



Bridie's Blethers

Issue 2 (January 2022)



Welcome to the 2nd edition of St. Bride's "**Bridie's Blethers**", St. Bride's very own newsletter. This issue includes a range of topics which again we hope you find interesting and relevant: the situation in Afghanistan and how St. Bride's can help, upcoming events, the work of St. Vincent De Paul, growing up in St. Bride's with strong Catholic roots, the Catacombs of Rome, mysticism in the church, Lorraine Corrigan's welcome to the Catholic community in West Kilbride, our film review and "**Bridie's Nuggets**" to name just a few. As usual, the key to Bridie's Blethers success is you! We'd like your comments / feedback (good or bad) as well as suggested topics of interest and contributions to future issues by writing, emailing westkilbride@gallowaydiocese.org.uk or speaking to one of the editorial team.

Can St. Bride's help the plight of people in Afghanistan ?



We cannot fail to be moved or appalled at the plight of people, especially children, living in Afghanistan since the Taliban regained control at the end of 2021 and the reintroduction of sanctions. TV coverage has shown the suffering of Afghan men, women and children through starvation in freezing conditions without proper heating, shelter, medicines or food. So the question is whether St. Bride's can do something to help those in need ? One proposal is for a second collection at the end of Mass on Fridays and

Sundays during February as a donation to the **Disasters Emergency Committee** (dec.org.uk) Afghan appeal to try and help in some small way those most in need.

Matthew 25:36 "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me."

Upcoming Events



Here are some upcoming events for your diary.

Please come along or help where you can.

Appeal for tins of meat and soup to donate to the West Kilbride Village Larder (in the Community Centre).

Sunday 23rd January and the following Sunday 30th January. Please leave your donation at the church.

After excellent feedback, the Sycamore Program returns.

Monday 31st January to Monday 28th February (5 weeks) in St. Bride's Church Hall at 7:30pm.

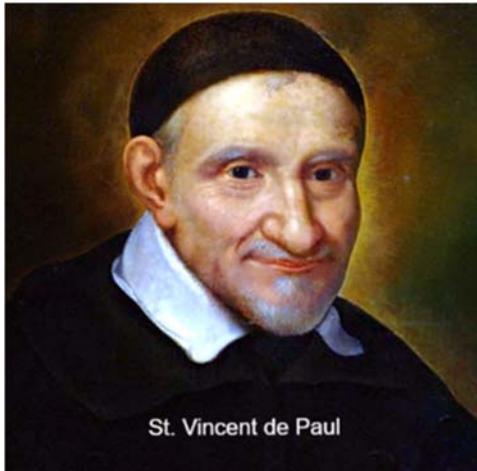
Synod 2021-2023. Pope Francis invites the whole Church to question itself on synodality: a decisive theme for the life and mission of the Church. See www.synod.va/en.html

March 2021-2023. Meetings will be held in St. Brides to capture our feedback on the questions raised. There will also be the option to email your comments.

World Day of Prayer

Friday 4th March in West Kilbride Parish Church.

West Kilbride's St. Vincent De Paul



West Kilbride's Society of St. Vincent De Paul (SVDP) have put together this note to explain what they do and hopefully encourage some of our readers to help in some way.

The first mention of **The Saint Vincent De Paul Society** was in the early 19th century when, in Paris, a young Frederic Ozanam and seven of his friends came together to form the first "conference" of Society of the Saint Vincent de Paul.

They provided help and support to the poor of Paris and had very close links to the Church. Word of their efforts and successes spread quickly and by 1860 there was reported to be nearly 2000 conferences throughout Europe including the UK. We in St. Bride's are proud to be a continuing part of this now worldwide organisation.

So what do we do ? The overall objective of SVDP is to provide support and assistance to those in need.

Anybody regardless of background is welcome to approach us for help. Most of these contacts come through the St. Bride's congregation, social services and individuals who know of us.

