

Summer-Autumn 2015

DIOCESE
OF
PAISLEY

VOCATIONS

THE JOURNEY
TOWARDS
PRIESTHOOD

ITALIAN JOB

Our seminarians get inspired by
life in Rome



tune in



Hearing His call? Paisley Diocese wants priests.

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WELCOME

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Jonathan Whitworth grabs his camera to reveal his Rome through a lens.

p4 Quick Q&A

We quiz **Joe McGill** with some quickfire questions as he reveals his top tippie, favourite saint, screensaver and more...

THERE'S a distinct **Italian** feel to this first edition of the Vocations mini-magazine. That's because we introduce four young men from the Paisley Diocese who are **studying for the priesthood** at the Pontifical Scots College in Rome.

The aim of this magazine is simple: to encourage more young people to consider the priesthood as their vocation.

And what a vocation! If you feel God is calling you to become a priest – **be not afraid!** Pray daily, receive the sacraments and get in touch with me for a chat.

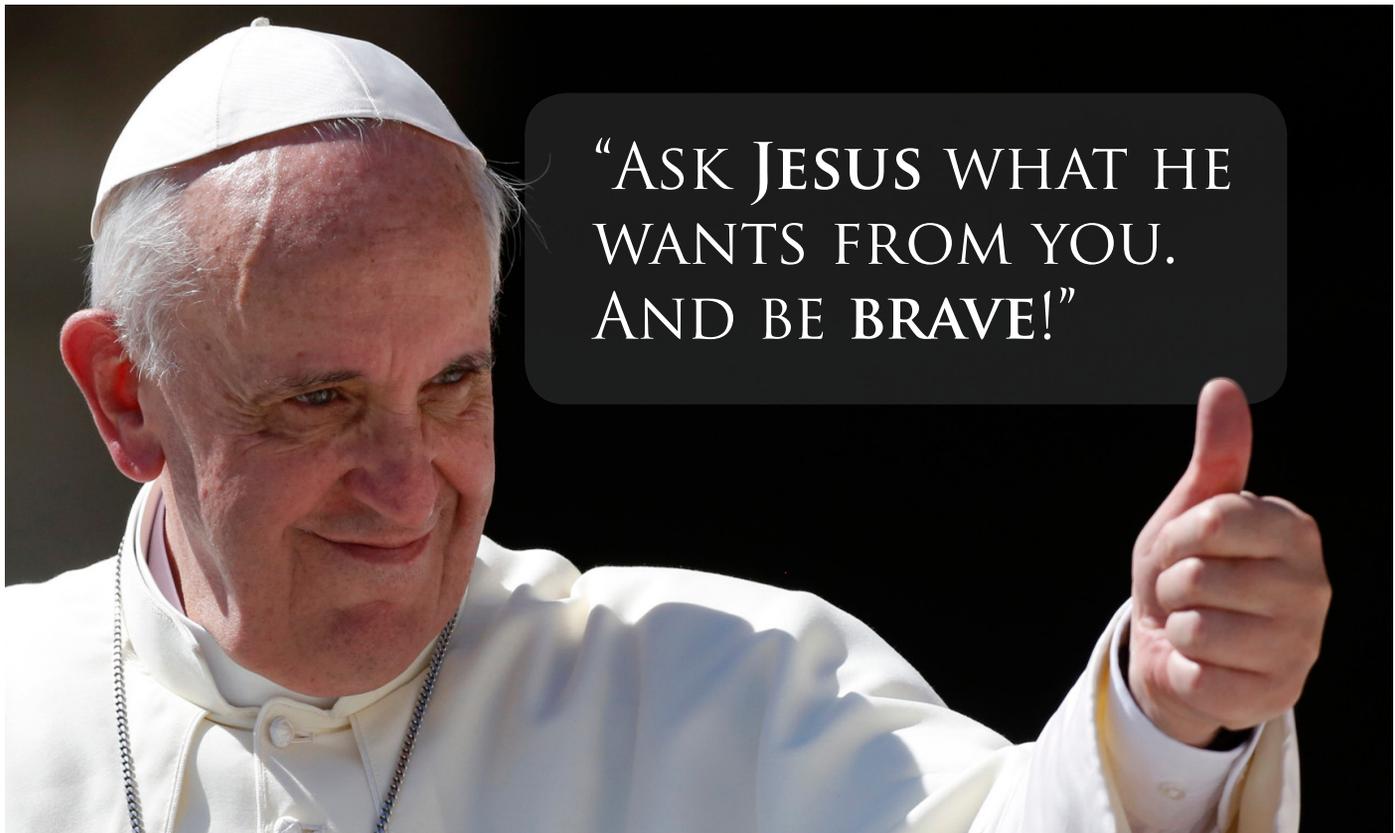
Father John Morrison,
Vocations Director

