“The difficulty we are facing today is that we are living in a transition period between a dying model of church and an emerging model of church. Much of the clerical structure and the patriarchal and hierarchical organisation of our church reflects the now dying model... Nevertheless, new models of leadership between pastors and laity are emerging...”

Werner G. Jeanrond
New models of church

Transitions are never easy. Leaving the familiar behind for something new is always challenging - will it work out? What should we do first? How will we manage the inevitable tensions and disagreements that will arise?

Professor Werner Jeanrond, writing in this edition of Open House, has provided a clear theological basis for a new postclericalist model of church in the British Isles. He has named many of the issues we need to address if we are to make the transition from the old model of church to an emerging model which as yet has few structures to support it.

We know some of its characteristics - it will be more participative, have a greater role for lay people, a redefined role for priests, and it will focus on a renewed understanding of mission rather than maintenance of an outdated institution. There are many church communities in Scotland which are nurturing these green shoots of change, and they have been greatly encouraged by Pope Francis’ foregrounding of many aspects of Vatican II. Open House was founded by a group of lay people in Dundee over 30 years ago to keep alive the Council’s opening to renewal and reform.

Piecing together a theology for Scotland

Scotland has an unusual geography. There is a lot of unpopulated land between Scotland and its only neighbour, England. It is separated from other countries by sea. It is easy to identify a Scot. There are accents. There are stereotypes. Scotland is not a region.

The history is also different. There was no 1066 conquest, nor even a 1966 victory. Instead there is 1314 and 1690. There is the Athens of the North and there was the Second City of the Empire. The law, education and the churches have been traditionally distinct. Devolution has added health, welfare and public order. These are pillars of a state. Are they the voice of a country?

Scotland is an unholy trinity. Some of its inhabitants describe themselves as Scottish. Others think of themselves as (North) British. And there is the population of the Gaelic and Nordic islands.

The Scottish are themselves a threesome: the lairds - educated in fee paying schools, dressed in kilts, with BBC accents; the lumpenproletariat who received a first class education for free, sing ‘Flower of Scotland’ and speak a variety of dialects; the immigrants who, educated elsewhere, like living in a wee country and speak at least one other language. They are all nationalists with a small ‘n’. They vote SNP, Tory, Labour, Liberal, Green or, significantly, not at all.

The (North) British are divided between those who are English which is the largest number of non Scottish in Scotland; and others, the older from the Commonwealth, the younger from the EU. To many of them it is not a critical factor that they live in Scotland. Their stay may depend on their job. If they vote it could be Labour or Tory.

The islands are only put together because they have small populations and because, oddly enough, they have favoured Liberal politicians.

If there was to be a theology for Scotland how could it be created out of such a quilt? There was at one time in Scotland a School of Common Sense Philosophy. Scots contributed to the Enlightenment, not only in pre-revolutionary Europe but also in post-independence America. David Hume was voted Scot of the Millennium. If ‘it’s the economy, stoopid’, Adam Smith is still quoted.

A form of liberation theology might be relevant to this background. It was pioneered in Latin America by Basque Jesuits. Their homeland straddles two countries, Spain and France. Bilingualism is always an advantage. Their intention was not to change the government but to change the people.

Geography and history have not been necessarily advantageous to Scotland. Common sense tells us that we are still an ill-divided nation. It is easy enough to blame governments, whether at Holyrood or Westminster. It is ordinary people who have to change. Is that any easier in the age of Twitter?
Towards a post clericalist church

A distinguished Catholic theologian reflects on living in a time of transition between old and new models of church, and the challenge of developing shared leadership.

When reflecting on the future shape of the church it may be appropriate to ask ourselves: what do we expect of God at this point in our lives, in our church, in our country, in Europe, in the world? How do we expect God’s reign to manifest itself here and now and what is our role and the role of Christian community in this process? What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ today?

We may also wish to ask ourselves: what does God expect from us? In what way are we to be God’s arms, legs, mouth, hands, feet in this universe?

It is important to identify and explore our expectations and God’s expectations at this point in time. Moreover, it is crucial to consider how we think of God when analysing our potential role in God’s evolving church. Do we think of God in terms of a monarchical super-power high above and beyond all worldly concerns looking down on us and interfering at this or that moment in response to our wishes, prayers and protestations? How do we imagine God’s presence in our lives, in the church, in the world and in this universe at large? How do we imagine our co-operation with God in the church?

Emerging models of church

In the Roman Catholic Church we are witnessing massive changes. For many centuries the Catholic Church was understood to be on its way to becoming a perfect society in and for the world, in accordance with what was assumed to be the will of God. Other Christian churches were considered aberrations from this road map, not to speak of other religious movements. The Church was pictured as a triumphant institution aspiring to order the world with the help of a divinely sanctioned hierarchy of popes, cardinals, bishops, priests, deacons (so far all male), supported by the religious, and finally by the laity.

Pope Francis’s image of the church as a field hospital initiates a dramatically different model of church. The Pope’s strategic visits to other Christian denominations, most recently to Lund in Sweden where he remembered Martin Luther and the beginnings and legacy of the Protestant Reformation, and his encounter with other world religions, demonstrate his determination to lead the church away from the model of the perfect society toward a model of a pilgrim church. He understands the Roman Catholic Church in terms of a pilgrim movement besides other pilgrim movements. All Christian movements try to respond to God’s call to participate in God’s great project of creation and reconciliation.

For us Christians, Jesus Christ has become the incarnation of God’s twofold project in our midst. The ministry, the violent death and the surprising resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth together confirm God’s creative will for this world and emphasise God’s lasting commitment to and love for his creative project. Jesus showed us a way of responding to God’s creative and reconciling initiative in his love, his healing attention to our human needs, and ultimately in his...
self-sacrifice. The early disciples could not think any longer about God apart from recalling these significant and transformative experiences with Jesus Christ. God made himself known in Jesus Christ. Ultimately, the experience of the continued presence of Christ in history through the divine Spirit prompted the emergence of the concept of the Trinity. Confessing God as Trinity, therefore, amounts to a confirmation that God remains committed to God’s creative and reconciling presence in our midst. That is what is ultimately meant by salvation.

Hence, salvation does not call for a departure from God’s created and beloved world into some other place or anti-world. God is not gnostic! Rather, accepting God’s salvation in Christ involves us in God’s promise to make everything new - beginning here and now. Pope Francis’s image of the church as a field hospital makes good sense if one wishes to be involved in God’s ongoing project of creation and reconciliation. It makes no sense if one sees the Church in terms of an anti-world, hierarchically structured by ordained men to avoid change and development.

God desires community with us human beings. This is the mystery of God’s creative and reconciling love - a mystery which invites us to participate ever more deeply in the divine-human network of interdependent love relationships: our love of God, our love of our fellow human beings, our love of God’s creation, and our love of our own emerging selves. Christian communities are called to become communities of love - and not models of some perfect society with a well-ordered male hierarchy.

It follows nowhere from the good news of Jesus Christ, from his death on the cross and his resurrection, that those who will be leading and organising Christian communities ought to be male. There is no theological reason whatsoever in support of an exclusively male or indeed an exclusively female priesthood or for a necessarily celibate clergy. The fact that for centuries cultural forces have prioritised men to take on religious, social and political leadership in European societies is a result of a gender power game. But please let us not blame God for this patriarchal development and let us refrain from imposing such a patriarchal plot on God.

We live and work at the intersection of two competing models of church: the church as well-ordered society and the church as dynamic pilgrim community. The model of church as society has favoured a clericalist understanding of church leadership. Here, the guarantors of a functioning church are the (male) clergy. This understanding is still about today. It reflects the efforts of past generations to erect a perfect society with the perfect and pure male leader at the top of a social pyramid in a hierarchical setting. Moreover, the image of the celibate holy man was a statement of power: God can be encountered perfectly only through male mediation. This is not to suggest that many priests who emerged from this cultural, religious and monarchical model have not been good people or done marvellous work. I am arguing that this model of clericalist leadership is neither theologically necessary nor desirable for a church that understands this model have not been good people or done marvellous work. I am arguing that this model of clericalist leadership is neither theologically necessary nor desirable for a church that understands itself now in terms of a field hospital called by God to serve a wounded world in great need of healing.

Let us reflect on how vibrant Catholic communities might look today and what form of leadership they require in order to support this alternative approach to church and life. Thus, rather than concentrating on the global picture, here I wish to reflect on the renewal of the local church.

Great Catholic Parishes
In a book entitled Great Catholic Parishes: how Four Essential Practices Make Them Thrive, William E Simon Jr and his friends set out to explore criteria for successful local Catholic parishes. Although this study reflects the current situation in the USA, important lessons can be learned for the British Isles. Bill Simon and his team visited 244 parishes all over the 50 American states, where there are more than 17,000 Catholic parishes (see p. 52). Bill Simon wrote: “Our study revealed that great Catholic parishes (1) share leadership, (2) foster spiritual maturity and plan for discipleship, (3) excel on Sundays, and (4) evangelize in intentional and structured ways. There is nothing revolutionary about these four practices... But these particular parishes are thriving in a time and climate when many people no longer find value in organized religion. These pastors, parish leadership teams, and parishioners have developed a clarity of vision. With a deepened understanding of just how critical the Eucharistic celebration is to the mission of the Church, they have become strategic about advancing the discipleship of their own people and the Gospel mandate to evangelize. The common attributes apparent in these pastors and woven through these parish communities are collaborative, intentional, and joyful” (p.6).

If we take a closer look at the four practices characterising a great Catholic parish we see that the model of pastoral leadership advocated and practiced here differs sharply from the hierarchical approach to priestly leadership which supported the model of church as perfect society. Leadership in great Catholic parishes always involves laypeople in some way.

