



Diocese of Paisley

Laity Catechesis Core Document

“ The Bishops’ Catechesis during Lent was an important first step on our journey towards the Synod. What you have in your hands now is the next stage of the process

Contents

Introduction.....	03
The role of the Laity	04
1. What is a Synod	05
2. A word about the Church	06
Questions	10
3. The Lay Vocation	11
Questions	16
4. Forms of the Lay Apostolate	17
Questions	21
5. And Scotland?.....	22
Questions	25
6. Faithful Witness	26
Blessed Charia ‘Luce’ Badano.....	27
Servant of God, Dorothy Day.....	29
Blessed Louis and Zelig Martin	31
St Gianna Beretta Molla.....	32
Venerable Matt Talbot.....	34
Concluding Prayer.....	36

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to assist Parish communities, groups and schools to engage fully with the work of our forthcoming Diocesan Synod on the Laity in the New Evangelization. As we enter the period of preparation for the Synod, we are encouraged to both *pray* for its success and *learn* more about the themes which lie at its heart. The Vatican *Instruction on Diocesan Synods* foresees that the consultation period should be preceded by structured catechesis:

The celebration of the Synod affords the Bishop a privileged opportunity for the formation of the faithful. It leads to a well-articulated catechesis of the faithful with regard to the mystery of the Church and the participation of all the faithful in her mission. Such catechesis is carried on in the light of the teaching of the Church's Magisterium and particularly that of the Second Vatican Council. To this end, concrete directives can be given to priests for preaching. [III.C.1]

The Bishops' Catechesis during Lent was an important first step on this journey towards the Synod. What you have in your hands now is the next stage of this process - the core catechetical document on the Laity (to be followed in due course by a companion document on Evangelization). It is intended to assist Parish Priests in their formation of the Parish communities by offering them a resource which gathers together many of the pronouncements of the Magisterium since the Second Vatican Council to the present. The core document will be adapted for schools and should also help form the basis of smaller group reflection and discussion. To this end, most sections contain questions for reflection and discussion. If used in small groups, responses should be noted and passed to each Parish's Synod liaison.

The role of the Laity

Lay people are, put simply, the vast majority of the people of God. The minority – ordained ministers – are at their service.

There has been a growing awareness of the identity and mission of the laity in the Church. We can count on many lay persons, although still not nearly enough, who have a deeply-rooted sense of community and great fidelity to the tasks of charity, catechesis and the celebration of the faith. At the same time, a clear awareness of this responsibility of the laity, grounded in their baptism and confirmation, does not appear in the same way in all places.

In some cases, it is because lay persons have not been given the formation needed to take on important responsibilities. In others, it is because in their particular Churches room has not been made for them to speak and to act, due to an excessive clericalism which keeps them away from decision-making. Even if many are now involved in the lay ministries, this involvement is not reflected in a greater penetration of Christian values in the social, political and economic sectors. It often remains tied to tasks within the Church, without a real commitment to applying the Gospel to the transformation of society. The formation of the laity and the evangelization of professional and intellectual life represent a significant pastoral challenge. [Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 102]

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1. What is a Synod?

A synod is a gathering of the Church to pray, reflect and discern where the Holy Spirit is leading us at this point in the long history of God's people.

We are used to hearing about the work of the Synod of Bishops, as they offer the Holy Father their own experience (and that of their people) in responding to important challenges facing the Church. In a few months the Synod of Bishops will gather around Pope Francis in Rome and conclude their discussions around how best to support the family in the 21st century. Our synod here in the Diocese of Paisley will no doubt take

up some of the themes of this global synod, but our attention is focused on matters closer to home: how do we build up the Church in this corner of the Lord's vineyard? How can we harness the talents of the lay faithful to further the New Evangelization called for by St John Paul II, Pope Benedict and Pope Francis, building up a 'civilization of truth and love'? It is important that our Synod brings the whole Diocese together around our Bishop and that the wisdom of the lay faithful, together with the insights of the clergy and the religious of the Diocese are brought to bear on these important questions.

Pope Francis asked the laity to respond directly to topics which would later be considered by the Bishops in Rome during last year's Synod: their responses help shape the agenda. So too, here in our Diocese, your views will be garnered to set the agenda for our own discussions and these will help the Bishop plot a course for the future of our local Church.

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2. A word about the Church

Before we turn our thoughts to how the Magisterium – the ‘teaching office’ of the Church describes the lay vocation, it is perhaps worthwhile considering the Church itself for a moment.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) describes the Church in these terms:

In Christian usage, the word “church” designates the liturgical assembly, but also the local community or the whole universal community of believers. These three meanings are inseparable. “The Church” is the People that God gathers in the whole world. She exists in local communities and is made real as a liturgical, above all a Eucharistic, assembly. She draws her life from the word and the Body of Christ and so herself becomes Christ’s Body. [CCC 752]

This is a helpful way to think about the Church because it leads us to focus first on the liturgical assembly, because that is usually the setting in which we encounter the Church — by coming together for Mass on Sundays and other occasions. Of course the Church is bigger than the reality we can see around us. We belong to a universal communion which not only reaches the ends of the earth but also embraces past, present — and eternity.

Of the many metaphors and symbols of the Church, we could perhaps focus on two: the Church as herald of the Kingdom and as the Body of Christ.

Jesus came to proclaim (and bring about) the Kingdom — or Reign — of God. Time and again his activity in the Gospel is centred on making God’s sovereignty of love, justice and holiness a reality in our world. In a sense, everything he does and says is directed towards achieving that end. Paragraphs 763–766 of the Catechism set out this teaching very clearly for us.