p5 What a night

Not everyone gets a chance to meet a pope. **Matthew Carlin** served for Pope Benedict on what was a memorable evening.

p6 God's call

From being 'dragged' to mass to hearing God's call, **Ryan Black** discusses the spiritual journey that led to him deciding to become a priest.



“ASK JESUS WHAT HE WANTS FROM YOU. AND BE BRAVE!”

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ROME REVIEW



UNI LIFE "Studying alongside seminarians, priests and religious from over 130 different countries gives university life a certain 'United Nations' feel to it, and rather typically the Scots, English and Irish always stick together."

The difficulties begin when trying to explain the intricate details which make us distinct from one another. A rule of thumb is that you can identify the Scots because they always offer to buy the coffee!"

ON THE BIKES "All that pasta must be answered for at some point. However, with views such as this, and skies genuinely as blue, who wouldn't be tempted by

a 'giro' on the bike? However, the Scots College is located upon an infamous hill, therefore the cycle into town is only half as fun as the return leg..."



CANDIDACY MASS "Scottish, English and French seminarians (a miniature 'Auld Alliance'?). Journeying towards priesthood with friends from all over the world certainly makes you feel part of the 'Universal' Church, but also reminds you of the importance of returning home to your own part of the 'vineyard of the Lord', filled with all the graces that life at the heart of the church offers."

Jonathan Whitworth, 25, of Greenock, is nearing the end of his journey to become a

priest. He grabbed his camera to show us what life is like as a seminarian in Rome.

