



ARCHDIOCESE OF ST ANDREWS AND EDINBURGH
Archdiocesan Newsletter

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Communicated directly to priests and religious of Archdiocese and Secretaries of Deanery Pastoral Councils by email from the Chancery of the Archdiocese. Enquiries please directly to the Chancery at 0131-623 8902. Please ensure that there is ongoing circulation of the contents of the Archdiocesan Newsletter either by email or by printed copies from the email for parishioners in general.

LETTER FROM CARDINAL:

I begin my words to you in this edition of our Newsletter by thanking you most sincerely for your greetings for St Patrick's Day and my birthday. I deeply appreciate the cards sent and the Masses and prayers offered for me and for my intentions.

We now enter the holiest time of our Church's year, as we celebrate Holy Week and then the great Feast of Easter. Travelling around the Deaneries of our Archdiocese during the season of Lent, has given me the opportunity at Lenten Station Masses of meeting a great cross-section of our people, especially the members of the Elect preparing for their reception of the great Easter Sacraments. I thank those many people in our RCIA teams, who have helped them on their Lenten journey – as also those involved in Parish, Deanery and the Archdiocesan Pastoral Councils, working together ever more closely as we are implementing our plans for moving forward in our Archdiocese, with our parishes working ever more closely together in clusters.

In particular I look forward to our Chrism Mass when, of course, as priests and bishop, we renew our commitment to priestly service – remembering also the service rendered to us by our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, who has had his own particular crosses to carry at this time. Of course, we prayed for the Pope in a very special way at our national celebration for the Fourth Anniversary of his Pontificate in the presence of Archbishop Faustino Sainz Muñoz, the Apostolic Nuncio and a variety of guests, including the British Ambassador to the Holy See, members of the Consular Corps from all over the world and, of course, members of the European Parliament, of the Westminster Parliament and of our own Scottish Parliament.

With my kindest regards and my renewed Easter greetings to you all. May you be strengthened to live your faith as a result of contact with the Risen Christ this joyful season of Eastertide.

(Note late news of deaths on page 7 of this Newsletter.)

1. EASTER IN PARISHES:

I would ask you to pass on my own greetings to all in your parishes as you celebrate the great Feast of Easter at local level. I also remind you of the following:

(1) Easter Play in Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh:

For the fifth year, the Easter Play will be performed in the spectacular surroundings of the West Princes Street Gardens. Previously, there had only been an afternoon performance of this Easter Play. However, this year there will be two performances, one at 10.30 am and the second at 2.30 pm – each performance is free of charge. Unfortunately, this year the closure of Princes Street will mean that passersby will not be able to watch the play from the street – however, as you approach West Princes Street Gardens there will be many volunteers directing you as to where to go for this magnificent and prayerful performance.

(2) Retreat in Daily Life: Easter to Pentecost 2009:

Continue your Easter joy by taking part in a 'Retreat in Daily Life'. This is described as a 'deep breath in the midst of life's busyness' and 'a chance to take a fresh look at yourself spiritually'. This is a retreat experience in everyday life with no need to travel away from home. All you need is a desire to know yourself and God more, a willingness to pray as you are able, and time to reflect with a trained prayer guide. These retreats are open to all, flexible times over five weeks 20 April – 29 May 2009 and facilitated by the Epiphany Group rooted in the Ignatian tradition. For further information/booking, please contact Elizabeth White at: 0131-467 6482 or e.l.white@lineone.net.

2. ONGOING CELEBRATIONS:

(1) Canonisation of Foundress of Little Sisters of the Poor:

We rejoice with the Little Sisters of the Poor at the forthcoming canonisation of their foundress, Blessed Jeanne Jugan.

The canonisation will take place in Rome by Pope Benedict XVI on **Sunday 11 October 2009** and will be followed by a Thanksgiving Mass in the Basilica of St Mary Major on **Monday 12 October 2009**, following on an audience with the Pope.

Details of local celebrations in Scotland will be released in due course following on the canonisation.

