always help us to grow, for through them the Holy Spirit gently fashions us to be ever more closely conformed to the mind and the heart of Jesus Christ."

There are a number of local pilgrimages planned for the diocese throughout 2026.

Please keep an eye on the Diocesan Facebook page for more details of the pilgrimages as they emerge. Alternatively, contact **Jim McKelvie** on pilgrimage@rcdom.org.uk or by phone on **07957 847290** to register your interest and to be kept up to date.



ST ANDREWS

On Easter Tuesday, we start our annual walking pilgrimage from Motherwell Cathedral to St Andrews. We will be walking every Tuesday, and covering around 11 miles each day, and we hope to arrive at our destination on 9th June. Our journey takes us through Linlithgow, over the Forth Road Bridge, where we join the Fife Pilgrim Way into Dunfermline and through many small Fife villages to St Andrews.

LINDISFARNE

In May we will be undertaking a pilgrimage by coach to the Holy Island of Lindisfarne in Northumbria, where St Aidan founded his monastery in 634. Aidan had been sent from Iona to Lindisfarne, and the island became the centre for the evangelisation of the north-east of England. Lindisfarne is a tidal island and is accessible only at low tide. Pilgrims can choose to leave the coach and walk the last 3 or 4 miles to the island.

WHITHORN

The annual pilgrimage to Whithorn takes place on the last Sunday in August each year. Whithorn lies in the south-west of Scotland in the Diocese of Galloway and was where St Ninian, Scotland's first saint, founded his church in 397. Whithorn was an important pilgrim destination in Scotland before the practice was banned by the Reformation in the 16th century. We hope to organise a 2-day event to Whithorn on 29th and 30th August, staying overnight in Dumfries and travelling to Whithorn on the Sunday for the pilgrim Mass. Mass is celebrated, weather permitting, on the shore at Port Castle Bay near the cave where Saint Ninian is said to have retreated for prayer.

FIFE

The Kingdom of Fife is rich in church history, from the once-powerful ecclesiastical centre of St Andrews to Dunfermline, the home of St Margaret of Scotland. In September, we will be making a pilgrimage to Fife to visit some of these sites and discover the rich Christian heritage that this beautiful part of the country has to offer.

New Icon honours Catholic Heritage of Coatbridge



The new icon which hangs in St Mary's Church in Whifflet

A new icon was recently commissioned by parish priest Fr James Travers to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the foundation of Saint Mary's Mission at Whifflet in 1874 and the 50th anniversary of the opening of Saint Bernard's Church in Shawhead in 1974.

An icon is a sacred image of a holy figure or event that serves as an aid to worship, prayer, meditation and devotion. Icons are not merely decorative; they are considered a connection to the divine, usually depicting figures like Our Lord, Our Blessed Lady, the angels and saints. Once blessed, they are sacramentals.

An icon is a tool for transmitting the truths of the Christian faith. The images complement the written word of Scripture, and the Holy Spirit can speak to us through them.

The artistic style of icons is not meant to be realistic, as they are symbolic and spiritual tools, not meant to be literal portraits. The non-realistic style emphasises the spiritual nature of the figures over the earthly one.

Icons use a visual language of symbols, including specific colours, gestures and objects, to communicate spiritual concepts and the role of saints.

The style aims to depict the heavenly order rather than the earthly one. The figure in the icon is meant to convey that they are looking out at us from heaven, and their expression can convey their connection to us through a phrase such as 'bright sadness' or 'joyful sorrow'. This expression is not an ordinary human emotion but a spiritual state that reflects the compassion felt by the figure in the icon for those still on earth experiencing suffering due to the separation from God that sin causes.

The icon is not meant to be a sentimental piece. Traditionally the faces do not depict strong feelings, only the virtuous ones such as : purity, patience, forgiveness, compassion, serenity and love.

Icons are silent. The purity of expression creates a stillness and silence which creates an atmosphere of prayer and contemplation. The iconographer uses prototypes, but the iconographer's individual spirituality is present in each icon.

