

# OPENHOUSE

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**SCOTLAND TO MARK FATIMA 100TH EVENTS**  
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**Help Faith Rise from the Ashes**  
Families forced from their homes in Iraq are they need your help more than ever - food and medicine are in short supply. This Easter, please offer the hope of the resurrection.

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A Catholic journalist on the church and the media

Tom Devine on prospects for Brexit

A parish priest on voices less heard

# Pilgrims' progress

Elizabeth Johnson's book, *Truly Our Sister*, develops a theology of Mary within the communion of saints. She envisions the mother of Jesus as a concrete woman of history who walked with the spirit in her time and place and is now one of the great 'clouds of witnesses' who surround the church on earth with encouragement and support.

The communion of saints, the 'great intergenerational company of persons', brings together the living and the dead in a 'river of holy lives' which embraces all those who seek God. It evokes Vatican II's image of the pilgrim people of God, deeply engaged in the world, moving through history towards the *eschaton*, committed to constant renewal, and open to the insights of different traditions.

The image of the pilgrim people reminds us that we have to keep on moving. We have to walk in different ways at different times. Today there is a need to reform the church's structures to make them more fit for mission, and to find new ways of being church which meet the needs of the contemporary world. One group who are

seeking to respond to changing needs are deacons. Significant numbers of lay men in Scotland have come forward for training in pastoral ministry. They learn how to baptise, preach and preside at weddings and funerals. Although they can do all of this as lay people, they are ordained.

It is easy to see them as plugging the gap left by the declining numbers of priests. It might be more helpful to see them as a bridge between lay and ordained, opening up paths to new ways of being church in which lay people can play a greater role. They come from the world of work and growing families; many are still employed while others are retired; and they bring a wide variety of gifts and experience to their new role.

Another clerical layer or a bridge to the future? Time will tell. In the meantime, as we walk with deacons on our pilgrimage together, we might reflect on their call to serve the community.

*Elizabeth A. Johnson's Truly Our Sister is published by Continuum, 2003*

# In praise of the bicycle

The Cardinal Archbishop of Cologne has taken part in the bicentenary celebrations of the invention of the bicycle by the German Karl Von Drais. The 'draisine' looked like a bicycle. Technically it was a velocipede. It was propelled by riders using their feet along the ground. The addition of pedals is usually credited to Kirkpatrick Macmillan of Dumfries in 1839.

Comparable advances were made at the same time by Gavin Dalzell of Lesmahagow and later by Thomas McCall of Kilmarnock. England followed with the penny farthing. This was limited by a front wheel drive. There then appeared the 'safety bicycle'. This had a rear chain drive and equally sized wheels. It was this that was mass produced. There was a bicycle factory in Glasgow in 1885.

The production of the bicycle coincided with the rise of democracy. It replaced the horse by providing greater versatility with less cost. It was used first for deliveries like the mail. Then it got men to their places of work. It also became a means of leisure. It was accessible not only to all classes but to women and children. Today in the developing world ownership of a bicycle is the single greatest determinant of economic progress.

*Open House* readers will recall learning to ride a bike not long after they started primary school. When (and why) did they give it up? For secondary school it was easier to hop on to a bus/tram or take the train. Then

came the ubiquity of the car. Many people own a bike. Most no longer use it.

Racing was part of cycling from the beginning. In racing countries there is a difference between the Lycra clad brigade and the rest who bike in everyday clothes. In the UK this difference is being eroded. In Scotland today it would be a brave parent who would allow a child on to a bike without a helmet and a hi-viz jacket. Eventually these will end up in the wardrobe together with the Messi strip. Bikes are those things that whizz along in the Tour de France.

There is some disquiet at the disappearance of cycling to school, work, shopping or just to get out and about. Schools are trying to create safe cycle ways. Employers have been encouraged to offer discounts to workers who cycle. Sustrans is engaged in a programme of creating pedestrian/cycle only paths. Most of the populated parts of Scotland are relatively flat. The problem is not so much the amount of traffic. It is the criminal attitude of many drivers to the speed limit.

Bikes should be available on the NHS. If a doctor's first recommendation to a patient was to try cycling, the NHS drug bill would fall dramatically. Obesity rates are rocketing. People absolutely need to get out more. It would be nice to think that in 2039 a Bishop of Galloway might cycle to Dumfries for the bicentenary of the bicycle of Kirkpatrick Macmillan.

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Thank you to all those who contributed to this edition of *Open House*.

*Open House*, which was founded in Dundee in 1990, is an independent journal of comment and debate on faith issues in Scotland. It is rooted in the reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) and committed to the dialogue which began at the Council - within the Catholic Church, in other churches, and with all those committed to issues of justice and peace.

[www.openhousescotland.co.uk](http://www.openhousescotland.co.uk)

Cover: Images courtesy of the *Scottish Catholic Observer*.

IAN DUNN

# The church and the media

A Catholic journalist reflects on the challenges of living and working between two worlds.

‘Catholic Journalist’ isn’t an oxymoron, but it feels like a relative: an oxy-idiot, an oxy-imbecile. As editor of the *Scottish Catholic Observer*, every day feels like an attempt to keep the ‘Catholic’ and ‘journalist’ parts of the job in balance.

Today’s journalism is relentless: a never ending whirl of always-pressing stories and scoops, a hustle-bustle of information, a fizzing, bristling, secular kaleidoscope that never stops.

Then there is the deep, lasting silence of the Church.

Flitting between the two is disconcerting but essential. I took over as editor of the SCO a year ago, and our best moments since then have been because we harried and chased, nipped and hassled, and dragged some lump of hidden truth from the shadows and deposited it in the porches of our churches – much to the alarm and delight of Scotland’s Catholics.

A newspaper can provide many shades of value, be it rich, moving features or witty, biting columns, but reporting is what truly matters.

Yet those same instincts are the ones that have led to our most difficult moments, when we’ve pushed a story too far or overlooked something obvious in our haste. The nature of our business model means we are separate from the Church, but utterly dependent on it.

Rub a priest up the wrong way and the paper could be pulled from a parish indefinitely, with ruinous financial consequences. Rub a bishop

up the wrong way and...well, it doesn’t bear thinking about.

Generally – fortunately – people are quite forgiving when we make mistakes, but there are plenty of Scottish Catholics, clergy and lay, who harbor a general ill-defined hostility to journalists of all stripes.

The roots of this suspicion are understandable.

Historically, the Scottish media was seen as intrinsically Presbyterian and anti-Catholic, like all the other great institutions of Scottish life. That hasn’t been the case for a long time, but suspicion lingers.

I recall telling a friend I’d applied for a job at the *Daily Record* about a decade ago – and he burst out laughing at the very idea they’d employ a Catholic. That suspicion has largely and rightly dissipated, but its residue remains.

Of course these days, the average Scottish journalist is about as religious as the cobbles on the street – and less likely to stroll into church on a Sunday morning. They also tend to be more left-wing than the population as a whole, and these days with the great wave of redundancies having thinned the herds of veteran reporters to near extinction, they tend to be fairly young as well. Youthful and left-wing: not a constituency that has a lot of time for the Catholic Church.

Among the daily circle of the middle-class, the secular people working on Scottish newspapers, in Scottish charities and in Scottish politics, a religious person is an

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oddy; belief is an embarrassment. The Church is seen as anti-modern, something to be suspicious of.

Yet with the disappearance of a generation of older reporters, an even greater issue is that huge reams of specialist knowledge have gone with them. Even the big London papers barely have religion correspondents these days, and in Scotland that knowledge is almost non-existent.

Outside of the SCO offices, I'd be stunned if there are five journalists in the country who have a decent understanding of the Scottish Catholic Church: what its internal politics are, who the hierarchy are, and even the fundamentals of what we believe. All of these are mysteries to most of the people who report on it. Even the ones who might be broadly sympathetic have seen *Spotlight*.

As *All the President's Men* inspired a previous generation, so too does *Spotlight* this one. Not without reason is the malevolent, concealing bishop a key bogeyman in the imagination of the modern journalist.

So for all there remain many talented reporters here in Scotland, doing vital work up and down the country in resource-starved environments when it comes to reporting on Catholic matters, the media here is generally

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somewhere on the spectrum of being hostile and ignorant.

When you are on the receiving end of it, it's hard to ignore. I've lost count of the number of times I've phoned a priest and audibly heard them clam up as soon as I said: 'Hello I'm a reporter...' Thankfully they usually relax a bit at '...from the *Scottish Catholic Observer*'.

But that tension is real. As Scotland becomes less religious and Catholicism again seems very alien to many Scots, the media can feel like an aggressive beachhead into Catholic territory. Social media has also helped create tighter bubbles of separation so it's easiest, sometimes, to forget that big non-Catholic world outside.

Of course, it's not just Catholics who dislike the media these days. In the decade or so I've been a hack, the hostility of the public to the journalists feels like it's exploded. When I first started at the Observer, I soon learned that describing myself as a Catholic journalist in the more liberal circles I moved in would get me a lecture on atheism, homophobia, the abuse scandal and God knows what else.

As time has passed I've grown more robust and confident in the Faith and better able to defend it – yet I've rarely had to. For in the last year or two, it's become the journalist part that draws the ire, not the Catholic.

'Are you one of those journalists that hacks dead kids' phones?', 'Did you help the BBC steal the referendum?', and 'Do you just like lying for a living?' are all questions I've been asked that I dearly wish were exaggerations.

Of course the conduct of journalist and proprietors is hardly beyond reproach but I blame social media or the general soaring in contempt for my profession. In addition to privileging

the loudest, angriest voices, and driving public discourse towards conflict, it's revealed too much of how the sausage gets made.

People see journalists on Twitter trading jibes, hinting about how they're in the know and wisecracking about the darkest tragedies, and think unprintable things. Journalists have always done these things of course, but seeing it done is unattractive – and it's all too easy to project whatever bias you like.

So for all the mutual suspicion between the Church and the media, they have one think in common: wider Scotland doesn't increasingly ignore them.

Somewhere in the middle is the SCO, plotting its own course through these choppy waters. All of which sounds very gloomy. Yet the need for us is greater than ever. No one else will report on what is happening in the Catholic Church. As often as not, the mainstream papers just lift our stories. Similarly we are out there rowing against the current, trying to find out how the ways in which Scotland is changing will affect the Church.

At times it seems a tightrope – in particular I wonder if, soaked in the social media of the secular world, I am too attuned to the negative, to hostility towards the Church. The balance between the worlds of the Church and the media is always on my mind.

I've always had a simple explanation for the paper's existence: it's to ask what it means to be a Catholic in Scotland. That will always be an interesting question, to those in the Church and out of it. So on that rock, we do our work.

*Ian Dunn is the editor of the Scottish Catholic Observer.*



## Calling all photographers

Open House would like to build up a collection of digital photographs which we could use for our front covers, or to illustrate articles. Photographs for the front page would appear 233mm deep x 216mm wide, minus 3mm all round once trimmed. They should be full colour and a minimum of 300dpi at final size.

These should be supplied as jpegs or tiffs.

Unfortunately we can't pay for photos but images and photographers will be credited.

If you are interested, email [editor@openhousescotland.co.uk](mailto:editor@openhousescotland.co.uk).

TOM DEVINE

# A Chink of light?

Scotland's best known historian reflects on the possibility that Brexit may not happen.

