



Rome Jubilee of Youth

FROM 28TH JULY to 3rd August Rome welcomed a multitude of young people with different languages, songs, footsteps. For these young people, including three from Birnie - Declan Thomas, Connor Steven and Graham Ramsay - as part of the Aberdeen Diocesan group, The Jubilee of Youth was the climax of Jubilee 2025, *Pilgrims of Hope*.

It was a never-ending sea of people and flags waving in the air, pilgrims from every corner of the globe, all there to pray and celebrate Mass, but what made it so striking was that your mind automatically assumed they were there for a music festival or a rock concert, but no, all of those young people were there to celebrate their Catholic faith and to pray. The youngest of those from Birnie was **DECLAN THOMAS** who wrote this account of his time there.



Declan

"When Pope Francis called for a Jubilee of Hope in May 2024, he mapped out a journey for millions of Catholics to partake in, each unique. Pilgrims on a journey of faith. *Spes non confundit - Hope does not disappoint* (Romans 5:5).

"I first answered the call to Pilgrimage around Christmas time last year, joining over 70 others from the diocese of Aberdeen. A first gathering came in March when we walked from Buckie to Keith for the feast of St John Ogilvie, which

offered both spiritual and physical formation for the journey ahead. This preparation, as well as a final meeting in Elgin in June, helped me to realise the importance and heritage of going on pilgrimage to Rome, something that has been done for hundreds of years. Our main spiritual leaders were newly ordained priest, Fr Aiden Matheson and the Dominican Sisters of St Cecilia. Their faith and devotion inspired us all, and helped us through the toughest moments of our journey.

"On our first day in Rome, we were greeted by a welcome Mass in St Peter's Square said by Monsignor Rino Fisichella. The square swarmed with Pilgrims with flags from every corner of the planet, was a vivid indication of the universality of the Church. We were blessed by a surprise appearance by Pope Leo, sending the crowds into chaos. Referencing Matthew 5:13 he said "*You too are the salt of the earth and the light of the world,*" reminding us that we are the future, and the hope.

"A key highlight was visiting the four Papal Major Basilicas, St Peter's, St Paul's Outside the Walls, St John Lateran and St Mary Major, where fittingly, Pope Francis is buried. At each there is a Holy Door, doors that are opened every 25 years, for the Year of Jubilee, allowing pilgrims to pass through and receive a plenary indulgence for either themselves or someone already deceased. All four basilicas were filled with beautiful artwork and sculptures.



Declan in St Peter's Basilica

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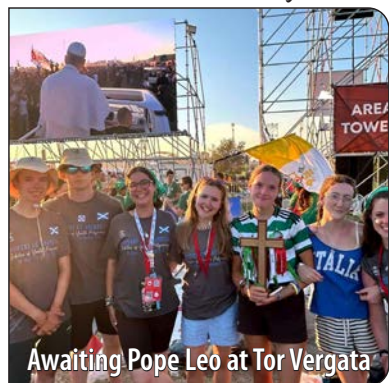


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"We also visited the Catacomb of Saint Callixtus, where it is thought that nearly 300,000 Catholics were martyred in the early days of the Church. It was striking how many tombs there were, despite us only seeing around 5% of the Catacomb. It was a great privilege to be there, and to pray a Rosary for all those who lay there once . . . I'm sure they prayed for us too.

"Fortunately, we also had the opportunity to attend a Mass with Pilgrims from all over Ukraine. Our youth group in Elgin had video-called a few of these pilgrims, as we learnt of the reality of living in a war-torn country, and how they continue to live out their faith. It was interesting to attend the Ukrainian Rite, which was a totally new experience for me.



Awaiting Pope Leo at Tor Vergata

"My favourite event was the overnight Vigil and Mass at *Tor Vergata*, where it's thought more than one million Catholics gathered from 146 different countries. The Universality of the Church was the location for meeting people from as far as Siberia and Guam. Often, being Catholic in Scotland can feel like a very lonely thing, so it was refreshing to be a part of this. The Pope led a period of Eucharistic adoration. I found the silence during this time particularly powerful. One million Catholics, divided by language, race and culture, but united in love for the Eucharist. Pope Leo highlighted the importance of the Eucharist in response to a question that night saying *"Remain united with Jesus in the Eucharist. Adore the Eucharist, the source of eternal life!"*

"After our time in Rome, we had a few days in Assisi.

Compared to our slightly hectic time in the capital, Assisi felt very quiet and calm. Located in the hills of central Italy, it was the birthplace of St Francis of Assisi, who remains a very popular Saint amongst youth. Our accommodation – in a former convent – sat directly across from the Church where Carlo Acutis lies. He will become the first Millennial Saint this September. I, amongst many other youth, feel a strong connection with him, due to his reliability. Hearing about his life helped me to realise that becoming a Saint is something that anyone can achieve, and is something that all Catholics should seek. He too recognised the importance the Eucharist has, calling it the *"Highway to Heaven."* Overall this Pilgrimage was an amazing experience, and something I'll cherish forever. Seeing the Churches in Rome and Assisi, meeting new people, and hearing about the lives of Saints both old and new."



Walking down to the Basilica of St Francis in Assisi



Connor

CONNOR STEPHEN was also there and wrote this of his time on Pilgrimage: "If there was a single phrase I could use to describe the Jubilee, it would be *"a second baptism."* Honestly, I was a little apprehensive to hear that I would be able to journey to Rome with the Aberdeen Diocese, not even three weeks before it would begin. I am not very accustomed to travel. Straight away I scrambled to make preparations, but in retrospect there wasn't anything I could do which would prepare me for it, and I am enormously glad God pushed me into going! I experienced God in ways I fully expected, and also in so many other ways that I didn't. The beautiful basilicas and churches in which His Sacrifice is remembered, the Holy Stairs, the people we met, all of them pointed the way to the Father through His Son, Jesus.



Time to relax

"Our accommodation was humble. A tent gym for a volleyball club on the outskirts of Rome, holding more than 70 of us. We had flat, small, metal beds and sleeping bags for warmth, though ➔



The Holy Stairs

with how hot Rome was many discarded these! Our Lord told us in St Luke's gospel to take nothing with us whenever we journey, but we had even these comforts, thanks be to Him. Friends were quickly made and soon our groups were a tight bunch, supporting each other with prayer and kind words and acts. The fellowship in Christ during the pilgrimage is something I will never forget. I will also not soon forget the mystical vision I had.

"After climbing the Holy Stairs in Rome, which so deeply touched my soul, I knelt down for the Consecration of the Eucharist, and a flash of light pierced the veil in the small chapel we were in. The cross was transformed and I could see Christ, amid-crucifixion, with those very same Holy Stairs filling the rest of the room. I was immediately reminded of the depth of my sins, so profoundly repentant for nailing Him in His innocence to that cross. Tears began to fall and didn't stop until the Mass was ended.

"On our final day we experienced the side of public transport in Italy we were unaccustomed to. Waiting on buses which never came! Eventually one did and we made our way through Rome, crossing the Tiber again to eventually come to a Ceilidh with the other Scottish Pilgrims in front of the Chiesa di Santa Maria in Trastevere where St Cecilia is interred. A lovely event, despite our lateness! Afterwards, Compline within that stunning church. Perfect way to round off the day.

"This pilgrimage felt like five years of life compressed into nine days. During my time I so clearly saw the face of Christ in all the people who supported us and journeyed with us there. Not a single person left the airport at Fiumicino the same as they arrived, and our Jubilee will remain in all of our hearts for the rest of our days. May God bless all of the pilgrims, and all who hear our stories!"



The Basilica of St Paul's Outside the Walls

GRAHAM RAMSAY was also there and wrote this for us: "I was blessed to join a group of 70 pilgrims from the Diocese of Aberdeen on a once-in-a-lifetime journey to Rome and Assisi for the Jubilee 2025 celebrations. Our days were filled with prayer, walking and awe-inspiring encounters. One of the most profound moments was passing through the Holy Doors of all the major basilicas in Rome - St Peter's, St John Lateran, St Mary Major and St Paul Outside the Walls. Each threshold felt like a spiritual renewal, a tangible step closer to God's mercy and grace. The grandeur of the architecture and the richness of the artwork left me speechless, every detail spoke of centuries of faith and devotion.



The Pilgrim Group outside Santa Sofia a Via Boccea in Rome

"Our group stayed in a large sports hall, sleeping on cot beds and sharing simple meals. Though the accommodations were humble, the sense of community was rich. We walked for hours each day, often navigating busy transport systems and overcoming language barriers. These challenges, though tiring, became part of the pilgrimage's beauty, reminders of the sacrifices made for spiritual growth.

