
St Peter's Magazine

Summer 2016

Issue 6





Table of Contents

Parish Priest: Monsignor Francis Kerr	3
Editorial: Caroline Moffat	3
St Vincent de Paul	3
SCIAF Report: Anne-Marie Douglas	4
And another Bloomer from a Church Newsletter	5
St Peter's Church First Open Doors Weekend: Pat Napier	6
Holy Humour	7
The Story of the Miraculous Medal: Ivor Clarke	8
St Patrick's Day Guinness Fruit Loaf: Annie Royan	9
Dresden Delights: Peter Nicholson	10-11
Grandpa and Grandma: as seen by our youngsters	12-14
A Christmas Story: Blessed Frederic Ozanam: Ian McCafferty	15
Praying with the Heart	16-17
New Dawn Conference: Jacqueline Heron	18-20

I am delighted to discover that the Parish Magazine is now in its sixth edition!

It has such a variety of articles from young and old and in between!

It is edifying to find that there is a substantial contribution of the spiritual and that this is balanced well with the amusing.

Congratulations to all our contributors and many thanks to Caroline and Ian for their efforts to produce this edition in time for summer.

Very Rev. Monsignor Francis Canon Kerr,
Parish Priest

Editorial

Caroline Moffat

Once again, thank you to all those who have contributed to this Issue of our Parish Magazine. And once again our younger parishioners have made a significant contribution, this time with images, in words and/or pictures of their grandparents. I was struck by the fact that, quite independently, three contributors have submitted articles about, or which make reference to, St Vincent de Paul. (See pages 3, 8 and 15). Perhaps the message of St Vincent de Paul, to provide practical help to those in need, is resonating more clearly today under the influence of Pope Francis and his insistence on God's mercy for all. We also have interesting and informative reflections on holidays by several parishioners. Perhaps you would like to comment on an experience you have had, either on holiday, watching a film or dvd, or reading a book. If so please send your contribution to caroline@moffats.eu or give a hard copy to one of the pass keepers at the back of the church and I will keep them for the next issue.

Saint Vincent de Paul

Extract from The Magnificat, July 2015 edition

Reproduced at the request of a family in the parish with the permission of 'Magnificat' www.magnificat.co.uk

Founder (1581 - 1660)

Born of French peasants, Vincent was ordained a diocesan priest in 1600. While assigned to the parish of Châtillon-les-Dombres, he was moved by the needs of poor families to organise a parish effort of ongoing and consistent help, the Servants of the poor, a confraternity of lay women.

By 1629, the confraternities had multiplied and spread to Paris where, as the "Ladies of Charity", they provided the first widespread organised charity the city had ever seen. Yet, frequently, the wealthy women of the confraternity lacked the know-how to cook meals, clean homes, bandage wounds - the concrete help that the poor needed. Seeing the need for a new congregation, Vincent asked Louise de Marillac to begin training young girls who wanted to give their lives to this work. Unlike other women religious, who pursued holiness

in the enclosure of the convent, the Daughters of Charity would become holy through their work with the homeless, the orphans, the destitute. "When you leave your prayer to care for a sick person, you leave God for God: to care for a sick person *is* to pray," Vincent said.

A great preacher of missions, Vincent also established the Congregation of the Missions (the Vincentians) to preach the Gospel to the poor. He died in 1660 and has been declared the universal patron saint of works of charity.

Eternal Father, through the intercession of Saint Vincent de Paul, pour forth your blessings on all who labour in their communities to relieve the sufferings of others.

SCIAF Report

Anne-Marie Douglas

This year's WEE BOX appeal focused on the beautiful country of Ethiopia and more specifically Borana in the south. Among other stories, we heard from Carfi Sara and his children, who appeared on the WEE BOX and were helped by SCIAF. Carfi told us he had been paralysed by poverty but with a little support from Scotland he has been able to turn his life around.

These stories were shared with parishioners who responded very generously during our very successful Lenten fund raising appeals.

We raised from the various events held, and from the Wee Boxes returned, a total of £2630 which has been sent to SCIAF. This amount will of course have been doubled by UK Aid.

