

# Bridie's Blethers



April 2024

## Congratulations To Our New Bishop



We wish our new Bishop of the Diocese of Galloway Francis Dougan every best wish and congratulations. He is in our thoughts and prayers as he begins his new ministry.

Bishop Francis celebrated Mass of Reception at St. Margaret's Cathedral in Ayr on the 10th March. He was ordained as the ninth Bishop of Galloway at St Peters-in-Chains on the 9<sup>th</sup> March.

Fr Duncan, Claire McIlhatton and Phyllis Howie from St. Bride's were privileged to be at Ayr and met him at the reception after the Mass. They got the opportunity to talk to him and have their photo taken with him. He came across as a very nice, humble and down to earth man. Bishop Francis was invited to visit St Bride's and he said he definitely would.

Bishop Francis has taken the motto of "Quench not the wavering flame".

"He does not cry out or shout aloud,  
Or make his voice heard in the streets.  
He does not break the crushed reed,  
Nor quench the wavering flame" (Isaiah, 42:3-4)

Responding to his appointment, Bishop Francis said:

"I am humbled and more than a little bit nervous that Pope Francis has asked me to take on this office. I feel confident however that I will not be alone in spreading the joy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I will be joining with every single person in Galloway Diocese all of whom have a role to play, my role being just one of them."

"With God's grace and the deep faith of the Church in Galloway we can continue to build on the solid foundations left by those who have come before us, stretching back to St. Ninian who first planted the seeds of the Christian faith in Scotland here in Galloway".



## To Reform Catholic Church, Honour Christ's Authority



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/paullew/50042>

The strict hierarchical governance structure of the Catholic Church has the dubious advantage of simplicity and clarity along with increasing implausibility. Divine authority is claimed as its foundation stone with a hermeneutic of uninterrupted direct line of command from Christ himself to the pope and bishops who comprise the magisterium.

We lay members of the Catholic Church, who constitute about one-sixth of the world's population, find ourselves locked in by baptism to an authority structure of enforced obedience to the magisterium's command and control system. It is a system that claims the right to not only to make decisions which have significant and often intrusive impacts on our lives but to limit our God given human rights, especially our intellectual freedoms. At the same time, we are locked out of all decision-making and unable to hold the decision-makers to account.

Reports submitted to the Synod of Bishops 2023 from synodal discussions on five continents reveal discontent with the traditional presumption of a passive people of God who "pray, pay and obey" the magisterium.

Christ wants grace-filled, not fear-filled, faithful.

An educated laity is now generations on from the collapse of many once powerful empires and autocracies, generations into the growth of liberal democracies and, crucially, 75 years on from the leavening influence of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). The U.N. document proclaims, among other rights, the inalienable natural (that is, God-given) rights of all human beings to freedom of conscience, opinion, belief and religion, including the right to change religion.

The Catholic Church's Code of Canon Law purports to give the magisterium authority to ignore and override all those inalienable human rights which international human rights law says belong to every individual church member. Not once since the promulgation of the UDHR has the magisterium confronted this fundamental disconnect between man-made canon law and the inalienable human rights which are an embedded function of the natural law, or what believers would call God-ordained individual human dignity. But the people of God have confronted the disconnect in increasing numbers, and confidence is waning in an arcane autocratic government populated exclusively by ordained men who are compulsorily celibate.

A man reacts while leaving a Mass at Santiago Cathedral in Bilbao, Spain, March 24, that was celebrated to recognize and apologize to victims of sexual abuse within the Catholic Church. (OSV News/Reuters/Vincent West)

Complaints about (among other things) the silencing of dissent, the exclusion of women from ordination and therefore all decision-making, the imposition of teachings which outlaw contraception or promote sexism and homophobia, the failure to fully include the laity in every aspect of church life whether governmental, sacramental, liturgical or catechetical, are often met with a dismissive magisterial resistance which is inclined to see such complaints as a feature of increasing secularism and an attempt to democratise the church.