Three styles of parish leadership were identified:

• Collaborative Leadership
• Delegating Leadership
• Consultative Leadership

All these styles combine pastoral and lay leadership, recognise distinctive ministerial talents and gifts, and organise and develop the ministerial profile of a parish accordingly. Moreover, once the lay ministers are in place, “the pastor must be willing to trust that the responsibilities assigned to team members will be handled and allow the laity to do their work. Only then can he devote himself to the elements of parish leadership exclusive to his role as the leader of leaders. Only then will he have the time, energy, and vision necessary to do these things well” (p.29).

In a pilgrim church, leadership is neither status nor position but an activity which with appropriate training and experience anyone can practice.

There is no theological reason whatsoever in support of an exclusively male or indeed an exclusively female priesthood or for a necessarily celibate clergy.
 anywhere at any time (cf. p.45). Hence, references to the shortage of celibate priests can never be a good reason for closing or amalgamating parishes. Leadership and ministry are practices not limited to the ordained clergy. However, ordination might well be a route to exercise new and more appropriate forms of collaborative, delegating and consultative leadership in and beyond the local church. The primary task among ordained and lay leaders in the parish is to develop strategic thinking and planning about discipleship. Once it is agreed that spiritual maturity is a goal to be pursued in the parish and resources (human and financial) are identified and allocated, programmes for the spiritual development of the parish membership can be implemented. At this point a word of caution is needed. It has been shown that ‘increased participation in church activities does not significantly contribute to an increasing love of God and others’ (Cally Parkinson). Involvement in a parish programme does not automatically guarantee the parishioners’ deepened commitment to Christ (p.61). This insight makes it necessary to concentrate on the overall goal of parish life, i.e. developing the network of interdependent loving relationships. The sense of belonging, therefore, must be a sense of belonging to God in Christ and each other rather than to a specific group in distinction from other possible groups. What needs deepening is not a feeling of belonging as such, but the development of a strong sense of Christian community. This is associated with a welcoming culture, bonds of friendship, interdependence, and occasions for parishioners to nurture as well as be nurtured in spiritual growth (p.73). However, a parish must never be encouraged to be only inward looking. A healthy exchange and interaction with other parishes, other faith communities and the host of religious development programmes on offer is essential. The church is there to serve the world - critically and self-critically. The Eucharist is the central experience of any Catholic parish, though not the only transformative experience. Prayer in its many different forms and occasions, bible studies, meditation groups, works of charity, groups for justice and peace, catechetical teams and preparations for sacramental initiation and participation are co-essential for the development of a passion for faith, love and hope in the Christian community. Mass attendance is important, but in itself not yet a guarantee for moving forward on a dynamic journey of faith (p.95). The Sunday experience, however, remains a crucial point of departure for all Christians to renew and deepen their vocation and discipleship. For the static model of church as a perfect society, the Sunday experience meant: coming, receiving, and leaving (p.100). For a pilgrim church this will never suffice. Rather, it takes planning and work to create a culture of hospitality and reasons for people to stick around and connect after Mass - all part of what makes the Eucharistic experience meaningful (cf. p.103). Moreover, the Eucharist needs adequate preparation - including the homily, the liturgical execution of the sacrament, and the accompanying music. Bill Simon offers six important insights into preparing for the Sunday experience: • Vibrant, welcoming Sunday liturgies require thorough staff planning and a well-organized network of volunteer ministers. • Attention to the needs of the children in the community is a critical success factor for vibrant parishes. • Hospitality begins with a parish’s online presence, which must be kept fresh and relevant to the expressed needs of both parishioners and newcomers. • The physical plant’s upkeep and suitability to meet the needs of the worshipping community are key factors in creating a vibrant worship experience. • Flourishing parishes have pastors who love being present to their people and who are highly disciplined about setting aside long hours of time and attention for homily preparation. • Music is central to the Sunday experience. Significant time, talent, equipment, and money must be budgeted in order to deliver great liturgical music. (cf. pp.123-4) These important insights are accompanied by frustrating experiences of no-change attitudes by some priests and parishioners. It will always appear easier to remain in the old church-association paradigm where everybody had their hierarchically assigned place than to embark on a pilgrimage toward the unknown with loss of status, power, control and security. Too often, long-standing negative behaviours on a parish staff or in a volunteer position are permitted to continue. Too often priests unable to move to the new paradigm block any change. There are times when a person needs to move on and let someone new minister, and there are times when ministerial roles can be restructured and not necessarily. Involvement in a parish programme is an essential part of what makes the Eucharistic experience meaningful (cf. p.103). Moreover, the Eucharist needs adequate preparation - including the homily, the liturgical execution of the sacrament, and the accompanying music. In the old model of church, evangelization was often accompanied by fire-and-brimstone sermons and undertaken by at times overzealous fanatics. Mission in all its forms and its symbiosis with the British (or other forms) of Empire has left a bitter taste in our mouths and we are embarrassed to even talk about it, let alone engage in it ourselves. What is required from a vibrant parish is simply to change attitude: from being concerned merely with itself now to looking outside. In other words, we need to move from maintenance to mission, from being content with what we see to inviting outsiders to come and see for themselves how we practice, enjoy and radiate discipleship. Pope Francis never tires of inviting us to change towards becoming out-reach people. We must begin to develop new attitudes and methods of evangelization - always beginning with ourselves. Reaching out to the so-called millennials, for example, presents a major challenge. Maybe a new look at the possibilities offered by new technologies will open new ways of contact and dialogue.

The crisis in our Church is not a crisis of faith, but the crisis of a particular paradigm of being church.
Nothing in the church - old and new - argues, as far as I know, that leadership was not necessary. Rather, what is necessary is a conversation on which kind of leadership best supports the gospel’s call on developing Christian communities, which kind of priesthood is required to promote the gospel in today’s world, and which approach restores the community to its genuine vocation of becoming afresh the salt of the earth.

In this period of transition toward the emerging model of a truly participatory church the lay-people (literally, ‘people-people’) must be clear about their co-responsibility. They ought not to hide behind the ineffectiveness of the old model of church and say that because we disagree with that model we cannot participate in the different levels of church work. There is no excuse for passivity. The new model of church cannot emerge and flourish if we are not actively contributing to it and thus promoting it.

All kinds of conflicts may appear on the road toward a better church. But in the present period of transition, we are invited to remain faithful to God’s love command, so forcefully confirmed by Jesus Christ. Loving God, our neighbours and ourselves is at the heart of any faithful response to God’s invitation to be part of her community. Hence, this love command applies also in any struggle within our church.

To love does not mean to like. Nobody, not even God, can force us to like those who misuse or neglect their power and responsibilities in the church. Rather, the necessary struggle to transform our communities towards becoming participatory communities must be a struggle of love. And that means that we should never deny others - priests, bishops and laypeople alike - in principle that they too are genuinely searching for true ways of being church. However, what we must insist on - otherwise our love is not just - is that we all equally engage in an open-ended co-operation and dialogue on all levels on what it means to be church today and on which ministries and leadership functions are needed in the pilgrim church. As a friend of mine recently put it, dialogue in the church today is easier than before since the Pope himself provides cover in that struggle.

It is true that not all priests and bishops have yet appreciated that the days of the old church model with its hierarchical order and authoritarian self-understanding are over. We must help them to see the light. That help can take many forms: prayer, faithful resilience, loving critical support, acts of liberating priests and bishops from their often self-imposed and painful isolation, inviting them back into the life and joy of vibrant communities. Today it is often the task of the laity to liberate their leaders for genuine forms of leadership.

Back to the beginning: What do we expect from God in our complex situation of transition? What does God expect from us? How strong is our desire to transform our world in love, beginning always with ourselves? How much faith do we have in God’s love and guidance?

Do we take the priesthood of all believers seriously and stop hiding behind the façades of a crumbling model of church? Do we experience the consolation of the Holy Spirit in our loving struggle to renew the church? Do we restore courage in our church? Do we share the Pope’s vision of a pilgrim church, fit to reach out as a field hospital to our wounded world? Do we want to promote the emergence of God’s reign of love in this world and desire a better church community fit to support the emergence of God’s reign?

Let’s remind ourselves that we do not believe so much in the church than with the church - and at times even without it - in the transformative presence of God in our midst. This faith will free us to liberate ourselves, the church and its structures for an ever more adequate service in God’s emerging reign.


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Lessons from South America

At February’s meeting of the Glasgow Newman Circle, Fr Timothy Curtis SJ offered a theological reflection on his experience as parish priest in Guyana, drawing out lessons for the Catholic Church in Scotland as it faces the challenge of parishes without priests.

On the face of it, Fr Tim Curtis’ parish in the interior of Guyana (which incorporated ‘bits of Brazil and Venezuela’) has little in common with Scotland except for its land mass, which is almost identical. But while Scotland has a population of over five million, the Guyana parish has 34,400, closer to the Catholic population of the dioceses of Aberdeen and Argyll and the Isles, scattered across a land of rainforest, mountains and plains. Lessons for Scotland, Fr Tim suggested, can be learned from the way in which the Guyana Catholic community developed from its days as a Jesuit Mission in 1904.

The first stage of its development, evangelisation, was led by Fr Cuthbert Cary-Elwes SJ, who was born in Boulogne in 1867 and educated at Stonyhurst College. The nephew of a Jesuit Bishop in India, Cary-Elwes entered the Society of Jesus with the desire to die a martyr in mission territory. He was ordained a priest in London in 1900.

He was sent to Guyana in 1904 and travelled inland in 1908 where he established many ‘Catholic’ communities among the Amerindians, who had had little contact with the West and none with Christianity. Each community built a church, said daily prayers, and the children were offered baptism after a year if the community maintained its common prayer life. A ‘one wife’ policy was introduced. Fr Cary-Elwes had a breakdown and returned to England in 1923, where he worked on a Makushi dictionary and composed hymns in the Wapishana language. He died in Glasgow in August 1945.

Between 1922 and 1939, other priests were sent to Guyana, where they visited villages on foot or on horseback. Each village had a church. The Amerindians adopted Western dress and the missionaries a relationship with the country’s ranchers. During the war years of 1939-45, when many Jesuits were withdrawn from the interior to become chaplains, the communities continued to meet and pray and maintain their churches.