We begin by listening carefully to individuals and try to understand the issues they are facing without being either judgemental or jumping to conclusions. We offer to stay in touch and can, where appropriate, introduce them to other organisations who may be able to also help. In addition, we still regularly see quite a few people with whom St. Bride's has a long term relationship. If money is the issue (as it often is) we have some resources which we can make available. This primarily comes from the generosity of the St. Bride's congregation for which we are very grateful as are our clients.

Last year you provided close to £3,000 which made a real difference to many.

In addition, donations of clothes, toys, furniture and food are given to us and passed on to our contacts.

Finally as was mentioned in the last issue of "Bridie's Blethers", new members would be very welcome to join us. If you are interested and would like to find out more about what we do please get in touch with any current members.

There is quite a lot to do.

Article by Bob Adams

Sycamore Returns



After the success and positive feedback of the first Sycamore course last year, the next Sycamore program returns as of **Monday 31st January starting at 7:30pm** and every Monday in the church hall for five weeks. Each meeting lasts approximately 1 hour followed by tea. You do not need to be at the first course to attend this one entitled "Living the Christian Faith in the World".

The content includes: (1) Creation, Fall and Salvation; (2) The Meaning of Love; (3) True Freedom; (4) Forgiveness, Healing and Mission; and (5) The Social Teaching of the Church.

Sycamore is a relaxed and enjoyable course with videos and discussions in small groups. It's a great way to deepen your faith and get to know your fellow parishioners in an easy and friendly way.

The Catacombs by Father Duncan



If I ever go back to Rome, there is one place I just have to see again - the catacombs. During a group pilgrimage to the Holy City a few years ago, we got permission to visit the Catacombs of Saint Callixtus - a labyrinth of underground tunnels and chambers. I must admit, I was constantly worried that someone might get lost - that "someone" obviously being me. The Group stopped after a while at a little "chapel" where the early Christians would have said Mass. Spontaneously, they all started to sing "Faith of our Fathers" - the deep emotion was palpable with tears freely flowing. The catacombs were primarily burial places. That was the main function. However, with time and in the face of the constant persecutions of the early Christian Community, the role of the catacombs expanded quickly. Christian martyrs, people who were

killed for refusing to renounce their Christian faith, were often buried there. The other Christians looked to the martyrs for examples of how to live and die for their faith and turned to them in prayer, knowing that the martyrs were safe in heaven and could intercede for their fellow Christians who were still living on earth. Christians often prayed at the martyrs' tombs, sometimes even celebrating the Eucharist there on the anniversaries of their deaths or other occasions. The catacombs became places of prayer and refuge and also places to pass on the faith to coming generations. With our "lockdown" in this time of the pandemic, with many parishioners anxious to come to Church, it seems that we have returned somehow to the "catacombs". However, they should not become places to hide away, but places to re-energise our faith, in spite of the practical difficulties and restrictions around us. I would like to use the image of the "catacombs" as a means to describe our parish as a unique place where we find renewal and strength for today's challenges and needs - a place where God's grace powerfully breaks through.



The "Catacombs" of the Parish. Every Parish contributes to renewal when it is a place of real community and a special "schooling" in our faith. Small groups, in the constant ups-and-downs of history, have often been the sources of change and renewal. The smallest of groups - Christ and his apostles - brought about a change in the world, which is simply inexplicable and extraordinary. Here we see the power of God at work: A tiny group, facing huge odds, and bringing about enormous success. Every Parish becomes "light" and "heaven" in society to bring about change for the better. The Parish plants "seed" in fertile soil [John

12:24] through the preaching of the Word of God, the sacraments and prayer, through reaching out to the poor and marginalised, through Catholic education and social justice. Parishes make a healthy impact on their surroundings if they are communities which generate authentic spiritual life and know that they are dependant on God's grace, always being open to the gifts and guidance of the Holy Spirit: They emphasise a life of prayer, a spirit of sacrifice, self-education in faith, they strive for virtue, they hunger for the Eucharist, they learn to be "missionary disciples" and they hope to be people who can give answers to the burning questions of our times. In this way, they avoid the danger of becoming self-referential but a force to change things for the better, making a real difference in their neighbourhoods. As Pope Francis encourages us: *"The Church needs our courage in order to give witness to truth. Let us never forget that it is the Lord who guides the Church. He is the one who makes our apostolates fruitful. Let the Church always be a place of mercy and hope, where everyone is welcomed, loved and forgiven."*