Challenges to the magisterium's authority and arguments in favour of reform are often met with the blanket defence that "the church is not a democracy!" That is undoubtedly true, but it is an irrelevant argument. The church is a Christocracy, and the real question is not whether the authority structure in the church measures up to secular democracies but whether it measures up to Christ. That is the appropriate point of comparison and it is rare to find any credible detailed analysis which probes the Christ-centred authenticity of the church's authority structure.

John Wijngaards, a former priest of the Mill Hill Missionaries, authored "Christ's Idea of Authority in the Church."

An exception can be found in the work of theologian John Wijngaards, former priest and vicar general of the Mill Hill Missionaries, an experienced missionary and teacher whose persuasive book *Christ's Idea of Authority in the Church* (Wipf and Stock, 2023) asks some disarmingly straightforward questions, such as: Are we sufficiently aware of the fact that church authority is spiritual authority? Do we mistakenly believe that being faithful to sacred tradition means holding on to the way things were in the past? Do we not realise that, on the contrary, sacred tradition — which goes back to Jesus himself — implies the authority of church leaders to deal with new challenges and walk new paths? Do we have the courage to listen to the Spirit and pursue responsible reforms?

Wijngaards, like many in the church today, is "dismayed by the ugly accretions that attached themselves to it in the course of the centuries. Like weeds, scallops and rubbish clinging to the bottom of a ship ... These cancerous growths were even enshrined in church laws."

Systematically, and with a great love for Christ and the church, Wijngaards takes the reader through a series of accessible meditations on Christ's words and deeds as they should apply to contemporary situations where skewed notions of church authority have created barriers to Christ's love.

His unpretentious belief in the possibility of and the need for a "different sort of authority" chimes exactly with the spiritual zeitgeist of the people of God in these synodal times. In fact, the insights and suggestions he offers would not look out of place as the basis for a truly dynamic agenda for the Synod of Bishops to be held in Rome in October 2024. There is no better vademecum, no better road map to a holier Christ-centred church for those of us journeying, listening and discerning our way through Pope Francis' Synod on Synodality.

With modesty, pragmatism, realism and, above, all hope in the church, Wijngaards insists we must prepare for a paradigm shift from a harsh ecclesial culture of rules and regulations, of fear and enforced obedience, to a loving culture of open invitation and accompaniment that lets grace flow and that floods the hearts of the faithful. Christ wants grace-filled, not fear-filled, faithful.

If the Synod on Synodality can help the church become a believable Christocracy, maybe, just maybe, there is still a chance for this world to finally understand why God interrupted baleful, miserable human history and sent his son to help us radically re-orient our lives toward the powerful light of love.

.....Mary McAleese is a Canon lawyer and former President of Ireland.

## My Faith Journey

By Liz Moran



My faith journey has been so long. I don't know why it has taken this length of time, I've always believed in God. I never joined the Protestant church. If anything was important in my life I always went to the Catholic church to pray and I always found peace and answers to my prayers there.

However, I do know why I'm becoming Catholic on Easter Sunday. I haven't had an overwhelming moment but gentle whispers and lots of them, guiding me, pushing me. This time last year, I was walking the dogs down Corsehill. There was one of these spectacularly beautiful sunsets over Arran. A woman crossed over, I thought to speak to the dogs as they are super cute, but no she wanted to speak to me. She asked me if I believed in Christ. Yes, I did and that I had been praying to find a good church. She invited me to WKPC and I started going last Easter. There I met many good people whose faith was strong but I was still looking. I felt pretty desperate.

An Alpha course was starting and I went along. Alpha courses involve watching a video on aspects of faith then discussing it in groups. One video was about salvation. The discussion after that video was my turning point. I discovered the belief in 'saved by faith alone' and 'once saved always saved'. I seriously, in all these years, never knew this is a core message of the catholic belief. 'What. What about what these saved people do?' I was told that is what Catholics believe and that I should read the Bible.