(2) Church of the Sacred Heart, Lauriston:

The well known and magnificent church of the Sacred Heart, Lauriston, celebrates 150 years as a parish from 1859 – 2009.

The opening of the year of celebration begins on **Friday 31 July 2009**, with a Solemn Mass celebrated by myself in Sacred Heart Church, Lauriston at 6.30 pm. A series of events has been planned for throughout – leaflets giving all information or exhibitions and concerts, as well as other events, are available from Sacred Heart Church, Lauriston or by contacting Mrs Barbara Conboy on 0131-466 0045.

(3) Archdiocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes:

Adverts for our Archdiocesan Pilgrimage with various additional pilgrimages to Lourdes taking place around that date for youth or other groups have been issued in our previous Archdiocesan Newsletters.

Please note that the Access Travel Pilgrimage Leaflet and Application Form can be downloaded from the Lourdes website by clicking on the Lourdes 2009 page.

(4) Advance Notice of Lourdes Play:

A musical play, entitled: 'Vision' which tells the story of St Bernadette of Lourdes through the eyes of young people in Lourdes today, will be performed in Edinburgh during the time of the Edinburgh International Festival – with the play being performed by the St Ives Youth Theatre from St Ives,

Cambridgeshire in the Diocese of East Anglia. The highly recommended play will be staged at the Roxy Art House between **10 and 15 August 2009**.

Further details can be seen by visiting: www.siyt.co.uk and www.visionthemusical.co.uk – or by contacting Jonathan Salt, the Managing Director at: 01480 493004 or 07939 213 77 or www.ojemba.com.

3. LITURGY COMMISSION:

The Liturgy Commission Music Convener, Dr Evelyn Stell, held an Organ Day on Saturday 14 March 2009 in St Columba's, Upper Gray Street, Edinburgh at 10.45 am for 11.00 am until 3.30 pm. Leaders were Simon Nieminski and Brian Gill – for all skill levels. Enquiries and details of future events may be made through Evelyn Stell on 01506 510 366 or evelyn.stell@forthinpraise.co.uk.

Further information can be obtained from: 'Forth in Praise Music' published by the Liturgy Commission Music Advisory Group.

4. L'ARCHE COMMUNITY:

Ms Judith Ellis, the Office Manager of L'Arche in England asks: "Will you help us in our search for Assistants to live and work in L'Arche Communities sharing life with adults with learning disabilities? L'Arche Communities throughout the country and indeed the world are enriched by the individuals who work as Assistants and they in turn are challenged and changed by their experience".

For further information about L'Arche and what the life of an Assistant entails, much information is on the website at: www.larche.org.uk. Alternatively, if you wish to discuss the possibilities direct, please call FREEPHONE 0800 917 1337 or email info@larche.org.uk.

5. CHARITY REQUESTS:

A community of Sisters from the St Elizabeth Convent in Minsk Diocese of Belarus have written to me introducing their community – the

Sisters produce candles, ceramics, paint icons, make priests' vestments, embroideries, woodwork and metalwork – and from time to time visit Great Britain selling their goods and have been to a number of abbeys, particularly to Nunraw Abbey and Pluscarden Abbey. They ask permission to contact parishes in our Archdiocese enquiring about the possibility of arranging stalls with their products after Mass. Consequently, your priests or those responsible for stalls in your parishes, might give you further information about these sisters in due course.

7. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

(1) National Prayer Breakfast for Scotland:

The National Prayer Breakfast for Scotland will this year take place on **Wednesday 27 May 2009** commencing at 7.00 am and concluding at 9.00 am. This event this year will take place in the Houston House Hotel, Uphall, West Lothian. If you wish further information, you may book at www.npbs.info or email: npbs@innessculthorp.co.uk; or if you have further enquiries, phone: 0131-443 1031.