The Cistercian monk, Thomas Merton (1915-68) explains, "The icon is an act of witness – what we see in prayer before an icon is not an external representation of an historical person, but an interior presence in light which is the glory of the Transfigured Christ "

An icon is most commonly painted on wood panels which have been prepared using linen and gesso. The paint is powdered pigments, and the traditional method uses a mixture of egg yolk and vinegar or wine as the medium. Made in the traditional way, icons last for generations, and some of the earliest ones date back to at least the third century, with many still existing in the Catacombs of Rome.

Gold plays a significant role in an icon. Its use, usually genuine gold leaf as in this icon, symbolises divinity, purity, eternity, the divine light of God, the heavenly realm and transcendence.

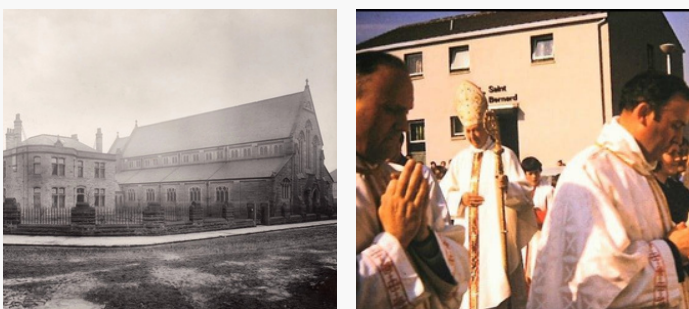
There are various styles of icons, for example, Byzantine, Russian, Greek and Coptic. The main figure of Our Lady

This icon is painted basically in the Neo-Coptic style, which originated in Egypt and it is the style I most commonly use. The other figures of Saint Bernard and the Cistercian monks are rendered in a slightly more traditional style.

The new icon, written by local Icon Artist, Bernadette Reilly, shows Our Lady (Saint Mary) with the Christ child as the central dominant figures. Colours play an important role in icons, and Our Lady wears a red robe covered in a blue mantle. Traditionally in Western art, the red symbolises humanity and maternal love, while the blue symbolises purity, virginity, holiness and the divine grace with which she was filled. Another important symbol on the image of Our Lady is the three stars, one on her headdress and one on each shoulder. These symbolise her virginity before, during and after the birth of Christ. One is covered in this icon by the figure of the Child Jesus.

Saint Bernard and the monks are depicted on the left side wearing the cowl which they wore in church, covering their working habit seen on the right as they work in the fields of wheat with a ploughed field in the distance to portray their involvement in agriculture. Saint Mary's Church is seen at the end of a field of wheat, referring to the "The Wheat Flats" of the district from where the name Whifflet originated. On the left, the monks are processing towards Our Lady, led by Saint Bernard with Saint Bernard's Church in the background. Among the saints, Saint Bernard is noted for his immense love and devotion to Our Lady and is shown displaying the opening lines of the prayer 'The Memorare', which is attributed to him. Beneath Our Lady are the final words of the 'Hail, Holy Queen' in Latin.

An icon is not complete until the halos have been given their inscriptions. The inscription found within Christ's cruciform (cross-containing) halo features the abbreviation IC XC on either side of Christ's head which stands for "Jesus Christ" in Greek. On Our Lady's halo are found the letters MP OY which is a contraction of the Greek words "Meter Theou" which literally means "Mother of God" or "God-Bearer" (Theotokos).



Left: St Mary's Church in Whifflet.

Right: Bishop Francis Thomson processes into St Bernard's Church for the opening Mass with first parish priest, Fr Patrick Brosnan (left) and his brother Fr Timothy Brosnan.

Saint Mary's Mission, Whifflet, was opened on Sunday 11th October 1874 by Bishop Eyre, Vicar Apostolic of the Western District of Scotland. It was 1878 before Scotland was divided again into dioceses, and it was 1905 before mission stations and missionary rectors became known as parishes and parish priests.

The first missionary rector was Fr Van Den Noort, who had lived for about two years in Saint Patrick's Chapel-House in Ellis Street, with special responsibility for the Whifflet area. He was one of several priests who came at that time from Northern Europe to serve in Scotland. The present-day church was opened in 1893. Saint Mary's and Saint Bernard's Parishes were linked in 2016 and united in 2019 with the new name of "St Mary with St Bernard."