"What truly made the experience unforgettable were the friendships formed. I met fellow Catholics from all walks of life, united by faith and purpose. We prayed together, laughed together, and



supported one another through every step of the journey. As I reflect on this Pilgrimage, I feel deeply grateful. It was not just a trip, it was a spiritual adventure that deepened my faith, broadened my perspective, and filled my heart with joy. Jubilee 2025 will remain a cherished chapter in my journey with Christ.”



Sister Mary Gianna

SISTER MARY GIANNA from Greyfriars Convent in Elgin was one of the leaders of the 70-strong group of Pilgrims and here she speaks of the great joy and deep devotion experienced she witnessed in our young Pilgrims.

“During the Jubilee for Youth in Rome and Assisi, the youth from the Diocese of Aberdeen including three from St Brendan’s Birnie experienced profound moments of grace. They embraced a true spirit of pilgrimage and maintained positive outlooks even in the challenging moments of pilgrimage. The preparatory events for the pilgrimage, included a pilgrimage walk in honour of St John Ogilvie in Moray and a day retreat at Greyfriars Convent. These

all helped to initiate bonds of friendship and cultivate an understanding of pilgrimage, jubilee, and Rome itself.

“Once in Rome, many experienced its beautiful art and architecture for the first time, taking in the splendour of the four major basilicas and patiently waiting in long queues in the heat to step into the grace of the Holy Doors. I witnessed their delight as they ran to meet the Holy Father as he circled St Peter’s Square and the grounds of Tor Vergata (the site of the overnight vigil) in his pope-mobile.

“Some expressed to me how much they appreciated hearing his words of exhortation and encouragement to be saints and how they loved joining him in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in a crowd of one million other youth in a stunningly sacred silence. There was a spirit of Christian friendship nurtured among them, particularly in their small groups, and during both joyful moments and moments of thick crowds and long walks. They bonded together and supported one another.

“I was impressed by their spirit of devotion and prayer during the Masses and Holy Hours we celebrated as a group, their requests for Confession and spiritual conversations, and their appreciation of the lives of the Saints’ whose relics they prayed with and whose stories they marvelled at. There was a stirring of their hearts in the realm of their vocations, as some began expressing desires to more consciously discern God’s will in their lives, to give themselves more completely to Christ, and to

even consider priesthood or religious life.

“I am so grateful for the prayers of all who supported us spiritually and materially so that our youth could have this transformative opportunity, rooting them more firmly in Christ and his Church. Praise God for his generous gifts and for the youth’s response to them! May those graces reach their full flowering in each of the pilgrims and enrich our whole diocese and beyond.”



Approaching the Basilica of St Peter



A very happy band of Pilgrims at Tor Vergata

Saint John Henry Newman is to become the newest Doctor of the Church

POPE LEO has paved the way for Saint John Henry Newman to be formally declared a “Doctor of the Church.” A “Doctor of the Universal Church” is a title bestowed on Saints who have made a significant and lasting contribution to theology or doctrine through their research, study, or writings. At present there are 37 recognised Doctors of the Church and notable examples include St Augustine of Hippo, St Thomas Aquinas, St Catherine of Siena and St Teresa of Ávila. St John Henry Newman will become the 38th Doctor of the Universal Church.



St John Henry Newman is one of the great modern thinkers of the Church and a key figure in a spiritual and human journey that has left a profound mark on the Church and 19th-century ecumenism, and the author of writings that show how living the faith is a daily “heart-to-heart” dialogue with Christ. His life was spent with energy and passion for the Gospel, culminating in his Canonisation by Pope Francis in 2019. This rare honour recognises his profound impact on Catholic teaching, especially on doctrine, conscience, and the role of the laity.

Newman was one of the founders of the Oxford Movement of the 1830s, which sought to revive certain Catholic doctrines in the Church of England by looking back to the traditions of the earliest Christian church. He was received into the Catholic Church in 1845 and became one of the most influential theologians of the era, bringing elements of the Anglican church into his new faith tradition.


He died in 1890. Newman’s path to being declared a doctor has been exceptionally quick, after Pope Benedict XVI beatified him during a visit to Britain in 2010. Pope Francis made him a Saint in 2019.

When the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham was established on 15th January 2011 it was placed under the patronage of (*then*) Blessed John Henry Newman by Pope Benedict XVI. Newman’s beatification was proclaimed by Pope Benedict on 19th September 2010 during his visit to the United Kingdom. When visiting Lambeth Palace and Archbishop Rowan Williams, he said: ‘In the figure of John Henry Newman we celebrate a churchman whose ecclesial vision was nurtured by his Anglican background and matured during his many years of ordained ministry in the Church of England. He can teach us the virtues that ecumenism demands: on the one hand, he was moved to follow his conscience, even at great personal cost; and on the other hand, the warmth of his continued friendship with his former colleagues led him to explore with them, in a truly eirenic spirit, the questions on which they differed, driven by a deep longing for unity in faith.’

John Henry Newman’s most well known hymn, “Lead, kindly light”, was written in 1833 during his return to England on an orange boat bound for Marseilles. He wrote, “*We were becalmed a whole week in the Straits of Bonifacio and I was writing the verses during the whole time of my passage.*”

Lead, Kindly Light, amidst the encircling gloom, lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home, lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see, The distant scene; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou, shouldest lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my path; but now, lead Thou me on!
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears, pride ruled my will. Remember not past years!

So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still will lead me on.
O’er moor and fen, o’er crag and torrent, till the night is gone,
And with the morn those angel faces smile, which I have loved long since, and lost awhile! 

Retreat at Boarbank Priory

THE SOUTH of Scotland Ordinariate Group are going on Retreat to Boarbank Augustinian Priory at Grange-over-Sands in Cumbria from Friday 17th to Monday 20th October 2025. As well as Ordinariate members and supporters from Whithorn and around they will be joined by some from other parts of Scotland. The Retreat will be led by Fr Simon Beveridge.



The beautiful situation of Boarbank Priory facing south and overlooking Morecambe Bay and Humphrey Head, provides a peaceful and attractive setting. Boarbank Priory is a Community of Catholic religious sisters sharing a life of prayer and hospitality. The spiritual life of the Augustinian Canonesses is structured on the Gospels and the Rule of St Augustine, which begins: *'Before all else, live in harmony, being of one heart and one mind on the way to God, sharing everything in common.'*

In 2016 the sisters at Boarbank were joined by their Sisters from Liverpool to form Our Lady of Hope, a single Community on two sites, Boarbank and Ince Blundell Hall. This, sadly, involved the closing the House in Liverpool, from where the foundresses of both Boarbank and Ince originally came. The community also have a resident chaplain and another resident priest and Mass is said daily for the Community, patients and visitors. Around half the sisters provide care and support during all stages of illness in the Nursing Home they run so that each person can live as fully as possible. Along with their staff they adopt a simple philosophy of care, based on the awareness that each person has the right to be loved, listened to, understood and respected.



Worship during the Ordinariate Retreat will be according to Divine Worship for both offices and the Mass. The chapel has undergone various periods of reordering over the years with the present layout dating from 1994. The chapel is "L" shaped with the Sisters' stalls in the area to the left of the altar in the photograph. We assure those going on retreat of our prayers for a successful and blessed time.

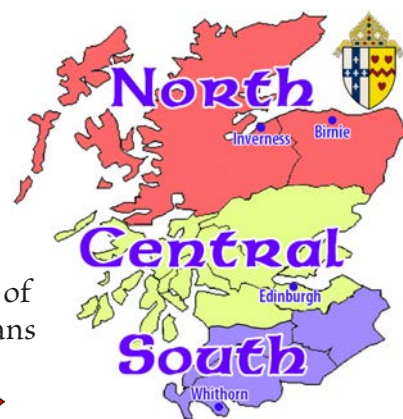
Ordinariate Jubilee Pilgrimage

THE JUBILEE Pilgrimage of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham, led by Bishop David Waller, will take place in Rome on 8th to 10th October 2025. This includes the Feast of our Patron, St John Henry Newman, with Mass celebrated in Newman's own titular Church of San Giorgio in Velabro. Participation in all or any of the pilgrimage ceremonies is free (except for the tour of the catacombs). Pilgrims will be asked to organise their own transport to (and around) Rome and to arrange their own accommodation. To register an interest in participating, and to be kept informed of an optional informal dinner, and other arrangements in Rome please visit www.bit.ly/Ord-Pilg



New Scotland Bank accounts


THE ORDINARIATE IN SCOTLAND, as announced in the last Review, now covers three areas: **Scotland Central** - the Edinburgh Group; **Scotland South** - the Whithorn Group; and **Scotland North** - the Ordinariate in Inverness and Birnie near Elgin. The current pattern of when and where Ordinariate Mass is offered will not change which means that Fr Len and Fr Simon will continue to alternate being present at the Ordinariate Mass in St Patrick's, Edinburgh.