(2) One World Group at St Ninian's:

This year the One World Group at St Ninian's Parish, Edinburgh will celebrate their 25th annual May Appeal. The opening event is a Flower Festival. Parishioners from many neighbouring parishes, as well as members of the local churches, are involved in putting together floral arrangements for what promises to be a wonderful event. Funds raised from this year's appeal will be distributed among the following projects: Wateraid, Lifeline, Scotpep, Maggie's Centre. All will be welcome on **1 May 2009 from 3.00 pm – 8.30 pm and 2 May 2009 from 11.00 am – 4.30 pm.**

(3) Training Course for Billings Method:

There will be a training course for those interested in the Billings Method from **16 – 19 April 2009** at the Schoenstatt Conference and Retreat Centre, Campsie Glen, Glasgow, G66 7AB. This will be a

unique opportunity for new trainees, including health professionals, who wish to become Billings Ovulation Method™ Teachers, and for those existing teachers to up-date their knowledge in the light of the most recent scientific and practical findings in the field of Natural Family Planning.

Further Information and Registration Forms may be obtained from: Fertility Care Scotland, 196 Clyde Street, Glasgow, G1 4JY or phone 0141-221 0858; Email: info@fertilitycare.org.uk

(4) 500th Anniversary of Birth of John Calvin:

A conference marking the 500th anniversary of the birth of John Calvin will be held in Peebles from **10 – 12 July 2009** at venues including Peebles Old Parish Church and St Andrews Leckie, with speakers including Professor Donald MacLeod, Professor David Fergusson, Professor Alasdair Heron and Father Henry O'Brien, a priest of the Diocese of Motherwell. Further details may be obtained from: www.calvin09peebles.org.uk or Peebles Old Parish Church, PO Box 13814, Peebles, EH4 8WU.

8. USE OF EDEN SPRINGS WATER COOLERS:

Some users of the Gillis Centre may be aware that we have recently changed the supplier of water coolers there, from Eden Springs to AquaAid. My thanks to members of Justice & Peace groups in the archdiocese for alerting me to some of the ethical issues concerning Eden Springs water. If your parish needs to use bottled water I recommend that you consider AquaAid, whose water comes from the Lammermuirs and whose profits go to providing water pumps in rural villages in Africa. See www.aquaid.co.uk for more information about them.

9. JUSTICE AND PEACE MATTERS – REBUILDING OF RWANDA:

As you know, there was a horrific genocide in the country of Rwanda in 1994. Following on that genocide, I was able to visit Rwanda in the company of Paul Chitnis, the Chief Executive of SCIAF and my official photographer, Paul McSherry, in January 2004. To commemorate the tenth anniversary of the genocide a rhododendron bush and accompanying plaque were placed in the front garden of St Bennet's.

The Honorary Consul for Rwanda in Scotland, Professor Gerda Siann, has been in contact with me, as this is now the fifteenth anniversary of the genocide. She is hoping that some schools and churches in the Diocese will contact her in order to make a contribution to the ongoing reconstruction of Rwanda. The information from her is contained further on in this Newsletter.

10. NEWS FROM THE CATHEDRAL NEWSLETTER:

Many people have been intensely worried about what they have read in the press concerning the development of the St James Centre and the considerable area of land in front of our Cathedral. I will continue to keep you up to date with this project. See overleaf for further information.

11. MEETING OF G20 IN LONDON – STATEMENT FROM RELIGIOUS LEADERS:

I have shared with various religious leaders in the United Kingdom in signing a communiqué to the G20 leaders, as they prepare to meet in London – trying to draw some important points to their attention.

12. DATE FOR NEXT ISSUE:

Any notifications or material for the next edition of the Archdiocesan Newsletter are to be with the Cardinal's secretary by **Friday 12 June 2009** for publication on **Tuesday 16 June 2009**.

STATEMENT FROM PROFESSOR GERDA SIANN, HONORARY CONSUL GENERAL OF RWANDA IN SCOTLAND:

“Since the dreadful events of 1994, Rwanda has been reconstructing in a very dynamic manner and has made substantial progress in the social, economic, health and educational sectors. This reconstruction has been underpinned by strong commitments to democracy, the rule of law and good governance.