763 *It was the Son's task to accomplish the Father's plan of salvation in the fullness of time. Its accomplishment was the reason for his being sent. "The Lord Jesus inaugurated his Church by preaching the Good News, that is, the coming of the Reign of God, promised over the ages in the scriptures." To fulfil the Father's will, Christ ushered in the Kingdom of heaven on earth. The Church "is the Reign of Christ already present in mystery."*

764 *"This Kingdom shines out before men in the word, in the works and in the presence of Christ." To welcome Jesus' word is to welcome "the Kingdom itself." The seed and beginning of the Kingdom are the "little flock" of those whom Jesus came to gather around him, the flock whose shepherd he is. They form Jesus' true family. To those whom he thus gathered around him, he taught a new "way of acting" and a prayer of their own.*

765 *The Lord Jesus endowed his community with a structure that will remain until the Kingdom is fully achieved. Before all else there is the choice of the Twelve with Peter as their head. Representing the twelve tribes of Israel, they are the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem. The Twelve and the other disciples share in Christ's mission and his power, but also in his lot. By all his actions, Christ prepares and builds his Church.*

766 *The Church is born primarily of Christ's total self-giving for our salvation, anticipated in the institution of the Eucharist and fulfilled on the cross. "The origin and growth of the Church are symbolized by the blood and water which flowed from the open side of the crucified Jesus." "For it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth the 'wondrous sacrament of the whole Church.'" As Eve was formed from the sleeping Adam's side, so the Church was born from the pierced heart of Christ hanging dead on the cross.*

“ The Church is born primarily of Christ's total self-giving for our salvation

This section speaks of the Church as a ‘seed’ of the Kingdom which grows according to God’s good pleasure and loving providence. But it also offers us the idea that Jesus gave the Church, in the apostles and their followers, a *structure*. So it is that the community of believers has a form, an order as well as a purpose. We believe that this structure continues to this day in the Church under the leadership of the Pope, as successor of Peter and the Bishops as successors of the apostles. This reality, sometimes described with the unflattering title of ‘the institutional Church’ really refers to the ‘little flock’ the Lord gathered to himself. All authority in the Church is essentially *pastoral* in nature (i.e. pertaining to shepherds) rather than the worldly model of power and prestige.

“ Jesus did not leave his disciples orphans. He promised to remain with them until the end of time

The Church is, therefore, a foreshadowing of the full reality of the Kingdom of God: it proclaims the Beatitudes and the Lord’s preferential love for those on the margins of life. It is, as CCC 766 pointed out, a community which flows from Jesus’ saving death on the cross. The sacraments flow from the mystery of the Paschal Sacrifice of Jesus and the community of believers is nourished, kept safe and enriched by the graces we receive through these signs. Above all, the blood and water flowing from the side of Jesus make us think especially of the sacraments of Baptism (by which we become members of the Church) and the Eucharist (by which we *receive* and *become* the **Body of Christ**).

Of all the ways of describing and thinking about the Church, perhaps none is as important as the Body of Christ. It is, in fact, probably the earliest theological expression for the Church since we find it in the writings of St. Paul. This is what the Catechism says:

787 From the beginning, Jesus associated his disciples with his own life, revealed the mystery of the Kingdom to them, and gave them a share in his mission, joy, and sufferings. Jesus spoke of a still more intimate communion between him and those who would follow him: “Abide in me, and I in you.... I am the vine, you are the branches” (John 15:4-5) and he proclaimed a mysterious and real communion between his own body and ours: “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.” (John 6:56)

788 When his visible presence was taken from them, Jesus did not leave his disciples orphans. He promised to remain with them until the end of time; he sent them his Spirit. As a result communion with Jesus has become, in a way, more intense: “By communicating his Spirit, Christ mystically constitutes as his body those brothers of his who are called together from every nation.”

789 *The comparison of the Church with the body casts light on the intimate bond between Christ and his Church. Not only is she gathered around him; she is united in him, in his body. Three aspects of the Church as the Body of Christ are to be more specifically noted: the unity of all her members with each other as a result of their union with Christ; Christ as head of the Body; and the Church as bride of Christ.*

790 *Believers who respond to God's word and become members of Christ's Body, become intimately united with him: "In that body the life of Christ is communicated to those who believe, and who, through the sacraments, are united in a hidden and real way to Christ in his Passion and glorification." This is especially true of Baptism, which unites us to Christ's death and Resurrection, and the Eucharist, by which "really sharing in the body of the Lord... we are taken up into communion with him and with one another."*

791 *The body's unity does not do away with the diversity of its members: "In the building up of Christ's Body there is engaged a diversity of members and functions. There is only one Spirit who, according to his own richness and the needs of the ministries, gives his different gifts for the welfare of the Church." The unity of the Mystical Body produces and stimulates charity among the faithful: "From this it follows that if one member suffers anything, all the members suffer with him, and if one member is honoured, all the members together rejoice." (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:26) Finally, the unity of the Mystical Body triumphs over all human divisions: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:27-28)*

The Catechism gets to the heart of the very intimate connection that exists between Christ, the Head of the Body and his members. St Paul is at pains to point out that the various parts of the body need each other, each with a different but important function. So it is that the different members of the Church have a variety of gifts, given by the Holy Spirit, but intended for the benefit of all. The body grows in strength when these gifts ('charisms') are put to good use: as Paul says, 'there is a variety of service to be done, but always to the same Lord.' (1 Corinthians 12:5)

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Questions

This section presents some of the principal ways of 'imagining the Church' since the Second Vatican Council.

- Do these images strike a chord with you, or is your experience of the Church quite different? In what way(s)?
- Is there a tension between the organic/living images of the Church (the seed, the body) and the more structured ways we think about the Church? How do we overcome this? (Or do we have to overcome it at all?)
- Have you any other comments or questions in response to this section?