JONATHAN WHITWORTH THRU A LENS



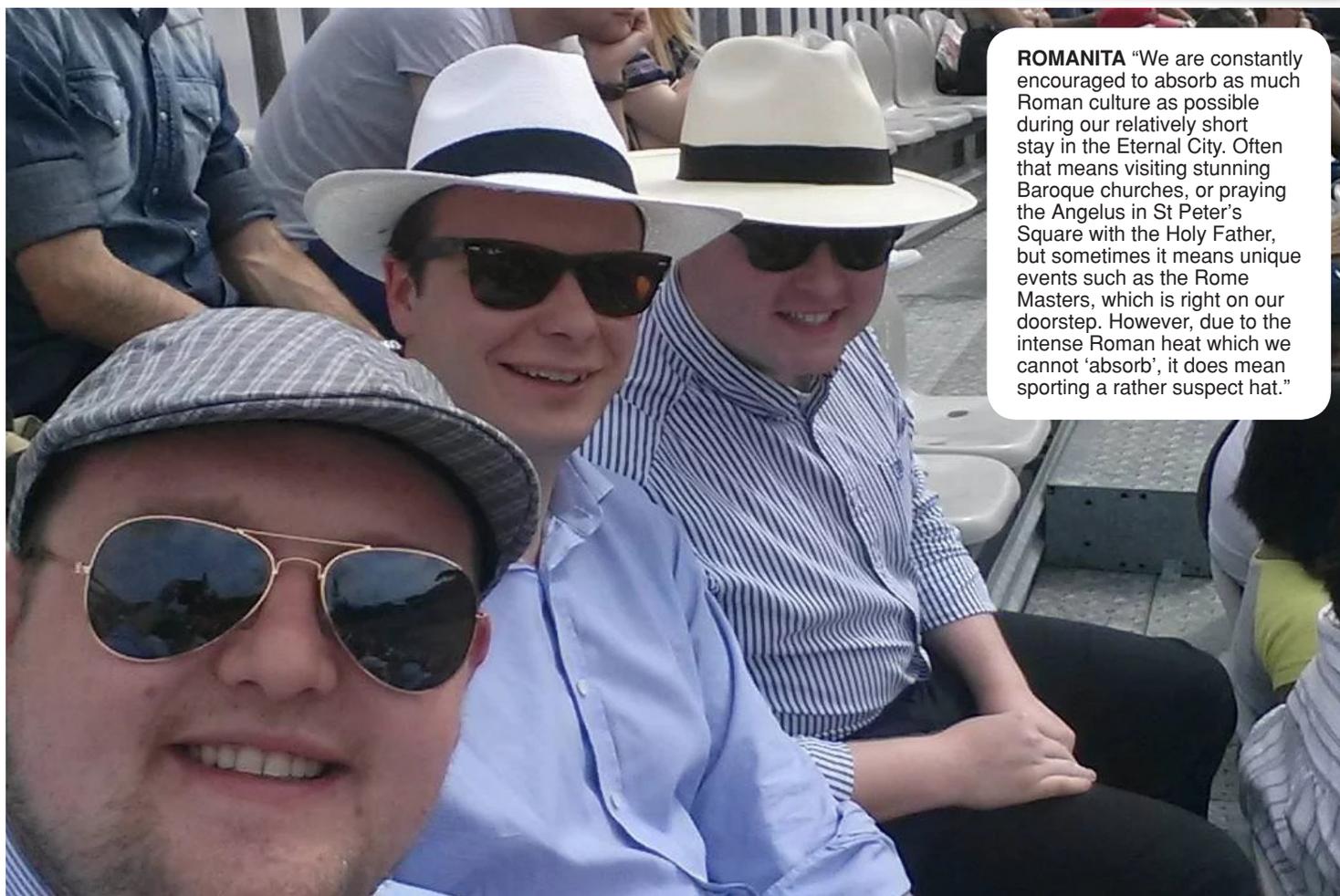
IRISH COLLEGE "One of the great advantages of living in Rome is visiting the various colleges, which each belong to a different country. Inside a seminary community you

experience an entirely different culture and expression of the one faith. Also, where else in Rome could you find a cup of 'Barry's Tea'?"

SCOTTISH ORDINATION "The desire to respond to the call of the Lord to serve as His priest is at the heart of everything we do in Rome. To know that you belong to a heritage of priestly formation that began in 1600 and that you are one link in a chain of men who have longed to serve the people of God in Scotland is what gives life to each of the many wonderful experiences of Rome."



ROMANITA "We are constantly encouraged to absorb as much Roman culture as possible during our relatively short stay in the Eternal City. Often that means visiting stunning Baroque churches, or praying the Angelus in St Peter's Square with the Holy Father, but sometimes it means unique events such as the Rome Masters, which is right on our doorstep. However, due to the intense Roman heat which we cannot 'absorb', it does mean sporting a rather suspect hat."



INTRODUCING...

GETTOKNOW

JOE MCGILL



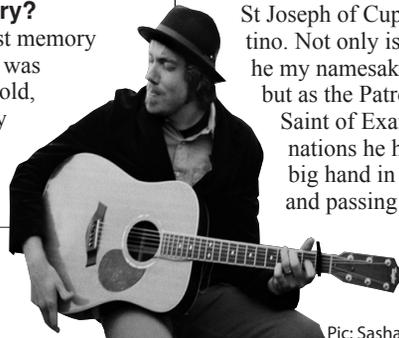
Seminarian Joe McGill, 22, is in his second year at the Scots College in Rome. He is from Clarkston and attended St Joseph's Parish in the town.

Earliest memory?

I think my earliest memory was from when I was about five-years-old, and for a birthday party my grandparents hired a bouncy castle.

Favourite band/artist?

I like a bunch of



Pic: Sasha Arutyunova

music, but just now I'm listening to a lot of Josh Garrels, an American singer-songwriter whose music is kind of about Christian themes, but not in a very explicit way.

Biggest inspiration?