I am now hoping that some of the schools in the diocese will be able to follow the example of the links with Rwandan schools that have already been made by St Mary's RC Primary School (Leith Links). Considerable assistance can be given to such links by the British Council through the Global Schools Partnership Scheme (the web site address for this is www.globalgateway.org.uk) and both Roddy McDougall of the British Council in Edinburgh (Roddy.McDougall@britishcouncil.org, phone number 0131 524 5769) and I (gerdasiann@yahoo.co.uk, phone 0131 554 4919, 11 Rosslyn Crescent Edinburgh EH6 5AT) are happy to give more information. If any schools are interested in such a link. I will also be happy to take information, photos etc out with me to Rwandan schools when I go to Rwanda in May

I am also hoping that there may also be some interest in an income generation scheme I am trying to start in schools in the poorer areas of Rwanda. This scheme would be carried out in partnership with a Rwandan agriculturalist Dr Juvenal Nshimiyimana of ISEA, the Rwandan University which is concerned with agriculture.

The idea is to set up a prototype scheme in one or two schools for raising poultry. This would serve at least two purposes. First, eggs would be available for those pupils who are most needy in order to augment their diet. Second eggs could be sold to the local community in order to generate income for the schools. Of course such a scheme, which has the support of HE The Rwandan Ambassador, would be conducted in a fully transparent manner and in conjunction with the relevant stake holders in Rwanda.

I would be most grateful to hear from any individuals, churches or schools that may be interested so that they can be involved in such a scheme from the outset and so that I can profit from their good advice.” (Contact: gerdasiann@yahoo.co.uk, phone 0131 554 4919, 11 Rosslyn Crescent Edinburgh EH6 5AT.)

STATEMENT REGARDING DEVELOPMENT OF ST JAMES CENTRE AND SURROUNDINGS FROM CATHEDRAL NEWSLETTER:

The development of the St James' Centre as well as the tram project will continue to cause us some disruption in the time ahead. We have recently received details of the way in which the Council is planning for the development and this is causing some concern. This present notification is to keep the Cathedral parishioners abreast of those plans. At its recent meeting the Council outlined a plan for the building of an hotel directly in front of the Cathedral. This would have the effect of blocking the front of the Cathedral from view and blocking the entry to the redeveloped St James Centre. In a previous time there were buildings directly opposite the Cathedral but their removal in the seventies created a splendid open space that allows a quality area at the top of Leith Walk and creates an open area bounded by the Omni centre, the Cathedral and Picardy Place. This was seen as a great advance at the time. To place a hotel there at this present time would remove that. Alternative proposals and sitings are available and discussions are ongoing with the City authorities. We will keep the details available as we know more.

RELIGIOUS LEADERS COMMUNIQUÉ TO G20 LEADERS SIGNED BY CARDINAL O'BRIEN AND OTHER RELIGIOUS LEADERS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM:

We write as religious leaders who share a belief in God and the dignity of human life. Our response to this dignity must be to act justly in all our relationships. Our communities include poor, marginalised and vulnerable people at home and abroad.

We bring our concerns to the attention of the leaders of the G20 as they prepare to meet in London under the chairmanship of the Rt Hon Gordon Brown, MP, Prime Minister to consider their response to a crisis that is world-wide.

The international community has made important commitments to the developing world. The Millennium Development Goals are of fundamental importance and must not be forgotten, even at this time of crisis. We remind the leaders of the G20 that even at these difficult times, they must hold fast to the commitments they have made to the world's poorest people. We hold that promises made to the poor are especially sacred.

Some aspects of this crisis will require technical economic solutions. However those solutions alone will not be enough to address all the questions that we face. At the roots of this crisis lie important moral issues. We are concerned for people and the work they do. We need to consider both the rich and the poor and to examine our own expectations and how realistic they are. We call on all to commit to justice.

People who have lost jobs, savings, or homes, or who now live with constant worry of what the future might bring are in need of immediate help. They deserve a future where their work is sustainable. We also need to find ways to enable poorer countries to trade their way to prosperity without creating new centres of urban poverty as work moves around the globe. We must root our patterns of work in our understanding of human dignity.