3. The Lay Vocation

The quote from Pope Francis on page 2 clearly identified that the lay faithful are the majority of the Church and yet there are many ways in which the talents of the laity are not being deployed to their fullest effect in parish and diocesan communities around the world. Over 50 years ago now, the Second Vatican Council called for the lay faithful to play their full role in revitalising the Church and engaging fully with the world in which they live and work every day, so as to be a leaven of the Gospel. We will briefly consider some of this teaching now.

The Council's great document on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* ('The Light of the Nations') reminded us that this lay vocation is rooted in our Baptism:

Through Baptism they are made one body with Christ and constituted among the People of God; they are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic and royal functions of Christ; and they carry out for their own part the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world. [LG 31]

The same document also affirmed the dignity of the laity and their purpose:

all share a true equality with regard to the dignity and to the activity common to all the faithful for the building up of the Body of Christ. [LG 32]

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The Council went on to issue an entire document dedicated to the Lay Vocation in the Church, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* ('Apostolic Activity'), in which the very purpose of the Church — proclaiming and building up the Kingdom of God — is bound up with the apostolate and, crucially, the term apostolate is expanded to include the lay faithful in a particular way:

they exercise the apostolate in fact by their activity directed to evangelization and sanctification and to the penetrating and perfecting of the temporal order through the spirit of the Gospel. In this way, their temporal activity openly bears witness to Christ and promotes salvation. Since the laity, in accordance with their state of life, live in the midst of the world and its concerns, they are called by God to exercise their apostolate in the world like leaven, with the ardour of the spirit of Christ. [AA 2]

This involvement in the apostolate is further emphasised as a *right* and a *duty* which derives from their union with Christ. *Apostolicam Actuositatem* says the laity engage in this

apostolate through Faith, Hope and Love. The document goes on to sketch out those areas in which lay people are particularly effective by virtue of their own skills and opportunities:

As sharers in the role of Christ as priest, prophet, and king, the laity have their work cut out for them in the life and activity of the Church. Their activity is so necessary within the Church communities that without it the apostolate of the pastors is often unable to achieve its full effectiveness. In the manner of the men and women who helped Paul in spreading the Gospel (cf. Acts 18:18, 26; Rom. 16:3) the laity with the right apostolic attitude supply what is lacking to their brethren and refresh the spirit of pastors and of the rest of the faithful (cf. 1 Cor. 16:17-18). Strengthened by active participation in the liturgical life of their community, they are eager to do their share of the apostolic works of that community. They bring to the Church people who perhaps are far removed from it, earnestly cooperate in presenting the word of God especially by

means of catechetical instruction, and offer their special skills to make the care of souls and the administration of the temporalities of the Church more efficient and effective. [AA 10]

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The Council saw this work as reaching out to those who are ‘far removed’ from the Church — either because they have drifted away from it or because they have never really encountered the Gospel before — and of engaging in pastoral work. This is described as *catechesis* (we think of the work of teachers, RCIA and SPRED teams etc.) or the *care of souls* (think of the variety of ministries, prayer groups and lay apostolates in your own parishes). It is also envisaged by the Council Fathers that the laity should play a part in managing the ‘temporalities’ (i.e. the fabric and finance) of the Church and taking much of this burden from the clergy whose main concern should be the pastoral care of the flock.

One of the most prophetic aspects of this Council document was with regard to young people. Although 50 years old this year, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* recognised that young people are on the receiving end of a series of rapid societal and technological changes. We know this to be even more true in 2015, when our young people are shaped by all sorts of influences, but are also inhabitants of a virtual world of technology and social media which can often leave their elders ‘outsiders looking in’. There is no doubt, however, that these same young people are blessed with

generous hearts and no less idealism than the optimistic generations of the 1960s. It is crucial, therefore, that they interact with the Gospel and become the face of the Church to their contemporaries: the best youth ministers are the young themselves:

Their heightened influence in society demands of them a proportionate apostolic activity, but their natural qualities also fit them for this activity. As they become more conscious of their own personalities, they are impelled by a zest for life and a ready eagerness to assume their own responsibility, and they yearn to play their part in social and cultural life. If this zeal is imbued with the spirit of Christ and is inspired by obedience and love for the Church, it can be expected to be very fruitful. They should become the first to carry on the apostolate directly to other young persons, concentrating their apostolic efforts within their own circle, according to the needs of the social environment in which they live. [AA 12]

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One of the other significant aspects of this document was the way it identified not only the importance of *formation* for the lay apostolate but also the *settings* in which that formation takes place.

The training for the apostolate should start with the children's earliest education. In a special way, however, adolescents and young persons should be initiated into the apostolate and imbued with its spirit. This formation must be perfected throughout their whole life in keeping with the demands of new responsibilities. It is evident, therefore, that those who have the obligation to provide a Christian education also have the duty of providing formation for the apostolate.

In the family parents have the task of training their children from childhood on to recognize God's love for all men. By example especially they should teach them little by little to be solicitous for the material and spiritual needs of their neighbour. The whole family in its common life, then, should be a sort of apprenticeship for the apostolate.

Children must be educated, too, in such fashion that transcending the family circle, they may open their minds to both ecclesiastical and temporal communities. They should be so involved in the local community of the parish that they will acquire a consciousness of being living and active members of the people of God. Priests should focus their attention on the formation of the laity for the apostolate in their Catechetics, their ministry of the word, their direction of souls, and in their other pastoral services.

Schools, colleges, and other Catholic educational institutions also have the duty to develop a Catholic sense and apostolic activity in young persons. If young people lack this formation either because they do not attend these schools or because of any other reason, all the more should parents, pastors of souls, and apostolic organizations attend to it. Teachers and educators on the other hand, who carry on a distinguished form of the apostolate of the laity by their vocation and office, should be equipped with that learning

and pedagogical skill that are needed for imparting such education effectively.