It came out during a long radio interview with Sally Magnusson in October last year. I was asked among other things about Brexit and its implications for the country. Probably more in hope than in any expectation, I blurted out that Brexit would probably not happen. The prediction easily slipped off the tongue because I believe the Leave vote of June 2016 to be an act of political and economic self-harm without equal in the modern history of the United Kingdom. Indeed, deciding to leave the biggest single trade bloc in the world as the result of a narrow majority in a referendum has to be seen as a collective act of potential economic suicide.

Against that background, it was indeed tempting to indulge in some wishful thinking.

Even at that time, however, there were some reasons to be more positive than wholly negative. As the nightmare drew ever closer there might be a chance that the English, because it was they who produced the decisive majority for Leave, might yet come to their senses. After all, the majority was relatively close for such a momentous decision which will impact on the future of the country for generations to come. Also, the many fables, lies and false promises of the Brexiteer politicians and their lackies in the right wing press during the campaign were now exposed for all to see. Real fears were being expressed in Northern Ireland about Brexit and the problems it might cause for the border with the Republic. The Scottish Government, smarting at the arrogant dismissal of its own proposals on Europe by Westminster, was sabre-rattling and threatening another referendum on independence. It also became abundantly clear that UK negotiators

with the EU were likely to face a proverbial Amazonian forest of legal complexities, and, as several well-informed voices predicted, discussions could last for a decade or more. Remainers were to be found in most Westminster parties, even in the ranks of the Tories, so a tiny hope lingered that they might collectively be able to bring some pressure to bear on an adamant and obdurate government.

Alas, such hopes were quickly dashed. The 52 per cent of the electorate who voted Leave were enthusiastically embraced by Downing Street while the 48 per cent who voted Remain were ignored and left to mope in the wilderness of lost causes. A Prime Minister, who herself had argued for Remain, metamorphosed before our eyes into a vociferous cheerleader for leaving both the single market and the customs union. The potential economic harm to be inflicted on the country might now be increased ten-fold.

For fear of alienating working class voters who might still be seduced by UKIP in the north and midlands of England, the Labour Party endlessly prevaricated and then found itself drowning in a sea of ambiguity over the issue. Only the SNP stayed constant in their opposition, but that was probably one reason among others why the nationalists later lost seats at the General Election of June 2017.

Predictably the usual suspects, aka *Daily Mail*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Express* and *Sun*, lacerated everyone who had the temerity to speak out against the Brexit vote. Not only were they denounced as 'anti-democratic', but some were also arraigned in the public dock as traitors to the country. Gradually, too, the rest of the media, whatever their own views on the subject, became reconciled to the



Tom Devine.

inevitability of separation. The narrative now fixated on the kind of Brexit, 'hard' or 'soft', it would be, not whether the UK would indeed leave the EU. That question seemed to be fading into history.

And then came the General Election, followed by ironies of historical ironies, after the results were declared before an astonished nation. An election designed primarily to destroy the Labour Party, so that it would never again recover, and, as a secondary motivation, build a commanding majority for the Prime Minister to strengthen her negotiating hand with Brussels for a 'hard' Brexit, ended in ignominy and personal humiliation for her.

The people had indeed spoken. It was almost the exact opposite of what Teresa May's coterie of unpleasant personal advisers (their swift departure another welcome consequence of the vote) had envisaged. Rather than the mantra of strength and stability we had 'May-hem', a felicitous term coined by *The New York Times*. Hubris was followed by near nemesis as the Prime Minister still clung to office but not power with the support of the DUP, a party founded by the old Protestant firebrand, Ian Paisley. It was a policy of expediency which some seasoned

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observers thought might harm the hard won peace in Northern Ireland.

May's limitations as a significant political figure had been cruelly exposed during the election campaign and Fintan O'Toole in the *New York Review of Books* went for the jugular:

'The Tories tried to build a personality around a woman who does not have much of a personality. May is a common or garden Home Counties conservative politician. Her stock in trades prudence, caution and stubbornness. The vicar's daughter was woefully miscast as the Robespierre of the Brexit revolution, the embodiment of popular will sending saboteurs to the guillotine. She is awkward, wooden, and, it turned out, prone to panic and indecision under pressure'.

When Nigel Farage announced that he might have to return to front line politics because of the developing situation, it was clear that the Brexit project was now under greater threat than at any time since the 2016 referendum. Several influential European politicians now started to queue up to state publicly that even though the hour was late the UK would still be warmly welcomed back into the European fold if there was a change of heart. Might there therefore be a very small chink of light at the end of the dark tunnel leading to *Gottterdammerung* for the country?

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The Tories dare not go back to the country and try again if they can avoid it because the electoral momentum is now firmly with a rejuvenated Labour Party.

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There are indeed some intriguing auguries. The Tories dare not go back to the country and try again if they can avoid it because the electoral momentum is now firmly with a rejuvenated Labour Party. A hobbled

PM and her kitchen cabinet can no longer put the fear of death into Tory Remainers to ensure their silence. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has on several occasions openly attacked the PM's intention to leave the single European market in the knowledge that she cannot now sack him for such independent thinking. The small group of newly-elected Tory MPs from Scotland have said they would oppose a 'hard' Brexit (though their voting behaviour to date suggests that declaration might only be so much hot air). The Prime Minister's new-found friends, the DUP, have expressed the same hostility to such a policy. Real power is moving from Downing Street to the Houses of Parliament. It is said that Remainer MPs are plotting across party lines and that the ultra Remainers, the SNP government and the Scottish Parliament, may yet have to give consent to some of the agreements under discussion with Brussels. All of them will have the opportunity to make great mischief amid the legal swamp of the Great Repeal Bill and numerous other pieces of related secondary legislation.

There are two little straws in the wind. In late May I had lunch with Michael Russell MSP, the Scottish Government's Brexit Minister, who stressed to me in no uncertain terms that Brexit was inevitable. Then, less than a month later, he admitted before a Committee of the Scottish Parliament that though Brexit was 'still the trajectory' he was no longer '100% convinced' that the UK would in fact leave the EU. The General Election of 8th June had made Brexit much less certain, and in his words, 'many options' were now possible. Sir Vince Cable, the new leader of the Lib Dems, is even more forthright. He now thinks Brexit will never happen because 'the problems are so enormous, the divisions within the two major parties are so enormous'. A second referendum could provide an escape route from disaster for the British people.

Now that UKIP has been at least temporarily eviscerated, some have surmised that the Labour Party might yet embark on a crusade to save the country as much of its surprising level of support in the General Election

came from young Remainers. As this is written, however, that hope seems like pie in the sky. Jeremy Corbyn may simply be playing a canny waiting game by keeping his powder dry until the Tories are rent asunder by their innumerable Brexit contradictions or the polls suggest a decisive movement in public opinion towards Remain. But some parliamentary insiders take the view that Corbyn, in his heart of hearts, is a hard Brexiteer who has never had much time for an EU club of capitalists. Whatever the truth of the matter, the same old studied ambiguity of the Labour Party on this historic challenge continues to prevail.

All that can therefore be said in July 2017 is that some battles have been won and others lost but the outcome of the war itself remains uncertain. In the end that will depend on the response of the UK Parliament and, ultimately, on public opinion.

The first signs that attitudes are beginning to change came in a survey by Survation in early July. It found that a clear majority of Britons (54 per cent) would vote to remain in the EU if another referendum was held. In addition, most people agreed that the best outcome was to stop exit talks completely and work to stay in the EU. Less than a quarter supported the Government's strategy of leaving the customs union altogether. People are becoming more aware of the dark economic clouds which are starting to gather even though the Brexit discussions have only just begun. Last year the UK had the highest growth rate in Europe; and this year the lowest. The sustained fall in sterling has pushed up inflation and the Bank of England has started to consider raising interest rates.

A slowly opening window rather than a chink of light might now seem a more appropriate metaphor as this story unfolds.

*Sir Tom Devine is Sir William Fraser Professor Emeritus of Scottish History and Palaeography in the University of Edinburgh. He writes here in a personal capacity. Tom Devine's next book, the co-authored, Tea and Empire, will be published by Manchester University Press in August this year.*

JIM LAWLOR

# Voices less heard

A parish priest reflects on the emergence of a new anti clericalism within the church in Scotland, and asks what kind of priests and what kind of church we want.

In the last edition of *Open House*, Mary Cullen presented Joe Hollands's analysis of how the form of the institutional church is moulded by a tensive relationship with the current of history. An indubitable dimension of that, which we have all encountered, is the imbalance of a hierarchical and clerically dominant church. Since Holland's work ends with the death of Pius XII, Mary's reflection brings us to the eve of Vatican II. Yet the acceleration of communication and the dialectic of history have unleashed all the force of a tsunami, part explaining the destabilised, confusing times in which we find ourselves as people, and as church.

These last five decades since Vatican II have seen massive cultural shifts, influencing the ongoing process of reception – or rejection – of Vatican II. Its 50th anniversary prompted a raft of published analysis. Among the most concise and passionate was Massimo Faggioli's Vatican II, *The Battle for Meaning*, a telling title.

One theatre of conflict, articulated by recent contributors such as Mary, Werner Jeanrond and others, is the identification of a resurgent neo-clericalism – here too in Scotland. This concerns me deeply – how could it not – I am a clergyman? I do not want to offer either an *apologia* nor seek sympathy for the poor put upon priest. But I need to highlight strands of this new clericalism in order to suggest there is abroad a growing reaction to it, and what it feels like to be caught in that mix.

In highlighting hallmarks of neo-

clericalism I have experienced, I need to avoid offering a subjective opinion and so will only describe those corroborated scientifically in John Weaver's study, *Thirty Three Good Men*.

The dominant image of priest is of one who is separate from The People (kudosh) and therefore holy(ier?) Another marker is of 'Teacher', possessing what 'The Taught', the laity, do not have. Professor Eamonn Casey describes this 'operative model', where the greatest emphasis is on the cultic role of the priest, most evident in a revisionist approach to the reform of the liturgy. In this operative model, there is little interest in ecumenical dialogue.

More worrying is the denial that the sexual abuse scandal is a current, shared responsibility. Rather abuse is relegated to history and blame apportioned to the faulty, conciliar vision of priesthood.

All these positions fly in the face of the liturgical, ecumenical and ecclesiological reforms of the Council, as well as reframing a 'them and us' culture. Of course there will be a discomfort with such a style of ministry, so it is no wonder I detect a frustration in recent pages of *Open House*. However, there are other consequences of this shift that have not been given similar attention. To put it frankly, on the back of this clericalism there is, I believe, a new evident anticlericalism.

This phenomenon has a long history, even if outside the scope of Mary Cullen's analysis of Holland. In the face of this anti clericalism

there is a group, described by Barry O'Sullivan as 'the fourth victim', the group of priests who are not abusers, nor formed in the dominant operative model of priesthood. They are the 'voices less-heard'.

In his letter (Unity in Diversity, *Open House*, April, 2017)) Peter McBride describes what I suspect this group is experiencing. Here 'the squeezed middle' is trapped between ineffective leadership, elitist clericalism and – to quote McBride – the radically different ecclesologies of our congregations. Please let me be clear. I am not suggesting that this group is perfect or free of the taint of clericalism, nor am I writing a eulogy for deference. I do, however, want to express something of the fear, of intimidation and isolation that affect many who are motivated by a vision of *Communio*, an equal and collaborative church. The 'fourth victim' has as his first forum of ministry a pastoral, parish context. But there no longer seems to be a shared urgency to evangelise, reach out to or engage the disaffected. What need is there for a culture of dialogue when the new dogmatism proclaims that we have the answers? You need only listen?