Saint Bernard's Parish was founded in 1973 by Bishop Thomson, and Fr Patrick Brosnan was appointed Parish Priest. The church was completed the next year, and the Solemn Opening took place on Easter Sunday, 14th April.

The parish was named after Saint Bernard (1090-1153) because of the local connections to the Cistercian Order. He had rescued the order from a shaky start, and in his lifetime, 430 Cistercian monasteries were established across Europe, one of which was at Melrose in the Borders. In time, ten other such communities came into being across Scotland. One of these was at Newbattle (sometimes Newbottle), in the Lothians. It was the practice of Cistercian monasteries to have outlying 'granges', which could be some distance from the monastery, often gifted to them by the king or local lords and nobles, often land that others found too difficult to use.

The Newbattle community was given lands at Drumpeledor (Drumpellier today) by Malcolm IV, King of Scots, in 1162. The monks worked hard to improve the land and provide work and food for local people.

The icon has three Latin words on the bottom right: "ora et labora" – a Cistercian motto, a command, meaning "Pray and work". Cistercian monks went to their chapel several times a day, but their rule of life included many hours given over each day to manual labour. The old Coatbridge Burgh coat of arms included the Latin words "laborare est orare", another Cistercian saying similar to the above. It meant "to work is to pray". Apart from agriculture, it was in this area that they are remembered for being the first in Scotland to become involved in open-cast coal mining. It is because of the Cistercians' connection with this area that it became known as the Monklands. For all these reasons it was fitting that a parish in Coatbridge should be named after Saint Bernard and also fitting that it should be associated with Saint Mary's since St Bernard had a particularly strong devotion to her.

Contributions by Bernadette Reilly (artist), Fr Michael Briody (Diocesan Heritage Commission) and Deacon Bill McMillan (Parish Deacon).



CALLED & GIFTED



Fr Martin Delaney, lead for the Wellspring Adult Formation Mission, gives an insight into a new charism discernment programme

At Ephesus, in Chapter 19 of the Acts of the Apostles, Paul encounters some people who had received John's baptism. He asks them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?" To which they reply, "We had never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

Perhaps many baptised people today, while knowing that there is a Holy Spirit, would express a similar level of confusion about how He is at work in their lives.

Called & Gifted is a 'charism discernment programme' which seeks to help the baptised to understand more fully their calling, as well as the specific charisms (spiritual gifts) which they have received. In turn, this can help them to take full responsibility for "the renewing and building up of the Church" (Lumen Gentium, 12).

Called & Gifted was devised by Sherry Weddell of the Catherine of Siena Institute (USA) back in the 1990s. It is a three-step process, which begins simply with learning about baptism, the Holy Spirit and charisms. This takes place over three days of workshops. During the first step, participants are invited to take a 'Gifts Inventory', where they answer questions which point to six charisms which might be present in their lives. Examples of charisms might be 'Evangelism' – having a special gift for talking to others about Jesus,

or 'Administration' – having a special gift for organisation and delegation in a Gospel-inspired project.

The second stage is a one-on-one interview with a trained interviewer (of whom there are eight in the Diocese of Motherwell). This lasts about an hour during which the interviewer guides the conversation to allow the interviewee to find evidence of particular charisms in their lives.

At the end of the interview, one specific charism is chosen for stage three – 'Discernment in Depth'. This is a six-to-eight-week process where the charism is tested for two hours a week in a designed experiment (or activity). Small group meetings take place during this time to aid the process.

Who is Called & Gifted for? Put simply, it is for anyone who feels called to take their baptismal vocation seriously and who would like to explore and understand exactly how God is calling them to serve Him in the Church and the world of today. It is principally for lay Catholics who are already practising and growing in their faith.

The Adult Formation Mission is running the Called & Gifted Programme this spring. If you think it is for you, then please speak to your Parish Priest as soon as possible.

NEW MUSIC FOR YOUR PARISH

Carlo Acutis Mass

Song of Farewell