Likewise, lay groups and associations dedicated to the apostolate or other supernatural goals, should carefully and assiduously promote formation for the apostolate in keeping with their purpose and condition. [AA 30]

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So families, schools, parishes and groups all have a role to play in providing the necessary human, theological, liturgical and spiritual formation for the lay apostolate. Human formation is important because the Gospel is essentially a Gospel of love and mercy, Good News indeed for a humanity which has been wounded by sin and selfishness. Theological formation is important because we need a good grasp of the Church's beliefs and teachings in order to explain them to others. So too liturgical formation is a key complement to doctrinal formation because *the Church prays what she believes* and the Church is never more 'herself' than when she is at prayer, worshipping God in the liturgy and celebrating the Sacraments. It is worth noting that our word 'liturgy' derived from the Greek λειτουργία (*leitourgia*) and sometimes translated as 'the work of the people' means service offered *to and by* the people. In a recurrent theme of the teaching of Pope Benedict, the faithful are called to what is termed '*participatio actuosa*' — something more than 'active participation' — which should not be confused with a superficial busy-ness but more like a state of deep openness to the mysteries which are enacted in the sacred liturgy. In other words, making ourselves as *really present* to the Lord as he is to us. Finally, spiritual formation is crucial because, without the nourishment of prayer and deep spiritual roots, much of the

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activity of the Church can deteriorate into a superficial 'busyness' no different from 'NGOs' — Non Governmental Organisations — a particular bugbear of Pope Francis. That said, the social doctrine of the Church (in issues relating to justice and peace), is an area of special expertise of the lay faithful. It is a source of great pride that our national Catholic development agency SCIAF and the work of Mary's Meals has such a profile nationally and internationally and that both are headed up by lay people.

In many ways the laity are called to that *prophetic* dimension of their Baptismal anointing. All God's people are sharers in this ministry of finding the signs of God's presence in our world and interpreting 'the signs of the times' through the eyes of faith. It is crucial, therefore, that all the faithful — ordained and lay — are engaged in this reading of the signs of the times here in Scotland: how God is speaking to the Church amidst the changing circumstances of our nation and its people. How do we respond to the call to holiness in our times?

Questions

- Which factors prevent the gifts of the lay faithful being put to best use in the Church?
- In what ways or situations can lay people operate more effectively than ordained ministers?
- How do the 'priestly, prophetic and royal' aspects of your Baptism show themselves in your everyday life?
- Thinking of people you know (perhaps in your own family) who no longer identify with the Church, what brought this about? Is there a part you can play in reaching out to them?
- What are the particular challenges facing young people in our society?
- What can we do to promote a culture of vocation (to ordained service and committed lay apostolates) in our families and communities?
- In what ways do your experience of Liturgy reflect and deepen the active participation of the faithful?
- Have you any other comments or questions in response to this section?

4. Forms of the Lay Apostolate

The next major intervention of the Magisterium on the role laity did not come until nearly a quarter of a century after Vatican II: this was the document *Christifideles Laici* ('The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful') written by Pope John Paul II in 1988 after the synod on the laity held in Rome the year before. The synod wanted to revisit the teaching of the Council and represent it for a new generation who are also called to go into the Lord's vineyard. This is an immensely rich document which repays careful reading in its entirety.

At the heart of this text is the symbol of the vine and the vineyard, and the Pope has offered a meditation on the relationship between the vine (Christ) and the branches (us). Pope John Paul wanted the Church to rediscover this sense of communion and find new ways to embody this in a mission of *re-evangelizing* the former heartlands of the faith in the face of a rampant secularization. This was the first and clearest hint at the theme of a 'new evangelization' which is so pressing for us today. Although *Christifideles Laici* was a synthesis of the Council's teachings, it also emphasised some aspects of the lay mission which had taken on particular significance in the intervening years. Two of the most significant of these relate to the role of women in the Church and the appearance of so-called 'new movements'. On the role of women, the Pope expressed the views of the synod in this way:

In particular when speaking of active and responsible participation in the life and mission of the Church, emphasis should be placed on what has already been stated and clearly urged by the Second Vatican Council: "Since in our days women are taking an increasingly active share in the whole life of society, it is very important that they participate more widely also in the various fields of the Church's apostolate" (a reference to AA 9). [CL 49]

Above all the acknowledgment in theory of the active and responsible presence of woman in the Church must be realized in practice. With this in mind this Exhortation addressed to the lay faithful with its deliberate and repeated use of the terms “women and men”, must be read. Furthermore the revised Code of Canon Law contains many provisions on the participation of women in the life and mission of the Church: they are provisions that must be more commonly known and, according to the diverse sensibilities of culture and opportuneness in a pastoral situation, be realized with greater timeliness and determination.

The Pope was clearly aware that statements of policy do not always end up being translated into changed practices ‘on the ground’. To this end, the synod recalled some concrete ways in which women should be involved in decision making processes in the Church.

An example comes to mind in the participation of women on diocesan and parochial Pastoral Councils as well as Diocesan Synods and particular Councils. In this regard the Synod Fathers have written: “Without discrimination women should be participants in the life of the Church, and also in consultation and the process of coming to decisions”. And again: “Women, who already hold places of great importance in transmitting the faith and offering every kind of service in the life of the Church, ought to be associated in the preparation of pastoral and missionary documents and ought to be recognized as cooperators in the mission of the church in the family, in professional life and in the civil community”. [CL 51]

“ Without discrimination women should be participants in the life of the Church, and also in consultation and the process of coming to decisions

Although the gifts of women are to be employed in the service of the Church, the Synod was also at pains to point out that lay men should not be overlooked.