The main change is that the Ordinariate in Scotland now has three separate bank accounts. Those who give by Standing Order or by Bank Transfer have already been informed about the new account details. We invite all members and supporters of the Ordinariate in Scotland to consider making a donation either by direct **Bank Transfer** or by completing a **Standing Order** form or by using **CAF** (the *Charities Aid Foundation*). If you are a *UK tax payer* we invite you to increase your donation at no cost to yourself through **Gift Aid**. Full details will be found at www.ordinariate.scot/donate

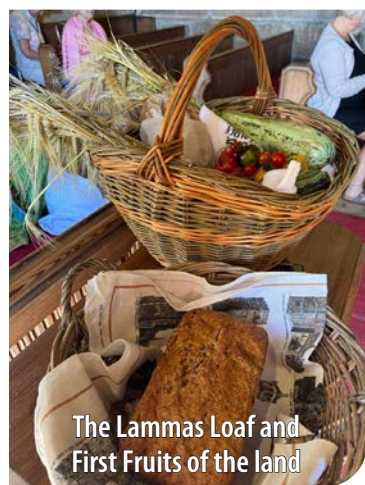
Financial Support

Each of the three areas will be financially independent with the income of the **Scotland South** group supporting the work of Fr Simon. The income of the **Scotland Central** group will fund the travel expenses of both Fr Simon and Fr Len coming to St Patrick's for the monthly Ordinariate Mass. It will also fund the national travel expenses of Fr Simon, Fr Cameron and Fr Len attending Ordinariate events in places like London or Walsingham. It will receive subsidy from part of Fr Stanley's generous bequest to the Ordinariate in Scotland which will also benefit the other groups. The income of the **Scotland North** group will support the work and travel expenses of Fr Len in Inverness and Birnie.

Every group in the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham is self supporting and relies on the generous giving of Ordinariate members, Associate members and supporters to maintain the work of that group. This is the reason why the three separate groups in Scotland have been formed. Each of the three relies on the generosity of those Members, Associate members and supporters within each group to keep it going. As well as your prayerful support for all that we seek to do, we also ask for your financial support. Full details of how you can help will be found at www.ordinariate.scot/donate 



Lammas Day Celebration at Birnie




The Lammas Loaf and First Fruits of the land

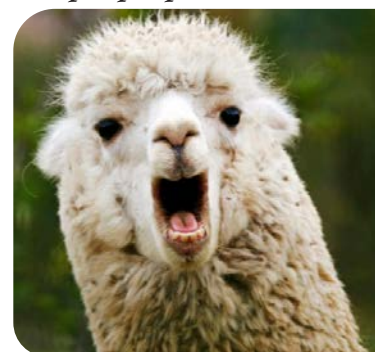
ALMOST CERTAINLY, for the first time since 1560, **Lammas Day** was celebrated in Birnie Kirk by Elgin, which dates from around 1140. This was the day when the church asked for God's Blessing on the First Fruits of the Land. Also known as *Loaf Mass Day*, it is celebrated on the 1st August. The name originates from the word "loaf" in reference to "bread", and "Mass" in reference to the Holy Eucharist, the Mass.

It falls at the halfway point between the summer solstice and the autumn equinox. In the Old Testament, the offering of first fruits to God is described as, *"when the harvest ripened, the priest went into the field and gathered a sheaf of first-ripened grain. Then he took that sheaf into the temple and waved it before the Lord."*

Lammas Day was an important festival for both Anglo-Saxons and Celts, celebrating the festival of the wheat harvest on the first day of August as "the feast of first fruits", the time when traditionally, the first of the wheat harvest was gathered in. The tradition was to bring a loaf of bread into the church and prayers offered for God's blessing on these first fruits.

It was around Lammas Day that loaves were baked from the first of the wheat harvest and, quite naturally, they were brought to be blessed in church. For us at Birnie our Lammas-tide Mass was followed by a Lammas Day barbecue. It was a great celebration with almost 50 people present.

Chonie Monro, the daughter of the Revd Ronald Torrie, Minister of Birnie from 1956-1986, exclaimed with great delight that it was the first time a loaf she had baked had been blessed! Gill Garrow was also heard to comment that it was just like the days of Mr Torrie again, when all sorts of things happened at Birnie to bring the community together. The great thing about our Lammas-tide celebration was that it brought together Birnie-ites, Ordinariate folk, local Catholics and even some Episcopalians. One person in the south, commenting on a blog about our Lammas-tide Mass, even asked what 'Llamas had to do with the church'! 



My Lady of the Chimney Corner

The Revd Samuel McCurdy Harris takes us to *Pogue's Entry* as he recalls a beautiful little book published in 1922

THIS YEAR golf enthusiasts have not only enjoyed watching the players on their television screens, at this year's Open Championship, but have also had the bonus of glimpsing the countryside surrounding Royal Portrush, the world-class links courses set amid Northern Ireland's stunning coastal beauty.

The golf course is not far from the world heritage site of the Giant's Causeway, the romantic ruins of Dunluce Castle, which some believe inspired C.S Lewis to write his Narnia stories, and all encompassed by golden sands and dazzling limestone cliffs. You can imagine our surprise then, when our youngest daughter phoned us some years ago now, to

tell us that she wanted to visit none of these beauty spots on our proposed Irish holiday, but instead a tiny house in a back street in the town of Antrim in the province of Ulster.



Pogue's Entry in 1925 (photo used with permission)

Antrim Town possesses a Castle, an Irish Round Tower, and it stands on the banks of Lough Neagh, the biggest stretch of inland water in the British Isles. But none of these had captured our daughter's imagination. That honour went to a tiny house in a tiny street in the town, called *Pogue's Entry*.


Nowadays it would be classed as little better than a hovel. But it was the setting for a remarkable and beautiful book *My Lady of the Chimney Corner* by the social reformer Alexander Irving (1863-1941), who wrote it in honour of his parents, James and Anna, in the early years of last century.

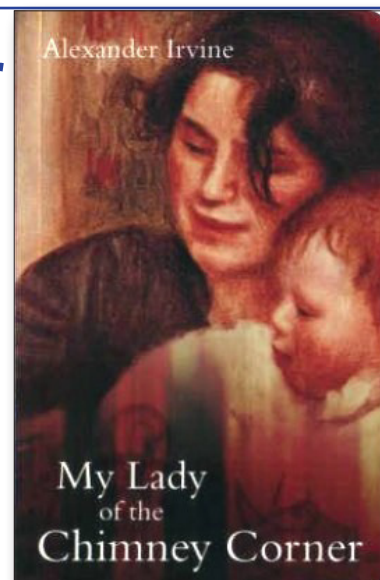
His father, Jamie, was an illiterate cobbler, and a member of the Church of Ireland. Anna, his mother, was a literate woman, destined for the teaching profession, and a Roman Catholic. Their life-long love for one another, and devotion to their family survived the horrors of the Irish potato famine, sectarian division and poverty.

The author tells us that on a visit home, he awoke to find his mother praying at his bedside, in words which, as he put it, recalled 'the tender piety of her childhood.' I am in no doubt that the words which fell from his mother's lips were those of the *Hail Mary*.

Anna and Jamie loved each other to the end of their days. Anna's devotion to her family surmounted the challenges of a very difficult life, lived out in what nowadays would be called 'an area of multiple deprivation.' My mother, wrote Alexander Irving, though poor, was in every respect a lady.

The Church celebrates the Motherhood of Our Lord's Mother, the Virgin Mother of 'the Saviour promised long.' The first to say 'Yes' to Him. In a sense His first disciple. By a happy coincidence, Anna's maiden name was Gilmour, literally *Servant of Mary*, and her life was one of devotion to Mary's example as a mother.

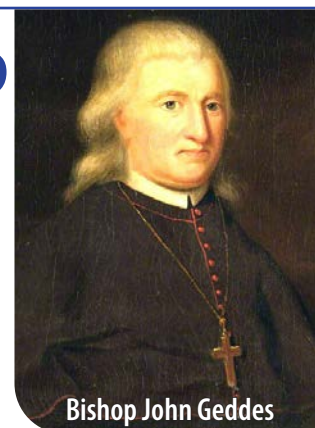
In the end, our daughter accompanied us to that little house in *Pogue's Entry* in Antrim Town, and shared in our wonderment that despite poverty and real hardship, true love prevailed, and a seal was set there on the transforming power of the Good News of Jesus Christ, incarnate, crucified and risen, the Son of Mary, Virgin and Mother. 



