

IS NOT this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house? *Isaiah 58.6-7a*

Time for preparation

GOODNESS, can Lent really be upon us so soon? I am writing this with the needles from the Christmas tree scarcely brushed away and yet plans for Ash Wednesday have to be made already.

Easter comes early this year – almost as early as it can be – and so there is not much time to get things in order. But that is what Lent is for, of course. It is a preparatory time – a time not only for getting the church ready for Easter and preparing the glorious festival but also for preparing our hearts for what is to come.

It used to be that Lent was the time when people were prepared for their initiation into the Christian faith. Baptism and First Communion went together and came at the Easter Vigil. Can we still keep the ceremonies if we don't have new people to induct into the faith?

By tradition, the Church has a Sunday in Lent when the discipline is relaxed a little. The fourth Sunday in Lent became known as Refreshment Sunday. It was also called Laetare Sunday because in the middle ages the words of the main service began with the words Laetare Jerusalem – Rejoice Jerusalem.

Nowadays, most people keep that Sunday as Mothering Sunday.

However you keep it, you are warmly invited to St Mary's Cathedral in Glasgow for some rejoicing in the evening. Choirs from around the diocese will be leading Choral Evensong at 6.30pm and everyone who can come is welcome. Joining our voices together in praise of God is one way to prepare ourselves for the emotional power of what is to come at the Feast of Feasts.

One of the other things that we do in the Cathedral all through the year is to pray for the life of the diocese each day. We remember Bishop Idris each morning and call to mind through the diocesan cycle of prayer each of the congregations in turn. This year during Lent, we will be praying for each church as we all, as God's people, turn our hearts and minds back to God.

Very Revd Kelvin Holdsworth, Provost, St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow

Journey in Faith grows

THE Journey in Faith course is continuing in Paisley as well as Dalbeattie where the days and dates have been changed to help participants of Unit 1 who had difficulty with travelling conditions at night.

Unit 1, covering Liturgy, Sacraments, the Bible and Prayer, has started in Hamilton.

Unit 2 will commence in Hamilton on 23 April, covering Doctrine, History and the Church now.

To gain the Bishop's certificate for any unit, participants must attend four of the six sessions. Certificates will be presented by the Bishop on Saturday 7 June at a Eucharist held at Holy Trinity and St. Barnabas, Paisley, at 11pm, followed by lunch.

Units 3 and 4 of the course have now been planned and will commence in Ayr on Tuesday

1 April and in Paisley on Wednesday 2 April. Unit 4 will start after the summer on 16th/17th September.

These two units go more deeply into the topics covered by the previous units.

Certificates will be awarded by the Bishop on Saturday 25 October at a Eucharist in Paisley.

Each unit costs £10.

For further information contact Linda Whitby, of the Diocesan Education Network: 2 Hight Gardens, Irvine KA12 8RQ (01294 276838) lindawhitby@btopenworld.com

Don't say it with flowers — say it with trees

PEOPLE in Britain spend a staggering £2.4billion on flowers and plants for Mothering Sunday.

But there's another way to give Mum a tribute to treasure, and it's longer-lasting too.

Mothers' Union raised over £120,000 with last year's launch of its Make a Mother's Day campaign gifts. Now the 2008 catalogue is available with virtual gifts priced £6–£150.

Among the choices are tree saplings, goats, hens, literacy and health training, and business skills training to help families improve their standard of living. Other gifts include training for marriage support group facilitators, equipment for children's play centres, and disaster relief kits.

Said an MU spokesman: "Working in 78 countries around the world to support mothers and grandmothers caring for young families, Mothers' Union members see first-hand the inequality of a world in which so many mothers struggle to feed, clothe and educate their families.

"Against that, lovely though they are, floral tributes lose some of their glamour."

Order by 18 February to receive a card with

details of your gift before 2 March. You can also buy a gift in memory of a mum as a homage to a lifetime of caring.

There is also a Make a Mother's Day church resource pack for Mothering Sunday, with prayers and liturgy, as well as reflections and resource materials for speakers.

Practical

With stories of Christians around the world living out their faith by serving their own communities, the pack celebrates family and the nurturing love of God, seen in the practical faith of MU members, programmes and beneficiaries worldwide.

Children's materials around biblical themes of mothering and nurturing will also be available. Stickers, ribbon for flower posies, and other goodies will help you make Mothering Sunday really special.

Order a catalogue from your local Mothers' Union representative, telephone 020 7222 5533, email marketing@themothersunion.org or visit the website: themothersunion.org.

Changes in the Information and Communication Network

THE past year has seen a few changes in the I&C Network line-up, reports *Revd Ali Chesworth, convenor*.