There is a first obvious and inevitable anti-clericalism that rides on the back of the still-accumulating scandal of abuse and its disastrous episcopal mishandling. But that anti-clericalism has spawned a more general manifestation. There is that disregard for clergy that comes from what Willy Slavin describes as generations of 'low grade abuse'.

Not sexual or specific, but just the cumulative effect of priests treating people in a shoddy way in the past. Everyone will have anecdotes that bear this out. This general mistreatment – high or low grade – is, I think, a major factor in the haemorrhaging of church attendance which is accelerating. ('Six out of ten Scots have rejected organised faith' the leader article; London *Times*, 1st July, 2017).

There is, second, an anti-clericalism of detached apathy. It is not even actively hostile, but is simply disinterested and apathetic, evidenced by a huge gap between 'Church' and people. Let me offer one of many anecdotes to illustrate this. A family asked me to bury their mother, but not with all the fuss; just a priest to 'do something at the crem'. Such a residual cultural connection is patently a moment of evangelising and demands a 'made-up' liturgy. The ritual language offers little for such a reality, so people create their own language; hand-written poems, roses; secular, sentimental, often improbable music. But at this funeral, as I committed their mum to be cremated and the curtains closed, I became aware, in the packed crematorium, only three of us whispered the Lord's Prayer.

This, sadly, is not an isolated experience, so deep is the chasm between us. If I am mourning anything it is not deference but relevance, connection.

In the face of this disconnected irrelevance, we are hampered by another subtle, dangerous anti-clericalism, that which exists within the body of the clergy ourselves. I admit a discomfort with those who advocate a return to a Tridentine Liturgy and a way of being priest that I do not recognise – of having the answers, whose ministries are scaffolded by law and dogma. By contrast, there is elitism among other clergy that dismisses those regarded as less sound, less Catholic and less traditional, whose ministries are formed by experience and circumstance. Even among those still-bothered Catholics I detect, if not quite a full-blown anti-clericalism, then at least an exasperation and frustration with the clergy, all of us lumped together!

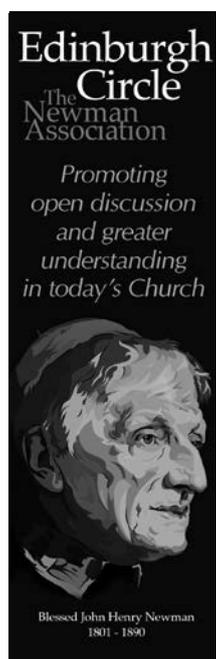
I opined some time ago in *Open House* my disappointment with the Archdiocese of Glasgow's vocation promotion video, *Do this in Memory of Me*. It shows a gold-and-lace bedecked priest at the altar of a neo-gothic church; there are no shots of priest and people in the same

frame. By contrast, the recently screened BBC drama series *Broken* shows the priest in almost every single shot with people. Jimmy McGovern's drama, meticulously researched and powerfully written, offers a televisual version of Pope Francis' oft-quoted soundbite, 'taking on the smell of the sheep'.

While one depicts an operative priesthood, the relational model in *Broken* catalysed for me an urgent dilemma. What kind of priest do we want – need – to serve what kind of church in these complex times? More than just being at the mercy of the tsunami of history, crises, clericalism and its antithesis, is it not time that the 'voices less-heard' speak out – even to one another? Perhaps, as in Ireland and elsewhere, can we not explore forming an association of clergy of like mind and vision, however informal, that supports the squeezed middle? I offer this reflection not as an academic musing but as an invitation to anyone who is prepared to engage in such a dialogue.

*Jim Lawlor is parish priest of Immaculate Conception parish in Glasgow.*

See the review of *Broken* on page 22.



**Tuesday 26th September 2017**

## **Towards a new ecclesial relationship between ordained and lay people in the Roman Catholic Church.**

**Dr Mary Cullen, Editor, *Open House*.**

**Meetings are in Mayfield Salisbury Parish Church, 18 West Mayfield, Edinburgh DH9 1RQ  
7.30pm - 9.30pm**

**All are warmly invited to attend. We ask for a small donation to cover our expenses.  
For further information please contact [lyncronin@btinternet.com](mailto:lyncronin@btinternet.com)**

NABIL ANTAKI

# Dispatch from Aleppo

A doctor and member of the Blue Marist community who remained in Aleppo throughout the siege reports that life is slowly improving.

On December 23rd 2016, the nightmare ended for the inhabitants of Aleppo. On that day, the last convoy of rebels and terrorists, who had occupied the eastern and southern neighbourhoods since mid, left the city.

Alepins were joyous about the liberation. There was no longer East or West; Aleppo was once again, as it has always been, one city under the control of the Syrian Government. Only 15,000 inhabitants of the eastern neighbourhoods were evacuated, at their request, with the rebels towards Idlib. The rest, more than 100,000 who were enduring the occupation without a choice, because their homes were there, remained in Aleppo.

For the 1.5 million inhabitants of the western neighbourhoods, which were under government control, the liberation provided a sense of security that they had lost for more than four years: the security of no longer receiving mortars, propane tanks used as bombs and snipers gun shots. Bombs continue to fall occasionally on the peripheral western neighbourhoods, launched by rebels still settled in the western suburbs.

Like all Alepins, we visited the ex-front lines, the historical neighbourhood of Jdeideh, the old city around the citadel and the eastern and southern neighbourhoods. The extent of the destruction is beyond what we could have imagined.

The city is returning to near normality. All the streets, many of which had been blocked by barricades, have been opened to

congested traffic. Traffic lights and roundabouts, powered by solar panels at each crossroads, are working again. Garbage collection has resumed. Gardeners are working again in the public gardens. All schools and the university are functioning normally.

Everyday life remains very difficult. A fuel shortage coupled with the absence of electricity means there was no way to get warm during the very cold winter months.

Despite the liberation, we still don't have electricity, nor have we for the last two years. We continue to buy it, at a high price, from private generators that now proliferate the pavements of our beautiful city which has become very ugly littered with generators and cables everywhere. The authorities are working hard to reconnect us to the national grid.

Running water is still cut off. One and a half million Alepins continue to use water, often not safe for drinking, from the 300 wells drilled in the city. The number of intestinal infections has reached a record level.

A number of displaced families were able to return to their homes. Others have to do major repairs; others are waiting for the mine clearing of their neighbourhood and for the restoration of the destroyed infrastructure, while others who lived in buildings which are now completely destroyed must wait for the reconstruction. Reconstruction hasn't started yet, so it's wait and see.

The economic crisis remains very serious. In six years of war, people have become impoverished because of unemployment, a dizzying level of inflation and the high cost of

living. Alepins cannot find work but on the other hand, small businesses which started to open timidly can't find skilled workers. The majority of young men are either enrolled in the army, or have left the country looking for better opportunities. Alepins now, more than ever, need help to survive.

Meanwhile, the war continues in Syria with the involvement of many foreign forces. Many territories and small towns were liberated from Daesh's control. Some are now under the control of the Syrian government, others are under the control of Kurds, Turkey or Islamists.

None of the hundreds of displaced families who benefit from the various programmes of the Blue Marists could return home and we accepted many newly displaced families.

We, the Blue Marists, don't have either the abilities, the skills or the mission to participate in the reconstruction of the city. On the other hand, we believe that human reconstruction is the most important and we are putting all our efforts into this and have developed new programmes to support it.

Convinced of the need to help young adults to work, to live and to get out of the vicious circle of war, unemployment and migration we organised young people aged 20 to 35 on the theme 'How to Start Your Own Project'. Twenty participants attended and at the end of the session, the jury selected the four best projects and we partially funded them. Because of the success of the project, we have just started a second round with 15 participants.

Our various relief programs continue to help the displaced and the

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poorest, supporting, approximately 1,000 families, Christians and Muslims, to survive by distributing monthly food and sanitary packages, money to pay for one ampere of electricity, and a monthly voucher to buy meat or chicken. We are also helping the displaced families pay the rent of their temporary housing.

Despite our cautious optimism, the task is huge. The exodus continues and every day friends, acquaintances, volunteers, collaborators or beneficiaries come to say a goodbye that sounds more like a farewell. In spite of everything, we continue to live our commitment. With cautious optimism, we are inspired by this extract from our friend Father Jean Debruyne:

To resist is to persist in looking at a piece of sky even if it is grey or black, even if it is held in a pocket handkerchief, incarcerated between very high walls.

To resist is to never give up looking out for the sun from the opening of a manhole.

To resist is to be stubborn enough to see the day rise from behind the barbed wires.

To resist is not to give in to the obligation to remain silent.

To resist is a pride.

To resist is to refuse intolerance, indifference and the denial of differences.

To resist is to never give up.

To resist is to never accept tranquillity.

To resist is to choose to be responsible.

To resist is to stand in front of God, standing, not laying down or kneeling.

Because to resist is to invent love.

*Nabil Antaki is a doctor and a lay member of the Blue Marist community in Aleppo.*

Radio 4 broadcast *Museum of Lost Objects – Return to Aleppo* on Friday 28th July.

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## Buddhism in Scotland

BILL MCLAUGHLIN

# The Buddhist monastery of Samye Ling

A writer celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Buddhist monastery of Samye Ling in Dumfriesshire and the work of its present Abbot, Choje Lama Yeshe Losal Rinpoche.

Samye Ling, on the banks of the Esk, was founded 50 years ago by two Buddhist monks, Chogyan Trungpa Rinpoche and Akong Tulku Rinpoche. The original house was called Johnstone House and was a former hunting lodge. The Johnstone House Trust was formed in 1965 with the objectives 'to make available to the public facilities for study and meditation based on Buddhist and other religious teaching'.

In 1967 the trustees offered it to the two Tibetan monks who were then in their late 20s. Unfortunately, Trungpa quickly came into conflict with both Akong and the trustees. He drank heavily and slept with his students. He married one of them, a fifteen year old girl at the time the relationship began, which attracted press attention. By then, he had been banished to a nearby house and divested by the Karmapa of his position as an official representative of the Karma Kagyu lineage.

Akong was a different type altogether. He had been found by a search party seeking the reincarnation of the 1st Akong. Around the age of four he was enthroned as the 2nd Akong. He was not only devout but a born leader who felt a strong need to care for his younger brother, Amdrak, who would later become Lama Yeshe Losal.

The name Samye Ling was derived from 'Samye', the name of the first Buddhist monastic university in Tibet and 'Ling' simply means place. It was the first Buddhist foundation

in Europe and is still the biggest. It received visits from many senior Buddhists including the Dalai Lama. It is situated in Eskdalemuir in Dumfriesshire on the banks of the river Esk – a quiet and peaceful place indeed.

The original house was too small for the vision which the Buddhists had for it and the small community set to, so that as little of their capital as possible would be diminished. It was nothing to see Akong, trowel in hand getting on with bricklaying. In 1975 the Karmapa indicated the site on which the temple was to be built. In 1984 the Dalai Lama consecrated the future Temple and returned in 1993 to inaugurate the site for the college. Phase 1 was the building of the Temple which was done entirely by members of the Samye Ling community. The grand opening of the Temple was on 8th August 1988.

Phase 2, completed before Akong passed away three years ago, added a college, library and new accommodation. Its population is about 60 and varies with the number of resident visitors.