Bishop John Geddes: 1735-1799

Dr Shelagh Noden recalls the important role a priest born at Enzie in Glenlivet played in re-introducing music in the Catholic Church in Scotland

BISHOP JOHN GEDDES is one of the most important figures in post-Reformation Catholic history in Scotland. Though not a musician himself, he exercised a great influence on the reintroduction of music into the Post-Reformation Catholic Church. Born in the Enzie in 1735 he studied for the priesthood in Rome, where he was ordained in 1759, returning to work in the Scottish mission. Between 1771 and 1780 he was rector of the Scots College in Spain, where he took the step of employing a Spanish music teacher to instruct the students. He took lessons himself, commenting *"and even I hope to be able to sing a Preface, a Pater Noster, etc."*



Bishop John Geddes

The library of the college, now moved from Valladolid to Salamanca, contains numerous items of music from this period, testifying to the thriving musical culture that John Geddes established there. Some of these are challenging works, giving an indication of considerable musical talent at the college. Several of these pieces were brought back to Scotland by returning students and some survive in a manuscript from Aquhorties College near Aberdeen.


The Scots College in Spain seems to have been the only one of the Scots colleges abroad to provide training in liturgical music at that period. Unlike John Geddes, the rectors of the other colleges appear to have considered it a waste of time to instruct the students in music, as the anti-Catholic laws then in force in Scotland meant they would have no opportunity to use their knowledge. So John Geddes showed great faith and optimism in taking this initiative, looking forward to what he described as *'a time [which] by the goodness of God will come, when the Catholic religion will again flourish in Scotland'*.

Many graduates of the Spanish college proved to be influential in the spread of church music in Scotland once religious toleration improved. These included George Mathison and George Gordon, two priests who were very active musicians. George Mathison deplored the fact that other colleges did not offer their students the same opportunity: *'Why should not all our Clergy learn to sing as part of their education while in the College, when they have such excellent opportunity, as is done in Valladolid?'*


John Geddes was appointed bishop in 1780 and returned to Scotland. His sociable, outgoing nature led him to make friends at all levels of society in Edinburgh, ranging from the influential Protestant judge, Lord Monboddo, who became a lifelong friend, to (perhaps surprisingly) the poet, Robert Burns, who presented him with a signed copy of his poems. Bishop Geddes did a great deal to dispel anti-Catholic prejudice by his unaffected friendliness and his participation in the social and intellectual life of the capital.

As one might expect he was very much in favour of the restoration of music into Scottish Catholic worship. Unfortunately, his friend and superior, Bishop Hay, was not. During the closing years of the eighteenth century the two bishops exchanged a lengthy and at times, on Bishop Hay's part, heated correspondence on the subject. Bishop Hay was afraid of sparking off anti-Catholic riots, as had earlier occurred in Edinburgh.

Bishop Geddes advanced every argument he could think of, ranging from 'the advantage that would accrue to Religion from the use of suitable Music, which had been sanctioned by the Church in all ages,' to the modern-sounding contention that music was a good way of involving young people in the Church.

It is ironic that Bishop Hay, so obdurate in his opposition to any form of singing in church, was himself a highly accomplished musician. Unfortunately he was not to be moved, and all attempts at reintroducing music into the liturgy were put on hold. Bishop Geddes must have been bitterly disappointed at having to abandon his hopes, particularly the choir started in Edinburgh by the Catholic musician Gianbattista Corri, which had shown much promise. Nevertheless, no trace of bitterness or rancour can be found in his surviving letters to Bishop Hay; in April 1790 he assuaged the senior Bishop's wrath by commenting, *'we shall smile together about this story when we meet in Heaven.'* 

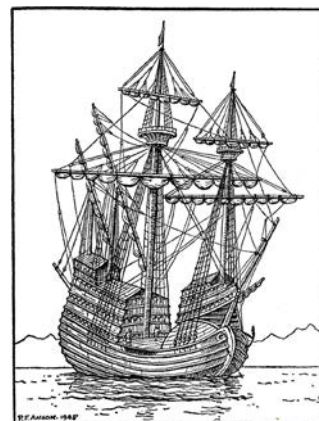
Ordinariate Scotland Update

WE ARE DELIGHTED to welcome several **new members of the Ordinariate** at Birnie, people who were once of the 'Anglican tradition', as well as a number of new **Associate members**, Catholics who wish to show their support for the Ordinariate. **Compline** continues every Wednesday at 7pm as does **Holy Mass via Zoom** midweek from the Oratory of Saint Joseph in Inverness. Full details will be found about how to join us at www.ordinariate.scot - also on the website several pages have been updated. These include **GALLERY** with lots of new photographs and **BOOKSHELF** where you will also find a link to purchase a *full colour A5 printed booklet* of this **OrdScot Review**. 



The Faith of Seafarers

THE TITLE "STELLA MARIS" - Star of the Sea - given to the Mother of God, is no modern one. Many instances of the use of this title, or words to the same effect, can be found in the writings of the Fathers from the time of St Jerome. In a sermon of St Bernard of Clairvaux, read in the second Nocturn on the Feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary (September 12th) he tells us that "the Virgin's name is said to mean star of the sea, and is well and suitably applied to the Virgin Mother." He bids us remember that:



"... whosoever thou art, if thou findest thyself being tossed in the storms and tempests of this world's flood rather than walking on dry land; do not take thine eyes from the brightness of this star, if thou dost not wish to be overwhelmed by the storm. If the winds of temptation rise, if thou runnest upon the rocks of tribulation, look to the star, call upon Mary. If thou art thrown upon the waves of pride or ambition, or detraction or jealousy, look to the star, call upon Mary. If anger or avarice or temptations of the flesh agitate the ship of thy mind, look upon Mary. If troubled by the enormity of thy crimes, confused by the blackness of thy conscience, and terrified by the horror of judgement, thou beginnest to be swallowed up in the bottomless pit of sorrow or the abyss of desperation, think upon Mary. She is that famous star which rose out of Jacob, whose rays light up the whole world . . . that bright and splendid star, lifted of necessity above this vast and boundless sea, glittering with merits, enlightening by her example."

In the age of Faith mariners invoked Our Lady as Star of the Sea. Ships in the English Navy, as well as in those of other nations, were named after Mary. Shrines were erected in her honour, e.g. the chapel of Our Lady of Arnesburgh (in St Nicholas, Great Yarmouth), Our Lady Star of the Sea at Southampton and at Broadstairs, Kent, a famous chapel dedicated to Our Lady. Passing ships used to salute it by striking their topsails. Our Lady of Scarborough was invoked by sailors and fishermen on the Yorkshire coast. To Our Lady of the Rock at Dover, Henry VIII made an offering on his safe return from France in 1532.

In Scotland the Royal Burgh of Leith still has Our Lady in a ship as its Coat of Arms. In medieval times a lamp burned night and day before the statue of Our Lady of Leith in the parish kirk, where there were chantry chapels endowed by ship owners and master mariners. The remarkable affinity between the arms of Leith and medieval medals and badges of Notre-Dame de Boulogne, who is also depicted in a ship, inclines one to think that this may have been yet another proof of the "auld alliance" between France and Scotland. Today there are no anchorites or hermits praying for seafarers. Their cells and chapels have disappeared or are in ruins. The flickering lamps that monks and solitaries put up to warn the passing vessels have given place to a chain of lighthouses and light-ships. No longer does an Abbot of Aberbrothock (Arbroath) need to erect a warning bell on the Inchcape Rock.

"On the waves of the storm it floated and swung
And louder and louder its warning rung,
When the rock was hid by the tempest swell,

The mariners heard the warning bell,
And then they knew the perilous rock,
And blessed the Abbot of Aberbrothock." (Robert Southey)

From: *The Church and The Sailor* by Peter F Anson, 1948

Ship drawing by Peter Anson: Maritime missionaries sailed across the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans in vessels like this sixteenth century "Carrack". 

Low expectations

Gillian Philip reflects on objectively beautiful and meaningful language

“**THE SOFT BIGOTRY** of low expectations.” It’s a term attributed to Michael Gerson, a speechwriter for George W Bush, and to be politically realistic, that will instantly exclude it from consideration by the ‘right-minded’. It was originally coined to describe “a patronising and dangerous attitude, cloaked as kindness” (to quote the *Pacific Legal Foundation*), “that assumes certain people are capable of less because of their race or background.” Or, one might add, their age.