After the war came the second stage of development: education. A new influx of priests arrived to serve the Amerindian people, many of whom were ex-army chaplains, used to getting things done. It was decided that each ‘Catholic’ village should have a primary school and the medium of teaching would be English. Amerindian teachers were recruited. Between 1945 and 1968, the Catholic Church built and ran over 50 primary schools, in which preparation for the sacraments was carried out. Many of the teachers were Amerindians from the North West, who did not speak the same language; soon everyone had a command of English.

In 1966 Guyana gained its independence from the UK and a Socialist government was elected. A ranchers uprising in 1969 was put down, and priests were expelled from the interior because of their relationship with the ranchers. They continued to serve on the coast and the Amerindians continued to meet and pray and wait for the priests to come back and baptise the children.

With the government’s decision to take over schools in 1972, the third stage of the church’s development began - the lay formation of adults. Vatican II had already given a more prominent role to lay people in the church, and in the parish in Guyana, a three day seminar become the staple tool for the formation of parish teams, attended by groups of over 60 people. The parish team included a chairperson, a treasurer, parish lay assistants, catechists, eucharistic ministers, a presider, readers, decorators, collectors, flower girls, altar servers and musicians. Seminars were directed at different levels.

Training for parish lay assistants required attendance at two three month courses and an annual top up, held either at one of three centres or in the local village. Courses included bible study, catechism, preparing people for the sacraments of baptism, confession, communion, confirmation and marriage, and conducting a Sunday service or a funeral. Nearly all funerals are conducted by lay people. Typically the whole parish team would meet on a Saturday to prepare the Sunday service, reading the word, sharing its meaning, choosing hymns, writing bidding prayers and choosing ministries.

Gradually, Jesuits from India replaced those from the UK. The next stage of development will begin with a focus on responsibility for schools, the challenges of a cash economy, income generation projects and helping Amerindians take control of their lives.

The lessons to be learnt from the Guyana parish experience? Disasters can become opportunities. When Fr Cary-Elwes left, other priests came. When they left, lay people took charge of their communities. When the schools were no longer the focus of evangelisation, adult faith formation was developed. When the ranchers fled, there was control of the land.

It became clear that Catholic communities can take responsibility for their church buildings and for handing on the faith. They can also take responsibility for celebrating it.

Asked what steps the Catholic Church in Scotland might take to make the transition from the old to a new model of church, Fr Curtis suggested that we need to redefine the role of the priest, accept that people can look after churches, and do some historical analysis to understand where we come from.

Fr Timothy Curtis SJ is parish priest and Jesuit superior at St Aloysius Church, Glasgow.

March 2017 | OPEN HOUSE | 7
A failure of leadership

The question is this: taken as a body, the bishops of England and Wales, of Ireland and of Scotland, despite frequent requests and the findings of questionnaires, have so far refused to engage in meaningful dialogue with lay-led and priest-led organisations on a number of topics considered important for the well-being of the Catholic Church in these countries. These topics relate centrally to one overriding concern, namely the on-going and inexorable fall in the number of serving priests and the consequent closure and amalgamation of parishes together with the break-up of longstanding communities and the prospect of a Eucharistic famine in the not too distant future.

But alongside this central issue and related to it in some ways are issues such as mandatory celibacy, the ordination of women, the pastoral care of homosexuals, the admission of divorced and remarried Catholics to the sacraments, contraception; and the practice of regularly consulting the laity as an issue in its own right. Notwithstanding the widespread agitation among ordinary Catholics, the bishops have shown a remarkable fear entertained by younger or newer bishops, of bishops or archbishops or Papal Nuncios in commanding positions within national conferences. Some senior bishops wield a great deal of authority; they are ‘bishop-makers’ who have the power to have an ordinary priest raised to the status of bishop and to promote a mere bishop to the status of archbishop - and the power also to block such promotions! Authority figures like this simply be ignored. Better not to put your head above the parapet for fear of being branded a dissident’ etc.

But fear of Roman authority is not the only type of fear. There is also the fear entertained by younger or newer bishops, of bishops or archbishops or Papal Nuncios in commanding positions within national conferences. Some senior bishops wield a great deal of authority; they are ‘bishop-makers’ who have the power to have an ordinary priest raised to the status of bishop and to promote a mere bishop to the status of archbishop - and the power also to block such promotions! Authority figures like this very often control the agenda at episcopal conferences and foster what is called ‘group think’, defying and disapproving of any individual who might offer a contrary opinion.

So what to do about this dangerous state of affairs? I would modestly suggest that the laity make their voice heard, that they should demand that their views are listened to and heeded. The greatest asset the laity have is their numbers. They can make their voice heard in face-to-face encounters as well as in letters and articles. They have no need to restrict their comments to Catholic media since the secular press has shown an interest in issues that concern ‘ordinary Catholics’ and a willingness to express their views, as the recent wide coverage of the scale of the sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests and religious in Australia illustrates.

It may be the case that some bishops believe that, in asking to be consulted, members of the laity are seeking to usurp the authority that properly belongs to them as bishops. But we now have in Pope Francis, at long last, a Pope who believes the exact opposite, as he has made clear in his encyclicals, where he roundly condemns the evil of ‘clericalism’, and in his published letter to Cardinal Marc Ouellet, in which he points out that in refusing to consult the laity bishops are, in fact, usurping the authority that belongs to lay members on account of their baptism.

In asking to have their views heeded, lay members of the Church are simply following the precedents to be found in the practice of the early Church, as we can plainly see in the Acts of the Apostles (see, for example, Acts 15:6). There is lavish theological support to be found in scripture and the early Church for the practice of consulting the baptised faithful on matters concerning the well-being of the Church. Of course, such consultation might lead to disagreements and a clash of arguments, but remember what Cardinal Newman said in his Letter to the Duke of Norfolk, that the early dogmas of the Church were the product of ‘The collision of Catholic intellects with Catholic intellects’.

In strict theological terms, the authority of the bishops ultimately derives from the commission they have received from the Church community, and the baptised faithful form the great majority in that community. The bishops have been placed in a position of leadership: SO LEAD.

Joe Fitzpatrick is a Scot who lives in Yorkshire and is a former Inspector of Schools.
Christian care for the elderly: 
St. Mungo’s Old Folks’ Centre for Wellbeing

A Glasgow academic traces the development of a city centre facility for older people and highlights the Christian rationale behind its work and outreach.

Not far from the historic and iconic St. Mungo’s Cathedral in Glasgow there is a day centre for the elderly that encapsulates the Christian vision of love and care of neighbour: the St. Mungo’s Old Folks’ Centre for Wellbeing.

The Centre initially opened on Monday 7th October 1963 as St Mungo’s Old Folks’ Club. The idea for the club originated with the then rector of St Mungo’s parish in Townhead in Glasgow. Fr. John Mary Griffin, a Passionist priest, was concerned about the problems of loneliness and boredom among the elderly in the parish. He was inspired by a television programme about Lamb’s House in Leith. This was a 16th century town house that was owned by the National Trust and used as a day centre for the elderly at that time. Fr. John Mary formed an executive committee to oversee the affairs of the new St Mungo’s Club.

The executive committee represented a mix of influential Catholic groups and groups from Glasgow City, including the St Vincent De Paul society, the Union of Catholic Mothers, Glasgow Corporation Health and Welfare Department, the Woman’s Royal Voluntary Welfare Service and the Glasgow Old People’s Welfare Committee. Glasgow Corporation provided generous financial aid. The Parochial Halls of St Mungo’s parish were used to house the club and adapted where necessary.

Nobody could have anticipated its early success. On the first day of opening, 70 men and 114 women enrolled, and by the end of the year the membership was 806 in total (290 men and 516 women).

In March 2008, the St Mungo’s Old Folks’ Club was renamed as the St. Mungo’s Old Folks Centre for Wellbeing. The work of the Centre is arguably more important than ever. The Scottish Government has recognised that people in Scotland are living longer and many are maintaining their health into old age. The Government has positioned its policy on older people within its social justice agenda. The Centre contributes to this social justice agenda and continues to address the issue of social...
isolation, aiming to help improve health and wellbeing and improve the quality of life for elderly people.

As the population ages, social isolation is increasingly understood as a serious threat, not just in terms of an increase in depression and poor mental health but also in terms of physical health and mobility - echoing the words of Professor Anderson from 1966. The Centre is currently open five days a week and provides an opportunity for people over 60 to meet and eat together. It continues to provide support in many other ways, including daily activities, outings and assistance with social welfare. The greatest contribution of the Centre remains the fact that it is a place where elderly people can meet and remain active in body and mind and retain their dignity.

One of the defining features of the club is that the original idea and proposal for the club were founded on Christian principles. The 1966 report used some short extracts from the newly published *Vatican Council Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* (1965) to articulate these principles. One of the key extracts was:

‘wherever there are people in need of food and drink, clothing, housing, medicine, employment, education; wherever men lack the facilities necessary for living a truly human life...there Christian charity should seek them out...and help them with appropriate relief’ (section 8).

There was another dimension of the original Christian vision of the club that was equally important. The original proposal outlined quite clearly the inclusive nature of the role of the club in the local area: ‘The Club will be undenominational. All Old Age Pensioners living in the District will be eligible for membership’. This later became amended in the constitution to incorporate a broader inclusion: ‘The Club is to provide for... old persons of pensionable age without distinction of race, nationality or religion’.

The ecumenical dimension was consolidated with the establishment of a monthly ecumenical service in the halls in 1963. The services were conducted in collaboration with the minister of Glasgow Cathedral. This was the era of the very early stages of the Roman Catholic engagement and participation in the ecumenical movement in Scotland. The vision of the club was innovative and contributed to this new Christian fellowship and solidarity. The monthly ecumenical service has continued to the present day.