Photos of some of the events which helped raise this money:





And another Bloomer from a Church Newsletter:

This evening at 7pm there will be hymn singing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

St Peter's Church - First Open Doors Weekend 26-27 September 2015

Pat Napier

Most of Edinburgh's adult population have visited the rarely open buildings during the city's ever-growing Open Doors events held at the end of September. Now, 25 years later, people still come out with undiminished enthusiasm and the initial day has grown into a weekend. The new entries to the brochures are keenly sought out, often as many visitors' start-off venue.

My first involvement came in a broadcast email from Bruce Royan letting the recipients know that the idea had been born, seeking reactions and proposing an approach for possible acceptance by the Open Doors committee. So far, so good. Having worked with Bruce before, I knew that if he's going to take it on, we'd have a terrific team – and – that it would all come to pass. My own verdict: let's go for it!

However, as a 'newbie' venue, putting your own building on show was a very scary thing. The amount and complexity of things to do beforehand grew from the size of the Braid Hill to Everest. Bruce plunged into pre-planning, gathering the best folk for the aspects of the work plan and then sweet talked them into accepting the suggestions. A first meeting took place, well before the Open Doors formal permission came through. In due course the plan turned into successful application.

Finally, the weekend arrived. The weather was kind, all was in place, last-minute panics were soothed, our volunteers had everything they needed to feel in reasonable command, should they be asked questions. We had even prepared two tours: exterior and interior in case of bad weather. Now all that was needed were the visitors. Would they come? Or not?

Then the first wave of visitors came in and, before we could take that in, our volunteers swung into action. The tours began for those who wanted that and information for the independent ones who preferred that way. Whenever I looked around, there was a buzz about the afternoon with that quiet air of subdued reverence and interested discovery.

Our Parish Room was all set up for refreshments and restful recharging of the batteries – plus – a brand new innovation: a stunning rolling slide show of the history, development and important artefacts to be seen in situ next door. Both days were filled with visitors; some indeed were so keen that they had queued even before opening time.

So where did I fit in? 1975 was designated the Year of Architecture. I was an Open University student doing the very first History of Architecture and Design course whose major component was a student-chosen project, to be researched, written and completed in 6 weeks while also completing the rest of the course. So, no pressure then!

There was a date span for a building choice: 1890-1929. But which to choose? From the day I'd walked through St Peter's Church doors in 1962 to hear Sunday Mass, I'd been *fascinated* by what I saw and felt while in this most unusual interior. I knew *nothing* about

this church and now, 13 years later, I still knew nothing. But this church was slap bang right in the middle of the dates. How could I write 5,000 words on this wee church? Could I find enough material to justify this choice?

So I met with my Supervisor, ran my thoughts past her and asked if it could possibly be acceptable. It was very, very acceptable (for she knew the story behind its existence) and I didn't. We decided to settle on the work of the architect; and I had to craft the question that I would ask so as to tell the story. Fortunately, the question was good and it led to an exciting, fascinating journey.

My wee church had an amazing story to tell and far from needing to pad anything out, I had to have special permission to write what I needed to tell the story. And what a story it was! It was stunning, very important and truly unique.

Now, our team was about to tell this story publicly for the first time. To all the visitors who would come to hear it while absorbing what they'd see around them. My task would be to create a way to document the rich, complex strands that make St Peter's Church unique. And to find a way to train our welcoming staff to answer the visitors' questions.

I want to say a heartfelt THANK YOU to every single one of Bruce Royan's team. I was privileged to work with this 'All Star' cast of specialists, many of whom I didn't know but now hope to call friends. Without their patience, good natures and eagle eyes I couldn't have played my small part.

Holy Humour recommended by Anne-Marie Douglas

Wishful Thinking

Three good friends died in a car accident and went to heaven.

During their orientation interview, the angel asked them, "When your friends and family are looking down at you in your coffin at your funeral, what would you like to hear them say?"

"Well," said the first man, "I think I'd like to hear them say that he was a great doctor of the time, and a good husband."

"That's very good," said the angel. He turned to the second one and said, "And what would you like to hear your family and friends say as they look at you in your coffin?"