I’m less than keen to confess my biological age but (kindly don’t count this on your fingers) I was 18 when the Scottish Liturgy 1982 was accepted and endorsed by the Scottish Episcopal Church. My memory is inevitably hazy, but I believe I first encountered it in my first year at university — probably at the Scripture Union. This student society, along with the Archery Club, the Debating Society, the Federation of Conservative Students and the Tory Reform Group (simultaneously), and (knowing me) the Volleyball team, I joined, in all the eager enthusiasm of Freshers Week. The Scripture Union would stand out for being the one I actually attended. Two or three times, anyway.

One can always forgive the madnesses of youth, but that very Liturgy is the one currently in use in my own parish church and many others. One might think that in 2024 — forty-two years after its acceptance — the inane, anti-poetic 1982 Liturgy might have been revisited. Of course it hasn’t. Maybe it’ll take another decade before the whole thing is rewritten for the non-binary generation; then, forty-two more years later, their embarrassed successors will get around to revising that. “*Our Parent, who art in Heaven... lads, what were we thinking?*”

I suspect it’ll take all those decades for a rethink because the Church is forever catching up. For instance, I blame the Anglican establishment’s unthinking acceptance of *Queer Theory* and gender ideology almost exclusively on their mulish resistance to gay and lesbian rights. It’s as if — like the Tory Party — they suddenly realised they needed to ditch their ‘nasty’ reputation, and in their panic to recalibrate, they swallowed eagerly an ideology that was superficially similar but in fact antithetical to, er... gay and lesbian rights. (That wasn’t the Church’s only motivation for embracing *Queer Theory*, nor the most sinister one, but I digress.)

Anyway, it’s been forty-two years — roughly two generations — since the Church decided to appeal to the *Young Generation*. That is: my generation. All right, I’m just over sixty. I’m a good bit older than the delightful congregants I thought of, in my youth, as the “old ladies” of St James the Less, Aberdeen; and that included my own mother. Has the church-attending demographic exploded since then? Do ever more young people identify as Christian? Um.

I was brought up — largely in that same St James the Less — on the 1929 Scottish Prayer Book. What an archaic anachronism it was, in those heady 1980s, and I daresay it seemed even more so in the 1990s, what with the *End of History* and all that. Yet it’s strange... when I recently began attending a small, independent and interdenominational church [Ed: *Birnie Kirk St Brendan’s*] that uses the old Liturgy, I barely had to read the responses. I didn’t have to glance at the Collects, the words of the Magnificat or the Nunc Dimittis. Four decades later, I knew the words by heart. I knew them because they were memorable, and they were memorable because they were objectively beautiful, and they were beautiful because they were meaningful.

Don’t ask me to quote the comparable passages in the 1982 Liturgy. I don’t know them, despite repeating them multiple times over the years. I’m sure they mean something, and that they meant even more to their writers, but they are not memorable. They are not beautiful, but utilitarian and ultimately banal.



I mentioned the *End of History*. I remember it well: it predated horrors that outdid the Cold War decades by an impressive margin. I can't help remembering that along with the 1929 Scottish Prayer Book, I was brought up to respect other Western traditions: liberal democracy, freedom of expression, tolerance. Those too are now outdated values. The *Young Generation* are encouraged to hold them in contempt, much as I was told that the beautiful, expressive but archaic language of the 1929 Liturgy was a thing of the past.

It might be useful to remember that things of the past might be the very things that establish the foundation of the future. And that even the *Young Generation* are capable of more than utilitarianism; that they might be open to inspiration. They might, despite the low expectations of their kind but patronising elders, both understand and appreciate the value of timeless beauty and meaning. 🙏

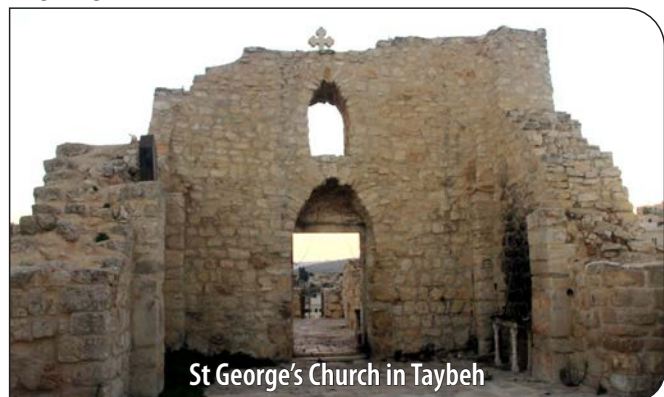
West Bank Christian villages under attack

POPE LEO and the leaders of many nations have expressed their grave concerns about the situation faced by the residents of Gaza under attack from Israel, but fears are also being raised about the situation in the Palestinian town of Taybeh, to the east of Ramallah and the last remaining town in the West Bank inhabited entirely by Christians. It faces ongoing attacks by Israeli settlers targeting residents, their property, and farmlands.

Reports in the *National Catholic Register* and *The Telegraph* reported that the area is dominated by thousands of olive trees, poultry and sheep farms, and wide fields used for seasonal crops and forms the bulk of Taybeh's total land area of about 5,900 acres. In 2019 and 2020, settlers set up illegal outposts around the town, often accompanied by arson attacks on crops, theft of equipment and deliberately releasing cattle into the fields to destroy harvests.



Father Bashar Fawadleh, parish priest of the Church of Christ the Redeemer in Taybeh, told CNA's Arabic-language news partner: *"The town, which the Gospel of John (11:54) refers to as 'Ephraim', the place Jesus withdrew to before his passion, is no longer safe for its people today... We do not live in peace but in daily fear and siege."* He added: *"Since last October, more than ten families have left Taybeh due to fear from ongoing violence and harassment."*



St George's Church in Taybeh

Fr Fawadleh also described further Israeli-imposed restrictions: *"Alongside these attacks, Israeli authorities have installed iron gates at the town's entrances, severely disrupting residents' access to work and essential services. These limitations, combined with mounting agricultural restrictions, have worsened unemployment and deepened the economic crisis, leading many to consider emigration."*

In the 5th century, a church, known today as St George's Church, was built in the east of the town. Recently Israeli settlers crept up to the ancient church and as they reached the outer walls, they crouched down to light a ring of fire. Then they revved the engines of their garden leaf blowers brought to fan the flames. Residents watched in horror as the blaze spread closer to the Church of St George. The flames were doused, but not for long. That evening, settlers returned to the town with assault rifles. The same happened the next day and three days after that.

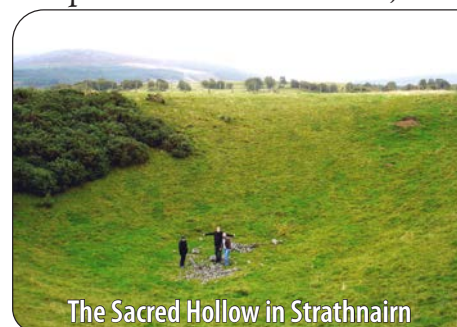
Fr Fawadleh, the parish priest, is reported in *The Telegraph* as saying: *"Each time we called the Israeli police, but they did not come. If they attack our sacred site, they can attack anything of ours."* He fears the attacks will drive Christian families from his parish. 🙏

An Episcopalian path to the Ordinariate

Fr Len looks back on the path taken by Scottish Episcopalians into the Ordinariate

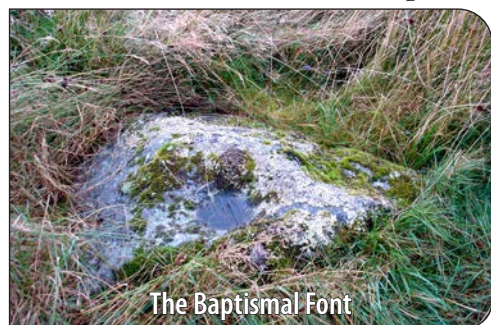
COME FROM a long line of Scottish Episcopalians, men and women who endured the days of the Penal Laws, introduced from 1560 onwards to suppress Roman Catholicism and Episcopalianism. As a result, the Ordinariate means something quite different for me and for many of us in Scotland. The Penal Laws meant that the *Episcopal Church in Scotland* faced years of persecution, similar to those imposed on the Catholic Church, meaning that we share a similar history to Catholics in Scotland. Because the Episcopal Church maintained the episcopal structure of the pre-reformation church, it remained more liturgical than the church south of the border.

Bryan Miller and I often recall stories from our ancestors of oil lamps being lit in barns in secret for illegal gatherings of Episcopalians as they awaited the arrival of their priest to say Mass. Under the *Penal Act* of 1748 an Episcopalian priest was forbidden from conducting public worship. The law stated that he could only hold worship in a private house with a congregation of no more than four people, in addition to the members of his own family.