The Centre has provided an invaluable service to the elderly from its inception to the present day. It has also earned a place in local and national history. Firstly, it was one of the very early day centres for the elderly which offered a range of services. It provided an important service to the people of Townhead, and it also provided a meeting point for people who had been relocated to the newer parts of the city. Secondly, it was founded on Christian principles and provides an example of inclusive Christian social mission and outreach. The aims and operation of the Centre are coherent with both the social justice agenda of the Scottish Government and that of the Catholic Church.

Professor Stephen McKinney is leader of Creativity, Culture and Faith (Research and Teaching Group) at the School of Education, University of Glasgow.

Selected references (a full list available on request):


Toal, V. (2013) *St Mungo’s Old Folks going strong at 50. Flourish*, September.
The Hart Report, Part II: systemic failings

In his second article on the Hart Report on the chronic mistreatment of children in homes and shelters in Northern Ireland (NI), a psychologist asks how we should respond to its findings.

The final report of the government’s Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry (HIAI) was presented to the public in January by its chairman, Sir Anthony Hart. The Irish Times feared his timing was had: the report’s ‘damning findings’ on the ‘unspeakable’ treatment of children had too much competition from Trump’s inauguration, the Brexit debate in the UK parliament, and the political crisis in NI. That was indeed the story’s fate, pushed off the front pages within a week.

Readers of Hart, however, will be well rewarded. Its first class, objective, independent reporting is a model for any other type of investigation of child abuse: honest and fair, it is not afraid to speak truth to power, whether the blame is directed at nuns, priests, bishops, police, civil servants, or government officials. Part I deals with the demographics of abuse in NI institutions, and the economic, political, social and cultural contexts within which children suffered for decades. Part II considers the ‘systemic failings’ of the many institutions examined by HIAI. While thousands of pages of testimony recount who did what to whom and where, the overwhelming impression is of the grinding inevitability and anonymity of institutional abuse, regardless of who the child was. Once you were in the ‘system’, abusive treatment seemed to be the default.

Hart’s six main messages are as follows:

1) Background factors such as poverty, social conditions and government policies had a significant impact in creating the settings in which systemic abuse occurred.

2) Given this background, some institutions providing residential child care were responsible for a range of institutional practices which constituted systemic abuse.

3) Some individuals provided excellent care, but others were cruel and abusive towards the children for whom they were responsible. This abuse has affected many people for the rest of their lives.

4) From the late ’60s onwards there were perceptible improvements in physical conditions, staff numbers and training, and case management, and by the 1990s the quality of care was generally good.

5) HIAI originally recommended that the NI Assembly provide a financial compensation scheme for victims, to be implemented during 2017. But the turmoil and dissolution of the current parliament has put that on the back burner, leaving Hart to plead that any new Assembly give priority to victim compensation after the elections. ‘We believe that those who have waited so long for their voices to be heard deserve no less.’

6) HIAI devotes several pages to debunking myths, rumours and allegations about the interaction of a paedophile ring and the UK intelligence services, in connection with a local authority home - the notorious and much publicised Kincora Boys’ Home, Belfast.

The police concluded that 38 boys were abused at some point during Kincora’s existence, 1958-1980. In 1981, three senior staff members were convicted of homosexual offences against boys in their care. Hart noted the lack of inspection by the RUC which might otherwise have spared many of the victims. But the report insisted that, ‘while there is evidence of numerous missed opportunities to detect the abuse and take action’, there was no evidence whatsoever of the hostel being used by security forces for entrapment, spying or blackmail of senior British establishment figures involved in a paedophile ring. Citing the full cooperation of all organisations and government departments investigated, the report ‘stripped away decades of half-truths masquerading as facts in relation to Kincora’.

Kincora was by no means unique. The largest number of proprietary homes investigated, and the largest number of complaints registered, all belonged to nine Roman Catholic voluntary homes, involving primarily Sisters of Nazareth and De La Salle Brothers.

At the Nazareth homes, facilities and staff were startlingly inadequate: ‘The premises were outdated, and while the Sisters of Nazareth did improve and update their homes, they were slow to do so and were hampered by their reluctance to embrace change and to seek state funding’. And when the state decided to place children in Nazareth homes (where the ‘men were unsuited or untrained’), ‘no adequate financial or administrative support for the children’ was provided.

Systemic abuse - both physical and emotional - was found in Nazareth homes, where children were denigrated, humiliated, overworked, or even had Jeyes Fluid disinfectant added to their bathwater. ‘There were a significant number of instances of sexual abuse in each home, usually by adults,’ including priests and lay staff. ‘Many of these failings were known to members of the Congregation at the time who did nothing to stop them.’

Whether administrative oversight and responsibility lay with a Catholic diocese or a state agency, the lack of funding, resources and staff hampered any attempt to monitor what was happening to children ‘in care’ in NI. Even so, ‘It was clear that inspectors were aware of the adverse conditions… For example, in April 1953, Miss

March 2017 | OPEN HOUSE | 11
Forrest, who was a children’s inspector with the Ministry of Home Affairs, wrote about the children’s homes run by the Sisters of Nazareth in Londonderry and Belfast: “I find these Homes utterly depressing and it appalls me to think that these hundreds of children are being reared in bleak lovelessness”.

Ranking beside the Nazareth homes was Ruhane House, run by the De La Salle brothers. Evidence from former residents convinced HIAI that there were systemic failings at Ruhane: serious physical assault of children by some brothers and lay staff, with a number of brothers sexually abusing boys in their care. Following reports of abuse, superiors put reputation first, failing to properly investigate, or notify local authorities (who were even misled about the extent of abuse). Offending staff were simply moved to other schools where they abused again. HIAI was satisfied ‘that the Order failed to keep the boys in their care free from the pain, fear and distress caused by the physical and/or sexual abuse they suffered or saw others suffering in Ruhane’.

**Systemic failings**

Institutional abuse in NI involved sins of omission as much as commission, regardless of affiliation. HIAI found the public agencies charged with oversight of institutional shelters to be ‘guilty of systemic failings in the homes or institutions they organised… or were responsible for inspecting in the case of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the DHSS’. When the 1930 Children and Young Persons Act authorised welfare authorities to provide accommodation for children in care, NI’s Ministry of Home Affairs and Dept. of Health & Social Services became directly or indirectly responsible for funding, regulating, inspecting, and enforcing standards of care in voluntary and statutory homes.

In practice, however, HIAI found that ‘this legislative focus on the care and well-being of children in residential care was not fully realised until the early 1980s due in large part to the under-resourcing of inspection activity’. Because of this, abusive situations often worsened before they got better. For example, the statutory requirement that voluntary homes put in place a system of monthly visitors whose function it was to inspect the home and speak to the children, was almost universally ignored by those homes for decades.

Then in 1980, the EHSSB (previously cited in a ‘catalogue of failures’ in the Kincora case) failed to alert social workers to the police investigations into physical and sexual abuse in Ruhane.

Two names stand out in the HIAI testimony - the notorious paedophile, Fr. Brendan Smyth, and the Catholic primiate, Cardinal Sean Brady.

Although he was convicted and sentenced in 1994 for 117 offences in NI and the Republic of Ireland, Norbertine priest Smyth admitted that he might have sexually abused hundreds of children during his five decades in the priesthood. His clerical collar opened the doors of Catholic shelters around NI, and HIAI is critical of his Order, the diocese of Kilmore, the diocese of Down and Connor, the Sisters of Nazareth and the De La Salle order for failing to report Smyth after he had abused children in their homes.

One 14-year-old boy was called to testify about his allegations against Smyth before a canon law investigation called by the Bishop of Kilmore. The boy was interviewed by Fr John (later Cardinal) Brady who ‘effectively silenced’ the witness by separating him from his parents and forcing him to take an oath of secrecy. Hart commented, ‘we are in no doubt that the predominant reason for those oaths was to ensure that the good name of the Catholic Church was protected by keeping the matters discussed secret.’

**A proper response?**

What are we to make of all this evidence of inhumanity, collected over three years, spanning seven decades of institutional mistreatment of children, marking their souls for life? What is a proper response to HIAI findings?

Reviewing the McLellan Report (Open House November 2015), I recalled that Bishop Desmond Tutu said decades of institutional injustice needed to be remedied in four ways: apology, punishment, compensation, and reconciliation. Does HIAI endorse this kind of remediation?

Hart has already called for compensation, the free provision of specialist care and services, and a public apology. Apologies have started to flow as copiously as the victims’ tears, from nuns, brothers, priests, bishops, police, civic officials, and politicians. Yet how many apologies would it take to soothe the sting of one cut on a child’s body immersed in Jeyes Fluid bathwater?

Reconciliation? Surviving victims say that HIAI ‘vindicates’ them, but will they ever be reconciled to their churches, their secular representatives, and all their other oppressors? The constant refrain throughout the HIAI Report was ‘systemic failing’ of institutions. If victims have any residual faith in ‘the system’, it is owed entirely to the honesty and decency of Sir Anthony Hart and his Inquiry team.

Which leaves punishment. While the Hart Report indicts a whole society for the abandonment and mistreatment of its children, it makes no provision for the punishment of individuals. Financial compensation may provide reparation for victims, but how about reparation for a society damaged by the operation of these ‘homes’? What does justice demand?

NI children were victims not only of systemic abuse by known predators, but also of a conspiracy of silence by colluders. ‘No one would listen’, a grown woman told HIAI about her childhood complaints, ‘Today we are believed’.

We need someone to listen. Children need someone in public life dedicated full time to their welfare. We need to establish, at the highest level of government, an Office of Child Advocate (OCA), with all the power and responsibility to maintain a solitary and unique focus on the rights of the child. Hart has taken a commendable step in this direction by proposing the establishment of a full time position of advocate for children abused in institutions. This post would be called Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Child Abuse (COSICA). It would be funded by, but independent of, government, and be responsible for availability, coordination and provision of services for the historical constituency of NI victims identified by HIAI.

We must recognise, nevertheless, that COSICA, however just, represents a retroactive battlefield solution for harm already inflicted - take care of the wounded, see that their needs are met. An OCA, on the contrary, would be a proactive solution to prevent harm; establishing an OCA would be like sticking a stake in the ground, drawing a line in the sand - it would proclaim that, from this day forward, no more war on children.