In the catacombs in Rome, we find the ancient image of Our Lady (depicted in a painting in the cemetery of Priscilla on the Via Salaria). The fresco, dated back to the third century, depicts the Virgin with the Child on her knees in front of a prophet (Balaam or Isaiah) who is pointing to a star to refer to the coming of a new world. The image of the Good Shepherd is also very prominent in the catacombs, inspired by the parable of the lost sheep. Christ is represented as a humble shepherd with a lamb on his shoulders as he watches over his flock - with love and care and faithful to the end. The catacombs are also the place of the martyrs who are buried here - killed during cruel persecutions by Emperors Decius, Valerianus and Diocletian. Around the tombs of the martyrs, pilgrims left their graffiti and prayers. We also find these "signs" of faith, hope and love in the "catacombs" of our family, our home and our Parishes. Something to think and pray about when we are "lockdown".

Lorraine's Choice – by Lorraine Corrigan



I try to live in the moment.

Walking in and around West Kilbride is a special time in my life: it's an adventure with no set plan, no route - just a clear view that it will make me feel refreshed, renewed, fulfilled and happy as I open up to God feeling nature all around me. So, I am both thankful and grateful to be able to share my journey with you.

It can be easier to walk around this world with your eyes cast down, but you miss too much; my eyes, like my heart are focussed and shining brightly as I write this. I know that I've always had a good relationship with God, but for most of my life, I have only let him in on my terms and conditions and pushed him away when I felt hurt or rejected. I now know that was wrong and I am very sorry that it has taken me all this time to accept His love fully into my life.

Like a wave in the sea; Like a bird in a tree; Like a footprint in the sand - I know He will guide me and hold my hand.

It has taken almost all of my life to feel this free. Recently, it became very clear to me that I had a choice to make and I made it: I allowed myself to more fully accept God's divine presence within my life and become Catholic.

I have an energy inside me that feels so strong. It lifts me up so positively and everything feels brighter, lighter, clearer – I don't want this "butterfly" feeling in my soul to leave me. I just know that I feel good about my choice.

Thank you for reading this as I begin to know and love God even more. Please feel free to pray for me because I would love to pray for you. I enclose below, "A Family Prayer" that has been dear to my heart for most of my life:

Father, we are your family, the people you created to be your own.

Out of love - you sent your only Son, so that we may have life, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Help us to know Christ's love and to share it with others at home, in the Church and in the world around us.

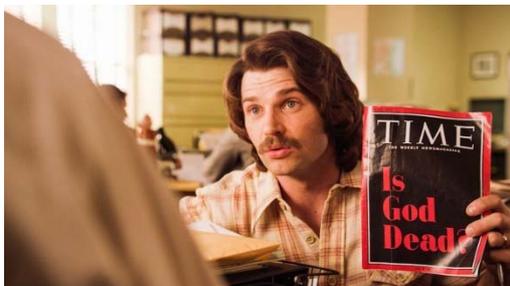
Pour out your blessings upon us, whatever our circumstances.

Renew our commitment to family life, by helping us to show warmth, care, tolerance and acceptance.

Enable us to help everyone so that all of us may feel that we belong.

Amen

One to Watch: Case for Christ (Amazon Prime)



This is a true story of an investigative journalist who takes it upon himself to get to the bottom of one of history's biggest mysteries in "The Case for Christ." Based on Lee Strobel's best-selling book, this religious-themed drama earns points for evangelising in a more narratively compelling form than usual. But while the film is watchable and features some effective performances, suffice it to say that it isn't exactly All the President's Men. Set in 1980, the story revolves around Lee (Mike Vogel), an award-winning reporter for the Chicago

Tribune and an avowed atheist, along with his wife Leslie (Erika Christensen). His life suddenly changes when his young daughter nearly chokes to death at a restaurant. The little girl is rescued by fellow diner Alfie (L. Scott Caldwell), a nurse. When the grateful parents remark how lucky it was that she was there, Alfie solemnly intones, "It's not luck. It's Jesus." The film tells the journey of Lee Strobel's journey from atheism to belief.