Growing up, it was probably Bishop McGill, who was my great-great uncle. Since then, different people have inspired me in different ways. For example, poor kids in inner city Detroit who I worked with were able to smile in difficult circumstances.

Favourite Italian food?

I really like Saltimbocca Alla Romana, which is veal topped with prosciutto and sage in a wine sauce. It's a standard main course at the college for big meals or feasts.

Top tippie?

You can't beat a nice gin and tonic for the heat in Rome, but I enjoy a wee dram in the evening too!

Last text you sent?

Erm... to my little brother asking him if he wanted to come to the pub.

Favourite saint?

St Joseph of Cupertino. Not only is he my namesake, but as the Patron Saint of Examinations he has had a big hand in my degree and passing all my first year exams in seminary.



How do you relax?

I love to sit and watch a film or TV show in the TV room in the college with some of the guys. We have a projector and decent sound system, and its always a relaxed environment.

What's your screensaver?



It's picture of a koala bear in a suit with the caption, 'I have all the necessary koalafications.'

Favourite word?

I like scottish slang, especially now that I live in Rome most of the year and 'brammer' is probably my favourite.

Favourite place in Rome?

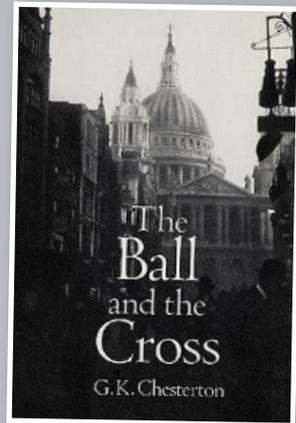
This is rubbish and a bit predictable I know, but you cant beat St Peter's. Excluding that, probably a wee church called Sant'Andrea delle Fratte. It was the Scottish national church in Rome during the middle ages, but more recently the titular church of Cardinal Winning.

Early bird or night owl?

I am definitely a night owl, but the seminary is turning me, slowly but surely, into an early bird.

What are you reading?

The Ball and the Cross by G.K. Chesterton. It's about the two Scots, a Catholic and an atheist, and conversations between them.



● See panel below for reading suggestions.

Best holiday?

Probably the best holiday I've had was with my family a couple of years ago in Portugal, it was just chilling out in the sun and eating nice food.

Tell us something about you we don't know...

I am quite accident-prone and I've been knocked down twice. Once was when I was quite wee and walked out in front of a lorry while it was stationary and it didn't see me and kind of bumped me over, the second time was quite bad and I was in hospital for a couple of weeks and couldn't walk for six months.

The Bible will always be the most important book for Christians. Supplement your reading of scripture with these suggestions...

GETINSPIRED	<p>DIVINE MERCY IN MY SOUL - F. Kowalska</p> <p><i>Divine Mercy in My Soul</i></p>	<p>The diary of Polish nun Faustina Kowalska in which she details her extraordinary closeness to Jesus who instructed her to commission the painting of the Divine Mercy image, now venerated in Catholic churches worldwide.</p>	<p>THE IMITATION OF CHRIST - T. A. Kempis</p> <p>THOMAS A KEMPIS <i>The Imitation of Christ</i></p>	<p>One of the most lauded books on Christian devotion and a masterpiece of spirituality. The German cleric writes simply and beautifully on living a Christ-centred life.</p>	<p>GOD OF SURPRISES - G. W. Hughes</p> <p>GOD of SURPRISES REVISED AND UPDATED EDITION FOREWORD BY EUGENE H. PETERSON</p>	<p>"This book has only one purpose," writes the author in the book's preface, "to suggest some ways of detecting the hidden treasure in what you may consider a most unlikely field, yourself."</p>
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The day

I served for

Pope

Benedict



VOCATION VIEW



MATTHEW CARLIN

Matthew Carlin is on the final path to priesthood after being ordained as a Deacon this year. Here he shares 'the most memorable night of my life' – serving for Pope Benedict XVI in Rome.

THE second time I met Pope Benedict XVI was probably the most memorable evening of my life.

You might imagine that being introduced to the Holy Father, the Supreme Pontiff, the Vicar of Christ, would be unforgettable enough. This, however, was something really special.