Arthur McCaffrey is a retired Harvard University psychologist who writes frequently about child abuse.
Interfaith Harmony Week takes place at the beginning of February. We don’t hear too much about it in Scotland because we put our energies into Scottish Interfaith Week in November. The idea of an annual interfaith week originated in Scotland and the date chosen was the week in which St Andrew’s Day fell, to underline the common civic identity that we all share, no matter our different faiths and beliefs. Its purpose is to raise awareness of interfaith relations and to encourage churches and faith communities, public bodies, schools and libraries to put on some kind of interfaith event or participate in events set up by local interfaith groups. Over the years interest in it has grown and in 2016 there were over 50 interfaith events around the country.

Interfaith Harmony Week is the initiative of King Abdullah II of Jordan who first proposed it to the United Nations General Assembly in 2010 and, within a month, it was unanimously adopted by the UN which declared that the first week in February would be observed as World Interfaith Harmony Week. The motivation for it was an important document published by 138 Muslim scholars and addressed to the Pope and other Christian leaders throughout the world. The document was a response to the upset caused by an unfortunate and obscure quotation from a 14th century Byzantine Emperor used by Pope Benedict XVI at Regensburg in 2006, which compared the rationality of Christianity and Greek thought with the violence and irrationality of Islam. It was a polemical quotation, probably directed more to the secular West than to Islam but it provoked polemical and violent responses within the Muslim world, leading of course to back-tracking, apologies and rapprochement on the side of the Vatican.

Not all the responses were violent, however, and the more moderate voices within Islam published a document which came to be known as ‘The Common Word Initiative’ from its title ‘A Common Word Between Us and You’. It was drawn up and signed by 138 significant Muslim scholars and clerics from around the world. Now it has over 20,000 signatories on the web. It was a significant initiative because it came from Muslims determined to open up a dialogue with Christian leaders and it has given birth to important interreligious dialogues, especially between Islam and Christianity, as well as World Interfaith Harmony Week. The abridged version of the document begins:

‘Muslims and Christians together make up well over half of the world’s population. Without peace and justice between these two religious communities, there can be no meaningful peace in the world. The future of the world depends on peace between Muslims and Christians. The basis for this peace and understanding already exists. It is part of the very foundational principles of both faiths: love of the One God and love of the neighbour. These principles are found over and over again in the sacred texts of Islam and Christianity’.

And at the end of the introductory section,

‘Thus in obedience to the Holy Qur’an, we as Muslims invite Christians to come together with us on the basis of what is common to us, which is most essential to our faith and practice’.

The document opens the way for significant theological discussions and also provides a sound basis on which to base our desire and hopes to establish good relations with our Muslim brothers and sisters.

The purpose of World Harmony Week is set out in a United Nations Resolution. Recognising the importance of interreligious dialogue for mutual understanding, harmony and cooperation it Reaffirms that mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constitute important dimensions of a culture of peace; proclaims the first week of February every year the World Interfaith Harmony Week between all religions, faiths and beliefs; and encourages all States to support, on a voluntary basis, the spread of the message of interfaith harmony and goodwill in the world’s churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and other places of worship during that week, based on love of God and love of one’s neighbour or on love of the good and love of one’s neighbour, each according to their own religious traditions or convictions.

The week is an attempt to highlight the good interfaith initiatives that are taking place all over the world. It would be hard to find anyone today who did not agree that good interfaith relations are necessary for peace, but more difficult to find too many people willing to give time and energy to it.

Building friendships

One off events are good, visits to one another’s place of worship interesting and maybe even disturbing for some, attending interfaith services an opportunity to pray beside one another if not with one another; but if interfaith is to truly contribute to a culture of peace it needs to be built on solid interfaith friendships. It’s only within the context of trust and friendship that we can begin to talk about some of the
difficult issues that divide us and cause tension between us. And interfaith friendships, like all friendships, take time and energy.

In my experience this means simply spending time with one another and engaging in conversations, meetings, actions that of themselves don’t seem to be getting anywhere. Interfaith friendships mean being human together, sharing the high and low points of one another’s lives, sharing meals and above all learning about the faith of others as well as sharing one’s own.

For me one of the joys of interfaith work has been making good friends. Sometimes I feel closer to friends in other faiths than I do to some people in my own, and I know I’m not the only person to experience this. While good neighbourliness and a sharing of aspects of our common life as citizens is authentic dialogue, interreligious friendships are more intentional and focussed on a sharing of faith, spirituality, experience and commitment. They’re not a means to an end that is political or even social though I do believe they sow the seeds of peace in our world. They also bring about personal transformation as we learn to appreciate difference and gain insights into our own faith.

Scriptural Reasoning
An effective way of doing this is to study and read the scriptures of other faiths with an open mind, open to the insights of others. Scriptural Reasoning is an approach that allows believers of different faiths to reflect on scriptures with a common theme from each of their faiths. It’s edifying to hear how believers understand their scripture, to see the similarities and differences but also the wisdom which we can all apply to our lives. I like scriptural reasoning because it allows for some depth to a conversation that often gets to the heart of our faiths so that it is indeed a dialogue of heart to heart. It’s this kind of dialogue that develops the trust and respect that enables us to ask hard questions. It also allows us to understand the complexities and tensions within religions and the need for all of us to support what is best in each of our faiths.

A sacred trust
There is a strong anti-religious feeling around, especially in secular Europe, and religions need one another. They need to stand up for one another and to speak well of one another. Just after his inauguration in 2013, Pope Francis wrote to the Muslim community and called on Christians and Muslims to think and speak respectfully of other religions and their followers and to do so not only in the presence of someone from another faith, ‘but always and everywhere, avoiding unfair criticism or defamation’. As Diana Eck says, ‘people of every religious tradition depend upon one another to interpret one another fairly and accurately. We are the keepers of one another’s image. … This is a sacred trust.’


Sister Isabel Smyth is Secretary to the Scottish Catholic Bishops’ Committee for Interreligious Dialogue, Joint Secretary to the Council of Christians and Jews, and honorary fellow of Interfaith Scotland.
Donal Dorr in Glasgow

Theologian, author and Catholic priest Donal Dorr will speak at a conference in Glasgow later this month to mark the 50th anniversary of the encyclical Populorum Progressio.

Fr Dorr is widely known for his writing on Catholic Social Teaching. His 1983 book *Option for the Poor*, looked at a hundred years of social teaching and examined the extent to which the church committed itself to being on the side of the poor and oppressed. In 2013 an update, *Option for the Poor and the Earth*, was published with five new chapters: on the equality and complementarity of women; Pope Benedict's first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*; Benedict's encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*; the follow-up to *Caritas in Veritate*, ‘Towards Reforming the International Financial and Monetary Systems in the Context of Global Public Authority’; and the issue of ecology as it has been treated in Vatican documents for over half a century.

His 2000 volume on *Mission in Today’s World* reflected on his wide experience as a missionary priest of the Kiltegan Order and argues for a complete re-envisioning of the purpose of mission.

He has also written a range of books on holistic living, including *Spirituality and Justice*.

Today Fr Dorr is well-known as a facilitator, consultant, trainer and resource-person as well as author. He spent many years, in Ireland and overseas, working with community groups, church groups and teams of all kinds, with a special emphasis on empowerment, community-building and conflict-resolution.

More recently he has acted as a consultant for management and leadership teams of religious congregations, community workers, and voluntary organisations. He helps those in leadership or managerial roles to find creative ways of working, and enables them to develop inspiring styles of leadership.

Also speaking at the conference will be *Open House* contributor and former Director of SCIAF, Duncan Maclaren, who was also secretary general of Caritas Internationalis, the global network of Catholic aid and development agencies. Duncan is currently working on a PhD on integral human development.

The conference, which takes place at Renfield St Stephen’s Centre, Glasgow, on Saturday 18th March, is free and open to all.

See advert on the back page.

Lentfest

The Archdiocese of Glasgow’ annual Lentfest, billed as an imaginative fusion of faith and the arts, is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year.

It is a community festival run by AGAP, the Archdiocese of Glasgow Arts Project, which offers a wide variety of events in the run up to Easter.

Highlights include a performance by pianist Alessandra Pompili, who presents an overview of the life and passion of Jesus in music on Sunday 19th March at 3 am in St Andrew’s Cathedral. Bach’s St John Passion will be sung by Caledonia Voices with the orchestra of Scottish Opera in St Mary’s Episcopal Cathedral, Glasgow on Good Friday at 7 pm.

A one hour play about the life of Margaret Sinclair, which was premiered at last year’s Edinburgh Festival Fringe, will be performed in parishes across the archdiocese; while the history of the *Catholic Observer*, Scotland’s only national Catholic newspaper, will be the subject of a lively conversation among present and former employees of the paper at St Mungo’s, Townhead on 5th April. ‘Pages thought the ages’ starts at 7pm.

A special invitation is extended to children for a session of international storytelling at the Garnethill Multicultural Centre on Saturday 11th March. It will explore the life of the Zambian farmer and his family who feature on this year’s SCIAF Lent appeal, and there will also be a craft workshop.

For more events and details, visit the Lentfest website at www.lentfest.co.uk

Fair trade eggs for Easter

Traidcraft, whose aim is ‘fighting poverty through trade,’ is appealing to churches to help sell fairly traded Easter eggs this year.

The Real Easter Egg comes with an Easter story book, is made of Fairtrade chocolate, and makes a donation to charity.

Fairtrade works to benefit small-scale farmers and workers, who are amongst the most marginalised groups globally, through trade rather than aid to enable them to maintain their livelihoods and reach their potential.

Over 4,500 Fairtrade products, from coffee and tea to flowers and gold, are on sale in the UK, worth over £1.57 billion a year.

Fairly traded eggs were launched in 2010 and to date Traidcraft has sold...
more than a million of them, 750,000 of which were sold through churches and schools.