Many voices were raised in the Synod Hall expressing the fear that excessive insistence given to the status and role of women would lead to an unacceptable omission, that, in point, regarding men. In reality, various sectors in the Church must lament the absence or the scarcity of the presence of men, some of whom abdicate their proper Church responsibilities, allowing them to be fulfilled only by women. Such instances are participation in the liturgical prayer of the Church, education and, in particular, catechesis of their own sons and daughters and other children, presence at religious and cultural meetings, and collaboration in charitable and missionary initiatives. [CL 52]

This is perhaps something we too have come to recognise in many of our parish communities where women far outnumber men in attending Mass and undertaking various duties in and around the parish. A more encouraging sign in recent times is the growth of a number of new lay movements in the Church. These should be welcomed as signs of the Holy Spirit finding new forms of expression in our society, alongside those long-established associations which have served – and continue to serve – our communities so well (the Legion of Mary, SSVP, UCM, Knights of St Columba, the Catenians, Cenacolo etc.).

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However, in modern times such lay groups have received a special stimulus, resulting in the birth and spread of a multiplicity of group forms: associations, groups, communities, movements. We can speak of a new era of group endeavours of the lay faithful. In fact, “alongside the traditional forming of associations, and at times coming from their very roots, movements and new sodalities have sprouted, with a specific feature and purpose, so great is the richness and the versatility of resources that the Holy Spirit nourishes in the ecclesial community, and so great is the capacity of initiative and the generosity of our lay people” (Pope John Paul II, Angelus 23/08/87).

Oftentimes these lay groups show themselves to be very diverse from one another in various aspects, in their external structures, in their procedures and training methods, and in the fields in which they work. However, they all come together in an all-inclusive and profound convergence when viewed from the perspective of their common purpose,

that is, the responsible participation of all of them in the Church’s mission of carrying forth the Gospel of Christ, the source of hope for humanity and the renewal of society. [CL 29]

Over the past couple of years some of these groups have come to make their home in Scotland and some exciting lay-led initiatives are beginning to bear fruit here in our own Diocese.

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Questions

- How are the gifts of women brought to bear on the life of your parish?
- Do we take sufficient account of 'male spirituality'?
- Which lay associations and apostolates are present in your parish? How do they operate and recruit new members? How easy is it to find out about them and join them?

The lay faithful have a unique opportunity to evangelise in the secular world.

- How do you evangelise in your everyday life, outside of the parish (i.e your workplaces, homes and families, and indeed all your secular activities)? What stops you from doing this more? What would help you to do this better?
- Have you any other comments or questions in response to this section?

5. And Scotland?

In Scotland we have been blessed to be visited by two successive Popes, St John Paul II and Benedict XVI: both have celebrated large open-air Masses in Bellahouston Park and brought words of real encouragement to us. It is worth revisiting some of the words addressed to the Church in Scotland during the more recent Papal visit. Pope Benedict particularly emphasised the apostolate of education as the gateway to enriching Scottish civic life and culture: a path taken by many people from our own families and parishes.

Among the differing gifts which Saint Paul lists for the building up of the Church is that of teaching (cf. Romans 12:7). The preaching of the Gospel has always been accompanied by concern for the word: the inspired word of God and the culture in which that word takes root and flourishes. Here in Scotland, I think of the three medieval universities founded here by the popes, including that of Saint Andrews which is beginning to mark the 600th anniversary of its foundation. In the last 30 years and with the assistance of civil authorities, Scottish Catholic schools have taken up the challenge of providing an integral education to greater numbers of students, and this has helped young people not only along the path of spiritual and human growth, but also in entering the professions and public life. This is a sign of great hope for the Church, and I encourage

the Catholic professionals, politicians and teachers of Scotland never to lose sight of their calling to use their talents and experience in the service of the faith, engaging contemporary Scottish culture at every level.

“Pope Benedict particularly emphasised the apostolate of education as the gateway to enriching Scottish civic life and culture”

Pope Benedict then addressed a rallying cry to the lay faithful of Scotland to resist those forces which would silence the voice of the Gospel and seek to limit its influence in the public square:

The evangelization of culture is all the more important in our times, when a “dictatorship of relativism” threatens to obscure the unchanging truth about man’s nature, his destiny and his ultimate good. There are some who now seek to exclude religious belief from public discourse, to privatize it or even to paint it as a threat to equality and liberty. Yet religion is in fact a guarantee of authentic liberty and respect, leading us to look upon every person as a brother or sister. For this reason I appeal in particular to you, the lay faithful, in accordance with your baptismal calling and mission, not only to be examples of faith in public, but also to put the case for the promotion of faith’s wisdom and vision in the public forum. Society today needs clear voices which propose our right to live, not in a jungle of self-destructive and arbitrary freedoms, but in a society which works for the true welfare of its citizens and offers them

guidance and protection in the face of their weakness and fragility. Do not be afraid to take up this service to your brothers and sisters, and to the future of your beloved nation...

In line with the idea of ‘youth evangelizing youth’, Pope Benedict concluded his remarks with some words aimed especially at the young people who were gathered there in such great numbers:

Finally, I would like to say a word to you, my dear young Catholics of Scotland. I urge you to lead lives worthy of our Lord (cf. Ephesians 4:1) and of yourselves. There are many temptations placed before you every day - drugs, money, sex, pornography, alcohol - which the world tells you will bring you happiness, yet these things are destructive and divisive. There is only one thing which lasts: the love of Jesus Christ personally for each one of you. Search for him, know him and love him, and he will set you free from slavery to the glittering but superficial existence frequently proposed by today’s society. Put aside what is worthless and learn of your own dignity as children of God. In

today’s Gospel, Jesus asks us to pray for vocations: I pray that many of you will know and love Jesus Christ and, through that encounter, will dedicate yourselves completely to God, especially those of you who are called to the priesthood and religious life. This is the challenge the Lord gives to you today: the Church now belongs to you! [Pope Benedict XVI, Homily in Bellahouston Park, 16 September 2010]

“ There are many temptations placed before you every day - drugs, money, sex, pornography, alcohol - which the world tells you will bring you happiness, yet these things are destructive and divisive.