The brothers Akong and Amdrak were born in Dharak, Tibet; Akong in 1940 and Lama Yeshe, whose given name was Amdrak, in 1943. All was peaceful until the Chinese invasion of 1959 when, along with some 300 others, they attempted to escape.

Lhasa, which would have provided the easiest way out, was already occupied by the Chinese so they had to take an alternative route. This



meant a perilous journey through the Himalayas at high altitudes, crossing raging rivers, avoiding the Chinese and suffering near starvation. Of the original party, only thirteen survived to reach India and safety, the journey having taken ten months. Another of their brothers died of tuberculosis and Amdrak contracted the disease, together with smallpox. He survived these only after major surgery and the removal of one lung.

He became successively administrator of a large Tibetan settlement in India and secretary to the 16th Karmapa in Sikkim whom he accompanied on a tour of the United States and Canada.

He was able to obtain a plane ticket and visa to allow him to accompany Akong to Samye Ling. In 1980 he took full ordination as a Gelong Monk from the 16th Karmapa and entered a strict long term solitary retreat. He later undertook the 49 day Bardo retreat of total solitude and darkness in Nepal and repeated this on Holy Isle in 1997. On being asked how he managed to do without the light of the sun for that length of time he replied that 'the light of the mind is stronger than that of the sun'. It was no surprise when Akong made him Abbot in his place.

## Holy Isle

I first met him at an interfaith day on Holy Isle in 2000 where he asked me to give a talk on Molaise, who had lived on the Island for ten or twelve years in the 7th century, and in particular to discuss his living in a cave as a semi hermit. On asking Amdrak why he had selected the Holy Isle for his second foundation in Scotland he replied that, as soon as he had set foot on its soil he had felt, spiritually, at one with his

fellow contemplative who was a monk of the Celtic Church.

It was impossible not to take an immediate liking to this happy, smiling, but deeply spiritual man. Significantly, his invitation had brought representatives from a very large number of faiths including the Episcopal Church,

and several Eastern Churches, among whom was a very impressive Sikh. The Catholic Church was represented by the Abbot of Nunraw who gave a short talk on the importance of keeping in touch with the contemplative history of the Holy Isle and its presence today with the Buddhists. The Church of Scotland, by a decision of the Ardrossan Presbytery was not officially represented but individual members attended.

When I had finished my talk on Molaise, Lama Yeshe Losal asked whether we could have a further chat when things were a bit quieter. He then revealed that he had bought a piece of land at Kilmainham in Dublin, where there is an old prison in which leaders of the Easter rising of 1916 had been executed. This was a stunning revelation as *Mainham* is a modernisation of *Maignen* who was the person and friend whom Molaise had asked to arrange his funeral. This request was of great importance in the Celtic Church as it was believed to be a great boon to the beneficiary. The ancient records tell that it was the third biggest funeral in Ireland, the largest, naturally, being that of Patrick.

Lama Yeshe Losal went on to reveal, further, that he had also arranged to buy a small plot of land at Leighlinn in Ireland where Molaise in later life had lived and where he had met his death. Further revelations were to follow. I explained to him the derivation of the name 'Molaise' which is the genitive rather than the nominative form of the name and the one by which he is best known. 'Eilean Molaise' or, in English, 'Molaise's Island', is how Holy Isle was known in gaidhlig speaking days. Lama Yeshe Losal responded with his

usual great beaming smile that his name 'Losal' had the same meaning as Las in Tibetan. Molaise's name lives on in Arran as the name 'Eilean Molaise' which gradually became corrupted into the name of the village on the shore – Lamlash. That village was known as 'Loch an Eilean', or, in English, 'Loch of the Island'.

The Holy Isle today has, at its southern end, a beautiful conversion and extension of the old lighthouse to provide a retreat centre for women, especially those doing the 'long retreat'. The Abbot's lodging is a little further up the hill so that he can find seclusion should he require it.

The men who are undertaking the long retreat of three years, three months and three days are based at Glenscorradale on Arran itself. At the northern end of the Holy Isle is an interfaith centre which provides a facility for those who want to 'get away from it all' for a few days or a weekend or have their own private retreat. Almost all the food is grown in a large vegetable garden as the Buddhists are vegetarian.

In both establishments, the system of morality laid down by the sages is observed. It consists of five precepts:-

1. To abstain from taking the life of any living being.
2. To abstain from taking that which is not given.
3. To abstain from sexual misconduct.
4. To abstain from telling falsehoods.
5. To abstain from taking distilled and fermented intoxicants which are the occasion for carelessness (this include drugs)

These, then are the principles by which they live and we, of the Island, are happy to have them as neighbours.

*Bill McLaughlin is a graduate of Glasgow University where he studied Arts and Law but left with an abiding love of ancient history. He is now retired and has lived in Arran for 40 years. Most recent publication is on Molaise, the Celtic Saint of the Holy Isle.*



FLORENCE BOYLE

# Mind the gap

Women's patience with the gender pay gap seems to be wearing thin – at last. The current gender pay gap for workers in full time employment is around 18 per cent. At the present rate of progress the gap will be eradicated by 2069, a mere 99 years after the introduction of the Equal Pay Act. Progress towards pay equality is tortuously slow and the in the space of a decade the UK has slipped from 9th place in the world in 2006 to 20th place in 2016.

For the first time, the BBC annual report published the names of all employees earning more than £150k. BBC supporters have been consistent in their criticism that this requirement was designed to embarrass the corporation with more tabloid 'fat cat' pay stories, undermining the BBC's public reputation, and thereby creating a public mood to change from the current universal licence fee model to a subscription service.

Unexpectedly and unintentionally, the remuneration report has turned a welcome spotlight on to the gender pay gap, exciting more public debate and outrage in a few days than decades of government enquires and think tank reports. It has also undermined a belief that the public sector, while paying less than commercial organisations were at least fairer, more equitable places to work. A myth exploded by dramatic examples of women and men, fronting the same programme, where the woman earns much less than her male counterpart. To add to the BBC's woes it is reported that ten high profile women presenters are now preparing to sue, despite the corporation's promise to eliminate the gap by 2020.

Much less publicity was generated by the TSB bank which published data on their gender pay gap a day before the BBC row broke. The gender pay gap in that organisation is 31 per cent. The gap between what men and women are paid in the form of bonuses is even larger, an eye watering 53 per cent. Hear any calls for boycotting the TSB? And the reason for the gap? The absence of women in senior management positions and

the 'cultural' challenges in recruiting women, which is spin doctor shorthand for the fact that financial services have a chronic problem attracting women to work in an industry long associated with a laddish, aggressive workplace culture.

New legislation coming into force obliges all UK companies with more than 250 employees to publish a snapshot of their employee pay, disclosing average pay for men and women, including any bonuses. The new reporting rules will affect around half the UK workforce. The database opened in April this year with a publication deadline of April 2018. It is fair to say that the publication rate has been sluggish, with companies holding back from sharing sensitive material with their competitors. It looks like we may have to wait until next Spring before we can draw any conclusions about the current state of the market.

There are no sanctions associated with the current publication requirements and no onus will be placed to do anything about closing the gap. The government's hope is that bad publicity will shame employers into action, and if the BBC experience is anything to go by who is to say that won't work?

It's questionable whether the 1970 Equal Pay Act is up to the job of delivering pay equality. Most experts agree that while the most blatant discrimination has, for the most part, been eliminated, ie same job, different rates of pay, the remaining issues are more complex. The task of proving discrimination has become much more difficult, especially when considering the factors that establish work of equal value. Many of the most notorious equal pay cases have taken decades to resolve. Some of the most well-known have involved women in low pay public sector jobs like cleaners and dinner ladies who fought for years to win their claims. As recently as June this year Glasgow City Council settled a ten year old equal pay claim with 6,000 women, costing tens of millions of pounds.

On International Women's Day this

year Iceland, ranked best in the world for gender equality by the World Economic Forum, became the first country in the world to introduce legislation which would require employers, who employ 25 or more employees, to prove that they pay all employees the same regardless of gender, ethnicity, sexuality or nationality. Although there are a couple of other jurisdictions in the world with similar provisions, Iceland is alone in proposing a mandatory requirement which would compel employers to be certificated to ensure compliance. The target date by the Icelandic government for pay equalisation is 2022.

As there are climate change deniers there are too gender pay gap deniers. While middle aged women might comfort themselves that things are improving and their daughters will be treated differently, the bad news is that there is a gap of around 5% among the 20 somethings which grows during child bearing years and women rarely manage to close. One of the biggest arguments is the cost. Businesses, while recognising the problem, say they simply can't afford to bridge the gap. Economic analysis has suggested the contrary. While there is certainly a cost, there is also a positive impact on the national economy. Closing the gender pay gap would inject an extra £50 billion into the UK economy.

It's worth adding that although the gender pay gap was one of the more obvious inequities the BBC report revealed, it was not the only one. The highly remunerated at the BBC are generally middle aged, white males educated at public school. The BBC might take a lesson from its pioneering managing director Lord Reith who in 1926, before even universal suffrage, issued a statement declaring that women 'should be on the same footing as men'. Current managers should look to their own history to ensure a fairer future.

*Florence Boyle is an IT specialist who works in the healthcare industry. She is also treasurer of Open House.*

NOEL DONNELLY

## Space-time assumptions

A consultant in adult faith development who has studied both science and scripture explores the meaning of the Feast of the Assumption, which is celebrated on 15th August.

Mid-August always reminds me of schools going back after the holidays (in Scotland anyway). I remember it because they go back near the Feast of the Assumption of Mary. That in turn makes me explore what that feast really means. Surely it's more than a space-flight for the body of Mary! So what does it mean?

As a scientist in my early training, I'm now a great fan of Brian Cox. You may know him for his TV and radio programmes describing the wonders of the universe in popular understandable ways. A distinguished Fellow of the Royal Society and also a former pop-group musician, he bridges the world of particle physics and the ordinary human searcher. He helps me when challenged about the Incarnation of Jesus in Mary and the Assumption of Our Lady into the glory of 'heaven' (whatever we mean by that).

Let's start with Cox's scientific presentation of the BIG. The universe has 30 trillion galaxies like our Milky Way. When we glibly mention 'the Incarnation', we are really saying that God selected the Milky Way as one of these thirty trillion galaxies, and decided to put a Y chromosome into an egg in the body of a girl in a planet called earth at a tiny village called Nazareth. That's quite a sentence! We can easily switch off and simply sing 'My God How Great Thou Art' ... or leave it for another day. But I do believe that questions here help us to grow.

And Mary was a questioner. When God greeted her through the Angel Gabriel, she was 'greatly troubled' (Lk 1.29) and she questioned, 'How can this be?' (1.34). When she in turn was greeted by Elizabeth her cousin as 'Blessed' because she believed (1.49), her response was the wonder of the

*Magnificat*. When the shepherds told her they had learned that her son was 'a Saviour, Christ and The Lord' she was 'amazed' and 'churned these things over in her heart' (2.19). When Simeon told Mary her child was 'destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel' (2.34) she 'wondered at what was said' (2.33). Probably still more, when holy Anna, who was 'looking forward to the liberation of Jerusalem' (2.38), started talking in her own way about her baby boy. Later, when the boy Jesus was twelve years old, Mary questioned him only to be told that he 'was about his Father's business' in the Temple (2.49). Mary's reaction? She simply 'did not understand' ((2.50).