For more information on how your church can help boost direct sales and encourage people to switch to Fairtrade this Easter, go to www.realesateregg.co.uk

Legal first

Congratulations to Aidan O’Neill QC, who has become the first Scottish QC to become a QC in England as well as Scotland. He was the only advocate among the 113 barristers to take silk in London’s Westminster Hall last month.

Mr O’Neill practices on both sides of the border, which have different legal systems, and he will now do so as an advocate in both jurisdictions.

Congratulations

I am sure readers will want to join everyone at Open House in passing our warmest congratulations to our editor, Mary Cullen, on the completion of her PhD in theology and religious studies at the University of Glasgow. She will graduate in the summer.

As well as diligently pursuing her research over the last three years into the ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay people in the Catholic Church in Scotland, Mary has made a significant contribution to Open House, for which we are enormously grateful. We hope that her commitment, energy and scholarship, already valued by us, will find a developing place in the wider community of faith.

Mary, a huge ‘Well Done and Thank You’.

Florence Boyle and Lynn Jolly.

Maryvale distance learning

The Maryvale Institute is offering a BA (Hons) in Philosophy and the Catholic Tradition.

This five year part time distance learning degree is validated by the Open University. Its aims are to equip students with knowledge and understanding of enduring philosophical disciplines, such as metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and logic; to explore the relationship between these and Catholic theology in dialogue with Pope John Paul II’s Fides et Ratio; to develop in students an ability to conduct personal study at the level of an informed and independent scholar, wishing to become an Honours level graduate.

Applications will be accepted in November/December 2017 for a January 2018 start.

For further information visit the Maryvale website: www.maryvale.ac.uk

Apologies

Apologies for misspelling Molenidar, the name of Glasgow’s ancient burn, in last month’s Notebook. Although the waterway has largely disappeared from view in the city, its name lives on, not least in the annual St Mungo Festival which featured in Notebook. It had a Molendinar walk, a Molendinar award, and a Molendinar lecture, which was introduced with a song about the Molenidar. So, no excuses for the spelling error.

Edinburgh Vigil group

Mike Mineter writes: The Vigil Group was formed almost five years ago in the period from Easter to Pentecost. We will be reviewing these years and making plans for the future when that same liturgical time comes around this year.

The concerns that prompted us to begin meeting and praying in 2012 included:
• the liturgical changes were ones we deplored, not least as signs of a desired cultural shift in the wrong directions.
• the then leadership in Rome seemed to desire a ‘smaller purer church’ with centralised authority.
• faithful writers who were seeking to express Catholicism in a way suited to our time were being silenced.

Some nine months after we formed, Pope Francis began to challenge as well as offer example and hope – quite recently in moves away from Liturgiam Authenticam that had laid the foundations for the liturgical changes and side-lining of the beautiful 1998 translation.

We think that it is timely to review where we are now, looking at these initial concerns, at both world-wide and local archdiocesan scales.

Professor Jeanrond’s thoughts are helpful in this, as indeed are two models for new (to us) forms of ministry. Many US parishes have lay leaders and no resident priest and if we look to a frustratingly distant horizon, then we can see the Church of Scotland already has its Local Ordained Ministry, often ordaining women to serve one parish community.

It is not an original thought to say that if we lack priests for otherwise viable communities, then it is the model of priesthood and ministry that needs to evolve.

More details about the events in the Easter-Pentecost period will follow in April.

See http://www.thevigilgroup.org.uk

On the web

Open House sometimes gets requests for articles that have appeared in past editions. You should be able to find them on the Open House website at: www.openhousescotland.co.uk which has a search engine facility.

We put three articles from the latest edition online every month. A month later, the full version of this edition appears, and three articles from the latest edition are posted.

Back issues are filed in chronological order.

Next issue ...

The copy deadline for the April edition is Friday 31st March. Please send your letters and articles by post to the editor at the address on page 23 or by email to editor@openhousescotland.co.uk


Laity and hierarchy
At the Edinburgh Newman Circle talk by Werner Jeanrond (15th February) an interesting question was asked. The talk was enclosed within the prayerful thought, what God might want of us in this situation. It led to the question of what should laity do in relationship to the strictures that were felt from the hierarchical structure on the sustenance and progress of Christianity in the local parishes; and the way forward seemed to be that there needed to be opposition. But a thoughtful questioner expressed the fear of excommunication if the ‘rules’ of the Church were opposed and broken. Werner brushed this difficulty aside - excommunication is no longer relevant! The example was given from the floor of Fr Flannery in Ireland saying a public (well-attended) mass, contrary to hierarchical ruling.

After careful consideration this interaction led me to think in a more generous way than I would otherwise. I began to see that just as most of the time we laity adhere to the rules and requirements of those ‘above’ us in the church structure (monsignors, canons, bishops etc.) so also many priests, bishops and archbishops have a parallel subservience to those they consider to be higher up in the ‘civil service’ of the Church (many of the Cardinals and Vatican officials) and to canon law and even current doctrines of the Church. Their subservience showed itself most obviously in the acceptance of the new imposed English translation of the liturgy in preference to a text which English-speaking church leaders had themselves previously prepared.

We laity must not accuse our hierarchy of uncaring and thoughtless adherence to restrictive or punitive rules when we ourselves are performing the same timorous subservience to rules and requirements laid upon us by them. I know there are examples of Catholics openly doing this both as individuals and as groups - perhaps these should be more open and encouraging others who are like-minded. We need to do this to bring about the change in the church which Werner, in his talk, showed had happened in history and was clearly about to happen in our present time - and, I might add, the shorter the transition process and the more lay activity, the less the pain, dissatisfaction and disillusion.

Jeff Bagnall,
St Mary’s Pathhead, St Andrews and Edinburgh diocese.

Not just Simeon
I was interested to read in February’s Notebook section that Holy Name Church in Glasgow had included the figure of the Prophet Simeon in their crib group. While creative developments in the way the Christmas story is presented should be welcomed, I’d like to point out that Simeon was not the only person who awaited the Holy Family in the temple. The Prophetess Anna also welcomed Mary, Joseph, and the tiny Messiah with great joy. She, like Simeon, surely deserves a place at the crib, and I hope that Holy Name church will include her next year.

It would be wonderful to see tangible evidence that we have moved into a time where the role of important lay women in the Church’s history is celebrated.

Liz Cole-Hamilton,
Cupar
Reformations
Carlos Eire
Yale University Press. 757pp. £20

This book shares the viewpoint of the
Innes Review, the Journal of the
Scottish Catholic Historical
Association (founded 1950), that there
were many efforts at
church reform before the Saxon
Augustinian friar Martin Luther, on
All Hallows’ Eve 1517, sent the
Archbishop of Mainz his 95 theses
about the forgiveness of sins. Eire also
agrees with the Innes Review that the
impetus for reform came not from the
church but from the newly emerging
European states which were eying the
church’s property. The ‘Babylonian
Captive’ when the Pope lived in
Avignon under the thumb of the
French King, and the Great Schism
when three Popes vied for support
from different rulers, ended the
Christendom symbolised by the Papal
tiara.

Before Luther the most radical
reformer was the Italian Dominican
Girolamo Savonarola in the city state
of Florence. His Ayatollah-like
approach earned him execution along
with two other friars in 1498. His
failure contrasts with the success of the
Spanish Franciscan Cardinal
Jimenez de Cisneros who died in the
year of Luther’s protest. Amongst his
achievements was the production of the
first polyglot (Hebrew, Greek and
Latin) Bible.

Nearer home was the English layman
Thomas More. He was a friend of
Erasmus of Rotterdam who was
brought up in the devotio moderna, a
lay reform movement. More helped
Henry VIII compose a rebuttal of
Luther which earned from the Pope
the title of ‘Defender of the Faith’ for
laying the egg Luther hatched, but he
denied this.

The common refrain of those who
wanted to reform the church was a
return ‘ad fontes’ (back to the sources)
i.e. to Sacred Scripture at the expense
of Church Tradition. This movement
was reinforced by the flight of Greek
scholars to Italy after the fall of
Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks
in 1453. Luther faced competition from
other reformers.

The first was Thomas Munzer who
thought if you could dispense with the
Pope why not get rid of the king as
well! Luther was horrified by the
Peasants’ Revolt of 1525. Another was
Ulrich Zwingli, killed in battle with Swiss Catholics, who was more
of an iconoclast. The most important
was the French priest Jean Calvin who
established the theocracy in Geneva.
Instead of Luther’s Sola Scriptura
Calvin proposed Sola Dei Gloria.
Some of his followers called Luther’s
Bible ‘a paper Pope’.

This brings us to John Knox, a priest
from Haddington. He was associated
with the reformer George Wishart
who was executed in 1546. Knox
took part in the revenge killing of
Cardinal Beaton. This earned him a
spell in the galleys before he escaped
to England. When Henry VIII’s older
daughter Mary restored Catholicism
he went to Geneva where he came
under the influence of Calvin. On his
return to Scotland he joined the Lords
of the Congregation in their battle
against the Regent Mary of Guise,
who was French. The success of this
aristocratic revolt allowed him to
enforce a Calvinist settlement on
Scotland in 1560.

The main effect of all these reform
movements was to establish the
axiom- cuius regio ejus religio
meaning the ruler determines the
religion of his subjects. This is not to
say there was no popular appeal for
reform. Religious conflict was fierce
among ordinary people. It can be
argued however that the real struggle
was about who owned the land. In
Ulster, more than 300 years later,
Unionist farms are targeted by the
landless Nationalists. Reducing it to
‘sectarianism’ is trite. The same
applies today to Islamic ‘jihad’.

Eire is even handed in his treatment
of reform movements and includes the
Anabaptists and other ‘non-
conformists’. Within the Catholic
Church he covers the Council of Trent
(1546-63). Trent also sought to return
‘ad fontes’. Its red line, however, was
the papacy. Its decrees therefore
affected particularly popes, bishops
and priests. The Council took into
account the new influences, not only
Protestantism but also urbanisation
and finance. It made as much use of
printing as other reformers had done.
Against the attack on celibacy it was
supported by the establishment of new
orders like the Jesuits. Ignatius Loyola
studied at the same College in Paris as
Calvin. Eire notes that the Spanish
Inquisition kept meticulous records.
Contrary to ‘black’ propaganda it
executed 1.8% of those accused.
At the same time in the East of Scotland
it is reckoned about 1,500 witches,
mostly women, were burned.

