

FREE!  
PLEASE TAKE ONE

# PRIESTS FOR SCOTLAND

PROMOTING THE PATH  
TO PRIESTHOOD

Issue 1 2016/17

## YOUR CONTACTS

**ST ANDREWS & EDINBURGH**  
Fr Michael John Galbraith  
01334 472856  
stjames.standrews@gmail.com

**ABERDEEN**  
Fr Keith Herrera  
01224 640 160  
administrator@cathedral-abdn.org

**ARGYLL & THE ISLES**  
Fr Michael Hutson  
01700 502 047  
timeheldmegreenanddying@gmail.com

**DUNKELD**  
Fr Michael Carrie  
tel 01382 539476  
frmichaelcarrie@outlook.com  
f Dunkeld Vocations  
@DunkeldVocation

**GALLOWAY**  
Fr William Boyd  
01294 279 130  
wh.boyd@btinternet.com

**GLASGOW**  
Fr Ross Campbell  
0141 339 4315  
rrcchaplaincy@gla.ac.uk  
f Archdiocese of Glasgow Vocations  
RCAGVocations

**MOTHERWELL**  
Fr Brian Lamb  
01698 823896  
info@sjblantyre.org

**PAISLEY**  
Fr John Morrison  
Tel: 01475 720223  
email: johnmorrison1976@gmail.com  
f Paisley Vocations  
@vocationpaisley

For the first time in a decade, Paisley Diocese has a new priest. Father **Matthew Carlin**, 28, *below*, was ordained in June. Here he explains his personal journey to the priesthood.

### When did you decide that you wanted to join the priesthood?

It was a gradual process. When I was younger I would help out in my own parish, such as saying the odd reading. Eventually I started to think that God was calling me to be a priest but it wasn't until I was seventeen that I realised it was definitely what I wanted to do.

### You studied law and Italian at Glasgow University before applying to the Scots College in Rome. Why did you do that first?

Law was something I wanted to do from a very young age because, initially, I wanted a good career that would provide me with a comfortable life in the future. It gave me

time to think about the priesthood and a little bit of life experience.

### Was there anything that could have potentially put you off the idea?

When you are a teenager you have visions of having a good job with a nice house, a car and money. You have to put that out of your mind. You deal with the decision head on because if you don't you may well think about what might have been.

### So what is life like at the Scots College in Rome?

I would say it's halfway between living in halls of residence and a monastery, in a good way! I had an absolutely amazing time while in Rome.

### What is it like having people call you 'Father' instead of Matthew?

I find it really strange when older people call me Father. It reminds me that I'm here because the Church called me to be a priest, I am here to do what Jesus wants priests to do. To my family I'll always be Matthew, although my brothers say "Yes, Father", "No Father" to wind me up!



# Malcolm Hutchison, Dunkeld

**I wasn't raised as a Catholic – it was only when I went to university that I really discovered my Faith.** I was baptised by the Dominican Friars in Edinburgh and have enjoyed gaining a greater experience of the Church and all her people since then, especially getting to know the Church in Dundee, which I had missed out on when I was younger. It was around 2013 that I started to think seriously about my sense of vocation. I think one of the most important things is simply being asked by a friend, family member or priest – “Have you thought about the priesthood?”. For me there was a niggling notion at the back of my mind, and being asked that question brought it forward: the answer was yes. But “thinking” - personal reflection - could only take me so far: the next step was to



apply. The application process was an introduction to the discernment and formation which form an important part of what we are doing in seminary. Importantly, it was a chance to meet other guys who were all searching for an answer to that question, “Am I called to be a priest?”, and gave us an easy setting in which to discuss our Faith and vocation. I and two other students started at the Royal Scots College, Salamanca, in January. Our days here centre around the communal celebration of the Church's prayers and classes focus on spirituality, human development, Scripture, and the Prayer of the Church. We have met a number of other seminarians from Spain, Mozambique, Mexico, and Ireland, who are in various dioceses and religious orders which really gives a flavour of the Universality of the Church.

**It is God's initiative, but I am blessed to belong to a loving Catholic family on the Isle of Benbecula.**

After school, I started an electrical apprenticeship at my Dad's business. I enjoyed living and working in Benbecula, but I wanted to serve



people in a different way. So I left home to attend Glasgow University. I then spent six hap-

**I saw priests interact with people in a way I had never appreciated. I thought: 'That could be me!'**

py years teaching in Dundee. I thought I had found my vocation! Doing RE with the kids helped me develop my spirituality. Suddenly, I was thinking

about priesthood. The idea just wouldn't go away. I chatted about it to a priest whom I had known well for many years. Talking to him made things clearer. He and I joined my dad and my wee sister in walking a chunk of Camino of Santiago de Compostela. It was a time when I could see how priests interacted with people in a way I had never appreciated. I thought 'that could be me!' I am now in my second year at seminary. If God has a plan for me, he's going to see it through. I look forward to the next part of that plan unfolding.