Many of these themes were echoed by Bishop John in his homily for the 2015 Chrism Mass in the Cathedral. Recalling the 400th anniversary of the martyrdom of St John Ogilvie, Bishop Keenan spoke of St John's personal search for the Lord which led him, gradually but irrevocably to the Catholic Church.

The search caused him a lot of anxiety as it began to dawn on him that the only truth by which he and the world could be saved was the Catholic faith. Here was the true Church of Christ, where the Saving Lord still lived on earth. Only here in the Catholic Church was there to be found that living, unbroken link with the Lord; only this Church included everyone of every rank and race across the world; in the Catholic Church there was testimony of ample and wonderful miracles; only this Church had truly satisfied the minds of the wisest; and it was for the Holy Catholic Church that he had heard so many martyrs had laid down their lives. He converted to it with a personal passion but soon it blossomed into a pastoral compassion for his homeland and a certainty that, if the soul of the Scottish

nation were to be saved and live, it could never be just by some mere political arrangement but would be so only through the ministry of Catholic priests who would restore the redeeming light and grace of the true faith to our shores. Then, and only then, would Scotland really and truly be a nation at peace with itself.

“ This Synod is an important step in refreshing our Church and strengthening our shared witness to the Lord.

It is a cause of pride and celebration that the witness of St John Ogilvie galvanised many generations of priests who dedicated themselves to carrying on that mission. Through their collective effort, the Church in Scotland was able to establish itself anew and helped ensure that the soul of our nation was indeed saved. Not least among the fruits of this mission was the emergence of a Laity which was well-formed and schooled in the same spirit of sacrifice which characterised their shepherds. As Blessed John Henry Newman wrote, ‘in all times the laity have been the measure of the Catholic spirit’ (*Duties of Catholics*, 4). There is a sense in which our nation needs the renewing power of the Gospel to be at work once again: an aggressive secularism, abetted by the tranquilising effects of materialism, have sapped some of the strength and confidence of the Christian voice in the public square. So too, some of the self-inflicted wounds suffered by the Church in recent years have been most keenly felt by the lay faithful. Although Bishop John's words were addressed in the first instance to priests, they are equally applicable to the lay members of our Parish communities. This Synod is an important step in refreshing our Church and strengthening our shared witness to the Lord.

Questions

In announcing Vatican II, St John XXIII set the Council the task of reading the signs of the times and responding to them in ways which were both faithful to the Gospel and yet adapted to the rapid (and sometimes terrifying) changes which had come about in the first half of the 20th Century. The teaching of the Council is still embedding itself, even as the world continues to come to terms with these changes in the first years of the next century. Scotland (and the Church in Scotland) is no exception to this.

- What are the 'signs of the times' which we must be able to read in 21st century Scotland, both as a nation and as a Church?
- Have you any other comments or questions in response to this section?

6. Faithful Witnesses

Of the countless saints in Heaven, the Church formally canonises a certain number of men and women of outstanding holiness and courage for the faithful to invoke in prayer and to imitate in their own daily lives. One of the most significant developments during the reign of St John Paul II (and ever since) has been an increasing number of lay men and women who have been set on the path to sainthood.

This document concludes with an overview of some of these 'faithful witnesses'.

[In response to these 'pen-sketches', you may wish to note anything which struck you about the person and the ways in which their lives 'put flesh' on the theology of the laity we have been considering up until now.]

“ there has been an increasing number of lay men and women who have been set on the path to sainthood

Blessed Charia 'Luce' Badano



In 1971, after praying and hoping for a baby for more than 10 years, Ruggero and Teresa Badano family of Sassello, Italy, welcomed a little girl whom they named Chiara.

Even at the age of four, Chiara seemed aware of the needs of others. She would sort through her toys to give some to poor children, and would never give away just the old or broken ones, because that would be horrible for children who had no toys! She invited less fortunate people into the family's home for holidays and visited the elderly at a nursing home. When other children were sick and confined to bed, Chiara visited them. She loved the stories of the gospel and loved to attend Mass.

When she was 9, Chiara became involved with the Focolare movement and its branch for young people. Focolare emphasizes brotherhood and unity among all people.

Chiara was very popular. She had a lot of friends, she played sports, and she loved to sing and dance. But when asked, she said she did not try to bring Jesus to her friends with words. She tried to bring Jesus to them with her example and how she lived her life.

When she was 17, Chiara learned she had a very serious form of bone cancer. Treatments were painful and unsuccessful. She became paralyzed. One day someone asked her if she hoped to walk again and her answer was no. When she suffered, she felt closer to Jesus. She even refused to take pain medication that would make her too sleepy to continue to live her life.

“ she did not try to bring Jesus to her friends with words. She tried to bring Jesus to them with her example and how she lived her life.

Despite her illness and being confined to bed, Chiara wrote letters and sent messages to other. She attended Focolare youth meetings. She inspired everyone who she encountered with her faith and love for others. She gave all her savings to a friend who was becoming a missionary in Africa. When her life was nearly at an end, she said, "I have nothing left, but I still have my heart, and with that I can always love."