It seems clear to me that Mary, like us, had to grow in faith. How do you think she felt when Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law, or cured the lame and blind? Were her eyes being opened wider and wider at who this son of hers really was? How did she feel when he gave his public manifesto in the Nazareth synagogue, quoting from Isaiah: that he was 'sent to bring the Good News to the poor', only to be followed by violent rejection at this apparently outrageous claim? And remember 'even his own brothers rejected him' (Jn 7.5). Or when they said, 'he is demon-possessed' (Jn 7.26)? How did she feel when the leaders snidely claimed 'WE know who OUR father is', hinting at Jesus' illegitimacy (Jn 8,38,41)?

On the positive side, how did Mary's faith grow when he said he was the Light of the World and immediately gave the sign of light to them man in darkness, born blind (Jn 9)? Or when he raised Lazarus, claiming her son was The Resurrection and the Life? (Jn 11)

This growing faith took her to her son's side on Calvary and through

the awful burial process into the risen presence in the Upper Room and later on as her mothering of the early church at Pentecost... and through death and Assumption.

This reverent gallop through our searching for the faith of Mary is validated to some extent by Pope Paul VI's phrase, 'With faith she received Jesus and with love she gave him to the world.'

'This is also our vocation and our mission, the vocation and mission of the Church: to receive Christ in our lives and to give him to the world 'so that the world might be saved by him.'

This feast of the Assumption celebrates the completion of Mary's faith journey. Pope Pius XII declared that '*Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul to heavenly glory*'. But what does this mean? The Magisterium of the church has stayed conspicuously silent regarding whether this process entailed Mary's physical death. The teaching merely states that Mary's body and soul were assumed at the completion of the course of Mary's life.

I find two areas helpful: Iona and Brian Cox, with his thirty trillion galaxies.

Brian Cox, who objects to being called an atheist, seems to hint at 'parallel universes' when he speaks about space-time cosmology, quantum physics and the 'human universe'. I need to remind myself that there's obviously more to life than what we can measure – we love, we create, we laugh.

George McLeod, the founder of the Iona community, said that he found Iona to be 'a thin place'. To me that applies not just to Iona, but means that the spiritual and earthly realities exist side by side, or *inter-penetratingly*;

it's a matter of 'tuning in' to these realities. Heaven is not 'up there' as we know, but all around us: in us and through us and with us, (as we echo at the Great Amen of the Mass).

I appreciate this 'thinness' more when I stop and allow the present moment to be present to me and try to tune in (through prayer and the imagination) to the NOW. (*The Sacrament of the Present Moment* is a famous classic by Jean-Pierre De Caussade). This non-time-bound 'presence' is a shared reality: it is the reality in which our deceased parents and friends surround us. We can normally grasp this reality only incompletely, 'through a glass darkly' as Paul put it (1Cor 13.12). This parallel reality breaks through the thinness in sacramental presences for us all, and also in uniquely gifted moments it does so to some individuals. This presence is 'where' Mary resides after her earthly pilgrimage. The 'whereness' of her body is hidden from us, just as the body of the Risen Jesus is; but the Assumption is a sign of where we are all heading after our earthly pilgrimage. In the meantime, I can hang on to the NOW and try to use it for building a more just and peaceful parallel universe with the help of the thinness around me.

When we pray, 'Thy kingdom come', we are often only too aware of the need for the breakthrough of God's help for us as we struggle to engage in justice and peace issues in a world where we hear of wars, massacres, massive injustice, economic uncertainties, corruption, rejection of institutions (including the church), amidst cultural and social upheaval of migration and asylum-seeking. We can understand how Pope Francis has a great devotion to *Our Lady Un-tied of Knots*. May she break through the thinness of heaven and support our efforts, as we struggle with the knots (and crosses) around us and within us.

*Dr Noel Donnelly is a consultant in adult faith development in the Archdiocese of Glasgow.*



Bishops' Conference of Scotland  
Committee for Inter-religious Dialogue in partnership with the  
Conforti Institute  
A Colloquium on Judaism



An opportunity to reflect on and deepen our understanding of Judaism. The colloquium will be led by Fr. David Neuhaus S.J., Latin Patriarchal Vicar for Hebrew speaking Catholics in Israel and Pastoral Coordinator for migrants.

He will introduce us to topics such as:

- ❖ Why the Land
- ❖ The Land and the Bible
- ❖ The Land in Contemporary Judaism and Christianity
- ❖ Justice and Peace in the Land

Our goal in this colloquium is to seek a better understanding, one which will help us in the ongoing task of building a culture of peace.

When: Friday 25<sup>th</sup> – Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2017  
Where: Conforti Institute, Calder Avenue, Coatbridge, ML5 4JS

The colloquium will begin on the Friday evening and end with dinner on the Saturday evening

The cost is being subsidised by the Conforti Institute. The reduced rate is £50 for Residential & £25 for Non-residential.

To reserve your place at the event please email Conforti on  
[info@confortiinstitute.org](mailto:info@confortiinstitute.org)

Please confirm if you are a residential delegate and any dietary requirements.

## Copy deadline

The next edition of *Open House* will be published in October.

Letters and contributions should be sent to the editor by  
Friday 29th September.

Contact details on the back page.

MIKE MINETER

# Calls for justice in the Holy Land

This is a reflection from an Edinburgh academic on three trips to the Holy Land, and on a 'Kairos Week' held on Iona in May.

In November 2015 I took part in a routine pilgrimage to the Holy Land. I returned to the West Bank in November 2016, and then again on a tour and conference organised by Sabeel, the Palestinian Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre, in March 2017. As my knowledge increased I tuned into the urgency and desperation of the calls from Palestinians for international help in seeking justice. Recent events – the Palestinian Christians' letter to the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the actions of Israel – have further raised the need for us to urgently heed these calls.

Our pilgrimage in 2015 focused on the world of 2000 years ago. It failed to engage with Palestinians or their economy. For example, from our Israeli-run hotel in Tiberias we spent about a morning in Nazareth to see the Catholic and Orthodox Churches of the Annunciation. Had I not already been there, we would have ignored the murals we walked past. These depict the Nakba, the Catastrophe of the ethnic cleansing in 1948. Nazareth is a town in Israel with a large Palestinian population, which was increased around 1948 by refugees, including many from Galilee. We did not hear about life there today.

'Come and see' is the invitation from Palestinians, knowing our media do not report their lives. In 2017, in one beleaguered village, access to fields and water is obstructed by settlers and a checkpoint. In recent months live ammunition was used by settlers and the Israeli Defense Forces against non-violent protesters. We were told:

'We don't need your tears - we have enough of our own from the gas. We need you to act.... in solidarity you are like roots that give us strength and water. You can't be free if I lose my freedom. Now you have seen, what will you do? What will your churches do?'

Checkpoint 300 obstructs the short commute from Bethlehem to Jerusalem: it is a few minutes' drive, but for the Barrier. Crowds queue from 4am hoping to be allowed through. The Barrier zig zags across main roads, around shops and divides gardens and olive groves. I got disoriented, and when I asked for directions was asked if I was British, and then: 'Do you see what Balfour did to us 100 years ago? Do you see that apartheid wall? Do you see the pain you caused us?'

As elsewhere in the West Bank, close to Bethlehem, the Barrier is being built some miles from the internationally recognised Green Line. This is isolating the Cremisan valley from Bethlehem and adjoining Beit Jala, in effect taking their space for agriculture and recreation along with a monastery, winery and school, into greater Jerusalem. It was explained to me that in many places the Wall denies owners access to the land and olive trees, but if not actively cultivated, the land is then claimed by Israel.

In Hebron settlers supported by soldiers dominate the lives of the Palestinians. By megaphone we were commanded to leave a rooftop overlooking a military base and Shuhada St. Despite its homes and shops belonging to Palestinians, this

is now open only to Israelis. Not far from there is the village of Al Arkib, whose remaining buildings had been demolished 109 times when I saw it in March, 110 times by the following week, and 114 before July.

There was tea, coffee, laughter and hospitality – as well as the account of recent events, including the taking of agricultural land for the depressing 'Ambassadors' Forest'. See <http://mondoweiss.net/2013/06/planting-expropriated-ambassador/>

I was startled by the plight of Umm-al-Hiran in the Negev. Demolition of homes is creating a site for an Israeli town, despite empty hillsides all around.

Back in the West Bank, in the South Hebron hills, I saw an internationally funded community centre that had been demolished because no permit was given by the occupying authorities for construction. Up in the Golan Heights, Syrians' experience mirrored that of Palestinians. Of course we got nowhere near Gaza whose future and present are so bleak.

We heard how all this represents only half of the oppression - the rest includes administrative obstructions to life and economic wellbeing. Oppression and occupation were the symptoms of settler colonialism, to take all the land west of the Jordan to the Mediterranean.

Time and again I heard 'Let us have justice, then we can speak of the future – there is land enough for settlers and us, but the oppression and occupation must cease'. The situation is fast deteriorating as the Barrier, settlements, checkpoints and

Israeli-only roads crystallise the West Bank into a pattern, with isolated Palestinian reservations.

Some speak of hope despite a pervading sense of hopelessness: the hope is rooted in faith and in the belief that oppression is unnatural and unstable. The latter is evidenced by the damage done to generations of young Israelis, traumatised by what they have to do, such as in the arrest of Palestinian children and the early morning assaults on homes.

## Iona

Kairos Palestine was formed in 2009 as a cry from the Christian Palestinians. Hind Khoury, its General Secretary, repeated that call on Iona in May, emphasising again and again the absolute need to act through a 'filter of love' and to seek fullness of life for all in the Holy Land.

She also called for us to recognise the rights of Palestinians, including to protest; to focus on international laws; to critique the theologies that support occupation and oppression; to name the inversion whereby Israel can portray itself as victimised; and to be a Church that gives hope to the oppressed – 'to speak religiously and not be contextual is missing the point'.

Discussion on Iona included the need to respond to Palestinians' call for boycott, divestment and sanctions – and also for positive engagement in the Palestinian economy, including buying fairly traded goods.

Mark Braverman, Programme director for Kairos USA, asked from his Jewish perspective:

'Can Christians today be courageously, faithfully, and

*unapologetically* Christian in taking up the cause of Palestine? Can they pick up the cross of being accused of betraying their hard-won friendship with the Jewish people, can they understand that sometimes confronting your friend in his or her sin is what true friendship requires? And can Christians, who in their penitential zeal over the sins of the church toward the Jewish people became afraid of saying yes, we, the church, did bring something new to the world, can Christians proclaim anew this new thing, bring this message afresh to the world? No more land deals! No more one people being chosen! All are chosen! Anything else is a betrayal before God! The Jewish community may or may not someday walk alongside you in this, but you must not wait for us'.

<https://iona.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2017/06/Restoring-the-Kingdom.pdf>

Hind Khoury closed the week on Iona:

'Just as the Jews of the first century endured suffering and humiliation without surrendering their longing for justice and their passion for freedom and dignity, so do we, the people of the land. And we will not give up because we know... that:

Jesus brought good news to the poor, emphasizing a God of love.... humankind will be liberated from bondage which is based on fear and punishment rather than love and compassion.

Jesus called for the deliverance of the captives ... He appealed for freedom.

Jesus called for the year of Salvation, a jubilee year where God wills that

usurped land is returned and captives return home.

It is time to end this prolonged occupation and oppression of the Palestinian people in order to liberate and humanise both occupied and occupier.....'.