That might sound a bit harsh but it was the best advice I could have been given. If that's what Catholics believed I wanted to find out more. I had been following the Bible in a Year in the Hollow app. understanding the Bible for the first time. I started reading and watching YouTube videos about the Catholic faith. Everything made sense. Every belief, I knew was Truth and everything slotted into place. As I started to learn about the Catholic faith and reading the Bible I found myself continually saying 'Wow, yes that's right'

RCIA was the next step and I started to go to Mass. I knew Christ was present at Mass. It wasn't like a service it was worship. Faith and Love are beautiful and I've found that beauty in the Catholic Church.

By Grace I have certainty and peace. No matter what comes against me and believe me in the past year it has, I know my faith, my trust in Jesus will never waiver. I know it is a bit of a cliché but there is no better way to describe it as 'Coming Home' - letting out a sigh and knowing you are where you should be.

- Saved by Grace
- Through Faith
- Working itself out in Love

Thank you to Canon Poland, Tam, Bernadette and Josie for guiding me through RCIA and answering my questions even when I became, to quote Tam, 'too philosophical.'

Thank you all at St Brides you have been so welcoming and supportive. I feel I've known you forever. I am blessed to live in this parish.

Thank you to Father Duncan for arranging RCIA, and telling me (when I went to see him at first) to focus on God is a God of love and for his homilies that have made my faith grow. Thank you to Father Gerry for being so easy to talk to and making me feel at home in the Church, so important when you first arrive.

Thank you to Janette my sponsor. I sat beside you, the first time I went to St Brides, for a reason.





1.

## Jesus Washes Our Feet This Easter

By Fr. Duncan



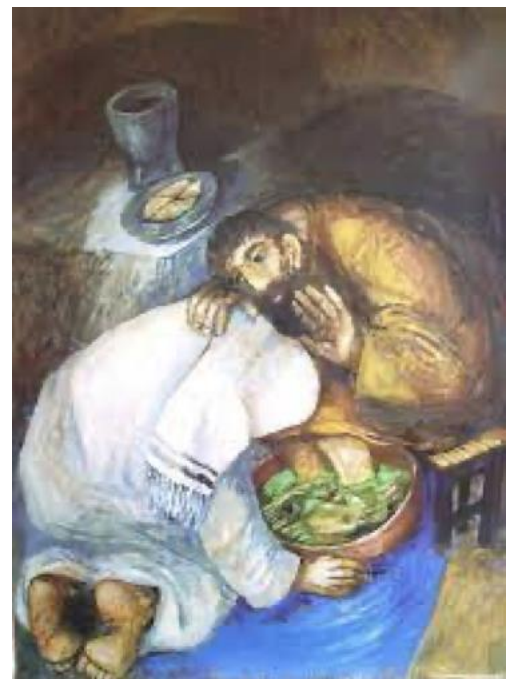
The beautiful story of the Washing of Feet is only found in the Gospel of John. John was known as the “disciple that Jesus loved”. It is quite amazing that he showed us one of the most powerful witnesses of love - when he washed the feet of his disciples. The painting of the “Washing of Feet” by Father Sieger Koeder is the artist’s image of a special and unique moment during the Last Supper. Jesus places a bowl full of water at the feet of Peter. This was usual for special meals among the Jews. He begins to wash his feet, although normally this would have been the task of servants. Jesus takes on this service himself. And then we come to the moment that is so beautifully described. Simon Peter cannot allow Jesus to wash his feet. His right hand is on the shoulder of Jesus, accepting and trying to understand. It is a sign of a deep bond, the bond of love. His other hand which is almost

in the middle of the picture is in a gesture of rejection, surprise, “no, this cannot be”. “Lord, you cannot bow before me, you are not the servant here. You are the Master.” Jesus teaches Peter: “If I do not wash you then you have no union with me...” Jesus shows something about his mission, about what his ministry is all about. The disciples were to carry on this ministry after him - because this was their last supper together. Jesus bows before others, he makes himself the servant of all, he kneels in service and in humility. This sign that he gives is the beginning of a new order - a civilisation of love.