Chiara died in 1990. Within nine years, the bishop of her diocese began the work on her cause for canonization. Pope Benedict XVI declared her "Blessed" in 2010. Speaking of Chiara's way of living as a demonstration of how Love, "with a capital 'L'," gives true happiness, Pope Benedict said that for everyone, she was "a ray of light, as her nickname says: 'Chiara Luce' (Clear Light)."

The Pope noted that the celebration is not only for those from her parish, local diocese and the Focolare Movement. Rather, her beatification was a festival for all young people, who can "find in her an example of Christian coherence."

He recalled the "full adherence to the will of God" in her life down to her last words, addressed to her mother: "Bye, Mum. Be happy because I am."

She was a normal, everyday girl, and possibly a normal, everyday saint. Chiara's brief life showed us how much one person can accomplish in God's name.

“She was a normal, everyday girl, and possibly a normal, everyday saint. Chiara's brief life showed us how much one person can accomplish in God's name.”

Servant of God, Dorothy Day



There are people all around us every day who live saintly lives. Some of them may even be called “saint” in the future by the Church. Dorothy Day was a woman who, much like Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, was sometimes called a saint in her work.

Dorothy was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., in 1897. The family moved to San Francisco and then Chicago, where they lived in poorer housing when Dorothy’s father lost his job. Even though Dorothy was young, she knew what it was like to feel shame over one’s living conditions. And as a youngster she loved to read inspiring stories of people who did good things in the world.

She attended college in Illinois but dropped out to take a job as a newspaper reporter in New York. The paper she worked for operated under the belief that all property and possessions should be owned by communities, not by individual

persons, so that through sharing, there was always enough for everyone to live on. During this time she led what might be described as a ‘bohemian’ existence, having a number of affairs, ending a pregnancy through abortion, entering into a civil marriage with one partner and later cohabiting with another. She joined groups of people protesting the United States’ involvement in World War I and joined groups that rallied for women in the U.S. to be able to vote in elections.

Her family had attended services at an Episcopal church, but Dorothy was drawn to the Catholic faith and attended Mass in New York, Chicago and New Orleans, when she worked in those cities as a reporter. When her daughter was born in 1927, Dorothy felt sure it was important to have her baptized and give her a Catholic upbringing, and she formally joined the Catholic Church.

Working as a reporter for Catholic magazines in New York, she prayed to the Blessed Mother to help her to use her talents to help the working poor. She soon met a man named Peter Maurin who told her to use her journalism skills to start a newspaper that could educate people about the teaching of the Catholic Church and how they related to social justice for people. Her kitchen table in her Greenwich Village apartment became her office, and she sold the paper, *The Catholic Worker*, for a penny a copy so that almost anyone could buy and read it.

When word began to travel about the things Dorothy wrote, people who didn't have enough food or a place to live began to come to her for help. Her apartment became a place where people could stay when they had nowhere else to go.

Eventually, Dorothy and others at her newspaper began to lease apartments and houses and even farms where people could go to stay. These were known then, and are still today, as *Catholic Worker* houses. When the Depression hit, a lot of people needed this help.

Not everyone liked Dorothy or agreed with her, especially when she wrote again and again in the paper that war was wrong, and the U.S. should not be involved. During World War II,

some of the young men who worked for the paper or in houses refused to fight in the military and were either sent to prison or served as medics — without weapons — in the war.

Dorothy and other members of the Catholic Worker movement also protested against nuclear weapons and were arrested many times for this. She also believed in equal rights for persons of all colors and backgrounds and took part in civil rights demonstrations in the late 1950s. She was in danger at times and even shot at in Georgia.

Pope Paul VI invited her to receive communion from him in Rome in 1967, a sign of honor for her work. When she became too ill to travel, Dorothy was visited by people like Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who gave her a cross usually worn only by her order's Sisters.

She died in 1980, but during her life when people called her a saint, Dorothy did not like the term. However, the effort began in 1983 to have her canonized, and Pope John Paul II gave the Archdiocese of New York permission in 2000 to open the cause for sainthood.

“ she prayed to the Blessed Mother to help her to use her talents to help the working poor

Blessed Louis and Zelig Martin



“When we live with love,
we grow in holiness”

When Louis Martin and his bride, Zelig, were married in 1858, they promised that they would “serve God first” together. They knew that putting God first in their lives would help them to always live with love.

Louis was a watchmaker. Zelig made beautiful lace to help support their growing family. They taught their children to know, love and serve God. The Catholic Church was an important part of their family life.

Like all married couples, they sometimes faced disappointments and sadness; four of their nine children died at a young age. They turned to God in difficult times and grew more deeply in love as they shared their sorrows and joys with one another.

In 1877, when Thérèse, the Martin’s youngest daughter, was only four years old, Zelig became very ill and died. The family was brokenhearted,

but they remembered that Zelig prayed with them to help them understand that her illness and death was part of God’s plan.

Louis lovingly raised his daughters. He generously gave his permission as each one asked to join the convent. He saw this as a sign that God was pleased that he and Zelig had shared their faith and love with their children. Louis died in 1894.

Zelig and Louis Martin’s lives show us that when we live with love, we grow in holiness. The Martins are such a wonderful example of holiness that Pope Benedict named them “Blessed” in 2008. They will be declared Saints by Pope Francis in October 2015 at the conclusion of the Synod on the Family.

We celebrate their feast day on July 12 and pray that they will soon be declared saints, like their youngest daughter, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, whom we call the “Little Flower.”

St Gianna Beretta Molla



Sometimes saints lead very normal lives. They love sports and have hobbies. They get married and have children. Some, like Gianna Molla, are even modern-day working mothers.

Born in Milan, Italy, in 1922, Gianna was always very religious. She attended college and medical school, married in 1955 and gave birth to three children while working as a pediatrician. Their family was very happy, and Gianna and her husband, Pietro, taught their children that their Catholic faith was the most important thing in their lives.