<https://iona.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2017/06/The-Year-of-Salvation-Hind-Khoury-1-June-2017.pdf>

Since June we have seen Israeli policies harden, not only at the Al-Aqsa mosque and in violent responses to Muslim and interfaith prayers and other (mainly) non-violent protest in the streets. (<http://sabeel.org/category/wave-of-prayers/>)

The fear is that some will turn to violence in response although in the West Bank we had heard that it is the non-violent activists that pose the bigger challenge to the Israeli state – 'the state can "do violence", but not Gandhi'.

The recent letter to the WCC from Palestinian Christians (<http://www.kairosbritain.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Open-letter-to-WCC-2017-final-NCCOP.pdf>) resonated with what I heard, and concluded: 'The current status-quo is unsustainable. This could be our last chance to achieve a just peace'.

That awkward question is now even more urgent: now you have seen what will you do?

See also: kairos britain, <http://www.kairosbritain.org.uk/palestinePortal>, <https://www.palestineportal.org>

*Dr Mike Minter works at the University of Edinburgh.*

## Website

Don't forget to take a look at the *Open House* website on [www.openhousescotland.co.uk](http://www.openhousescotland.co.uk).

There you will find full back copies and extracts from the current edition. The website is a good way to introduce people to *Open House* and, we hope, encourage subscriptions.

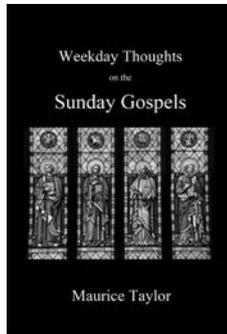
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# NOTEBOOK

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## New book

Maurice Taylor, Bishop Emeritus of the diocese of Galloway, has written a new book, *Thoughts on the Sunday Gospels*.



He says: 'The book is a kind of companion to an earlier book of mine whose title is *'What Are They Talking About?'* but whose subtitle, though verbose, is more explanatory. *'Help for the puzzled and the patient at Sunday Mass – Short background notes for the Collects and the Readings.'* The idea is to give lay people an idea of the various collects (opening prayers) and Scripture readings that they will hear when they are at Mass on any Sunday in the three year cycle (and on any solemnity or feast which may occasionally displace the Sunday texts).

'That book's purpose is merely informative. The present work gives fuller treatment on each of the gospel passages which can occur on Sundays – information, explanation, reflection, suggestion, resolution. It may be useful, therefore, for individual or communal *lectio divina*, for small groups' discussion, for homily preparation or for anyone interested in spending more time with the weekly gospel reading, either before or after hearing it read at Sunday Mass.

'Brief background notes are also included about the first and second readings'.

*Weekday Thoughts on the Sunday Gospels* (227 pages) costs £10.00 (inclusive of post and packing). It is obtainable from Bishop Taylor (email: mauricetaylor1926@sky.com), (telephone 01292 285865) or from his website (bishopmauricetaylor.org.uk).

## Alexander 'Greek' Thomson

Thomson is Glasgow's 'other' architect of genius, the first being Mackintosh. Thomson was born in Balfron in 1817 and died in Strathbungo in 1875. He was the ninth of twelve children and had twelve children himself. His most famous buildings are St Vincent Street Church in Glasgow which is still used and Caledonia Road Free Church preserved as a ruin. His third Church in Queen's Park was destroyed in World War II. They were built in the style of basilicas. His Egyptian Halls in Glasgow's Union Street are boarded up as the result of a prolonged legal dispute. His best preserved building is Holmwood House in Cathcart. It was owned for many years by the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions who ran a primary school of the same name in it. They sold it to the National Trust for Scotland and it is now open daily to the public.

## Catholic perspective on the Reformation

An evening meeting to commemorate the Reformation will be held in St Patricks in the Cowgate, Edinburgh, on August 15th at 7.30pm for 8.00pm.

The focus will be on the Reformation from a Catholic Perspective, and the guest speaker will be writer and broadcaster, and former editor of the *Catholic Herald*, Peter Stanford. He has written a new work on Luther, copies of which will be available for sale at the meeting.

## Poetry

*Open House* contributor and keen walker Michael Martin has published a little book of poems, the

first two of which he wrote as a student in the 1960s. The collection is called 'Here's Hoping', and money raised will be go to Compass Children's Charity, which supports street children in Central America.

Get in touch with *Open House* if you would like a copy of Michael's poems.

## Partition

August 2017 marks the 70th anniversary of the Partition of India. The 'Jewel in the Empire' had its wings severely clipped before Independence. The great states, Punjab in the West and Bengal in the East, were split down the middle between Hindu and Muslim majorities. West Punjab and East Bengal became Pakistan (East Pakistan later became Bangladesh). Those who compare it with Ireland and thought it political chicanery point to the fact that India has always had more Muslims than Pakistan. Those who believed it was a sad necessity point to Kashmir which had a Hindu ruler with Muslim subjects and is still being fought over. India and Pakistan now both have nuclear weapons.

## Homeless Jesus

Plans for the erection of a life sized statue of homeless Jesus next to St George's Tron, just off Buchanan St in Glasgow, are now well underway.

Glasgow will be the latest city to take the statue, along with Manchester, following Westminster City Council's rejection of an application to have the statue installed near Methodist Central Halls in London. Apologies for getting this wrong in June's *Open House*.

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# LETTERS

The Editor of *Open House* email : editor@openhousescotland.co.uk

All correspondence, including email, must give full postal address and telephone number.

## On keeping the Sabbath holy

I would readily agree that there are too many Sunday Masses celebrated in some areas of the country (*Open House* editorial, June) and also that there is more to Sunday observance than participation/attendance at Mass which for some people can be impossible in their actual circumstances. To state, however, that 'our insistence on going to Mass every Sunday started as a fund raising exercise for people suffering in all sorts of ways' in no ways does justice to the evidence of history.

An insistence that the faithful should participate in the Eucharist/Mass on Sundays does not originate in external factors but is innate to the gift of faith. The observance of Sunday as the 'holy day of the week' (including participation in the Eucharist) is a phenomenon which arises spontaneously as a result of the Easter mystery. And when we begin to find formal statements being made that the faithful are expected to participate in the Eucharist on a Sunday these statements would seem to be for the information of wider society as well as being a reminder to the faithful of what was expected of them.

The fact that so many Christian believers have lost sight of the fundamental place of participation in Sunday Mass as part of the life of faith is a challenge for us in our mission of evangelisation and also an invitation to examine how well we celebrate Sunday Mass in our parishes. Sunday Mass is not meant to be something that we fit in somehow to our busy schedule but should rather be the centre of our week around which all else flows.

Mgr Philip Kerr,  
Edinburgh.

Having lived and worked in Scotland for over 40 years I retired to my home city Vienna back in 2008. I grew up an Austrian Roman Catholic.

Once again the editorial is interesting but slightly disturbing to me: it is, for instance not true that in 'Catholic countries' people go to Mass on feast days (only), not on Sundays. I don't understand where this notion is coming from. Also some statements in the editorial cause me concern: Mass at different times and in different churches by a priest on a Sunday is 'hard to justify'. (See The Precepts of the Church at the bottom!)

The author also seems to jumble up the words Church and Eucharist. Church clearly is not the synonym for 'chapel' (or the building) but stands for the mystical Body of Christ of which we are part. The Eucharist is the Sacrament that 'happens' during Holy Mass. The term 'Sabbath' is a fundamentalist Protestant attempt to return 'ad fontes' and should not be used in a Roman Catholic context. Passages of Scripture such as Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 16:2, Colossians 2:16-17, and Revelation 1:10 indicate that, even during New Testament times, the Sabbath is no longer binding and that Christians are to worship on the Lord's day, Sunday, instead.

The Precepts of the Church can be found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, citations 2041-43. They include the following:

'You shall attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation and rest from servile labour.' The faithful are required to attend the celebration of the Eucharist every Lord's Day (Saturday vigil or Sunday Mass) and the holy days of obligation as established in the liturgical calendar, unless excused for a serious reason [i.e. illness or the care of infants].

Wolfgang Geissler,  
Wien, AUSTRIA.

## Women deacons

I would like to answer the points raised in the letter by Joe Fitzpatrick in the June edition of *Open House*, commenting on my article on women deacons in May. Some of Joe's comments were matters of personal opinion and that is fine. However debate about the future of the Church will only be fruitful if it is based on theologically sound and historically accurate data. So I feel the need to clarify the following.

Joe questions that all denominations are struggling to provide clergy for their parishes, quoting figures for England and Wales. I cannot comment on the situation south of the border but defend my statement for Scotland. The article in June's *Open House* on the General Assembly includes the following 'There is a severe shortage of parish ministers, and this will increase over the next few years.' (p.8, col 3). My local Episcopal minister has just retired and is not being replaced. Other local denominations have had lengthy gaps between ministers.

Joe says that clerical celibacy was introduced in the Middle Ages. This common mistake is based on the reforms of Pope Gregory VII and the Lateran Council of 1139, when stricter rules were introduced. However Pope Gregory was not introducing something new but trying to enforce existing rules that were being ignored. The basic principle of celibacy goes back to the teachings of Jesus himself (Mt 19:10ff; Mk 10:29; Lk 18:29 also Mt 22:30; Mk 12:25). Paul was ambivalent on the subject. Joe quotes 1 Cor 9:5 'Have we not the right ... to be accompanied by a Christian wife?' but ignores 1 Cor 7:32-38 'The unmarried man gives his mind to the Lord's affairs ... the married man gives his mind to the affairs of this world ... he who marries his fiancée is doing well, and

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he who does not, better still.’ So celibacy was encouraged as the better path for those in leadership positions. By the Council of Nicaea in AD 325, celibacy was expected (see Canon 3). Joe points out that the Eastern Church does not insist on this. He does not point out that only celibate priests are considered for ordination as bishops. (Is the popularity of Joe’s interpretation of history due to the post-reformation denominations looking for a ‘get-out clause’ to explain their decision to allow married ministers?)

Joe then goes on to recommend a book on the structure of the early Church by Herbert Haag. The development of the hierarchy of the Church was a gradual process and historical details are incomplete. However, to claim that Jesus did not institute a hierarchical organisation and that all official positions in the Church are man-made is to fly in the face of all scriptural evidence. Yes, we are all brothers and sisters in Christ but even within families there is a hierarchy. All social groups have hierarchies, be they human, mammalian, avian or even insect. So Jesus selected twelve followers as his ‘inner circle’ who received extra teaching. Even within this twelve, Peter, James and John were the only ones to witness the Transfiguration and Peter was quite clearly given the role of leader. The apostles were given the commission to spread the Good News. They could only do this through a hierarchical organisation. Even non-episcopal denominations have to appoint leaders, hence the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, quoted in the June issue of *Open House*.

I have not read this book but the summary given by Joe worries me. The logical conclusion of this argument is to deny apostolic succession, all the sacraments except Baptism and Matrimony, the Real Presence in the Eucharist and more. What does that leave us with?

Jane Coll,  
Thurso.

## On calling priests father

With all due respect to the excellent Professor Ian Campbell and others, I have no hang-ups about addressing priests as ‘Father’. I do not particularly, as a heterosexual, working-class (now middle class) west of Scotland Catholic, suffer from patriarchal, hierarchical, bourgeois, gender dysmorphic angst in relation to this form of address. ‘Father’ is a term of rightful respect and part of our (admittedly relatively recent) western Catholic tradition. I admit I love it, and no – I am not kinky. Can we worry about things more pernicious?