The feet of Jesus too are dirty. He has been walking in the streets of Jerusalem. He was been on his way all day to the people in need. The people who search for the Lord. He practically couldn’t bow down any deeper than he is doing before Simon Peter. His face is reflected in the dirty water in the bowl. Where there is sin and sorrow, where there is pain and disappointment, where there is doubt and broken hearts - Jesus is there. His face is reflected exactly on the feet of Peter. “When you, Peter, carry on my mission, then follow in my footsteps. May the path of your footsteps be guided by my image, the image of humility and love. Bring the Gospel of life and love to others through your service.” I wonder if Peter, who was the first Bishop of Rome, the first Pope, understood this moment in all his meanings. The sadness in the face of Jesus perhaps gives us a glimpse that learning to really love will be a constant challenge to all of us as a Church.

The background to this scene remains dark and full of shadows. It shows that it is not always easy to bring love everywhere - especially where it is needed. However, the light that falls on the bread and the wine, the broken bread of love, the grape that is crushed to make the wine remind us of the words of Jesus: “This is my Body broken for you, this is my Blood shed for you.” The Eucharist is our source of strength and hope. It is the celebration of the power of love. Whenever we eat this bread and drink from this chalice, then we commit ourselves to learn to love again.

Every human being has two needs that are deeper than any other. We need to be loved, and we need to love. This is because we are created in God’s image, and God is love. The Holy Trinity is divine love, fully alive, each Person, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, loving the others and being loved by them. God is an eternal exchange of love and we are invited into this exchange. We are created in that image; we are made to follow that example. We can have all the money in the world, all the popularity, power, and success you can imagine, but if we aren’t loved, through and through, just because of who we are, with no strings



attached, and if we don't love someone else enough to sacrifice ourselves for them, we will be miserable. Jesus knew that we needed these two things. Through his suffering and death, his Passion, he gave them to us. St John tells us: "He loved his own who were in the world, and he loved them to the end." This means that Jesus gave us the uttermost proof of his love, his Passion, incontrovertible evidence that there is no limit to his love for each one of us. On Holy Thursday, he gave us three great gifts that would extend his Passion, the proof of his love, throughout all of history. He gave us the Eucharist - his real presence nourishing us in every Tabernacle and every Holy Communion.

He gave us the priesthood - a sacramental multiplication through all time and space of his own merciful, wise, and healing love. And he gave us the commandment of true love, so we would know how to love truly: by serving others, not indulging ourselves, just as he washed his disciples' feet. Through these tremendous, eternal gifts, God redeems us, meeting the two deepest needs of every human heart. May I wish all the parishioners and friends of St Bride's a very blessed and happy Easter!

## 50 Days of Easter

How many people celebrate the end of Lent and Easter as one day – Easter Sunday.

The season of Easter lasts for 50 days and is celebrated as **one single joyful event** called the "great Lord's Day".

The Easter season is also known as the "Eastertide" or "Easter Time," as well as "Paschaltide," "Paschal Season," or "Paschal Time". It is a seven-week season from April 1<sup>st</sup> to May 20<sup>th</sup> to rejoice in Christ's victory over sin and death.

So apart from chocolate and Easter eggs, let us remember to continue the celebrations during the 50 days of Easter up to the feast of the Pentecost.