What renewed Catholicism was the
discovery of the trade routes to the
East and the discovery of the New
World in the west. Some Catholics
thought the new converts would make
up for those lost to Protestantism.
After Cromwell old England proved
hostile to Calvinist reform. The
English were more interested in ritual
than in doctrine. The Puritans sought
a haven in ‘New’ England, north of
Florida where the Spaniards were. The
Scots-Irish went south west where
they produced the Klu Klux Klan. The
principal author of the Declaration of
Independence, Thomas Jefferson, a
Deist, ditched not only Church and
Communion but also the Incarnation
and insisted on the separation of
church and state.

Just as Eire anticipates reform before
1517 so he brings the story up to date
by looking at the consequences of the
Renaissance reform movements.
Briefly he believes that ‘the reformers
sought to secularise the church but
ended up sacralising the state’. Europe
descended into confessional regions. The blood of the martyrs (from all sides) provided the disillusionment that led to the scepticism of the Enlightenment. Arguments about free will and predestination proved barren. The emphasis on personal conscience and on the subjective led to dogma without ritual. Kant’s philosophy made the short journey from Prussia to St Petersburg where in 1917 Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (Lenin) arrived at the Finland Station. Thomas Munzer appeared on a DGR banknote as the first revolutionary. But today a Lutheran from the DGR is Chancellor of capitalist Germany.

Reform is again in the air in the Roman Catholic Church. 757 pages for £20 seems a good bargain to find out how this fits into previous efforts.

Willy Slavin

God’s Jury

Cullen Murphy
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2012

Cullen Murphy’s book is subtitled The Inquisition and the Making of the Modern World. In a lengthy introduction he propounds that everyone knows the name of the Inquisition but few can say when it started, how long it lasted, what countries were affected, and whether it resided with us still, even though the Church is no longer the global institution it once was. He indicates that in the course of his work he will show that the motives and methods of the Inquisition foreshadowed much of later institutionalised evil and regressive regimes such as the Nazis and the Holocaust, Fascism and the KGB.

For non-historians, Murphy explains that there were three Inquisitions: Pope Gregory IX’s in 1231; the best known Spanish Inquisition under Torquemada in the 15th century; and the Roman Inquisition which commenced in 1542. The first was to deal ruthlessly with heretics such as the Cathars, mostly in south west France. The second sought to enforce orthodoxy and also end mostly Spanish superstition and heresy, and the third was to combat the Reformation.

The Inquisition process had a long history and grew out of the ancient Roman law where procedures and disputes were replaced by a formal process in the hands of the state, known as Inquisitio, and conducted by a magistrate or Inquisitor who was often a Dominican monk. Although this was meant to be a sort of court, the Inquisitor was detective, prosecutor and judge all rolled into one and therefore ‘God’s Jury’. Very detailed records were efficiently kept of those found guilty of heresy and put to death.

The author argues that the 1950’s McCarthy witch hunt of suspected US Communists had many of the same hallmarks, where prominent public figures were investigated, named and condemned without trial by the same investigative committee and had their careers ruined without ever being able to answer back.

Some of the other Inquisition procedures, he suggests, are also evident today in the war against terror, particularly lengthy imprisonment without trial in Guantamino Bay and rendition.

So far as the latter is concerned, after the Inquisitor condemned the heretic to death, he was then passed to the secular authorities for burning at the stake. Some countries today, who claim they will never torture, have used rendition to hand over their suspects to countries who still extract information for them by torture. Torture was in fact authorised by Pope Innocent IV who issued a papal bull Ad extirpanda. Clergy could be present but were not to participate. Once again, this was handed to a skilled representative of the secular authority to do the job on behalf of the Inquisitor.

The author, an American Catholic, recounts in detail his travels around France and Spain to the places where much of the activity was centred, and finally to the Vatican to explore the records and seek out any relics. The Congregation of the Inquisition was not formally abolished until 1908 but some of its functions were included in the new Congregation of the Holy Office, particularly the Index of Forbidden Books.

Those of a certain age will recall being warned not to read a book ‘Because it is on the Index’. Those charged with compiling the list came very close to including the works of England’s greatest Catholic author Graham Greene, in particular The Power and the Glory, a novel about a deeply flawed priest in Mexico. It was already banned in Ireland, but unlike Jean Paul Sartre, Greene was finally spared from the Index which was not itself abolished until the early 1960s.

Murphy’s principal argument, based on his travels and extensive research, is that the Inquisition is the ancestor of the communist secret police, the fascist regimes and the Orwellian surveillance states. Their bureaucracy and single-mindedness give rise to certainty and to the inquisitorial impulse, and they act accordingly.

This work was published well before the unexpected emergence of the new US President. One can however hazard a guess at what the author would have made of the immediate executive orders which bypassed Congress, restricting much Muslim travel, proclaiming the erection of a wall along the Mexican border, declaring a belief in torture, undermining the health provisions of the previous president, and already challenging the power of the judiciary. Enough material already for a sequel?

Lewis Cameron

March 2017 | OPEN HOUSE | 19
Coffee table books?
In our world of kindles and phones and even of minimalist décor is there still a demand for what used to be, for several generations, a universally accepted and understood concept of books scattered around the house often nestling on the ubiquitous coffee table? I was reminded of this when I came across this instantly attractive book which somehow manages to leap out and demand the browser’s attention and then proceeds to fully engage by means of a vast quantity of delightful illustrations of superlative quality.

The title is also arresting and designed to attract the would-be reader who might not be able to reel off the names of too many medieval manuscripts, far less their history. What comes after ‘The Book of Kells’?

This book offers an encounter with no less than twelve carefully chosen medieval manuscripts from over a million. Each is offered as characteristic of its century with a fascinating story to tell. The manuscripts themselves come in all shapes and sizes. The term manuscript is defined as ‘as a document written by hand’ compiled over considerable time and throwing up various issues about ‘collation’. This latter point is the nearest the author allows himself to showing his professional expertise as a palaeographer. This book is designed for the general reader with a writing style which is conversational, first person plural and decidedly informal.

The author is not a conventional historian but someone who worked for much of his life in Sotheby’s before moving to Cambridge in 2000 as Fellow and Librarian of Corpus Christi College. An admirable advocate for his trade, he emphasises there are ‘good careers in manuscript studies in rare book libraries …’ and numerous opportunities for ‘perceptive enthusiasts’. In addition to the twelve chapters he offers a comprehensive introduction and an engaging enquiring epilogue. His task is to bring to life ‘some of the greatest works of art in our culture which, in the originals, are to most people completely inaccessible’. Each manuscript has a story waiting to be told involving detective work of a high order. Another part of the jigsaw is travelling on a phenomenal scale. Only one of the twelve is located in the country where it was conceived and actually put together. The writer suggests it is ‘pure chance which has brought the volumes to wherever in the world they are now’.

This wonderful book can be appreciated at many levels. The reader is invited not just to admire the illuminations but to engage in a voyage of discovery as to why these manuscripts matter today and what they can tell us. In addition in the unlikely stirring of any credible doubt, he provides no less than a 15 line sentence offering a plethora of reasons for their specific study. I would but offer a further view that the book is also exceptional value for money given its considerable length at 632 pages as well as the quality of the numerous illustrations.

Returning to the coffee table theme, what was the criteria? In no particular order, the book should certainly look good. In terms of content, it does not demand to be read cover to cover but can be picked up with enthusiasm at any time. The book was often designed to catch the attention of and subsequently impress the discerning visitor. This memorable book meets all these requirements, plus giving the host the opportunity to casually drop the term palaeography into a conversation with the unsuspecting guest. The writer himself focuses simply on providing enjoyment for the reader and the simple pleasure to be gained from seeking to understand manuscripts which have stood the test of time and continue to inform our world today. Hopefully this proves to be but volume one.

Dan Gunn

Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts
Christopher De Hamel
Allen Lane
2016 - £30

FILM
Hacksaw Ridge (2017)
Director: Mel Gibson
Writers: Robert Schenkkan (screenplay), Andrew Knight (screenplay)

For a film of a true story about a conscientious objector in war

Hacksaw Ridge contains a shocking amount of blood. Except it is not strictly about conscientious objection and the Battle of Okinawa was amongst the most bloody of World War Two.

Desmond Doss (Andrew Garfield - Fr Rodriguez in Silence) enlists in the American Army after Pearl Harbour. He believes in war but because he nearly shot his father in a domestic dispute he has taken a vow never to touch a gun again. He joins
an active unit, thinking he can be the medic. This is not what his officers think. He is mocked and bullied for his Seventh Day Adventist beliefs. Eventually he is taken to a court martial and is only allowed to stay in the unit when his father, a WWI veteran, wangles a favour for him. The idea of a singleminded man against the powers that be has appealed to Gibson since his Mad Max days.

The battle scenes that follow are graphic. They are a lot more violent than Braveheart. Americans storm the ridge. The Japanese drive them back. Doss then comes into his own because the unit is short of medics. It is apparently true that in real life Doss stayed behind to rescue a large number of the unit, including those who had mocked and bullied him. Doss lived to tell the tale. He received the Purple Heart and was the first soldier to receive the Medal of Honor (from President Truman, no less) without having fired a shot. He returned to his wife and appeared on This Is Your Life. He lived till 2006. The film ends with shots of Doss with former comrades testifying to his bravery. Gibson leaves us in no doubt that this was due to his religious faith.