Professor Gerry Carruthers,  
Glasgow.

## Inspired by John Miller

I lived in Castlemilk from 1956 until I moved to London in 1973. I read an article from *Open House* online when I was looking up some details about Castlemilk and the churches there. It was by Mr Miller, who was a Church of Scotland Minister, and worked with Father Toy, a Catholic priest, for many years in Castlemilk. Mr Miller was also Moderator of the Church of Scotland for some time.

I remember Mr Miller very well. As a Catholic brought up in St Bartholomew’s parish I first met him when my Uncle Bill, who was not a Catholic, died in the early 70s. Mum thought very highly of Mr Miller because of his attitude and because he kept in touch with my aunt and my cousin, who suffered from schizophrenia, for years after the funeral.

I hated the sectarianism of the 60s and early 70s but Mr Miller showed something different.

Thankfully, I’ve seen Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists and atheists work together in London after the Grenfell Tower fire; which has also brought people from different cultures and nations together.

Rena Christmas,  
Colchester.

## Mixing up the monks?

While introducing his review of the film, *Jennifer (Open House, June)*, Norman Barry confuses two films about communities of monks. *Of Gods and Men* was not the film that depicted the Carthusian monks of La Grande Chartreuse but the dramatic story of the community of Trappist monks, living at Tibhirine in Algeria, seven of whose members were kidnapped and executed during the Algerian Civil War in the mid-90s. The film he described was, of course, Philip Groening’s, *Into Great Silence*. Contrary to Mr Barry’s assertion, my review of this film did indeed appear in *Open House* in June 2007.

John Dougan,  
Bothwell.

## Not the full story

As someone who voted Remain in the EU referendum I share the concerns of Eamonn Cullen, ‘Brexit, borders and peace in Ireland’ (*Open House, June*). He quotes the Irish journalist Fintan O’Toole on the English nationalists who championed Brexit. This is not the full story.

What made a big difference in swinging the vote towards the Leave campaign were the millions of former Labour voters in the North of England from devastated economic areas.

Scottish nationalists also voted for Brexit. Of the million Scots who voted to leave the EU, 600,000 were SNP supporters.

Had many thousands of Catholics of Irish descent not voted SNP in the 2015 general election, returning 56 of the 59 Scottish seats, many of them in former Labour constituencies, we would never have had the Tory government’s referendum on the EU.

Andy Glen  
Airdrie

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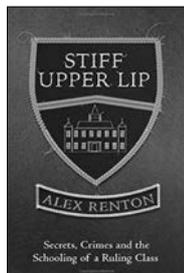
# BOOKS

## Secrets, Crimes and the Schooling of a Ruling Class

Alex Renton (2017)

Weidenfeld & Nicolson £16.99

Here is the four letter word that spells out the nature of child abuse: Eton (founded in 1440). It is written by one who knows because he was there. Fielding, in the 18th century, described Eton as a 'bearpit'.



Thackeray called his public school (Charterhouse) 'Slaughterhouse'. CS Lewis said his was like Belsen. To bring Scotland into the picture William Boyd called his time at Gordonstoun 'ten years of penal servitude'. A rare escapee was Winston Churchill. When the maid showed the marks on his bottom to his mother she removed him from Harrow. His mother was American. Other parents knew but did nothing.

Renton notes that the Clarendon Commission of 1861 into public schools spoke of the excessive death rate, including suicide, among pupils. Rape was not unknown. Boys found to be 'snitching' were beaten the more. The abuse was thought not to be the rule but the price to be paid for entry into the ruling class. The conditions led to depression, substance abuse and detachment from families. After the Commission the age of (sexual) consent was raised. Small boys were separated from older ones.

Auberon Waugh was told his public school was famous only for snobbery and buggery. He retorted that there had

been no snobbery in his time. The sociologist Royston Lambert, previously headmaster at Dartington Hall, deliberately withheld 'the more disturbing' parts of his research into what he called 'hothouse education'. BBC Radio had a series on a fictional public school called Whack-O. The first series was called Six of the Best. It was filmed as 'Bottoms Up'. None of this is mentioned in Tom Brown's Schooldays. Nor does it appear today in JK Rowling's Hogwarts.

Renton believes that sex abuse is not the greater part. Cruelty is more evil than lust. Physical and verbal bullying was part of the system of producing 'character' and promoting camaraderie. There was ritual humiliation. A key object was to effect separation from mothers. The result was for some pupils a losing of their moral compass, unsure of when to say no, like flogging natives in faraway places with strange sounding names. The ethos of public schools led to the sadism of the parade ground. How else would the lads have 'gone over the top' in 1914?

Anthony Chevenix-Trench was headmaster of Eton in the 1960s. He abolished public flogging only to retain it in private. He was sacked (although not for that) and the following year became head at Fettes in Edinburgh. The source of the abuse was financial stringency which led to unqualified staff and spartan conditions. The more beating by the staff, the more bullying there was among the pupils. There was a belief in original sin, the consequences of which had to be beaten out of the pupils. 'Swishing' (with a cane) only ended when it was abolished in Borstals. Some *Open House* readers may remember the outcry in 1965 when two Glasgow hooligans were birched on the Isle of Man.

The most amazing aspect is that it is the lower classes that have opened all this up, pursuing their assailants through the courts. Rich parents sent their children to boarding, poor parents had theirs taken into care. Children needed love and not all got it from their parents. 'Soft marks' were looked out for and groomed. Those who resisted were left alone. Lone offenders among staffs were rare. Some belonged to out of school paedophile rings where the abuse was not consensual.

There were few Catholic public schools. Still Renton feels able to refer to the 'huge' number of abusive Catholic priests. He states that the Catholic ethos took for granted the goodness of human nature. 'Muscular Christianity' is the more likely culprit. Anglican clergy were prominent in the creation of boarding schools. A classical curriculum familiarised the adults with pederasty. Incompetence, misplaced loyalty and a criminal failure of the sense of duty allowed the abuses to take place. The connection between corporal punishment and eroticism was well enough known.

A reviewer recalled his headmaster as a 'genial sadist' with whom his father played tennis during the holidays. Another said: 'Here is a subject nobody has really attacked..... it's possible an entire ruling class has been institutionally damaged by these schools'. Despite these allegations there have been few prosecutions within the ruling class. The churches and others who cared for the poor were the first to be sued. Now it is the turn of the Armed Forces and sports clubs. Next up the public schools? Renton's book is a start.

Willy Slavin

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# FILM

## Romans (2017)

Directors - Ludwig Shammasian, Paul Shammasian

Starring: Janet Montgomery, Orlando Bloom, Charlie Creed-Miles

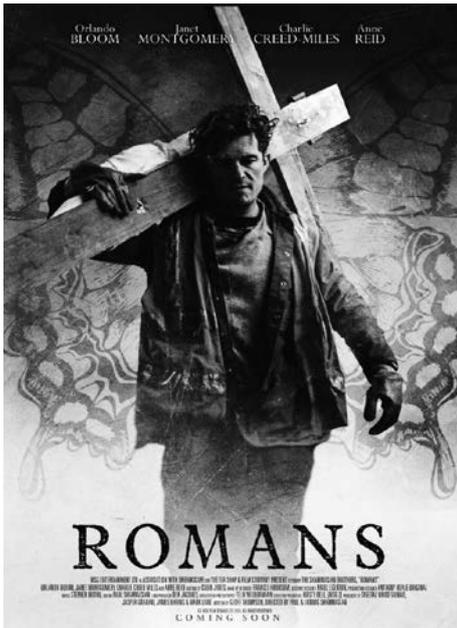
A senior inspector of Police Scotland recently raised the question of treating sex offenders as possible mental

health cases rather than potential criminals. Between 2012 and 2015 the number of registered sex offenders in Scotland rose almost 1,000 to 4,787. In the 1980s the total Scottish prison population was 4,680. A Scottish Government spokesperson commented: 'the monitoring of sex offenders is more rigorous than ever before with greater police powers'.

*Romans* suggests a different approach: forgiveness. The title is from the Epistle of that name. In chapter 12 Paul commenting on

Leviticus 19.19: Vengeance is mine says the Lord writes : 'if your enemy is hungry or thirsty give him food and drink. By doing so you will heap coals upon his head'. Romans is the Epistle appointed to be read from the Lectionary in summer 2017.

Malky (Orlando Bloom of the *Lord of the Rings* and *Pirates of the Caribbean* series) works in demolition. He lives with his mum (Ann Reid) when not fighting with his girlfriend Emma (Janet Montgomery). His equally mad pal, Joe, is played by



the Scottish actor Alex Ferns. They are demolishing an old church. Paul (Charlie Creed-Miles), a born again Christian, asks Malky to save the crucifix from being smashed. Malky carefully carries down the figure of

Christ on his shoulder. Paul's life was saved in prison by the kindness of a priest. He diagnoses the root of Malky's anger as something that happened in the past. He has to get rid of it.

The script is basically a painfully slow elicitation from Malky that his anger stems from being abused by a priest when he was eleven. His mother, a single parent, is a cleaner in the church. She refused to believe him. Eventually, as advised by Paul, Malky goes to confession to the priest and shakes hands (albeit lefthandedly) with him.

The world premiere took place at the Edinburgh Film Festival. The event was well attended. In the questions afterwards from the audience the director thought the film might struggle to get commercial circulation because of the challenging nature of the story. Apparently no matter how much they like to read about such things, people are reluctant to pay cinema prices to watch it.

The screenwriter said the story came from his own experience. He likened abuse to possession. You have to get your own life back, he said. The role of the abuser is secondary to the recovery of freedom. His argument appeared to be that if the abused recovered the abuser would eventually pay his dues – as in the Epistle to the Romans.

The final scene elicited a question from the audience as to whether forgiveness had been achieved in the film. The screenwriter replied that according to St Paul actions have consequences. This raised the further question as to whether a life is required for the crime of sexual abuse.

### Norman Barry

Barry Norman died on 30th June 2017. He was BBC film critic 1972-98. He was married for 54 years and had two daughters. In 2013 he compiled a list of the 49 best British films. They included *Whisky Galore*, *Gregory's Girl*, *Local Hero* and *Trainspotting*. He did not rank them. He invited *Radio Times* readers to nominate the 50th. They chose *Slumdog Millionaire*.

## NETFLIX

### The Keepers

Netflix, somewhere you go for a good box set or a rainy day film, is also becoming a producer of original content. One of its most recent offerings is a seven part documentary series about a 50 year old child sex abuse scandal in the Catholic Archdiocese of Baltimore. For those of us who have become somewhat inured to yet another story of clerical child sex abuse, *The Keepers* comes with a few more twists.

In many ways the script is a predictable one. The abuse was reported, the priest was moved and decades later when the now adult victims stepped forward to tell their stories, they were disbelieved, discredited and eventually, financially compensated. But this story also includes the murder of 26-year old Notre Dame nun, Sister Cathy Cesnick, and her former pupils' quest to find out who murdered her and why. Sister Cathy, attractive, lively and committed, knew, or at least had suspicions about what was going on in Keogh High School. Was this why

she was murdered?

The 'Keepers' refer to the small group of women, now in their sixties, who had been Sister Cathy's pupils and who started on a search for the truth about her murder. They then began to understand how this was intertwined with the story of sexual abuse, the abuse of power by church and police authorities and the ability of the powerful to keep secrets.