Anglican theologian, NT Wright wrote the following about Eastertide:

*"We are Easter people! We stand on resurrection ground. Easter is not only our greatest party (much greater by the way than Christmas, whatever you do on Christmas you ought to do ten times as much at Easter); Easter is the only reason we are here at all!"*

*We should meet regularly for Easter parties. We should drink champagne at breakfast. We should renew baptismal vows with splashing water all over the place. And we should sing and dance and blow trumpets and put out banners in the streets. And we should invite the homeless people to parties and we should go around town doing random acts of generosity and celebration. We should be doing things which would make our sober and serious neighbours say, 'What is the meaning of this outrageous party?'"*



**"Do not abandon yourselves to despair.  
We are the Easter people and Alleluia is  
our song."**

**Pope John Paul II**



## The Future Of The Church ?

## By Our Largs Correspondent



A friend of mine with experience in the world of finance and business often tells me that if the Church were a business he would not invest a penny in it. Wherever he goes there are signs of decline everywhere: falling numbers, an almost total lack of young people, declining income, ageing clergy, too many buildings and an ever-widening gap between the Church and modern society. And it's hard to disagree with him.

If we continue on the path we are currently on, he argues, within less than twenty years, as the generation which still attends Mass dies off, there will be no-one left in our churches. So is he right ? Is the decline he speaks of terminal ? Or is there an alternative story here, another way of looking at what is happening. Well, I think there is, and it goes back to something Pope Francis has been saying since the day he became Pope.

What Pope Francis has been inviting us to understand is that the Church is not the people who attend Mass. That there are millions of people out there who have a whole variety of relationship, with the Church, relationships which would come under headings like hurt, anger, disappointment, fear, confusion, and so on. These people are, to use the Pope's phrase, 'on the margins', and he invites us to understand why they are there, what it is they feel and how they have come to this point in their lives. And so I would like to explore some aspects of this now.

There are many reasons why people today are angry at the Church, top of the list being the scandal of sexual abuse perpetrated by priests and others. This anger and hurt is felt, not just by the victims, but by millions of others, especially in traditionally Catholic countries like Ireland or Spain, who are angry at themselves for being so stupid as to put their trust in a Church which has failed them so badly, a feeling that will still be around for many years to come. But there is an anger that goes back further than that, and that is the anger of those who have suffered over the years at the hands of the Church's marriage laws. Families split down the middle, parents, brothers and sisters missing out on wedding celebrations, years of fear and anxiety about 'going to hell' which have deeply damaged many married relationships. There is not so much of this around now – people do not care as much about what the Church says as they used to – but it has caused huge amounts of pain in the past and a lot of that is still around in the older generation. But here are many other reasons why people are angry: perhaps something Father said or did one day when he was maybe not at his best. Personality clashes and rows which happen in every parish, causing some people to stop going to Mass. Our failure to reach out to people and make them welcome when they come to our parishes. Their name is Legion.

One problem that is dividing the Church at the moment is that some people are disappointed at the slowness/lack of what they see as necessary change, while others are bitterly opposed to any change at all, clinging to what they have always known even as it slips through their fingers and disappears into history. The chronic lack of adult education in faith which would enable childhood faith to grow into mature adult faith has done enormous harm. I remember one man coming to see me to explain why, after years of going to Mass, he was not coming back. It was because so many things in the bible he had been told as a child were true had been shown by modern science not to be true. Properly understood there is no clash between the bible and science, but no one had ever explained things like this to this good man. And there are millions of Catholics out there like him. They feel conned, cheated, even lied to.



Then there are our young people. For the vast majority of them the Church has no relevance whatsoever. It makes no sense to them. But it is not that they are 'irreligious' in any meaningful sense. The evidence is that young people today are asking all kinds of questions about life as they experience it in today's society. There is overwhelming evidence that they are searching for meaning in the midst of a very confusing world. The increase in mental health illness among them is surely evidence of this.

The problem is that they cannot see anything in the Church which helps them in their quest. We speak a language they do not understand. Like the classic Englishman abroad faced with a 'native' who does not speak English, we keep repeating the same thing, only louder. And until we can learn to express the great truths of faith and the great insights the Christian tradition has to offer in a new language, one that makes sense to young people, they and their great potential will continue to be lost to the Church.