She thought for a minute, then said, "I'd like to hear them say that she was a good mother, and a good teacher to the children of tomorrow."

"That's a good answer too," said the angel. Turning to the third, he said, "And what would you like to hear your loved ones say as they're looking at you in your coffin?"

Without hesitation he said, "I'd like to hear them say, 'Look, he's still breathing!'"

The Story of the Miraculous Medal

Ivor Clarke

An essential part of every visit to Paris is, for us, not the Eiffel Tower or the Louvre; not a romantic Seine Cruise; but a bus trip to the rue du Bac- more specifically, to the Convent of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul situated towards the end of this long street that runs southward from the Pont Royal. Thousands of pilgrims come here from all over the world every week to visit the Chapel of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal.



It was in this chapel that a young novice, Catherine Labouré, witnessed a series of three apparitions of Our Lady. During the second of these apparitions, in November 1830, Mary appeared to be standing on a half-globe, with a serpent under her foot and rays of light streaming from her down-stretched hands. As Catherine watched, within an oval around this image appeared the words, "Ô Marie conçue sans péché priez pour nous qui avons recours à vous" -

O Mary conceived without sin pray for us who have recourse to you.



A voice instructed Catherine that she was to have a medal made bearing this image. Then the oval shape rotated to show twelve stars surrounding the letter M linked to a cross above two hearts, one circled with thorns and the other pierced by a sword: the twelve stars representing the twelve apostles and the church; "M" and the pierced heart signifying Mary; the cross and the heart with the crown of thorns representing her son, Jesus.

The voice went on to tell Catherine that whoever wore this medal with confidence would receive great blessings.

At first her confessor, Fr. Aladel, discouraged Catherine and, indeed, forbade her to so much as think of the apparition, even when it was repeated the following month. It would be more than a year later, in February 1832, during a terrible cholera epidemic in which thousands were dying, that he finally had 2000 medals made and distributed. Immediately, there came reports of miraculous cures and conversions. By the end of the decade more than 10 million of these "miraculous" medals had been distributed.

In January 1831, at the end of her novitiate, the young visionary had been moved to work with the elderly in a very poor part of Paris. She died in 1876. Fifty-seven years later, at the time of her beatification in 1933, her tomb was opened: her body was found to be intact, a phenomenon often associated with sainthood, and was transferred to the chapel at rue du

Bac. She was canonised in 1947. Today pilgrims queue up to kneel at the altar of apparitions. There, beneath an image of Our Lady holding an orb representing the world, just as she had appeared in the very first apparition, is the glass casket bearing the body of Saint Catherine Labouré.

Postscript

On 8th December, 1854 Pope Pius IX proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception: Mary, Mother of God, was indeed conceived without sin. Four years later, in 1858 a poor, peasant girl called Bernadette Soubirous, at the prompting of a sceptical parish priest, asked the beautiful lady who appeared to her in a grotto beside the River Gave, "What is your name?", and she replied, in the local Lourdes dialect, "I am the Immaculate Conception."

Photographs from and more information at
<http://www.chapellenotredamedelamedaillemiraculeuse.com>

St Patrick's Day Guinness Fruit Loaf

Annie Royan

Moist, moreish and with a texture a bit like malt loaf, this cake is loaded with fruit that has been steeped in your favourite stout. It will keep for up to a week wrapped in greaseproof paper in an airtight container.

SERVES 12

350g mixed dried fruit
1 x 330ml bottle of Guinness
2 eggs, beaten
100g soft light brown sugar
100g dark muscovado sugar
270g self-raising flour
½ tsp mixed spice



Place the dried fruit and Guinness in a bowl, cover and leave overnight to allow the fruit to absorb all the goodness and flavours of the Guinness. Or if pushed for time, bring the fruit and Guinness to the boil in a saucepan and then set aside to cool.

Preheat the oven to 180°C/fan (160°C/gas mark 4). Grease and line a 900g loaf tin.

Stir the beaten eggs into the fruit mixture, then add the sugars, flour and spice, and mix well. Dark sugar can retain large lumps, which are not good when baked, so be sure to mix thoroughly.