On of the key accomplishments of the series is the tight focus it maintains throughout on the victims. It chronicles the impact on a tightly knit, devout community and the impact the scandal has had even on those on the outer fringes of the story – their husbands, siblings, children. The story is still a current one. In recent months, the body of the paedophile priest Joseph Maskell was exhumed for DNA evidence that could link him to Sister Cathy's murder; the tests proved negative.

There is nothing sensationalist in the tone or presentation of *The Keepers*; it is measured and is as much interested in the forensic investigation techniques of the former pupils, than the details themselves. Now retired, these women are fearless and terrier like in their pursuit of every lead, and

in their willingness to ask anyone any question. The facts are jaw dropping. The abuse happened in plain view, in a Catholic girls' secondary school because, cue another recurring feature of the abuse story, when the faithful hold their leaders in awe and don't believe them capable of any wrongdoing, when evidence of that wrongdoing is presented, it is disbelieved. None of these girls told their parents, or anyone else, because they knew no one would believe them.

Bad habits die hard. When the series was released a couple of months ago, the Archdiocese of Baltimore tried to discredit the series, even resorting to Twitter, re-tweeting another tweet which dismissed the series as fiction. They have since apologised for their behaviour.

The next challenge for the women is to get the Archdiocese to release the records of a 1990s investigation they claim to have done into Maskell. The Church has so far refused, fuelling the suspicion that no such investigation ever happened. Maskell was just moved on.

### Florence Boyle

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# TELEVISION

## Broken

Writer: Jimmy McGovern

Producers: Ashley Pearce & Noreen Kershaw

BBC 1, 6 episodes, started 30 May 2017

In Fr Michael Kerrigan, Jimmy McGovern has created an excellent portrait of a priest struggling with the complexities of vocation and ministry today.

In an interview on BBC Radio 4, McGovern spoke of knowing many such faithful priests who give their lives to serving their communities, helping the poor, looking after down and outs, running food banks and the like. He felt that their story should be heard.

Fr Michael (Sean Bean) is parish priest



in a northern English city. He wrestles with everyday difficult issues: pastoral, personal, family and faith.

*Broken* spans six episodes with interwoven storylines. The style is social realism and the issues very contemporary. Some of the stories are harrowing, but ultimately, the series is uplifting.

Issues include poverty, love, family trauma, clergy sexual abuse, gambling and addiction, hope, racism, truth and conscience, institutional corruption, homophobia, suicide – and personal faith and doubt. Incidents include a single parent concealing the death of her mother; the police shooting of a mentally ill young black man; a mother preparing to commit suicide.

Characters and situations are well observed and portrayed.

McGovern shows a keen understanding of the sacraments. They, especially the Eucharist, are central to every episode and to the complex finale.

He also shows the importance of priestly support: in particular in the relationship between Fr Michael and his friend / confessor / advisor, Fr Peter Flaherty (Adrian Dunbar). Now there is

a man you would go to for wisdom and support.

Amid all these difficult issues and storylines, there is plenty of humour and humanity.

Only a couple of times did I feel that McGovern missed the mark – once when Fr Michael shared some personal history and another where he challenged church teaching during a sermon – but the mark was not missed by much.

Overall, this was a splendid piece of drama with strong storylines and equally strong performances – sometimes harrowing, but ultimately uplifting.

All credit to McGovern's perceptive writing; Sean Bean's strong, layered, sensitive and often understated performance; and to the whole ensemble of cast and production team. The result is a wonderful piece of television which should appeal to a wide audience on many different levels.

I can think of several Fr Michaels that I know, wonderful priests whom I respect – and, yes, love. Maybe I should make more of an effort to tell them so.

An Open House contributor

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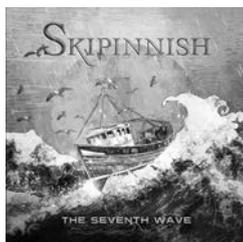
# MUSIC

## Skipinnish:

The Seventh Wave

Skipinnish Records, SKIPCD26,  
[www.skipinnish.com](http://www.skipinnish.com)

Skipinnish is a well-established Scottish Highland folk-rock band in the tradition of Run Rig. This, their 7th album, sees a change of vocalist and a new line-up of



Angus MacPhail (accordion), Andrew Stevenson (Highland bagpipes, whistles), Norrie MacIver (lead vocal, guitar, accordion), Alistair Iain Paterson (piano), Alasdair Murray (Highland bagpipes, whistles), Rory Grindlay (drums) and Angus Tikka (bass).

And what an enjoyable, absorbing mix this album is. We're treated to stirring bagpipe-tune sets to get the crowds bouncing at outdoor festivals. For example, *The Hag* set kicks off with the Irish jig *The Hag At The Churn*, delivered with a rhythmic Pogues-style

strut, before moving into some deliriously hypnotic Scottish pipe tunes. The band's own compositions include big, folk-pop anthems celebrating life, love and homeland, with surging melodies and stomping choruses. Try *Harvest of the Homeland* or *Alive* - and join in the refrain 'We will return, our flame will burn again'.

Most impressive of all is that Skipinnish are not afraid to change gear completely and take on the challenge of writing songs about suffering and loss. The highlight of this album is *The Iolaire*, a heartfelt song about a dreadful tragedy that every Gaelic-speaker in Scotland could tell you about, when on New Year's Day 1919, over two hundred Hebridean soldiers returning home from the First World War were shipwrecked and drowned within sight of the lights of home - Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis.

A hard song to write. And an emotional song to sing. For the final verse of *The Iolaire*, the vocal switches from lead singer Norrie's male voice to Caitlin Smith's high female voice, the tune changes, and Caitlin leads a congregation of voices in a psalm-like Gaelic chant to the words 'Eilean Fraoich, Eilean Leòdhais mo Ghràidh' ('Isle of Lewis, I love you'). It is profoundly moving.

Skipinnish, if this is what you can do for the memory of the men of the Iolaire, I would dearly love you to compose a song about bonnie wee Eilidh MacLeod and bonnie wee Laura MacIntyre – two teenage girls from the Isle of Barra who went to Manchester Arena to hear Ariana Grande sing.

*Sojourners in this vale of tears,  
On thee, blest Advocate, we cry,  
Pity our sorrows, calm our fears,  
And soothe with hope our misery.  
Refuge in grief, Star of the sea,  
Pray for the mourner, pray for me.  
Do thou, bright Queen, Star of the sea.  
Pray for thy children, pray for me.*

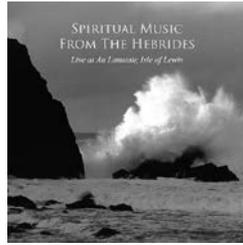
## Various artists:

Spiritual Music From The Hebrides – Live At An Lanntair, Isle of Lewis

An Lanntair Records, LANNCD005,  
[www.birnamcdshop.com](http://www.birnamcdshop.com)

This live recording saw a coming together of Scottish Gaelic traditional singers and musicians, classical musicians from the Scottish Ensemble, and ecclesiastical a-cappella Psalm-

singers and precentors from the Islands of Lewis and Harris, in a programme of religious and spiritual music. (All profits from this recording will be donated to the Bethesda Hospice in Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis).



Scottish traditional and folk-country arrangements of Gaelic hymns and psalms are sung by Isobel Ann Martin, Jenna Cumming, Chrissie Morrison and Emma MacLeod, with tasteful instrumental support on fiddle, guitar, keyboards, violin, viola, cellos and double-bass. The album opens with a traditional Gaelic slow air performed by Highland fiddle maestro Duncan Chisholm, accompanied by the Scottish Ensemble string quartet.

Also included in this album/concert are four stunning examples of traditional Presbyterian Gaelic psalm singing: a uniquely Scottish 'sean nòs' ancient vocal style, developed over hundreds of years as part of Presbyterian Church services in the northern Hebrides. The precentor leads the choir in a protean, elemental surge of sung scripture, generating wave upon wave of an oceanic sound that makes your spine tingle, your hair stand on end, and your soul ache with the acute yet blissful sensation of a God-shaped hole.

*'Tu excitas, ut laudare te delectet, quia fecisti nos ad Te, et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in Te'*

*'You move us to delight in praising You; for You have formed us for Yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in You'*

St Augustine, Confessions Book 1 (Translated by J.G. Pilkington).

*'What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself'*

Blaise Pascal, Pensées (Translated by A.J. Krailsheimer)

*'If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world'*

C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity.

Paul Matheson

## Reviewers

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

Florence Boyle works in the healthcare industry.

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

Willy Slavin is a retired priest.

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# Moments in time



It is a beautiful sunny morning as we set

off from St Monans, an old seaside village in the East Neuk of Fife. The fishing fleet left long ago for nearby Pittenweem but there are signs that a shellfish fishery is emerging. At the top of the brae, we see below us the magnificent fourteenth century church, perched on a ledge by the sea, where we hope to worship tomorrow. The path takes us over the Inverie burn and along steps cut into the rock below the church. We climb up the other side and head for a low cliff on which stands a well-preserved doocot and the substantial ruins of Newark Castle. Shags are standing on an off-shore rock and we see the colourful red flowers of bloody cranesbill. Skylarks are singing over the farmland where crops of wheat and barley are

pushing up.

The path descends to the beach, heading east along the rocky coastline. This is the most popular part of the Fife Coast Walk, which runs from the Forth to the Tay, and we meet a number of walkers coming the other way. Across the sea, we can make out the coast of East Lothian with the pyramidal shape of Berwick Law and the bulky outline of the Bass Rock. Now we climb again towards the old embankment which carried the railway from St Andrews to Leven and then past another castle, Ardress and a large farm with its attendant cottages. We see and hear whitethroats, reed buntings and yellowhammers amongst the path-side bushes and there are many wild flowers; red campion and the blue meadow cranesbill.

The beach is now becoming more sandy with dunes behind; a

notice informs us that there is a project to protect the not so common blue butterfly, but we do not see any today. We are heading for a low promontory on which stands a stone structure known as the Lady Tower, which was built in the eighteenth century so that Lady Anstruther could change before bathing, out of sight of the local populace. The story is that her servant rang a bell to warn people to keep away! From here we admire the view over the sea and back towards St Monans. We walk a bit further to Ruby Bay, from which we can see the village of Elie with its fine sandy bay stretching to Earlsferry Point, where pilgrims used to land on their way to the cathedral at St Andrews, the tourists of medieval times.

**Tim Rhead**

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

# OPEN HOUSE

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*The opinions and ideas expressed by all our contributors are their own and not accepted as those of Open House.*

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## CHANGES AT OPEN HOUSE

Starting from this month, *Open House* will be published every other month, instead of monthly. The change is prompted in part by the cost of producing and posting the magazine every month, with a break in summer and at Christmas, while keeping the price low. We have been kept afloat for many years by the generosity of those who make additional donations to their subscriptions, and for that we are very grateful.

Similar magazines have moved online, but after much discussion we do not think that we, or many of our readers, are quite ready for the move.

We hope that moving to a bi-monthly production will

strengthen the voice of *Open House* at a time when it is much needed within the church in Scotland, as many of our subscribers tell us. It will give the small team of volunteers who work on the magazine more time to gather and prepare material, and, we hope, to sharpen up the comment and debate we aim to encourage.

We will keep the new arrangements under review.

There have also been changes to our governance which we will report in October.

In the meantime, we hope you will continue to support us. The next edition is due out in October and the deadline for contributions is Friday 29th September.

Thank you for all your support.

