



# Vox Clamantis

Bulletin of the Society of Saint Pius X in Scotland

May 2024

*"The will to do, the soul to dare"*

Dear Faithful,

Once again this month, the date of Easter makes for the whole of the Easter season falling in May. The Octave of Whitsun and even Corpus Christi are also in this month with merely the feast of the Sacred Heart falling outside.

May is therefore a month of processions in the Church's calendar. Our Lady's procession, the Rogation processions and the Corpus Christi procession were historically, in ages of Faith, a marvellous opportunity for public witness of the Faith – devotion to our Lady, trust in God's Providence and faith in the Blessed Sacrament would have shone forth through the streets of many a village and perhaps even the cities. Although a minority in Scotland, Catholics were still numerous enough to make such professions of Faith viable whereas now, the location of our church buildings in Scotland makes such a profession difficult and the small number of faithful is not calculated to impress our Protestant and Godless neighbours.

Protestantism, of course, stopped the public profession of Faith for almost 300 years but, as we shall see in future editions, the Faith after Emancipation and the Restoration of the Hierarchy had meant that by the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, such signs of Faith were beginning to flourish once again. The wrecking ball of the Second Vatican Council took the heart out of this devotion and the social revolution of the 1960s in general, now met by no opposition from the Church did the rest.

The parallels between Protestantism and the novus ordo are remarkable. Back in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, by rejecting celibacy (of the clergy) and, later, actual asceticism in general, as well as its representatives, the saints, Protestantism and the novus ordo have become a blunted, or rather broken-off Christianity, lacking the pinnacle: it runs out into nothing. This 'new faith', by eliminating asceticism and its focal point,

the merit of celibacy, has actually already abandoned the innermost core of Christianity and is to that extent to be regarded as apostasy from it.

This has become evident in our days in the gradual transition of Christianity into the flat rationalism, this modern Pelagianism, which in the end boils down to a doctrine of a loving father who made the world, and who, if one only submits to His will in certain respects, will also provide for an even much prettier world afterwards. This is clearly not going to convert anyone.



It may take generations for this public profession of Faith here in Scotland to once again take to the streets. We do, however, still perform the Rogation procession over the fields of a local farmer which, if witnessed by only a few hikers and bemused locals, nonetheless is a profession of our Faith in the Providence of God and our recognition of the source of all our benefits. Our industrialised society means most will be unable to attend but I urge all to unite themselves spiritually over the three Rogation days in prayer and intercession to our Heavenly Father.

With every good wish and blessing,

Rev. Sebastian Wall (Prior)

# CARFIN—THE SCOTTISH LOURDES

“One must admit that, at least to the man in the street, the Carfin Grotto has been an inexplicable mystery. How did it happen that 200 volunteer workers should, through the space of twenty years... have had the enthusiasm, the patience and the brains, to create what has often been called an oasis of beauty in a drab countryside?” Thus wrote Mgr. Canon Taylor in 1952 in his history of the shrine built by him some 30 years previously.



*Mgr. Thomas N. Canon Taylor*

It is certain that a replica of a pilgrimage site in the far south of France, thus relatively inaccessible to people in the far north of Britain, has no obvious motivation. But God's Providence works in mysterious ways. Canon Taylor himself had been trained at St. Sulpice in Paris and since 1893 had the opportunity to visit Lourdes regularly. Later, visiting Oostakker in Belgium, he saw the replica grotto built there in 1873 where a miraculous cure had taken place and the idea of something similar in Scotland took form.

One of the first Scottish pilgrimages to Lourdes in 1920 included a delegation from Canon Taylor's parish and they came back full of enthusiasm. This enthusiasm was somewhat subdued the following year when the miners' strike began. Carfin was a mining town and this meant most of the men were without work, unable to support their families and, most significantly, free to take up the activities to which the working man was prey when idle, gambling and drinking.

While travelling through Europe, Canon Taylor had become aware of the various clubs, sodalities, as well as the pilgrimage to Lourdes as a way in which men might be 'restored to Christ'. He also had a piece of waste ground (mostly marshland) opposite his church. Being an enterprising man, Canon Taylor co-opted what he called the 'enforced leisure' of these strong but unemployed labourers to make 'a

long cherished dream a reality, the building in Scotland of an open-air Basilica to the Mother of God. He writes, "The Catholic miner alone possessed the combination of qualities required for such a gigantic task; patience, endurance, faith profound. He lacked only leisure, and a strike of almost a year's duration afforded him the long hours necessary to lay the foundations of the future masterpiece. Faith the Irish miner has in plenty. Yet he never suspected that his little Grotto was to blossom out into Scotland's first Marian shrine. At most he had hoped that it would be a joy to his fellow Catholics, and in a small way, a lantern to light to their Mother's arms those outside the Fold".

These are pretty modest aspirations. The site was but an acre in size and may have been very similar to the many 'Lourdes grotto's that grace the property of many a parish church. Over the next twenty years it was to grow considerably.

Probably the most significant 'other' shrine at Carfin is the one to St. Therese of Lisieux (though she was not canonised until 1925). The life-size figure executed in stone, replicating the classic devotional-card image of the Carmelite nun with the cross and roses, was deemed a close likeness by her sisters – a seeming guarantee of the authenticity and efficacy of her shrine. Erected by public subscription so that all Carfin's patrons, the more prosperous alongside the poor, could equally feel a measure of ownership, the marble effigy was surrounded by twelve rose bushes which were an offering of thanksgiving from a Protestant medical doctor for the recovery of his five year old child.