The Sacred Hollow in Strathnairn

The story is told of a large house in Inverness where the priest stood in the central stairway with groups of four people in each room. The penalties for violating this law were harsh. A first offense could result in six months' imprisonment, while a subsequent offense could lead to being transported for life to the West Indies plantations. This law was a direct result of the association between the Episcopal Church and the Jacobite cause, which sought to restore the Stuart monarchy. The aim of the laws was to cripple the church by making it nearly impossible for people to gather openly for worship. One visible sign of these days is the 'Sacred Hollow' which can still be visited in Strathnairn in the hills above Loch Ness. It is a natural hidden amphitheatre where hundreds could gather in secret while a lookout on nearby Brin Rock kept watch for approaching Redcoats. Nearby is a boulder with a large cup-stone indent that was used as a font for Baptism.



The Baptismal Font

The lifting of restrictions imposed by the *Penal Laws* against Catholics happened in 1829 and for Scottish Episcopalians they were lifted in the same period. By this time the Episcopal Church was described by Sir Walter Scot, himself an Episcopalian, as having been reduced to "a shadow of a shade." It was estimated that only around four bishops and a few dozen priests remained. In the years that followed, the Oxford Movement had a strong influence on Scotland maintaining the liturgical life it had long fought to preserve. Today many of us in the Ordinariate in Scotland, as former Episcopalians, consider ourselves to be the 'faithful remnant' of what our ancestors struggled to remain faithful to during those years of suppression.

Before the Reformation in Scotland the church was part of the universal Catholic Church with a hierarchical structure led by bishops. The Reformation here advocated for a new form of church governance called Presbyterianism. The period from the mid-16th century until the end of the 17th was a turbulent time in Scottish religious history. The national church's governance swung back and forth between Presbyterianism and Episcopacy, often influenced by the reigning monarch's preferences.

The final break came after the *Glorious Revolution*, which saw the deposition of King James VII of Scotland (II of England) and the rise of William and Mary. Because the majority of Episcopalian Bishops and their clergy remained loyal to the deposed King, they refused to take the oath of allegiance to William and Mary. As a result, the Scottish Parliament disestablished Episcopacy and formally adopted Presbyterianism as the state church in Scotland in 1690.

The Scottish Episcopal Church, now a non-established denomination, maintained their belief in an episcopal form of church governance and continued their allegiance to the Stuart monarchy. This →

newly formed church had faced a period of persecution and legal restrictions, particularly after its members supported the Jacobite Risings to restore the Stuart dynasty.

The late Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother, herself a staunch Episcopalian, contributed to the restoration of the Stuart memorial in St Peter's Basilica during the early 1940s. The monument, near the font, commemorates the last three male members of the Stuart line: James Francis Edward Stuart ("the Old Pretender"), his sons Charles Edward Stuart ("Bonnie Prince Charlie") and Henry Benedict Stuart (Cardinal Duke of York).

South of the border the split from the Roman Catholic Church and the establishment of the Church of England happened in the 16th century during the reign of King Henry VIII as a result of his desire for a male heir. His first wife, Catherine of Aragon, had not produced a son who survived infancy so Henry sought an annulment of his marriage from Pope Clement VII so he could marry Anne Boleyn. When the Pope refused to grant the annulment Henry and Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy, severing ties with Rome and making the king the "Supreme Head of the Church of England."



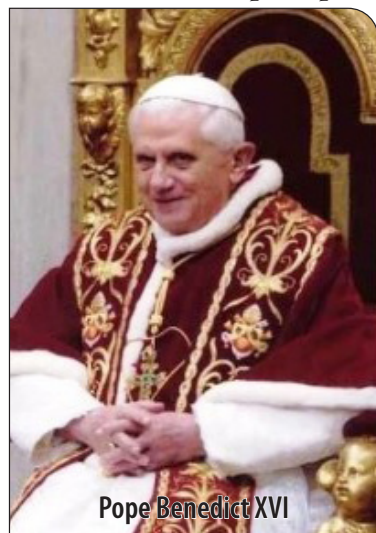
The Stuart Memorial in St Peter's

Relationships between the Episcopal Church and the Church of England had a complex history from the beginning, largely due to political and ecclesiastical issues. Indeed it was not until the passing of the *Episcopal Church (Scotland) Act 1864* by the Westminster parliament that the final barriers were removed, allowing men ordained by Episcopalian bishops to hold office in the Church of England.

Since the Reformation, clergy ordained in the Church of England had to swear an *Oath of Allegiance* to the British monarch, as the Supreme Governor of the church. This was why, when Samuel Seabury was elected as the first Bishop of the American Episcopal Church following the *Declaration of Independence* he was consecrated in Aberdeen in 1784 where he did not have to swear the Oath. It has been argued by some that this event in Scotland was the real beginning of the Anglican Communion which until then had been more closely connected with the spread of the British Empire.


The *Episcopal Church in Scotland* changed its name to *Scottish Episcopal Church* in the late 1970s to better reflect its distinct identity within the Anglican Communion. In my Episcopalian days, with connections going back to the days of the Penal Laws, I never considered myself to be 'Anglican'!

In my college days in the late 1960s and early 1970s, while training for ordination, ecumenical dialogue between the Episcopal Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland intensified significantly following the *Second Vatican Council* (1962-1965) in the Catholic Church. The hope then was for a much deeper relationship between the two, but that was all to change as the liberal agenda took hold in the Episcopal Church and throughout the Anglican Communion.



Pope Benedict XVI

In Scotland, because the Episcopal Church was numerically very small compared to the Church of England, numbers in the Ordinariate in the early days were small. Around 20 people with their pastor were received, while in England it was over 1,000 people and around 60 priests were received. For a small number of Episcopalians in Scotland, the coming of the Ordinariate was the long awaited answer to our prayers for which we owe our thanks to Pope Benedict XVI.

We rejoice in the fact that our liturgical books, *Divine Worship*, authorised by the Holy See, are the first time in history that the Catholic Church has taken into her own liturgical life, treasures found in the reformed tradition in which the Holy Spirit's work can be discerned. As Pope Benedict himself said, the rich treasures of our Anglican liturgical and musical heritage, are a "*tradition to be shared*." 

A visit to Pluscarden Abbey

Hazel Dickson was there with the Birnie folk

I AM AN ELDER at Elgin Parish Church of Scotland and I also attend the weekly ecumenical services at Birnie Kirk for Ordinariate Evensong and, on occasion, I make it to the monthly Saturday Ordinariate Mass. Our numbers and denominations vary but we have a wonderful spiritual connection through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is safe and inclusive among like-minded Christians where our slight differences in our religious belief are paled into insignificance compared to the joy and enthusiasm we share in the Risen Christ.




I am not sure how it came about, whether we invited ourselves or indeed Fr Benedict invited us, but tea and cake was mentioned and the deal was done! On Saturday 9th August, about 26 of the 'Birnie folk' as we are endearingly known amongst our Catholic family, arrived at Pluscarden Abbey for a visit. Bryan Miller was our group leader sharing his extensive knowledge of the Abbey and its history, before joining the monks for the monastic service of None. For me personally, the spiritual unity sitting listening to the Gregorian chant did certainly impact on my soul. I was sitting head bowed in the presence of our Lord, the Holy Spirit was indeed present with us. I can fully understand from the results of extensive studies on the Gregorian chant that it can lower blood pressure and help reduce depression or anxiety. It certainly did have a calming effect on my soul.

We were invited into the Choir to look closer at the pews and stained glass windows. Fr Benedict and Bryan bounced off one another with their knowledge, their sense of humour and over all their love of the hallowed ground we had the privilege to be standing in. I am sure if they were to take their 'double-act' on the road, they would be received most welcomingly. Although, it has to be noted, they were upstaged by Brother Michael popping by to announce the important news that the Abbey Shop's card payment machine was back online following a power cut, much to the amusement of our group.

As we headed through to the Lady Chapel, again another privilege for us, the duo were on top form again with their knowledge and genuine love for their surroundings. I am sure I can speak for all when I say we could have listened to many more of Fr Benedict's 'just one more thing' or 'oh, just one more before we go'. Refreshments, with delicious home bakes provided by our own Gill Garrow, were served in the Visitors' Centre. Some of us sat out in the lovely sunshine basking in our glorious surroundings. Our sincere apologies to the Brothers for disturbing their peaceful ambience with our enthusiastic chatter and laughter.

There was time to have either personal reflections in the grounds or wander round to the shop and of course, the obligatory photo-shoot. We were also able at last to see *in person* Philip Chatfield's many wonderful and life-like sculptures which we have heard so much about. God has blessed Philip with an amazing gift and we look forward to welcoming him back at Birnie soon.