What we can do about this right now is for another edition of Bridie's Blethers.

But having begun with one Francis I would like to end with another. In his homily during his first Mass in the Cathedral in Ayr, our new Bishop, Francis Dougan, explained that he had chosen as his motto words from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah which play an important part in the Liturgy of Holy Week. The passage speaks of one who will come to bring true justice. He will not break the crushed reed nor quench the wavering flame, perfect words with which to conclude our reflection. There are millions of women and men out there who are part of the Church but who are clinging on to their Catholicism by their fingertips. Like the friend of mine who decided to go back to Mass for Lent this year but soon gave up because it just made no sense to her. These are the reeds which we must not crush and the flames we must not quench. They need to be treated gently and sensitively, and to do this we must become a more humble, compassionate, nourishing, open, tolerant, non-judgemental, outward-looking Church.

There is no time to waste.

---

## God's Love And the NHS

The love of God is like the NHS:

**Accessible to all. And free from the point of delivery.**

From a sermon given at St. Quivox RC Church  
3rd week of Lent.

---

## St. Bride's Soup Sunday

On Sunday 11 March our second event of Soup Sunday was held after Mass.

Delicious soup, sandwiches, tea, coffee and chocolate biscuits were on the menu .

40 people were served and 6 helpers in the kitchen so it was a full house.

Everyone enjoyed being together and special guests were Father Joe, Father Bill, Brother Brendan a cousin of Father Gerry.

Days before the event a chance meeting by Maureen with a Social Worker from North Ayrshire plus an announcement on the news that North Ayrshire was one of the three highest areas in Scotland for Child poverty - both lead us to the decision to give any donations to Child Poverty in our area.

The amount raised was £625 which shows the generosity of everyone in the Parish - thank you very much indeed.

A special thanks to the young boys who served the soup, dried the dishes and counted the money.

Thank you everyone, it was a great Parish event.



The Soup Specialists.

Thank You Ladies!



Looking forward to the next  
Soup Sunday



## World Day Of Prayer



On Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March, World Day of Prayer was held in St. Bride's along with our friends from West Kilbride Parish Church.

The theme of the Service written by Christian women of Palestine was from St Paul to the Ephesians: **"I beg you ..... Bear with one another in love"**. As always, the readers came from both churches and this year's Reflection was given by Rev. James McNay of WKPC.

One of the highlights of the afternoon was the presentation given by a Palestinian Lady who lives in Glasgow. She told the story of her family in Gaza and what they are experiencing at the moment. It was very moving.

Praying together, singing hymns together and having a cup of tea together with the people of WKPC is always a faith filled experience and this year was no exception.

A huge thank you to everyone who prepared, participated and worked hard on the day - it is very much appreciated. We look forward now to next year when on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2025 we shall meet in WKPC and Father Duncan will give the reflection on the readings.



## World Day Of Prayer



## More Ramblings From A Man From The Bann

My first sporting hero was Roger Byrne. In 1957 and 1958 I was the left back on my primary school football team. He was the left back and captain of the Manchester United “Busby Babes” team that was making a name for itself in European football. Of course, I only ever heard radio commentary on matches and read about him in newspapers and sports magazines. But he was the man for me to emulate. Then when local Coleraine man Harry Gregg joined United at the end of 1957 for a world record fee for a goalkeeper I had two heroes in the same team.

That changed when my pal Michael came to our door at teatime on 6th February 1958 to tell me about the Munich disaster. One of my heroes, Byrne, along with seven of his teammates and some fifteen other people had died in a plane crash as they returned from a European cup match. Harry Gregg survived and displayed some real heroism. Escaping from the burning wreckage he chose to return to help rescue others – including Bobby Charlton. This was my first inkling of the frailties of life.