Pour the mixture into the tin and spread evenly. Bake for 1-1¼ hours, until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Leave in the tin to cool completely.

Dresden Delights

Peter Nicholson

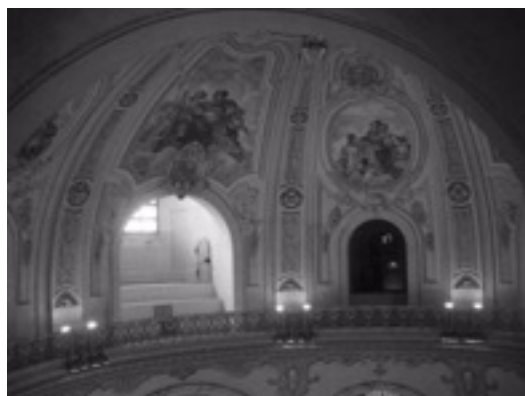
For a place to visit that combines a spiritual with an artistic impact, and provides a powerful demonstration of the rebirth of the human spirit out of death and destruction, I can recommend the Frauenkirche (Church of Our Lady) in the German city of Dresden.

Visiting our Chris in Berlin in October, he and I took a day trip to Dresden, which lies near the southern border of the former East Germany. A non-stop bus took us around two and a half hours; only a little more time than the train and a lot cheaper.

Many of you will know that Dresden suffered possibly the worst devastation of any German city during World War 2, when carpet bombing by the RAF in February 1945 produced a firestorm that reduced this historic building, along with most others, to rubble. I had heard of the city being restored to its former glory, and wanted to see it for myself. I was not disappointed.

The Frauenkirche itself is the centrepiece of the old city, but rebuilding was delayed until after German reunification, and only completed in 2005. An exhibition in the church records the destruction, the planning and the many phases of the reconstruction.

From the outside the church is an odd shape, giving the impression of a large round tower, dominating a wide cobbled square where you may see horse drawn carriages and open air classical musicians vying for the tourists' attention, all in front of a prominent statue of Martin Luther. Once inside, the cultural intensity rises several notches.



An elaborate pattern of galleries and balconies rises above the near-circular nave, all in light pastel shades which in part give the impression of panels of pink marble, but has all in fact been painstakingly hand painted. The ceiling of the dome comprises eight large panels in baroque detail, with a glass centre section adding to the impression of light. But dominating it all is the massive altar piece, so elaborately carved it seems quite overdone, but a stunning piece of work at the same time.

I mentioned the exhibition. To see the photos of the destruction and the new church eventually rising from the rubble was to me a really uplifting experience, a demonstration of the power of faith over evil, of a determination that good will triumph. That so much love and money should have been devoted to such a work of beauty in the modern world I found awe-inspiring. Berlin itself has similar exhibitions, but nothing to compare with this masterpiece.

As a bonus, for 8 euro you can go right to the top of the 90 metre high tower for a 360 degree panorama of the city – a good climb even with a lift part of the way, but well worth it. Explore the old city if you get the chance – it's been so well restored that it's hard to tell what is original and what isn't.



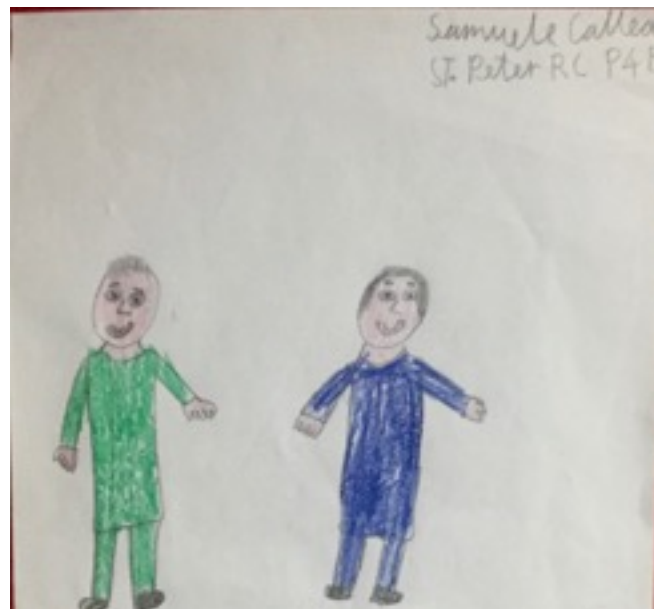
Incidentally, Dresden has a “New Town”, a bit like Edinburgh but not so old, where I found a church dedicated to the Three Kings. I haven't come across one before; does anyone else know of one?