Bridie's Nuggets



"If your dreams don't scare you,
they aren't big enough"

...Ellen Jonson Sirleaf
(Africa's first woman president)

"Change will not come if we wait for
some other person or some other
time. We are the ones we have been
waiting for. We are the change that
we seek."

.....Barack Obama

A Funny Nugget....Driving Test

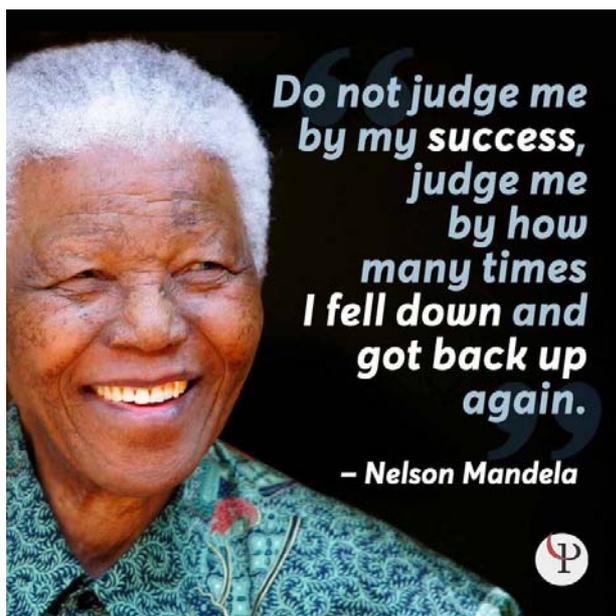


A teenage boy had just passed his driving test and asked his Dad if he could start using the family car. The Dad said he'd make a deal with his son, "You bring your grades up from a C to a B average, study your Bible a little and get your hair cut. Then we'll talk about the car".

The boy thought about that for a moment, decided he'd settle for the offer and they agreed on it.

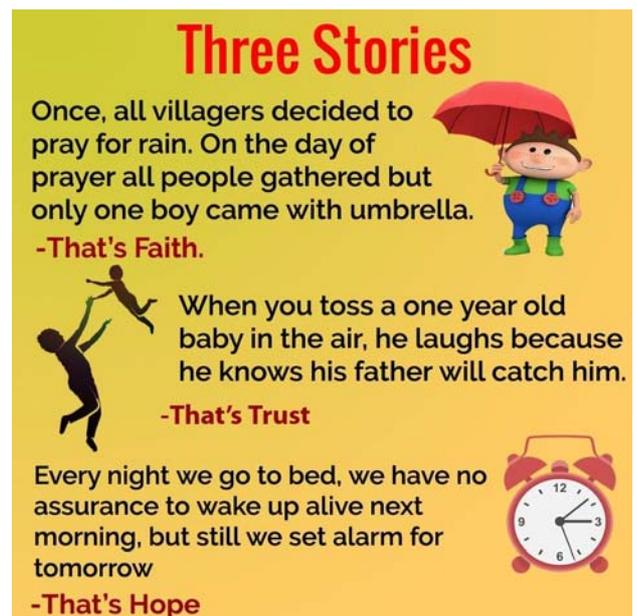
After about six weeks, the Dad said, "Son, you've brought your grades up and I've observed that you have been studying your Bible, but I'm disappointed you haven't had your hair cut." The boy said, "You know, Dad, I've been thinking about that, and I've noticed in my studies of the Bible that Samson had long hair, John the Baptist had long hair, Moses had long hair, and there's even strong evidence that Jesus had long hair."

His Dad replied, "Did you also notice that they all walked everywhere they went?"