Last spring we welcomed Dr James Currall, St Peter's, Dalry, as a new member of our group, and in the autumn we welcomed back Mrs June Gray, St Margaret's, Newlands, after a couple of years' sabbatical.

THE SOUTHSIDE PASSION

A Passion play telling the story of Christ

For Holy Week 2008
Catholics and Protestants
from some of the Glasgow Southside
Churches are staging a Passion play.

7.30pm

Wednesday 19 March & Friday 21 March,

St. Margaret's Episcopal Church
353/355 Kilmarnock Road, Newlands

email: southsidepassion@yahoo.co.uk

After seven years as Diocesan News editor Marilyn Pope decided to step down last summer, although she remains an I&C member. As a group we kept DNS going through the autumn by producing a newsletter format which was distributed by e-mail in Rich Text format only.

We are delighted that Susi Cormack Brown has accepted Bishop Idris' invitation to be the new DNS editor, and we also welcome her as a member of the I&C Network. Susi is a member at Holy Trinity, Ayr. Please remember to keep the information for DNS coming in. Susi's contact details can be found at the end of this publication.

Currently, in conjunction with the Bishop's Staff Group, we are undertaking an extensive review of Diocesan Communications.

The Diocesan website is going to be integrated with the Provincial website. Diocesan News will continue to be published on a monthly basis.

A presentation about diocesan communications in general and the new website in particular will be made at Synod on Saturday 8 March.

Anyone wishing to find out more or become involved with the I&C Network, please contact me on 0141 959 3730 or send me an e-mail at ali@chezzie.myzen.co.uk.

Bishop's 2008 Lent appeal

The Bishop's 2008 Lent appeal will raise funds for Macmillan Cancer Support.

The charity provides practical, healthcare, emotional and financial support, as well as campaigning for better cancer care.

It has now funded nearly 4,000 Macmillan

health and social care professionals across the UK, all specialists in their area of cancer care and leaders in their field.

They use their expert knowledge to help people understand more about cancer, manage their symptoms and side effects, and find practical ways to live with their illness.

For more details visit macmillan.org.uk.

Accolade for Cathedral music director

CATHEDRAL music director Frikki Walker is among leading church musicians to receive honorary awards this year from the Royal School of Church Music.

Frikki Walker, director of music at St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow, has been made an Associate of the Royal School of Church Music.

The award is bestowed for achievements in church music or liturgy of national significance, or for important musical or liturgical work within the RSCM.

"Some of the freshest and most imaginative Sunday worship has been broadcast from St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow," said an RSCM spokesman.

"Much of this is due to the approach taken by Frikki Walker in directing a volunteer mixed-voice cathedral choir.

"He has produced a distinctive Scottish tradition which is not hidebound by Anglican convention."

Young choristers' radio debut

LAUNCHED in October, the boys' and girls' section of the Cathedral choir now numbers 15 choristers.

They have already sung at a variety of services in the Cathedral including the Advent and Christmas Carol services, and on Christmas morning.

Said Frikki Walker: "It is our intention to have them robed by Easter, and they will make their broadcasting debut on Sunday 17 February, when the Cathedral presents *Morning Worship* live on Radio 4 at 8.10am.

If you know of any boys or girls aged 8-14 who may be interested in joining the choir, contact Frikki: music@thecathedral.org.uk

Composing competition

AS PART of its centenary celebrations in 2008, St Mary's Cathedral in Glasgow is to hold a composing competition.

The requirement is for a new musical setting of the Scottish Episcopal Eucharist 1982 for congregation, choir and organ. The prize is £500.

Adjudicators will be internationally renowned composers James MacMillan, and John Bell. Competition details from Frikki Walker (music@thecathedral.org.uk) or visit www.cathedral.glasgow.anglican.org.

*Advance notice
for your diary. . .*

Annual service in celebration of authorised ministry

Saturday 31 May
St Mary's Cathedral
at 11am

TO CELEBRATE and affirm the ministry of all those involved in licensed and authorised ministry in the Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway, all lay readers and those in authorised ministry – eucharistic assistants, worship leaders and pastoral assistants – are invited to attend along with those who wish to support them.

This year the focus will be on the lay readers, who are required to have their licences renewed as part of the three-year cycle in accordance with recent practice.

The Bishop regards this service as a significant event in the life of our Church and encourages attendance wherever possible and practical.

Refreshments will be provided after the service.

If you have any queries about the service, or about authorised ministry, please contact Revd Shelley Marsh, diocesan adviser for diaconal ministries: dma@episcopalglasgow.org.uk 0141 585 5845.

A voice on the Provincial Finance Committee

The Very Revd Dr Gregor Duncan reports. . .

I sit as one diocesan representative among seven on the Provincial Finance Committee. The committee tackles a huge range of important business for the whole church with care and good humour.