The occasion was a prayer vigil celebrating the Feast of St John Vianney (patron of diocesan clergy) and the end of a year when the Pope had asked the faithful of the world to pray – especially for priests.

A small group of seminarians were asked to serve for the Holy Father at the vigil. At the time I was in my first year at the Scots College in Rome. **I have never seen more priests gathered in one place.**

St Peter's Square was set-out with chairs to accommodate around 10,000 clergy who had come to Rome for the evening as a pilgrimage.

Beyond the seated enclosure, a crowd of several more tens

of thousands had gathered – Romans, pilgrims and tourists, all drawn by the chance to see Benedict. After an hour or so of prayer led by priests from around the world, the Pope arrived and gave an uplifting and encouraging reflection on the enormous blessing of a vocation to the priesthood.

The Blessed Sacrament was then exposed on a mobile altar set before the great doors of the Basilica. Finally, the Pope solemnly blessed the crowds with the monstrance in the Roman twilight.

My job for the evening was simple: carry the Holy Father's

I followed the Pope into the darkened Basilica. I was so close that I could hear his aide whisper to him.

miter to him, then follow immediately behind in the final procession, back into St Peter's Basilica.

Times of real excitement always seem to pass in a flash. This was no different.

Those few hours in the square were over before I could really take stock of the situation.

It was not until we began the procession that the enormity of the moment struck me.

I followed Pope Benedict into the darkened Basilica, the spiritual centre of the Catholic world. I was so close that I could hear his aide whisper to him as we approached the steps by which every visitor enters.

The interior was in near-darkness, save for the moonlight which shone through the high window and shimmered down on the polished marble floor, and, in the distance, a dozen oil lamps which burn perpetually around the Confessio – the location of the tomb of Peter, the fisherman who failed his Lord and died the chief of the Apostles.



MAKING THE DECISION TO BECOME A

PRIEST

RYAN BLACK FROM PORT GLASGOW IS ABOUT TO ENTER HIS THIRD YEAR AT SEMINARY. WE ASKED THE 23-YEAR-OLD TO TELL US WHY HE DECIDED TO JOIN THE PRIESTHOOD.



From a relatively early age I was sure that the Church would always be part of my life. My mum and dad are practicing Catholics, and so my brother and I were 'dragged along' when we were very young.

*I began to become interested in my **FAITH** as I progressed through St Michael's Primary School and St Stephen's High School. I became an altar server in Holy Family Church when I was eleven years old, serving for Fr (later Monsignor) Gerry Gallagher and Fr Joe Burke.*

I stopped serving on my **16th** birthday (because of peer pressure more than anything else), but at that point I knew for certain that I wanted always to be part of the Church.

THE PLAN WAS TO GO TO UNIVERSITY, GET A JOB AS A NAVAL ARCHITECT, GET MARRIED, MOVE TO HONG KONG AND THEN THINK ABOUT BECOMING A DEACON.

I did not believe in 'the call'; as far as I was concerned, the good men I had met who had become priests had done so because they had wanted to do so. For me, 'the call' was a cheesy way of defending a life-choice.

That all changed in 2011. By then I had returned to my own parish of St Francis in Port Glasgow. My parish priest, Joe Balmer, suggested I travel to South Africa for one month with other young people to establish a relationship between our own parish and parishes there.

I THOROUGHLY ENJOYED THE EXPERIENCE, AND IT WAS ONLY MONTHS LATER IN MARCH 2012 WHEN I HAD MY INITIAL MEETING WITH THE VOCATIONS DIRECTOR AT THE TIME, FR FRANK HANNIGAN, THAT I REALISED THAT IT WAS A MAJOR FACTOR IN MY DISCERNMENT. EVER SINCE I HAD RETURNED FROM SOUTH AFRICA THERE HAD BEEN SOME NAGGING FEELING THAT I SHOULD CONSIDER THE PRIESTHOOD.

The nagging feeling got so strong that eventually I felt that I would actively be ignoring whatever was drawing me to priesthood if I did not at least enquire about the applicants' year.

Although there were many factors, the most important were **PRAYER** – especially in front of the **BLESSED SACRAMENT** – and honest dialogue with family, friends and God.