Oh, and Dresden is the home of Stollen, a Christmas treat here but one they are happy to serve you at any time of year, in many varieties. Almost worth the trip just for that!

Grandpa and Grandma

As seen by our youngsters

Samuele Callea



Mauro Maria Luisa
My grandad works in the garden
meanwhile my gran gives food to the
hens. Sometimes even my gran works in
the garden, she gets a bit dirty.

Giovani Teresa
My other grandad is in heaven and
my other gran is close to the sea in Italy.

Amelia Royan Aged 8



Grannie in the garden

Emma Palmer



My Granny and Grandad take me to the park



Noemi Callea Pia



Angus Wryte Pia





Grandparents

By Juliet Boardman

I'm lucky because I have known all my grandparents. They are all very different, but they have one thing in common—they shower all their grandchildren with lots of love!

N'Ann'a and Grandad are my Dad's parents and live in Newcastle so we see them a lot.

N'Ann'a: N'Ann'a loves art and I remember lying down on a big piece of paper and her tracing around my body then cutting it out, me, my cousin and my siblings coloured it in with pens and paint (she even let us use some of her old makeup and put it on the paper.) She never minds when we make a mess!

Grandad: When I was little grandad always did something funny to get my attention he made a pop sound with his mouth that made me laugh. He did this with all my cousins and later I tried the same thing on my little brothers.

Gigi and Poppi my Mum's parents and live in America, they live in an elderly home.

Gigi: Gigi loves me and all my cousins so much she has bags, hats and necklaces printed with all our names on them. She also loves tartan and anything British. Once she was visiting and was asked to be in a photo with a tourist because she was wearing so much tartan they thought she was Scottish.

Poppi: poppi was always really enthusiastic to play games with me and said that I was good at everything. He was always supportive.

I'm so glad to spend so much time with them and happy to know them so well!!

Blessed Frederic Ozanam

Ian McCafferty

Founder of the Society of St Vincent de Paul

"Show us your Christian works!" This was the challenge thrown at Frederic during a meeting of the History Society which he had founded at the University of Paris in 1831. He had spoken up at lectures and tutorials against the false doctrines and distortions of Catholicism of some of his teachers. He was 19 years old! His response was "Let us go to the poor!" So without delaying, he and his room mate Auguste Le Taillandier took some of their firewood to a poor, elderly neighbour in their street.

Within a week, plans for a new charitable organisation quite separate from the History Society were making good progress. They approached Sister Rosalie Rendu, a Daughter of Charity, who put them in touch with many poor families for whom she was caring. To firewood was added bread-coupons and meat-tokens negotiated with local shopkeepers and Welfare Board officials.

At a weekly meeting on 23 April 1833 they chose St. Vincent de Paul as their patron saint and agreed to call the group the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

Frederic's short life of 40 years coincided with a period of political and civil upheaval in France and more widely in Europe; the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte, the restoration and deposition of the French king, the beginning of the Second Republic followed by the Second Empire of Napoleon III, including two revolutions in 1830 and 1848.

The Industrial Revolution caused large movements of people to cities in search of employment. The poor quality of housing and lack of public services resulted in widespread ill-health, disease and dire poverty.

As Professor of Commercial Law in Lyon, Frederick campaigned for a just wage. Later as Professor of Foreign Literature in Paris, he championed the Church's contribution to education and culture in Europe. As the co-founder of a newspaper, he promoted Catholic Social Teaching on labour, human rights and strove to reconcile Monarchists and Republicans to the cause of democracy.

At the time of Frederic's death in 1853 there were 500 Saint Vincent de Paul Conferences (groups) in France and Conferences had been formed in England, Ireland, Scotland, Spain, Belgium and America. The first Conference in Scotland dates from 1845, only 12 years after Frederic founded the first conference in Paris. It met in Edinburgh.