From the point of view of our vestries and congregations three areas of the Committee's work may be of most interest.

It awards grants quarterly from the Dunderdale Fund for the ongoing maintenance and repair of properties; and annually from the Maintenance and Development Fund for development of buildings, old and new.

It is my responsibility to argue for the grant

applications to these funds submitted by our Property Committee.

I also advocate the diocesan bid for Grants for Ministry (previously known as Augmentation) once a year, another important aspect of the finance committee's work.

All of these procedures, and the many other aspects of the committee's work, in my experience, are conducted in a fair and transparent manner. Debate on the committee is open and vigorous, as it has to be at a time of considerable financial stringency at provincial level.

It is very ably chaired by Canon David Bayne. So, it is one of the committees of which the Dean can truly say that he enjoys his membership!

Winning the peace — a 9/11 victory for the footballing immams

Peter Andersson reports from Sweden on events in our partner diocese of Gothenburg

THE date 9/11 is often associated with of hostility between Islam and the West.

But in Gothenburgh, a group of Christians and Muslims decided to present another image, so they arranged a friendly soccer match.

One team consisted mainly of ministers and the other of imams. Jewish players were represented in both teams. The match took place on a big outdoor area and got good media coverage. The Muslims won 1-0.

Aids Day declaration

FOR World Aids day on 1 December the Bishops' Conference of the Church of Sweden published a declaration on HIV and AIDS.

The bishops want to raise awareness about one of the biggest threats against humanity, with more than 40 million people infected.

The declaration also stresses the challenge to the church to face these facts. The bishop of the Diocese of Gothenburg urged parishes and all people of good will to support the struggle against HIV and AIDS.

Advent Sunday was also the

beginning of the Christmas campaign for international solidarity of the Church of Sweden. The theme this year was Support the Struggle Against HIV and AIDS.

Scots join youth camp

EVERY autumn the Church of Sweden youth arrange a camp for 15-20-year-olds at the conference centre of Åh.

Last year 170 youth participated from parishes in the diocese together with guests from Scotland. The programme included worship, seminars and drama.

Eleven want to be dean

ELEVEN ministers, including three women, feel the call to become dean of Gothenburg Cathedral.

The dean is the vicar of the parish of the cathedral and also a member of the diocesan chapter and the bishop's depute in the diocesan board.

The current dean retires in June.

Youth guidelines

GOTHENBURG diocese has laid down ethical guidelines for work

with confirmation classes and youth. Drugs, alcohol, bullying and sexual harassment are covered.

Help for abuse victims

BECAUSE sexual abuse unfortunately exists within the church, the Diocese of Gothenburg has published a leaflet with guidelines on the church's responsibility in sex-abuse cases.

Two contact people have been appointed to support those who consider themselves victims of unwelcome sexual behaviour in words or acts. They can offer counselling and help with contacting the judicial system and support organisations.

Ordinations

THREE new ministers were ordained in Gothenburg Cathedral by Bishop Carl Axel Aurelius in November.

DIOCESAN SYNOD

GLASGOW and Galloway Diocesan Synod will be held at the Glynhill Hotel, Paisley Road, Renfrew, 9am for 10am, Saturday 8 March, .

Regional Advent Quiet Days draw bigger numbers

An Advent Quiet Day arranged by the diocesan Action Group for Spirituality attracted 88 people around the diocese. Group convener Edith Thorp reports...

ON A very wild, wintry and cold day, 8 December, the Spirituality Group

hosted a Quiet Day in each of the seven regions of the diocese. The theme was *I am the Light of the World*, and the groups used the Holman Hunt picture of that name as a common focus for the day.

Previously the Group has held a single event in one venue, attracting 25-30 participants on average. But with each region hosting its own Day

this time, 88 people took the opportunity to set time apart to reflect. The Group is grateful to the charges that hosted the Day, and to the leaders who guided it.

The next Advent Quiet Day will be Saturday 29 November, the ACTS National Quiet Day. If your charge would like to host the Day for your region, e-mail: edith.thorp@virgin.net.

NEWS IN BRIEF . . .

Fairtrade status for diocese

GLASGOW and Galloway is working towards becoming a Fairtrade Diocese, which requires more than half of its charges achieving Fairtrade Churchstatus.

Revd Ian Barcroft, convener of the Church in Society network, says: "The requirements are very straightforward and an application form can be downloaded from fairtrade.org.uk."

Before completing the application form, churches ready for Fairtrade status are asked to email the network's secretary, Mrs Jennifer FitzGibbon (j2fg@aol.com) of St Columba's, Largs.

Pathway to Prayer Saturday 8 March

PATHWAY to Prayer is an annual gathering of more than 150 people exploring their relationship with God through prayer.