Gregg was soon fit to resume playing as part of a makeshift United team. At home for a short break, he attended a primary schools cup final. Myself and all the other boys stood open mouthed as we looked admiringly at this apparent giant of a man. He went on to play in that summer’s world cup finals where he was voted goalkeeper of the tournament. That was probably the pinnacle of his career. He continued as United’s goalkeeper as the team was rebuilt. Injury and declining form led to fewer appearances. He never won any medals at United and was released in 1964. Seeing the demise of my sporting heroes made me realise that my life needed a different type of hero to fire my imagination.



The Times - Harry Gregg in action

Around this time my RE class at school were being taught some church history. Ecclesiastical shenanigans at the time of the Great Schism and during the Reformation did not enthuse us one little bit. However, stories of individuals who were striving to spread the Word of God did fuel our teenage idealism. One such person was Columbanus (also known as Columban).

The Irish understanding of life had changed when Patrick brought the Gospel story to them. It became embedded in their life. Right from the start monasticism became popular, the lifestyle appealed to the Irish character. In Ireland the monastery was centred on the community and among the people, not on the buildings. Columbanus (also called Columban) was born into this world around 530 AD. At the age of eighteen he decided to dedicate his life to God. He studied in a few monasteries and eventually came to the monastery in Bangor ( in county Down) where he was ordained. The strict discipline there suited his serious temperament. Educated in the classics as well as sacred scripture he became a great teacher. After many years in Bangor he felt a call to travel to revive the gospel message in mainland Europe.

Christians in Europe during the first three centuries AD, whose lives were often under threat, were certainly devout people. But from the time of Constantine in the fourth century when “to be Roman was to be Christian” the faith of the vast majority of converts was rather shallow. Following the collapse of the Roman empire and the resulting chaos the Church remained strong but the Bishops and clergy lived in some luxury and at a remove from their flocks. This was the world that Columbanus chose to enter.

Around 590 AD he and twelve companions travelled through Britain to Europe. They arrived in an area now part of Eastern France and established a number of monasteries. Initial good relations with the Frankish ruling family enabled Columbanus to have great influence in the local church.

Later his admonishments about their amoral behaviour and issues with the local bishops about the exact date of Easter and other issues led to the departure of Columbanus and his group. They travelled by river to lake Zurich where they failed to win any new converts and in fact caused a wave of persecution. They were welcomed into Lombardy (now in Italy) in 611 AD where Columbanus became involved in a dispute about the “Arian controversy” concerning the Divine nature of Christ. The local king facilitated the founding of a new monastery at Bobbio, to the south of Milan, where Columbanus died in 615 AD. Columbanus is remembered as the first to express his Irish identity in writing, using the words “we Irish” in a letter to Pope Boniface IV. He is recognised as the first great Irish man of letters, his works include letters, poetry, sermons and a rule for his community.

Pope benedict XVI gave his opinion that Columbanus could be called a “European saint” due to his work across western Europe. Columbanus had, for instance, used the term “all of Europe” within a letter he had written to Pope Gregory the Great.

Columbanus put the unity of the Church foremost when he was involved in trying to resolve the dispute over the date of Easter, saying that nothing is more important than “the bond of unity in the Spirit that makes us children of God the Father”. Aware of the danger of harmony being compromised not just by theological issues, in a letter he reminded people in France that in the Church national allegiance and racial identity had been superseded but not replaced by a spiritual identity. This is what pope Francis advocates in “the Joy of the Gospel”. In a section titled “Unity prevails over Conflict” Pope Francis writes “the message of peace is not about a negotiated settlement but rather that the conviction that the unity brought about by the Spirit can harmonise every diversity”.

So Columbanus still has relevance for us today.

By James Montgomery

## Post Lenten Thoughts

We are all familiar with Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving yet ignore the fact that the word Lent is an old word for Spring, i.e., a time of looking forward to good things and to Christ rising again with a sense of awe!!