This is a personal reflection from me, but I think I can speak for all when I say, it was a most joyful and uplifting experience. With grateful thanks to Fr Benedict and Bryan Miller for hosting and providing such an enjoyable afternoon. Many thanks also to the monks for their gifts of fresh produce from the garden. Our ecumenical mix was truly discerning God's way on this His sacred ground. God's Will be done! Psalm 133:1 NIV - *'How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! Amen.'* 





The Slipper Chapel

Walsingham Restored

David Chapman looks at revival of Pilgrimages to Walsingham

THE PRE-REFORMATION history of Walsingham is not the concern of this article, but readers should be aware of its outline: Richeldis' vision in about 1061, the construction at Our Lady's command of a replica of the Holy House, its rise to become a major centre of pilgrimage and its subsequent destruction in about 1538 under Henry VIII.

And so dark night fell on this glorious place

Where of all former glories there hardly was trace.

Ave, Ave, Ave Maria. Ave, Ave, Ave Maria.

Yet a thin stream of pilgrims still walked the old way

And hearts longed to see this night turned into day.


Ave, Ave, Ave Maria. Ave, Ave, Ave Maria.

(From the delightful doggerel of the Anglican Pilgrim Hymn)

Part One – The Restoration of Catholic Pilgrimage

So we come, skipping over some 350 years of history, to the end of the 19th century. In both Catholic and Anglican churches there was a slow revival of interest in pilgrimage. In Norfolk, the Catholics were first, but it was a shaky start. At that time, Little Walsingham had no Catholic church – and no Catholics! What had been once a thriving town – which is why it's bigger than Great Walsingham – had become a sleepy village and came under the 'care' of the Catholic church in King's Lynn – some 25 miles away. The church there was falling down and had to be rebuilt. The 'Mission Priest', Fr Wigglesworth, appealed for help and Fr Philip Fletcher arrived. He knew of the Walsingham Chapel at Buxted and had been an Anglican under the great Fr Wagner in Brighton. He became a Catholic, was ordained and spent his ministry promoting pilgrimage. At his suggestion, the rebuilt church at King's Lynn incorporated a replica of the Holy House of Nazareth with a statue of Our Lady of Walsingham and the first pilgrimage there took place in 1897. There was also a pilgrimage procession, organised from King's Lynn, which walked from Walsingham Station to the Slipper Chapel, a mile from Little Walsingham, in reparation for the destruction of the Shrine.

In that procession was a Miss Charlotte Boyd. She had been inspired by a visit to the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey to found the English Abbey Restoration Trust with the aim of buying and restoring ruined religious houses and returning them to use by religious communities. She tried to buy the ruined Priory at Walsingham, but had to be content with the Slipper Chapel, which she bought for £400 in 1893. This little building had been one of the chapels along the pilgrim route to Walsingham, but since the destruction of the Shrine had been in secular use, even as a cowshed, and was in a poor state. Charlotte had been an Anglican but following a retreat in Bruges became a Catholic. She wanted to restore the chapel and give it to the Benedictines. However, a religious order could not come into the diocese (at this time Northampton) without the invitation of the Bishop – and this he declined to give. The chapel was, however, given to the Downside Benedictines, was restored and a cottage built beside it. Downside wanted to organise a pilgrimage from Beccles to Walsingham in 1900. Bishop Riddell was not pleased. *"There is only one pilgrimage approved by me, that to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham at Lynn. I cannot approve of any other."* No-one wanted the Slipper Chapel, so a caretaker was appointed in 1901 to live in the cottage and to show interested visitors the chapel. Charlotte Boyd died in 1906 and never saw Mass celebrated in the place she had saved.

With a change of bishop came a change of policy. In 1931 Downside gave the Slipper Chapel to the Diocese of Northampton and in 1933 the new Bishop, Laurence Youens, was keen to establish it as once more a place of pilgrimage. The chapel at King's Lynn remained, and still is, the Pontifical Shrine, but a new shrine was created in the Slipper Chapel. In 1934 Cardinal Bourne led a pilgrimage of some 12,000 people. Starting in Norwich and travelling by train to Walsingham, a procession went to the Slipper Chapel where, with the approval of the Pope, Cardinal Bourne declared it to be the National Shrine of Our Lady in England. The pilgrimage had been restored. 

In Part Two of his article David Chapman will turn to the Anglican Shrine and Alfred Hope Patten.

*I am indebted to Fr Michael Rear's masterly book **Walsingham – Pilgrims and Pilgrimage** for the basis of this article (2nd Edition.*

Published 2019 by Gracewing. ISBN: 978 085244 944 8). If you want to know more about the 'Holy Land of Walsingham' from pre-Christian times onwards, do buy it. It is a fascinating read – definitely not dull, boring history.

St Brendan's Birnie Update

SCAFFOLDING WAS up outside the church at Birnie at the end of August to enable work to be done re-pointing the walls and all the places on the roof where the lead work and stone come together and re-pointing where necessary. This work is being done by the Kirk Session of Elgin Parish Church under the direction of Session Clerk, Hazel Dickson and under the always watchful eye of Gill Garrow. At the same time, inside the church local electrician, Sandy Duncan, was busy sorting out problems with lights as well as inspecting the wiring in the church.



We are also grateful to local blacksmith Ian Mitchell of Fogwatt Smiddy who replaced one of the outside lights which was damaged in Storm Floris in early August. He generously replaced it with a new solar powered light at his own expense. So a very big 'thank you' to the Kirk Session of Elgin Parish Church, Sandy Duncan and Ian Mitchell

Monthly Compline at Birnie

Following the success of Evensong, a request was made for a monthly Compline and because of the link with Pluscarden it was suggested that we use the Latin Monastic Order of Compline. This was a direct result of the interest in Gregorian chant sparked by the recent visit to Pluscarden by some of the Birnie folk. One of the first to 'sign up' for Compline in Latin was Hazel Dickson who is also an elder at Elgin Parish Church of Scotland. You will already have read what she said about their visit to Pluscarden, *"... joining the monks for the monastic service of None. For me personally, the spiritual unity sitting listening to the Gregorian chant did certainly impact on my soul. I was sitting head bowed in the presence of our Lord, the Holy Spirit was indeed present with us."*

Revive!


Some of the group of young folk from the Diocese of Aberdeen and from Birnie Kirk St Brendan's who were on Pilgrimage in Rome for the Jubilee, including Graham Ramsay and Connor Stephen, are bringing together an new group at Birnie. Its to be known as *Revive!*, a young 18 to 35 Catholic group which will meet monthly with the aim of learning more about the faith and promoting the enthusiasm and joy they experienced on Pilgrimage. They have chosen Birnie Kirk St Brendan's as their place to meet and to pray because of its ancient roots, the oldest place of worship in the Diocese (and perhaps even in Scotland) having been used as a place of Christian worship continually since at least 1140 when it became the first Cathedral of the Diocese of Moray.

Macmillan Coffee Morning

Following on from the great success last year of the first Macmillan Coffee Morning at Birnie Hall which raised £1,700, another is planned for Friday 26 September. It will start at 10 and continue until 12 noon. There will be a raffle, wheel of fortune and produce stall. Phillip Chatfield is going to make some stone carvings and we also hope to have with us an accordionist and perhaps also a fiddler who play for us. As always, all are welcome to come along and support Macmillan Cancer Support.



Evensong and Monthly Ordinariate Mass

Evensong and monthly Mass continue at Birnie. At Evensong every Wednesday at 7pm the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis are now sung, along with two hymns, accompanied by our organist, Maureen Woodhead. We are delighted that Maureen, who has been known to Fr Len for a number of years, now plays for Evensong and at Mass on the first Saturday of each month at 12 noon. Fr Len's first charge in the Episcopal Church was St Ninian's in Aberdeen in the late 1970s. Maureen was then a Novice at St Margaret's Convent in the city and had been sent by Mother Verity Margaret to play the organ. Maureen became a Catholic long before the Ordinariate's arrival and now lives in Forres. The organ at Birnie is rather special. It was built by J W Walker and Sons as a temporary organ for Liverpool Anglican Cathedral and was purchased for Birnie by the Revd Ronald Torrie for the reduced price of £2,000 in the early 1970s. Maureen is at present researching the history of the organ and we hope to include a report on her findings in a future Ordinariate Scotland Review. 