**Do not judge me
by my success,
judge me
by how
many times
I fell down and
got back up
again.**

– Nelson Mandela



Three Stories

Once, all villagers decided to pray for rain. On the day of prayer all people gathered but only one boy came with umbrella.

-That's Faith.



When you toss a one year old baby in the air, he laughs because he knows his father will catch him.

-That's Trust

Every night we go to bed, we have no assurance to wake up alive next morning, but still we set alarm for tomorrow

-That's Hope





The Answers Are All Kinds Of Sweets

1	Wobbly Infants	
2	Where Refined People Live	
3	100% Precious	
4	Carrier for dairy produce	
5	Belly dancers perhaps	
6	Speak quietly	
7	Edible fasteners	
8	Mediterranean islanders	
9	Feline sports wear	
10	American half time	
11	Pirates loot	
12	Clever chocolate	
13	Online tinder	
14	Type of dog	
15	King of the jungles local	
16	Promote, Improve, Encourage	
17	Alfresco dining	
18	Black and white perhaps	
19	Small pieces of snow	
20	Used to be 26 miles	
21	Tartan granite	
22	Night time explosion	
23	David Bowie's favourites	
24	Found in an electric plug	
25	All sorts of girls	

Answers at bottom of last page and also available on the St. Bride's website – www.stbrideschurch.co.uk

The Modern World needs Mysticism, by our Largs correspondent



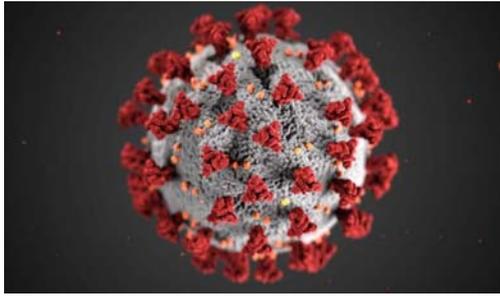
Covid19 has been a time of disruption and upheaval at every level and the Church has been no exception. At first, disruption and upheaval sound negative, and there have been many negative aspects to life over the last two years. Disruption and upheaval, however, can be positive and creative. Throughout history, periods of disruption and upheaval have led to new developments. Indeed, they are essential elements in all development and change in the sense that for something new to be born something old has to die, a process the Church has been involved in throughout its history, a process that continues in our own day through the Second Vatican Council and all the disruption and upheaval, positive and negative, that has followed it. And now we have the Synod, called by Pope Francis with the aim of enabling the whole Church, sixty years after the event, to embrace all that was good in the fundamental vision of Vatican II. The hope is that, *walking together*, we can turn away from scandals, internal wrangling, disputes and division and address the profound needs of the modern world, a world we are called to serve by sharing with it the Good News of the Gospel.

The truth we have to face, however, is that the Church is hardly in a fit state to do this. For a variety of reasons, we have lost credibility with millions of people who share this moment of history with us. There have been the sexual and financial scandals: splits between so-called liberals and conservatives over issues like sexuality, gender, clericalism, the role of women in the Church and so on. There will always be differences of opinion. This is unavoidable. But in places like the US, the differences are so deep that there are effectively two different Catholic Churches at war with each other, a situation which exists to some extent in parishes across Scotland. Until we sort ourselves out and learn to speak to the world in a language it can understand about the things that matter, it's hard to see how we are going to have the credibility that would encourage people to listen and take us seriously again. The hope is that the coming Synod, to which we are all being asked to contribute our ideas and experience, will move us along what is going to be a long and difficult road. But in the midst of all that, if we are to be a Church fit for the age we live in, there is one thing above all others I would propose to you now. Forty years ago, I read the books of William Johnston SJ, a man who lived most of his life in Japan and wrote extensively about the link between Eastern and Western spirituality. His books moved me deeply at the time, and I have started reading them again recently. In one of his last books (he died a few years ago) he says something I have quoted in homilies over the years - 'The Church of the twenty first century must give people mysticism or die.' And I firmly believe with all my heart and soul that he is right. So what is this mysticism Bill Johnston speaks of?