Pope John Paul II beatified Frederic Ozanam on 22 August 1997 at Mass in Notre Dame during the World Youth Days. He told the congregation that he had been a member of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society when he was a student.

In his homily, Pope John Paul said that Frederic's vocation was the love of God and neighbour: he helped the poorest people in a spirit of service and sharing, seeing the image of God in them. He was involved in the most important social and political issues of his day, working for justice as well as charity and respecting the convictions of those who did not share his beliefs. Pope John Paul concluded his homily by exhorting people to follow the road of holiness and commitment to the poor which Frederic Ozanam had taken.

Praying with the Heart

Lectio Divina: Praying with Scripture

The goal of lectio is an expanding capacity to listen with our heart to the Word of God in all of life's situations, leading to a more constant awareness of God's presence. It is listening that leads to a new way of seeing and integration of prayer, work and relationship with others. These are the four stages:

LECTIO: Repeated Reading



A repeated reading of the text until certain words or phrases call for attention. In a group setting it is normally read twice with a silence in between.

This is like taking in food, like eating the word of scripture.

Requires a listening heart wherein God's self-communication is made manifest in Christ, in the Scriptures, in the human heart and the heart of the cosmos.

This listening in community is not passive, it is something we do with the whole self, mind and heart. We not only listen to God's word but we listen to what has been given to each person.

KEY FOCUS QUESTION:

What word or phrase strikes you? What stays with you?

MEDITATIO: Reflection

This stage has been described as rumination or chewing. This is like a musing. We chew over the phrases that struck us and digest them so that they speak directly to us. This is not like a quick raid into the text to grab the meaning and make an escape. It is more like a cherishing; this process can reach throughout the day saying it to oneself and letting it act on the heart.



At this stage the heart of the text emerges for the individual.

Questions that arise at this stage are related to the individual's perception of the word:

- What is this calling me to do?
- What is it saying to me and my life?

Gradually we recognise the text or resonate with it.

We find that we have lived the sequence of events ourselves.

We identify ourselves with God's people – Jesus, the prophets, the great women and men of the Old and New Testament.

We find ourselves adopting their attitudes.

We also recognise ourselves in the bad characters – the Pharisees, Pharaoh, the jealous apostles.

We find we want to give up those attitudes.

In other words, after chewing over the word like a cow chewing the cud, we connect with this word as alive and active and speaking directly to our situation today.

ORATIO: response



This is like a deep tasting, where the keywords or phrases eventually lead us to prayer inspired by a growing awareness of connecting to God's presence.

Lectio blossoms spontaneously in praying out loud:
Thanksgiving that Jesus is alive in the story of grace.
Humility that the story of sin is alive.
Petition that the story of grace will prevail.

In this moment of prayer comes the recognition that God's word is near, God's grace is near.

The prayer is like a short sharp burst of flame!

This is normally expressed briefly, simply, straightforwardly. In a group setting prayers take the form of:

- Thanking God
- Asking God
- Saying sorry

Which leads to the final movement of prayer which is resting in contemplation.

CONTEMPLATIO: Resting



This is savouring of the text. It consists of lingering with love on the text that has been given.

Murmuring your word or phrase in the silence of your heart and being led beyond words to a silent awareness of presence.

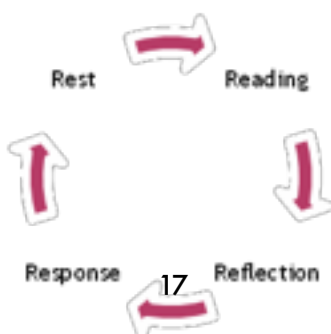
There is a sense of communing with God. It is described by St Bernard as a clinging to God, or grasping God!

In this stage we have a sense that we are living with the Word, walking with the Word, reading the Word.

SUMMARY:

Lectio is a contemplative way of praying with scripture.

- The reading stage is about eating with an attentive heart.
- The reflection stage is about chewing for the heart of the matter.
- The response stage is about praying spontaneously from the heart.
- The resting state is about savouring with the heart.