“Gianna and her husband, Pietro, taught their children that their Catholic faith was the most important thing in their lives.”

But when Gianna was expecting her fourth child, doctors discovered a cancerous tumor that needed to be removed from her body. By doing the surgery, though, her unborn baby would die. She insisted the baby be allowed to live. Gianna died at age 39, just seven days after her baby girl, Giannina, was born in 1962. More than physical pain, she suffered the most at the thought of leaving her children.

Giannina followed in her amazing mother's footsteps and became a doctor.

Gianna Molla is the first woman physician to have been declared a saint, the last saint canonized by the pope in 2004 before his death a year later. In his homily at the Mass, the Pope described her as 'a simple, but more than ever, significant messenger of divine love. In a letter to her future husband a few days before their marriage, she wrote: "Love is the most beautiful sentiment the Lord has put into the soul of men and women".

Following the example of Christ, who *“having loved his own... he loved them to the end”* (John 13: 1), this holy mother of a family remained heroically faithful to the commitment she made on the day of her marriage. The extreme sacrifice she sealed with her life testifies that only those who have the courage to give of themselves totally to God and to others are able to fulfil themselves.

Through the example of Gianna Beretta Molla, may our age rediscover the pure, chaste and fruitful beauty of conjugal love, lived as a response to the divine call!

“ The extreme sacrifice she sealed with her life testifies that only those who have the courage to give of themselves totally to God and to others are able to fulfil themselves.

Venerable Matt Talbot



Matt was born in 1856 and to a poor family with 12 children in Dublin, Ireland. His father and several of his brothers were alcoholics. Matt began working as a messenger boy when he was 12 years old. He also began drinking alcohol around the same time.

Once he began drinking, Matt could not stop. Alcohol became the most important thing in his life. He spent all his money on liquor, and when he did not have money from his regular job, he often stood outside a pub waiting for a friend to invite him in and buy him a drink. Soon he had no friends left. He once stole a fiddle from a blind man, pawned the fiddle and used the money to buy alcohol. Whenever he drank, he got into fights.

When he was 28 years old, Matt decided to stop drinking. He went to a priest for confession and then “took the pledge,” a common custom in Matt’s time. Alcoholics often made a promise to God in the presence of a priest as a sign that they were going to give up drinking. Matt’s first pledge was for three months.

“ Once he began drinking, Matt could not stop. Alcohol became the most important thing in his life.

Matt turned to God for help. He began to go to daily Mass. He often spent his free time — the time he used to spend in the pub — praying. He became especially close to Mary. He knew that our Blessed Mother wanted to help him live a happy life. He read stories of the saints and joined the Third Order of St. Francis.

Matt stopped carrying the money he earned from his job in a lumberyard. He wanted to avoid the temptation to spend it on drink. Instead, he gave his wages away to friends who needed money for rent or to buy food or shoes for their children. He was also generous in donating money to his church.

Matt stayed sober for the rest of his life — almost 40 years. He was a man of simplicity, on his way to Mass when he died on a neighborhood street of a heart attack.

Matt Talbot has been declared “Venerable” by the Catholic Church. This is the first step on the journey to sainthood. Matt was healed from his addiction by God’s love and his faith. Like Matt, we can bring our troubles to God and Mary in prayer. We can remember that God hears and answers all of our prayers. Today, many men and women who struggle with alcohol addiction carry with them a “Matt Talbot,” a medal with Talbot’s likeness on it, to help them in their struggle.

“ Matt turned to God for help. He began to go to daily Mass. He often spent his free time - the time he used to spend in the pub - praying

Concluding Prayer

**All Catechesis issues forth into prayer:
we conclude with the beautiful prayer to our
Lady composed by Pope John Paul II at the
end of the document *Christifideles Laici*.**

O Most Blessed Virgin Mary,
Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church, with joy and wonder we
seek to make our own your *Magnificat*, joining you in your hymn of
thankfulness and love.

With you we give thanks to God,
'whose mercy is from generation to generation',
for the exalted vocation
and the many forms of mission entrusted to the lay faithful.
God has called each of them by name
to live his own communion of love and holiness
and to be one in the great family of God's children.
He has sent them forth to shine with the light of Christ
and to communicate the fire of the Spirit in every part of society
through their life inspired by the Gospel.

O Virgin of the *Magnificat*,
fill their hearts with a gratitude and enthusiasm
for this vocation and mission.

With humility and magnanimity
you were the 'handmaid of the Lord';
give us your unreserved willingness
for service to God and the salvation of the world.

Open our hearts to the great anticipation of the Kingdom of God and of the proclamation of the Gospel to the whole of creation. Your mother's heart is ever mindful of the many dangers and evils which threaten to overpower men and women in our time.

At the same time your heart also takes notice of the many initiatives undertaken for good, the great yearning for values, and the progress achieved in bringing forth the abundant fruits of salvation.

O Virgin full of courage,
may your spiritual strength and trust in God inspire us,
so that we might know how to overcome all the obstacles that we encounter in accomplishing our mission.
Teach us to treat the affairs of the world
with a real sense of Christian responsibility
and a joyful hope of the coming of God's Kingdom,
and of a 'new heaven and a new earth'.

You who were gathered in prayer
with the Apostles in the Cenacle,
awaiting the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost,
implore his renewed outpouring on all the faithful,
men and women alike,
so that they might more fully respond to their vocation and mission,
as branches engrafted to the true vine,
called to bear much fruit for the life of the world.

O Virgin Mother,
guide and sustain us so that we might always live
as true sons and daughters of the Church of your Son.
Enable us to do our part in helping to establish on earth
the civilization of truth and love, as God wills it,
for his glory.
Amen.

“ All Catechesis issues forth into prayer



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