When we spend now, we have to pay later. This also applies when we use up the resources of the natural environment. The commitment to cut carbon emissions and so to slow the devastating effects of man-made climate change has increased substantially. This must not be forgotten or postponed. We call on the leaders of the G20 to hold firm to the commitments they have made.

Many people are suffering as a result of the economic crisis we face. Indeed, the World Bank estimates that 53 million more people could fall into absolute poverty as a result of the crisis. The likelihood is that more will face significant hardship before it comes to an end, and those who are already poor suffer the most. The leaders of the G20 must look at the faces of the poor around the world and act with justice, think with compassion, and look with hope to a sustainable vision of the future.

The G20 leaders must do everything in their power to recover stability in their economies. We pray for them, that they may do so to protect the vulnerable from injustice and respect the integrity of the commitments they made in easier times.

LATE NEWS OF TWO DEATHS:

(1) Death of Monsignor John James McMeel, retired priest of Archdiocese:

The late Monsignor John McMeel died peacefully in the Victoria Infirmery, Kirkcaldy on Thursday 26 March 2009 after a few days illness there.

Father John was initially assistant in a number of parishes of our Archdiocese: in St Andrew's, Ravelston, St Patrick's, Edinburgh, and in Musselburgh. He was then appointed as parish priest to Duns and Eyemouth, where he served from 1965 until 1969 and then appointed to St Paul's, Glenrothes from 1969 until his retirement in 1997. His life was one long ministry of service of God and of his people. Many priests have spoken to me of the priestly example which he gave to them and I myself, then a young man in St Columba's Parish in Edinburgh, remember going to St Patrick's nearby to learn from something of the priestly example of John McMeel.

When he did retire to Cupar in Fife, John remembered that first and foremost he was still a priest living in retirement – priesthood came first and then retirement. His retirement home became for him a haven in which he could still celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass day by day, sharing that sacrifice with some of those who are able to come to join him; it was a place where the Rosary was prayed by him and those who shared something of his life; and it was a place from which he could continue his magnificent outreach of love and writing to his family in Ireland.

Having celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his Ordination to the Priesthood in St Paul's in Glenrothes in 1995, he celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of his Ordination quietly in his retirement home, with Bishop Donal and his close family and friends.

I remember visiting him shortly after his Diamond Jubilee on a Sunday on my way to Confirmations elsewhere. I intruded as he was celebrating Mass with some of his friends. He immediately asked me to sit down and to share in the Mass with him as he proceeded to break the bread of the Word of God, lead his little congregation in the Prayers of the Faithful, and then we united our prayer in the great prayer of Christ in those beautiful words of Consecration and then Holy Communion. I cannot think of a more memorable Diamond Jubilee that I have ever celebrated.

Having enjoyed a long and basically health lifestyle for some 88 years, preparing to celebrate the 65th anniversary of his priestly ordination in this coming June, John was quite simply increasingly tired. I am sure that his going to hospital must have been a relief for him so near the end of his life and he quietly passed to Almighty God on Thursday 26 March 2009.

Along with his nephew, Bishop Donal McKeown, Assistant Bishop of Down and Connor in Ireland, Father Gerry Hand, present parish priest of St Paul's, Glenrothes and many priests of our Archdiocese including, of course, the Diocese of Dunkeld, I was privileged to celebrate the funeral Mass of Monsignor John in St Paul's, Glenrothes on Thursday 2 April 2009 before his remains were taken by Bishop Donal and his family to Ireland for burial in the family plot there.

(2) Death of Mother Anne, Carmelite Monastery, Dysart, Fife:

Mother Anne died peacefully in the Carmelite Monastery, Dysart on Tuesday 31 March 2009 at 5.20 pm. Mother Anne had been ailing since Christmas and the medical staff, doctors and district nurses, as well as the Sisters, were all amazed that she had lived on for so long. The death of Mother Anne was the end of an era for Dysart Carmel – with Mother Anne being in the 70th year of her religious profession and the 102nd year of her age. Her funeral will be celebrated on Monday 6 April 2009 in the Carmel at Dysart. A further tribute will be paid in the next Newsletter.