Participants choose up to three out of six workshops. Led by experienced leaders from different denominations, each has input, discussion and time for prayer. Workshops are:

- ◆ Exploring the Bible prayerfully and creatively (Rev Sheila Mitchell)
- ◆ Finding God in the paradoxes and ambiguities of our faith (Fr Stephen Motroni)
- ◆ Inner peace (Maria McMahan)
- ◆ Celebrating God's Kingdom – songs of love, joy, peace and justice (Mairi Munro)
- ◆ Franciscan spirituality (Rev Colin Mylne)
- ◆ Celtic Christianity for the 21st century (Deaconess Chris King)

10-15am-4.30pm, Portland and St Meddan's (CoS) Church halls Registration £7 (unwaged £5). Lunch provided (donation welcome). More details and booking form from Chris King (01563 851197).

Leap-year concert

**St Michael and All Angels, Helensburgh
Friday 29 February, 7.30pm**

On offer in a very mixed programme of classical music will be exciting flute music from Helena Gourd; Vaughan Williams' Songs of Travel from Russell Knott; Spanish notes from Alicia Tindal and soothing Baroque music with harpsichord, recorder and continuo. Wonderful young musicians include Patrick Cassels and Alasdair Wood playing the 3rd Movement of Bach's Double Violin Concerto; Hannah Rankin performing Pierné's Bassoon Concerto and baritone Michael Menzies.

Helensburgh String Quartet will also present a medley of theme tunes requiring audience concentration – prizes to be won! The star raffle prize will be one of Joan Sadden's beautiful quilts.

Tickets £6 (under-18s £2) including interval refreshments. Available after church service or from Hopscotch, Margaret Gilbert (01436-675136), Sophie Hamilton (01436 671074) or Hilary Menzies (01436 671969).

Ignatian retreats

WEEKEND retreats run by the Ignatian Spirituality Centre include events on Bute and in Skelmorlie, Ayrshire.

Two days of Celtic workshops including a pilgrimage to the ancient monastic site of St Blane's on Bute take place over the weekend of 6-8 June.

The following weekend sees individually guided retreats at Skelmorlie's Notre Dame Centre.

Longer retreats are also offered in Spain, Ayrshire and Iona.

For the full programme call 0141 354 0077 or visit iscglasgow.co.uk.

Stewardship studies

CHARIS is the Scottish Episcopal Church's resource for stewardship. One section of *Charis* contains six biblical texts with guidance for further reflection and study.

The Diocesan Stewardship Committee hopes that these texts and study tips will stimulate thought and discussion. Two studies appeared last year; here is the third. The final three will be published in future issues of Diocesan News.

Mark 10:17-27

The rich young man

17 As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him.

"Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

18 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good – except God alone.

19 "You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honour your father and mother.'"

20 "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy."

21 Jesus looked at him and loved him.

"One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you

will have treasure in heaven.

Then come, follow me."

22 At this the man's face fell.

He went away sad, because he had great wealth."

23 Jesus looked around and said to his disciples,

"How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"

24 The disciples were amazed at his words.

But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!

25 "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

26 The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?"

27 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."

QUESTIONS

1. What jumps off the page at you?
2. Think of this scene like a film. (a) Identify all the individual scenes / moments in this incident. (b) What sorts of emotions might you associate with each scene / moment?
3. What might this particular incident tell us about Jesus' views on wealth and possession?
4. Why might this man be unwilling to part with his possessions?
5. In responding to Jesus today, in what ways do wealth and possessions hold us back (a) in our personal context, (b) in the Christian community?
6. What challenges and affirmations are we faced with from this passage as we explore *Charis* and our concern for the stewardship of our resources?

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Items for inclusion in the next issue should be sent to the editor, Susi Cormack Brown, e-mail: marilyndns@btinternet.com (address as last year) by Monday 11 February. Or c/o Glasgow & Galloway Diocesan Centre, 5 St Vincent Place, Glasgow G1 2DH (0141 221 5720/2694)

Smithstone House courses and retreats

SMITHSTONE House conference and retreat centre has published its programme for 2008.

Near Kilwinning, the ecumenical centre offers short courses and weekend or midweek retreats.

The next course is Listening ear – for all interested in pastoral visiting. (7.30-9pm, Wednesdays 14, 21 & 28 February).

One-night themed retreats and two-night relaxing mid-week breaks are also of offer from 15 February.

Call Fr Stephen Motroni (01563 851197) for a programme.

A Wee Taste o Scotland

Friday 8 February, 7.30pm

A sit-doon supper o' grand Scottish fare wi' a guid variety of drink an' entertainment

St Columba's
Aubery Crescent, Largs
Tickets £7

Call 01475 686213 to book