Jesus recommended turning the other cheek. Convert Roman soldiers left the army. When the Emperor became a Christian however the theory of the Just War was created. Franz Jaggerstatter who refused to be enlisted by the Nazis is an exception to the rule of Catholics fighting for God and Country. General Schwarzkopf directed the Gulf War with a statue of the Child of Prague on his desk. By and large only those who belonged to the Peace Churches (Quakers, Witnesses, Adventists etc) were recognised as conscientious objectors.

Mel (the patron saint of Ardagh, Ireland) Columcille Gerard Gibson has been in the Hollywood doghouse for the last decade because of his drinking, womanising and an anti-Jewish rant. He has just had his ninth child by his third partner. He is hoping, if not for an Oscar, at least for redemption from the jury of his peers.

Norman Barry

Doss, seen here atop the Maeda Escarpment - 'Hacksaw Ridge' - refused to carry a weapon, but was rarely found to be without his bible.

During the battle of Okinawa he dragged approximately 75 severely injured men to the edge of the ridge and lowered them down to other medics below.

**MUSIC**

The Treatment Tapes

Rab Noakes

EP Neon Records, NEONCD018

Rab Noakes is a veteran Scottish musician and singer-songwriter. He’s been 70 years on the planet and 50 years on the road, with a musical career that started in 1967 and has seen him perform with the likes of Barbara Dickson, Gerry Rafferty and Lindisfarne. He’s made over 20 albums.

In 2015 Rab was diagnosed with tonsilar cancer. He composed the six songs on this EP in the period following his treatment of radiotherapy and chemotherapy.

The style is a mix of Mike Marra and Bob Dylan. Rab’s laconic, bluesy vocal and R&B guitar reminds me of them both, as does his intelligent, poetic lyrics. The songs are thoughtful, stoical, self-mocking and darkly-humorous, with touches of poignancy and lyricism. It is all absorbing listening, with the accompanying booklet providing a full, fascinating account of how each song was composed as part of Rab’s strategy to shun self-pity and to get himself through it all.

At least two of the songs here are masterpieces: Mindful and I Always Will. In Mindful, the lyrics are arresting (‘Do you find that today turns up too late, on a pile of yesterdays?’). Rab’s gruff vocal delivery - and the wry stoicism and the self-deprecating humour in his words - seem to try to keep at bay the feelings that might lead to grief: but those emotions leak out anyway in the form of the wistful oboe’s melancholy, valedictory accompaniment. And in Rab’s beautiful love-song to his wife, I Always Will, the melody is tender and sweet and life-affirming, with the sonorous cello carrying the shadow of the fear of parting.

www.rabnoakes.com
Songs of Robert Burns
Robyn Stapleton
Laverock Records, LAVE002CD

Robyn Stapleton is a young folksinger who performs the traditional songs of her Scottish and Irish heritage. In 2014, she won BBC Radio Scotland’s Young Traditional Musician of the Year award, and she has performed with leading ensembles such as the RSNO and the BBC SSO. Growing up in the South West of Scotland, Robyn was introduced to the songs of Robert Burns from a very young age, and she has devoted her second album to Burns’ work.

It is a masterful display of how to sing poetry. Robyn’s singing is beautifully phrased, with crystal-clear enunciation of Burns’ words. The production and arrangements are careful and judicious. The instrumental accompaniment gently interposes contrastive musical phrases between verses, adding drama, zest and colour to the songs, enhancing Robyn’s vocal without ever undermining or overwhelming it.

Robyn is accompanied here by fiddle, viola, piano, harmonium, guitar, mandolin, bouzouki, flute, percussion, and by a string quartet.

The arrangement of Westlin’ Winds brings out the full autumnal beauty of the song. Robyn’s heartfelt, trembling vocal is joined by wistful piano and poignant string quartet. In Ae Fond Kiss, the piano introduction and the piano/fiddle accompaniment frame Stapleton’s powerful, projected vocal, creating a vivid late-night cabaret atmosphere that reveals this classic ballad as the dramatic torch-song it truly is.

The Slave’s Lament has Robyn’s emotionally-charged vocal accompanied by Patsy Reid’s viola. This is folk-music’s answer to Lieder; it may not be Schubert but it’s every bit as intense and profound. Ca’ The Yowes demonstrates Robyn’s considerable vocal range and her voice’s richly expressive timbre in the lower register, not unlike the sonorous fiddle that so evocatively accompanies her. My Love Is Like A Red Rose is sung by Robyn with charming, effortless flurries of grace notes, and the string quartet accompaniment adds further emotional depth.

Robyn’s whole approach returns Burns to the world of chamber-folk and art-song (which is the world he inhabited in his own lifetime). The polish and precision of these interpretations reminds me somewhat of the counter-tenor Andreas Scholl’s exquisite folk-song album Wayfaring Stranger, which also contains a superb version of My Love Is Like A Red Rose.

For many years now, Robyn says she has wanted to create an album that fully expresses the passion, humour and emotional truth within Burns’ songs; songs that so deeply connect with people all over the world. How wonderful to have achieved a lifelong dream so early in one’s career. www.robynstapleton.com

The Macalla Suite
Michael Rooney
Draiocht Music, Doorla 005

As part of the 1916 centenary celebrations in Ireland last year, this suite of music was commissioned from the composer Michael Rooney to commemorate the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin. Using a 60-strong orchestra of classical and Irish traditional musicians, this is a folk-classical suite of 19 orchestrally-arranged short pieces composed in the Irish traditional idiom, incorporating traditional Irish songs associated with the Rising: The Bold Fenian Men, The Foggy Dew and Oró Sé Do Bhréitha ‘Bhaile.

Rooney’s suite portraits in music the sufferings of 19th century Ireland, the Irish nationalist freedom struggle, the Rising itself, the aftermath, and the present-day reconciliation with the British state.

There are some striking pieces here. A Clash Of Traditions conjures the austere sound of Ulster’s life-and-drum marching tradition, representing the Ulster Volunteers, and contrasts it with softer, mellow Irish traditional march-tunes, representing the Irish Volunteers. Confusion is a syncopated piece composed in changing time-signatures to capture the confusion before the Rising. The Battle evokes the armed conflict of the Rising itself, beginning with mournful cellos, ominous bodhrán and brooding strings. Lament For The Dead has keening, wailing uilleann pipes accompanied by majestic strings.

The epic sweep of the Macalla Suite’s orchestration is like a film soundtrack. Indeed, it will remind many people of Seán Ó Riada’s famous folk-classical soundtrack to Mise Éire, the 1959 Irish film documentary about the Rising.

It is worthy of note that the composer Michael Rooney is a leading exponent of the traditional Irish harp, and that he shares Seán Ó Riada’s admiration for the stately elegance of Irish folk-baroque music, such as the Vivaldi-influenced compositions of the 17th century Irish harper Turlough O Carolan.

Some of the most beguiling pieces in the Macalla Suite are the ones in Irish folk-baroque style, such as The Queen’s Speech, which commemorates the 2011 visit by the British Queen to Dublin’s Garden of Remembrance, where Her Majesty stood and bowed in honour of those who fought against the British state to win Ireland’s independence.

Rooney’s beautiful, graceful baroque composition is the perfect musical expression of peace and reconciliation. www.draiochtmusic.com

Paul Matheson

Reviewers

Norman Barry is the long time film reviewer of Open House.

Lewis Cameron is a retired sheriff.

Dan Gunn is an elder in the Church of Scotland and former Head of Operations at the Scottish Prison Service.

Paul Matheson is a music reviewer and an equality and diversity officer with the police.

Willy Slavin is a retired priest.
Moments in time

The strong east wind is sending the waves crashing on to the beach; an impressive sight but not somewhere to linger on a cold day. We head inland past the Carnoustie Golf Hotel, which faces two of the famous golf courses and was built for the Open Championship in 1999. Nearby is the old golf shop, located in what looks like an old cottage, a relic of earlier days of less sophisticated golf facilities.

The track takes us past the third golf course, the Buddon, which lies adjacent to the railway line from Dundee to Aberdeen. We see Golf Street station, the nearest station to the golf courses, which only has one train each way per day, at 6.05 in the morning returning at 7.15 in the evening. Modern housing and an old factory, formerly a jute mill, occupy the land on the other side of the railway but we have an open outlook across the golf courses with scattered trees and sandy bunkers. A song thrush is singing but the skylarks have decided that spring has not arrived yet.

This is part of the Angus Coastal Trail which at this point has to leave the coast because the land ahead is occupied by the Barry Buddon Training Area, dating from 1850, which prevents access to the shoreline whenever red flags are flying, which they are today. We reach Barry station, which is nearly a mile from the village but has very long platforms. This will have been a busy place in former times, especially in wartime with trains bringing troops to the firing ranges. However, the station also has only two trains per day so I expect that nowadays the soldiers all come by road.

We cross the railway and walk inland past a few scattered cottages and smallholdings. The land is flat and used mostly for grazing. A buzzard glides slowly over some trees and ahead we see Barry church tower. Now there is a by-pass and the village is peaceful. We explore the old graveyard which surrounds the ruins of the original church. The post office is now a house and the place has a feeling that Barry’s best days were in the past when this was the main settlement in the area, before the establishment of nearby Carnoustie.

Tim Rhead
Tim Rhead is a pastoral assistant in the Episcopal Church.

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Is This Progress?
The challenge of Populorum Progressio 50 years

18th March 2017  9:30am - 4:30pm
Renfield St. Stephen’s Centre, 260 Bath St,
Glasgow G2 4JP

A one day conference in Glasgow offering an opportunity to discuss Pope Paul VI’s encyclical, Populorum Progressio. The day will explore its legacy of Integral Human Development and what it means for Christians.

The programme for the day includes presentations by Fr Donal Dorr, Kiltegan Father and author of numerous works on development issues, and Duncan Maclaren, former director of SCIAF. There will also be an opportunity for participants to discuss the issues raised by the encyclical.

The event is free and open to all. Refreshments will be provided.

For more information or to book your tickets contact
Donna Morris  0141 354 5555  donna@justfaith.org.uk

This conference has been organised by Just Faith, a partnership of three agencies working together to encourage people to put their faith into action.