On Praying at Lourdes

Dr Simon Cotton recalls some of his many visits to the place where the Virgin Mary appeared to Bernadette Soubirous in 1858

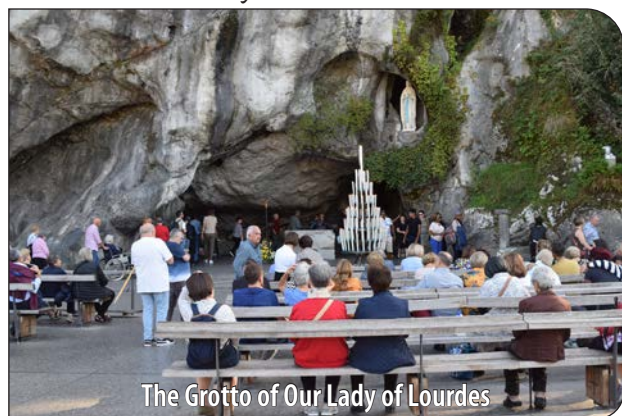
I HAVE MANY memories of Lourdes, which I first visited in 1984. There's the year that I called in at Luz S Sauveur, just to the south, to buy a toy Marmotte for a friend; then I drove the few miles to Lourdes, arriving at the shrine for the 5 pm procession of the sick. It was extremely hot and humid and I thought of the brancardiers and handmaids who take the sick everywhere. As I walked down to the office to pay for Masses to be said for three friends,



The Basilica of Our Lady of Lourdes

I was nearly knocked over by young people coming out of the confessionals, laughing and crying with joy....

Saint John Paul II was the first Pope to visit Lourdes, coming here for the Assumption in 1983 and again, twenty one years later, when he was a sick man. The Pope arrived in Lourdes for his last visit on August 14th 2004. That day, I was staying at the Abbey of Bec, at the other end of France, in Normandy. Before the Vigil Mass, a French friend started dialling up on his mobile phone but as I remarked, '*Patrick, le Pape, il est occupé. Il ne peut pas parler avec vous.*' The next day, the



The Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes

Pope addressed 200,000 of the faithful, 150 bishops and 1,000 priests, saying that he would never return to Lourdes: '*I feel with emotion that I have reached the end of my pilgrimage,*' he said.

That year, I reached Lourdes a few days after the Pope's visit, on August 24th. I turned my Mini Cooper off the autoroute at Tarbes; taking off the Bach that had accompanied me across the length of France, I put on *The Bob Dylan Songbook*, track 6, so I drove into Lourdes with the *Flamin' Groovies* pounding out '*Absolutely Sweet Marie*'. I reached my hotel, parked and checked in, then walked down to the grotto to light a few candles. I was there to pray for friends, particularly Maria, a French friend, who was dying.




Mass in the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes

I had been in Lourdes two years earlier, praying for Maria then, and sending her a card to let her know. She replied (I translate):- '*You know, when I was eighteen I went with my mother to pray for the sick at Lourdes. I could not have known that one day someone would go to pray for me in the same place. Life is very surprising, isn't it?*' I try to get to Lourdes every year that I can, remembering my promise to pray for Maria, who died the day after I reached Lourdes, August 25th 2004. Of course, I request a Mass to be offered for her soul.



The Basilica of Our Lady of Lourdes

There is no best time to visit Lourdes. Go in January, when it is deserted, with a trickle of pilgrims, and you can perhaps more easily concentrate on the business in hand. Go in August, and it is bedlam, but you get the solidarity of praying with tens of thousands of Catholics from all over the world. 

Ecumenical: the inner reality binding the Catholic Church

In the first of updated articles from early editions of *The Portal*, Fr Mark Woodruff confronts some myths about the Catholic Church



WHEN THE ORDINARIATES for Latin Catholics worshipping with Anglican liturgical patrimony were announced, a protest from some Orthodox arrived at Rome: *"This is Uniatism – you agreed that it was a thing of the past."* Uniatism is the proselytisation of Christians away from their own Churches and uniting them with yours through a rival organisation, in which they can keep their accustomed rule of worship; it is not real unity. Is that what the Ordinariates are?




The Roman Catholic Church is blamed for Uniatism the most, but all Churches seem to have practised it. Protestant missionaries in 19th century India, instead of supporting the small, ancient Churches of the 'Nasrani' - the Malabar Nazarenes who trace their apostolic succession to St Thomas' mission out of first century Syria - persuaded some to alter their liturgy and faith to embrace Reformation doctrine. Thus the Mar Thoma Church, now associated with the Anglican Communion, took form. This merely followed the example of Portuguese colonists in the 16th century, who splintered the single Church of St Thomas's Christian's Church, when they tried to impose the previously unknown Latin rite as well as Roman Catholic jurisdiction to the exclusion of existing bishops. Instead of restoring the Catholic unity of the early Church, they caused divisions that are evident to this day.

Equally, the Russian Tsars ran Churches for targeting Catholics and Lutherans, and even today there are "Western Rite Orthodox" Churches for drawing in Catholics and Anglicans. A dark episode in Catholic history concerns the missionaries to Copts under Ottoman Muslim rule in Egypt, pressuring people to accept the protection of "Roman obedience" in place of their own Pope, direct successor of St Mark, on the polemical ground that his Church was heretical (which we now accept was due to semantic misunderstanding rather than defective teaching). In mid-20th century Russia, when the Orthodox Church on its knees was most in need of Catholic help, a Vatican commission tried to recruit bishops as fifth columnists to bring it into clandestine union with Rome. No wonder some Orthodox remain suspicious of Catholic ecumenism. Each of these adventures brought division and weakened Churches instead of relieving tensions. Nor were they - at first - about evangelisation to those who had never encountered Christ.

In 1993, however, the Catholic-Orthodox Joint International Dialogue's "Balamand Declaration" stated that Uniatism - whoever does it - belongs in the past, with no place either in mission or as a means to unity. The twenty three non-Roman Catholic Churches - Eastern in rite and tradition, but no less Catholic - felt criticised, as if Rome now felt they should not have existed in the first place. Yet several had come into unity with the See of Peter not by proselytism, but as whole Churches. Once, they had been isolated by history, politics or frontiers; then they were glad to recover a former, lost, unity. Their witness is that Churches do not need to be "separated brethren" in order to preserve their patrimony and identity. These include the 1,000-year-old Church of Kyiv, alive today in the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church (now revived after decades of USSR suppression), America's Ruthenian Church, and the very small Belarusian and Russian Catholic Churches. (The Russian Orthodox Church is also a descendant of the Kyivan Church). Then there are the Melkite Greek-Catholic Church, with its almost 2,000 years of history present across the Middle East, the Chaldean Church in Iraq, and the Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara Churches which have repaired some of the damage to the ancient one body of Christ in India.

In forthcoming articles, we will see how today's 19 million Eastern Catholics worldwide deepen the universality of the Catholic Church, not by being the same as Roman Catholics but by using diversity to form unity, as distinctive Churches, yet in a common household of faith. Each adds its ➔

own venerable rite and tradition. Thus all those in communion with Peter's church at Rome practice an ecumenical way of living: the superabundance of diversity is no more than the superabundance of unity. Thus we may answer those who say that the Ordinariates are "not proper Catholic," or else "divisive, like Uniates." Instead the embrace of their patrimony makes clearer how the one apostolic truth holds the many in communion in the rich fullness of one faith, one body." 

Fr Mark Woodruff is Catholic Co-Secretary of the Catholic-Orthodox Pastoral Consultation in England and Chairman of the Society of St John Chrysostom

Saint John Henry Newman

on The Indwelling Spirit


"Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Romans 8:9

THIS WONDERFUL change from darkness to light, through the entrance of the Spirit into the soul, is called Regeneration, or the New Birth; a blessing which, before Christ's coming, not even Prophets and righteous men possessed, but which is now conveyed to all men freely through the Sacrament of Baptism.



By nature we are children of wrath; the heart is sold under sin, possessed by evil spirits; and inherits death as its eternal portion. But by the coming of the Holy Ghost, all guilt and pollution are burned away as by fire, the devil is driven forth, sin, original and actual, is forgiven, and the whole man is consecrated to God. And this is the reason why He is called "the earnest" of that Saviour who died for us, and will one day give us the fullness of His own presence in heaven.

Hence, too, He is our "seal unto the day of redemption," for as the potter moulds the clay, so He impresses the Divine image on us members of the household of God. And His work may truly be called Regeneration; for though the original nature of the soul is not destroyed, yet its past transgressions are pardoned once and for ever, and its source of evil stanching and gradually dried up by the pervading health and purity which has set up its abode in it.

Instead of its own bitter waters, a spring of health and salvation is brought within it; not the mere streams of that fountain, "clear as crystal," which is before the Throne of God, but, as our Lord says, "a well of water in him," in a man's heart, "springing up into everlasting life." Hence He elsewhere describes the heart as giving forth, not receiving, the streams of grace: "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of Living Water." St John adds, "this spake He of the Spirit" (*John iv. 14; vii. 38, 39*). Such is the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost within us, applying to us individually the precious cleansing of Christ's blood in all its manifold benefits.  (from *Parochial and Plain Sermons: Sermon 19*)

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