# Ronald Campbell, Argyll & The Isles

## Christopher Doig, Aberdeen



**The first seed was planted by my parish priest. A positive image of priesthood has always remained with me as a result of knowing him.**

I will never forget the time I went to him for my first ever confession – it was a real experience of the Divine Mercy! Priesthood was something in which I began to take interest at the end of my time at university. I didn't think God was actually serious about it! I worked in St Mary's parish in Inverness, which involved administration, youth work, fundraising, finance and organizing pilgrimages; and in all this, God was revealing to me

what He wanted me to do. My burning desire to go to Holy Mass, for scripture and prayer, and love for parish life were clear signs that He was calling me to dedicate myself totally to His service. The very first time I heard with clarity what the Lord was

**I'm sorry Jesus, but I think you've got the wrong guy. "No" he said, "I know who I want and I want you."**

asking of me was when I was alone in silent prayer; it was like an interior dialogue with him.

Caravaggio's painting, 'The Calling of Saint Matthew' sums up quite beautifully the way the Lord came in prayer. In the painting Jesus is pointing to Matthew and he looks at him

in surprise, pointing to himself and asks "me?"

The dialogue was something like this: "I want you to be one of my priests." I responded: "I'm sorry, Jesus, but I think you've got the wrong man. Maybe you meant that other guy who has greater faith and holiness of life." "No, no", he said. "I know who I want, and I want you." "But have you seen my life?" I shouted back. "I know you. All I want is your heart; now come follow me." It took a further two years of listening to his voice for me to say yes.

The more I listen to him the more I come to know him as the Good Shepherd who is always faithful, despite my own sinfulness and weakness. He really is merciful!

Jesus has a plan for your life. Love Him with all your heart and mind and body, and abandon yourself to His will and He will show you how He wants you to serve him.

## Kevin Rennie, Galloway

**It wasn't until I started university, studying Electrical and Mechanical Engineering, that I really began exploring my faith.**

Edinburgh University is blessed to be served by the Dominican Order. Two of the Friars were instrumental in my growth in faith and love of Christ.

Towards the end of my third year I began to

feel that I couldn't see myself doing engineering as a profession. I started discussing vocations with my parish priest in Dumfries at the time.

I had, like many other young people, been asked on more than one occasion in the past: "Do you feel that you may be called to the Priesthood?" and my

answer was always the same: "I'm open to it, but I don't feel that it's for me".

Through prayer and conversation, both with priests and friends, I made the decision to start the Seminary Applicants' Year at the same time as my final year of university. Since starting, I have found great joy, as well

as having the opportunity to learn and grow more in my Spiritual Life and relationships with others.



# Edward Toner, Glasgow

**Ideas of priesthood have always been in my mind for as long as I can remember.**

When asked as a child what I wanted to be the answer was usually priest (when it wasn't chef or wizard!).

As I moved through secondary school I almost abandoned ideas of priesthood. Yet I still had a desire to stay close to Christ. I started attending daily Mass while at Strathclyde University and sought new ways of exploring my faith. I took the opportunity to get involved with different apostolates in Glasgow. All this enabled me to fulfil a deep desire within me to come closer to God and help others know Him. I final-

ly plucked up the courage to get in touch with my diocesan Vocations Director. Going to the Seminary Applicants' Year weekends was great as I got to meet other

---

**At secondary school I almost abandoned ideas of priesthood. Yet I still had the desire to stay close to Christ.**

---

Scottish guys discerning their vocations. I was accepted in Holy Week 2015 and set off for

Rome last September.

I had a wonderfully affirming first year filled with wonderful experiences, including meeting Pope Francis, which brought me closer to Christ and to a better understanding of His calling for me. Please continue to pray for me, for all seminarians and for an increase in priestly vocations for our dioceses in Scotland.



**I suspect I'm not alone in thinking that God has a wonderful sense of humour when it comes to calling men to His priesthood.** I had no apparitions, visions or spectacular signs from heaven to flavour

my journey. If my own experience is anything to go on, the first reaction is "Me? No way.

That can't be right."

I had only recently rediscovered my faith (after a not so brief sojourn away from the Church in my teenage years) when I first thought about priesthood as more than a pastime for the pious. I was incredibly lucky to have a series of fantastic parish priests who loved the Church and lived out their priestly vocation with a real sense of joy. I think it's true that when a vocation is lived out fully (be it priesthood, marriage or religious life) it's incredibly at-

tractive. The seed was firmly planted in me by that priestly witness. I remember one of the novelties of moving to Dundee to start my degree was the availability of daily Mass. I can't pretend that I woke up every day desperate to get the Cathedral – indeed much of the time friends from the Catholic Chaplaincy would drag me half-asleep to the Chapel – but it was in the quiet time spent with Jesus in the Mass that those considerations I had so eagerly brushed aside crept back to mind. After two years of trying to figure out just what the Lord wanted from me I issued the ultimatum. I knelt in the pews of

Dundee Cathedral and demanded a yes or no answer. "Do you want me to be a priest?"

I'd love to say that a sweet voice echoed from the tabernacle, but I remember thinking that I wanted the answer to be yes. It took me three years and lots of prayer to figure out what I wanted, never mind what God wanted. Eventually I made the decision to apply. I'm in my third year in the Scots College and couldn't be happier. So for anyone reading this who has felt God's call and is struggling to figure out what to do next, I'd offer one piece of advice: pray, persist and apply.

# Martin Eckersley, St Andrews & Edinburgh