The first thing to say is that there is nothing special about it. Mysticism is simply an alternative form of knowledge. It bypasses things we normally associate with knowledge: study, learning, discussion, arguments, concepts, intelligence and ideas. It belongs to the world of intuition and insight. St Ignatius calls it *deep interior knowledge*. It comes from inside ourselves where the Spirit of God lives and moves. It is, in fact, the only way we can know God. Books, sermons, theology, courses teaches us *about* God. But the only way to know God as opposed to knowing about God is through personal experience, we all have if we are able to recognise it.

As children we learned God is everywhere. The whole of creation, the poet Gerald Manley Hopkins has written, is filled with the splendour of God. The sense of amazement we feel when David Attenborough speaks about nature, or when Brian Cox boggles our minds with the enormity of the Cosmos, is the beginning of mysticism. So is a sunset over Arran. These things reach a place inside us to receive and experience God. He/she really is everywhere: in every person we meet: in everything that happens to us: in the great breakthroughs of science; in the beauty of music or the smile of a child. I meet a lot of dogs these days as I walk along the prom in Largs. And God just shines out of them. God really is everywhere, because, if there were a place where he was absent, that place could not exist. This is a glimpse of ultimate reality and the Good News we have to share with the world of our time. This is a glimpse of the Kingdom. In 'heaven' there will be no religion, no Churches, no priests, no sacraments, no Mass. There will only be mysticism, glimpses of which are all around us if we have eyes to see. It is not far away or hard to find. It is as close to us as the air we breathe. To find it all we have to do is ask and we will receive, seek and we will find, knock and the door will be opened to us.....Mysticism is what we are designed and created for. That is why the modern world needs it so much.

The Pandemic and Us – By Phyllis Howie



It's been a very strange time for all of us since COVID19 came into our lives in 2019.

So how has it changed our lives? Here are some of the comments some of our Parishioners told me:

" I felt alone and scared"

" I haven't left the house for weeks"

"I haven't seen my family for months"

"I couldn't go to my brothers funeral "

That was at the highest peak of the Pandemic. As we entered the second phase, we were offered hope with the arrival of the vaccines, our Church was open again, we had to book our place at Mass but our mood was a little more positive. We could see some friends and family in the garden, we could meet up again with our Parish Family at Mass, we felt reconnected. So, we had to social distance and wear masks but then we got our second vaccination, little by little our life and faith was being restored.

Through it all we kept everyone informed about Parish news, through letters, our new website, email, and where safe to do so by visitations. We even managed to run a 6 week Sycamore Course last October, giving Parishioners the opportunity to reach out to one another and share their faith, and their gardens!

We were also very fortunate to be asked to share in 2 weddings and 2 baptisms, a bit of sunshine and celebration, a reminder to us that our church is a place of coming together with hope for a return to seeing our friends who we have not seen for nearly 2 years.

We look forward to the future with optimism and hope and better days ahead.



We'd like to thank all of our contributors and writers for their effort and great work for this edition of Bridie's Blethers.

Write to us with your thoughts! We hope you have enjoyed the second edition of Bridie's Blethers. For future editions your parish needs **YOU!** Please provide any feedback and most importantly topics and articles to include in the next edition by emailing westkilbride@gallowaydiocese.org. Alternatively, speak to one of the editorial team. We aim to issue Bridie's Blethers every 2 months.

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We wish you all best wishes and blessings for 2022

Next Edition due: End March 2022

1. Jelly Babies; 2. Quality Street; 3. All Gold; 4. Milk Tray; 5. Turkish Delight; 6. WIISPA; 7. Buttons; 8. Maltesers; 9. Kit Kat; 10. Time Out; 11. Bounty; 12. Smarties; 13. Match Makers; 14. Yorkie; 15. Lion Bar; 16. Boost; 17. Picnic; 18. Minstrels; 19. Flake; 20. Marathon; 21. Edinburgh Rock; 22. Star Burst; 23. Heros; 24. Fuse; 25. Dolly Mixtures