New Dawn Conference 2015

Jacqueline Heron

St Andrews played host to a 5-day conference entitled New Dawn in Scotland 6-10 July, which was aimed at fostering a new evangelisation.

“The purpose of New Dawn is to show the Catholic Church in all her splendour,” explained Douglas Hunter, Director of New Dawn in Scotland.



“We arranged a great selection of speakers to ignite a new fire for the Holy Spirit and help us to be able to renew the Joy of the Gospel in our hearts.”

“New Dawn brings an extra dimension as it’s something that has been built up by the laity and it encourages the laity, with the support of the priests, who love seeing the laity acting and working in the field of evangelisation”.

The conference heard from Catholic speakers from around the globe including Ghana, Zambia, Ireland and England. Each day was built around the Holy Mass but also made time for confessions, Eucharistic adoration, healing services, catechetical activities for children and young people. Those who spoke to the youth discussed a range of issues including relationships and the idea of chastity, as well as the unrealistic way that young women’s appearances can often be portrayed in the media. There was also a range of short evening performances by young artists from the theatre company ‘Glow’ as well as a very successful ceilidh which marked the end of the conference on Friday.



One of the highlights of the week came on 9 July when delegates undertook a rosary pilgrimage through the streets of St Andrews to mark the Feast of Our Lady of Aberdeen. This concluded with Holy Mass in the grounds of the city’s ruined cathedral.



Rosary procession leading into St Andrews Cathedral ruins

In his homily, Bishop Stephen Robson of Dunkeld explained that if Catholics genuinely believe that the Catholic Church teaches with the authority of Jesus Christ on matters of faith and morals then, it stands to reason, we cannot pick and choose the teachings of the Church that we wish to accept.

“Do not some Catholics who embrace passionately Catholic Social Doctrine are nevertheless cool or ice cold about the other dogmas of the Faith? Who perhaps accept the convenient, but reject the inconvenient truths of the Catholic Faith? We might passionately believe in banning nuclear weapons or get fired up about climate change, but then happily, even enthusiastically, or even silently accept the evils of abortion or accept the state's right, over God's, to change the understanding of the biblical doctrine on marriage?”

New Dawn in Scotland will next take place in July 2016. St Andrews will again be the venue. Director Douglas Hunters says they look forward to warmly welcoming even more families and individuals. He believes that Pope Francis summed up the spirit of New Dawn in his document *Evangelii Gaudium* when he wrote:

“The Holy Spirit also enriches the entire evangelising Church with different charisms. These gifts are meant to renew and build up the Church. They are not an inheritance, safely secured and entrusted to a small group for safekeeping; rather they are gifts of the Spirit integrated into the body of the Church,”

Evangelii Gaudium #107

For more information on New Dawn in Scotland go to: www.newdawninScotland.com

Personal Report

Jacqueline Heron

The first time I attended New Dawn in St Andrews was July 2015. I wasn't quite sure what it was or how I would fit in. I knew it was a catholic conference and that there would be a Rosary procession through the streets of St Andrews, but more than that I wasn't sure.

When I attended the conference I was surprised to find it was packed with international speakers and priests, speaking on the theme of the conference. Youth events, Praise and worship, Mass, absolutely amazing singing mostly led by Craig lodge music ministry, with lots of quiet moments for prayer, Adoration and opportunities for reconciliation as well as entertainment for young and old. This year 2016 the theme will be 'God's Mercy'. One of the highlights is always the healing service. The speakers were always very scriptural and thought provoking and made me think more deeply about the influence of God's healing love in my life and how I show this love to others. That year this thought impacted and grew in my thinking... How could I be blocking God's love by holding onto past hurts and pain and how this had prevented me growing in deeper relationship with God through his son Jesus.

I thought on this theme coming up to Christmas and this Year of Mercy and I hope I will be able to 'get my hands dirty' in helping others and be a visible sign of God's Mercy and forgiveness.

I am still working through those themes of healing and hope to explore them further in this year's conference, as well as being open to hear God's word in all areas of my life.

May God richly bless you and your family this Year of Mercy