Traditions can be helpful; we are all familiar with the question "what are you doing for Lent?" but there is so much more to it than that. We must never stop learning and growing in our faith. It's unwise to let yesterday take up too much of today! Yet somewhere along the way, we stop imagining our future, preferring the safety of the past, just do what Father says. That is the day we stop living and start dying as individuals and as a church!

Church attendance is dropping - why, could we be the reason?

Do we have the Guru's Cat syndrome?

### 'Guru's Cat'

When the guru sat down to worship each evening, the ashram cat got in the way distracting the worshippers, so he ordered the cat be tied up during worship.

Long after the guru died, the cat was still tied up during the worship. Then when the cat died, another cat was brought to the ashram so it could be duly tied up during evening worship.

Centuries later, learned essays were written by the Guru's disciples on the essential role of a tethered cat in all properly conducted worship!!!

.....from 'The song of the Bird' by Anthony DeMello

## One To Watch – King Of Kings

### Amazon Prime –



To help us celebrate the 50 days of Easter, here is a film epic on the life of Jesus. Jeffrey Hunter puts in a fine performance as Jesus of Nazareth. Even Orson Welles's narration is pretty cool too.

King of Kings is an excellent biblical epic produced by Samuel Bronston and many of the people who also made 'Ben Hur' although the film was much less expensive.

The film covers the 33 years from Jesus Christ's birth in Bethlehem through the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension. The screenplay is extremely intelligent and effective, concentrating not just on Jesus, but on the society and personalities that surround him.

The Sermon on the Mount is a film high point; the Crucifixion and Resurrection have the kind of power that can bring a lump to your throat, even after repeated viewings.

While 'King of Kings' lacks the big names and big budget of other films about the life of Jesus ('The Greatest Story Ever Told'), the performance of Jeffrey Hunter makes this film a very moving experience!

## Easter Egg Hunt

In addition to Easter Sunday Mass, Liz Moran's confirmation and reception into the Church and the celebrations afterwards, there was also the annual Easter Egg Hunt. It was all joy and happiness at St. Bride's this Easter Sunday. Some photos of the Easter Egg Hunt below:



## Bridie's Nuggets



"A good head and a good heart are always a formidable combination."

...Nelson Mandela

"Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people and hallelujah is our song."

.....Pope John Paul II

"Why do you suppose they made you king in the first place?' I ask him. 'Not for your benefit, but for theirs. They meant you to devote your energies to making their lives more comfortable and protecting them from injustice. So, your job is to see that they're all right, not that you are - just as a shepherd's job, strictly speaking, is to feed his sheep, not himself."

.....Thomas More



"The man who says his wife can't take a joke; forgets she took him."

.....Oscar Wilde

## Just for a laugh.....What does God look like

A funeral service is being held in a church for a woman who has just passed away. At the end of the service, the pallbearers carrying the casket accidentally bump into a wall jarring the casket. They hear a faint moan. They open the casket and find that the woman is actually alive. She lives for 10 more years and then dies. A ceremony is again held at the same church and at the end the pallbearers are again carrying the casket out.



As they are walking, the husband calls out, "Watch out for the wall!"

## And Another.....

A pastor's wife was preparing pancakes for her young sons. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their Mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, "Let my brother have the first pancake. I can wait." The oldest boy turned to his younger brother and said, "You be Jesus."

**Your  
Parish  
Needs  
You**

Please write to us with your thoughts! We hope you have enjoyed this edition of Bridie's Blethers. For future editions your parish needs **YOU!** Please provide any feedback (good or bad) and most importantly topics and articles to include in the next edition by emailing [westkilbride@gallowaydiocese.org](mailto:westkilbride@gallowaydiocese.org). Alternatively, speak to or email one of the editorial team: [Petermcluskie60@icloud.com](mailto:Petermcluskie60@icloud.com); [joe.mcaleavy1804@yahoo.com](mailto:joe.mcaleavy1804@yahoo.com); [howiephyllis@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:howiephyllis@yahoo.co.uk);

Some images used under Creative Common License - <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>