By the mid 1950s there were twenty shrines occupying around 50 acres. These include a shrine to St. Joseph, set in an excavated sunken area, which tested the skills of the collier volunteers when begun in 1937 and completed (after the interruptions of war and numerous landslides) after 1951. A St. Patrick's shrine was unveiled on 24<sup>th</sup> August, 1930. Other saints from French devotion similarly arose: St. John Vianney and St. Philomena, while one to St. Maria Goretti also appeared after her canonisation. The original idea of our Lady of Lourdes was added to by a shrine to our Lady, Star of the sea and our Lady of Fatima, inaugurated after the war with much anti-communist fervour. More recently a more modest one has appeared to honour our Lady of Czestochowa.

The obvious difficulty with replicating



**Workers on the construction site**

Lourdes in Scotland was the lack of a supernatural spring. There are three local wells dedicated to our Lady very close by (Motherwell being the best known). Ever the practical man, Canon Taylor contrived to install a spring of his own (using Glasgow Corporation tap water). Thus “an artificial streamlet flow[s] through a flower-clad rockery of Westmoreland stone, reminding the pilgrim of the famous miraculous spring at the rock of Massabielle” in the words of the Canon. Despite its prosaic provenance, there are many cures attributed to the drinking of or the bathing in the water from the grotto. The Evening dispatch described various people “coming to get water from the pool for friends unable to make the journey, carry[ing] all kinds of utensils for this purpose, including jam jars, empty medicine and lemonade bottles and pitchers”.

As well as Carfin water, devotion to St. Therese, whose relics the Canon procured from her convent, has also produced many miracles. In the testimonies, the male cures have a common element. Mr. James Donaghy was one of the early cures. He reports the debilitating effects of ‘not [being] fit to work’ and his reliance upon the ‘sick fund of 15/- a week.’ After his cure, he was ‘perfectly well and working every day’. Another of the shrine’s male devotees, J. Hobson from London, wrote to Canon Taylor in 1937 describing his concerns about steady employment for himself and his working-age daughters. Similarly in the recovery of Peter McConnel in 1957 from pleurisy and bronchial carcinoma, deemed ‘amazing’ by his consultant surgeon, it was ‘fitness to work’ that was celebrated and used as compelling evidence of a full and lasting recovery.

The thanksgivings for ‘favours granted’ sent by male workers were also commonly accompanied by celebrations of a particularly masculine form of physical, strenuous piety, such as the forty mile journey on foot of a young male teacher who made a pilgrimage in

thanksgiving for employment during the lean years of the depression.

Whilst the perils of employment and breadwinner provision featured strongly in many of the accounts of grateful male clients, another male ‘ailment’ was alluded to by Mary McDermott. In her letter she alludes to her brother who had ‘lapsed’ and was an alcoholic, she was pleased to communicate that the card of St. Therese and the ‘25 glorias’ prayers had worked: “A few days later he went to confession; he hasn’t taken any drink since and attends morning daily Mass. I thank you very sincerely for this great favour Father and I hope you will ask Saint Teresa that he may have the grace to resist drink during the rest of his life. I hope I may have strong faith in her intercession as I sometimes worry in case he may start drinking”.

It is evident from early photographs that his idea of using the building of the grotto to bring the men closer to Christ bore fruit in many of the devotional practices at the shrine once the construction was completed. Whether it is bearing the canopy at Corpus Christi or hefting the statue of our Lady or St. Barbara (the patron of miners) or the enormous reliquary of St. Therese, these men are never absent in their suits and sashes of the various groups to which they belonged. Alongside fostering a devotional landscape for the performance of ethnic cohesion, the associational cultures that flourished at Carfin were thought to engender stability and ‘respectability’ as an alternative to the ‘atheistic class antagonism’ and working-class loyalties mobilised by the Labour Party.

At a time of sectarianism, particularly in the West of Scotland, Carfin became a beacon of Catholic strength, attracting tens of thousands of pilgrims every year. A more recent addition to the shrine complex is an ecumenical exhibition showing the origin of all manner of false religions. Whether this is seen by the present curators as an antidote to sectarianism is not known. At any rate, the building housing it has recently been closed.



# Mass Schedule

	Carlisle	Glasgow	Edinburgh
Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup> May		6.30pm	6.30pm
Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> May	11am		
Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> May ( <i>First Friday</i> )		6.30pm	6.30pm
Saturday 4 <sup>th</sup> May ( <i>First Saturday</i> )		11am	11am
Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> May — Fifth after Easter		8.30am & 10am	9am & 11am
Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> May			7am
Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> May	7.15am		Rosary 7pm
Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> May	7.15am		
Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> May — Ascension of Our Lord	11am	6.30pm	6.30pm
Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> May	7.15am		
Saturday 11 <sup>th</sup> May		11am	11am
Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup> May — Sunday after the Ascension		8.30am & 10am	9am & 11am
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> May			7am
Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> May	7.15am		Rosary 7pm
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> May	7.15am		
Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup> May	11am		
Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> May	7.15am		
Saturday 18 <sup>th</sup> May Whitsun Eve		11am	11am
Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup> May — Whit Sunday		8.30am & 10am	9am & 11am
Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> May			7am
Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> May	7.15am		Rosary 7pm
Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	7.15am		
Thursday 23 <sup>rd</sup> May	11am		
Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> May	7.15am		
Saturday 25 <sup>th</sup> May		11am	11am
Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup> May — Trinity Sunday		8.30am & 10am	9am & 11am
Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> May			7am
Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup> May	7.15am		Rosary 7pm
Wednesday 29 <sup>th</sup> May	7.15am		
Thursday 30 <sup>th</sup> May — Corpus Christi	11am	6.30pm	6.30pm
Friday 31 <sup>st</sup> May	7.15am		

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If you require any further information concerning one of these places, or need to talk to a priest e.g. in case of emergency for the Sacraments, please ring the phone number mentioned in contact details.