



Diocesan Centre
Coursington Road
Motherwell
ML1 1PP

Rt Rev. Joseph Toal STB KC*HS
Bishop of Motherwell

27th July 2025,

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Diocesan Jubilee Pilgrimage to Lourdes returned a few days ago and I wish to express thanks to all who participated in the Pilgrimage and those who supported the pilgrims, either as parishes or individually. Our time in Lourdes went very well and we felt refreshed and uplifted by our days together and our participation in the liturgies and spiritual devotions at Our Lady's Shrine. A special word of thanks therefore to Fr Gerry Maguiness, our Pilgrimage Director, and all who assisted in preparing for the Pilgrimage and managing its progress through the days in Lourdes. The presence of our young people as members of The Diocesan Alma Group was essential for the assistance so well offered to elderly pilgrims particularly, so I record our appreciation to them, and to Fr Mark O'Donnell and the other leaders. Well done to all involved and we look forward to the 2027 Pilgrimage.

Today is the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly and in his letter, Pope Leo writes of the need to be Pilgrims in our local parishes. He meant this in a particular and most necessary way, namely in regard to identifying the sick and housebound in our parishes and making a pilgrimage to visit them. Pope Leo says:

"Every parish, association and ecclesial group is called to become a protagonist in a "revolution" of gratitude and care, to be brought about by regular visits to the elderly, the creation of networks of support and prayer for them and with them, and the forging of relationships that can restore hope and dignity to those who feel forgotten. Christian hope always urges us to be more daring, to think big, to be dissatisfied with things the way they are. In this case, it urges us to work for a change that can restore the esteem and affection to which the elderly are entitled."

These strong words from Pope Leo ask us to recover our ability to know and attend to the sick and the housebound, and I encourage families to let the Parish Clergy know of elderly family members who are no longer able to attend Mass and who would wish to receive Holy Communion at home. This is not a burden on priests and deacons, but one of things we have been ordained to do. Yes, we have Eucharistic Ministers also but it is a privilege for those ordained to attend to the sick and housebound also.

Continuing in the Spirit of Pilgrimage during the Jubilee Year, the Diocesan Jubilee Cross will travel round the Diocese at the end of August/beginning of September. The Pilgrimage will include a Ceremony of Welcome for the Cross followed by a Jubilee Mass in each Deanery. The hope is that the people from the parishes in each deanery will gather as Pilgrims of Hope for their Mass to pray for the future well-being of our Church and our World. The Programme of Deanery Masses is as follows:

Northern and Coatbridge Deanery

- Wednesday 27th August – 75th Anniversary Mass of St Monica's, Coatbridge at 7pm
- Sunday 31st August – 60th Anniversary Mass of St Benedict's, Easterhouse

Airdrie Deanery

Monday 1st September – Mass at St Aloysius, Chapelhall, at 7pm

Motherwell and Central Deanery

Tuesday 9th September – Mass at Sacred Heart, Bellshill, at 7pm

Hamilton Deanery

Wednesday 10th September – Mass at St Bride's, Bothwell, at 7pm

Wishaw Deanery

Thursday 11th September – Mass at St Thomas', Wishaw, at 7pm

Rutherglen and East Kilbride Deanery

Monday 15th September – Mass at St Bride's, Cambuslang at 7pm

Conclusion of Pilgrimage

Wednesday 16th September – at Diocesan Vocations in the Cathedral at 7pm on the Feast of St Ninian.

During this special period the **National Pilgrimage to Carfin** will take place on Sunday 7th September with Mass in the Grotto at 3pm.

- The Jubilee Cross will be welcomed and processed at a number of School Celebrations during this period:
- The Walk of Hope for Secondary Schools from Carfin on Friday 29th August.
- Jubilee Mass for Primary Schools at Carfin on Thursday 4th September at 11am.
- Our Lady's High School Anniversary Mass on Thursday 4th September at 7pm
- St Aidan's HS Feast Day Mass on Friday 5th September at 11am
- Holy Cross HS Feast Day Mass on Friday 12th September.
- We will also celebrate two Ordinations – Stephen Nevans will be ordained a Deacon on Friday 29th August at 7pm, and Deacon Christopher Igwe will be ordained a priest in the Cathedral on Wednesday 3rd September at 6.30pm.
- On Saturday 13th September SCIAF will celebrate its 60th Anniversary Mass at St Columbkille's, Rutherglen, at 12 Noon.
- On Sunday 14th – the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross – the Knights of St Columba will celebrate their Annual Pilgrimage to Carfin with Mass at 3pm.

As you can see, this is a very full programme, and I invite you to participate as much as possible. The idea is to celebrate Jubilee 2025 round the Diocese through the presence of the Cross and local participation. We pray that it may offer opportunity for prayer and renewed vigour in our journey as Pilgrims of Hope and enhance our sense that as the Diocese we will have participated in and from the Church's Jubilee Year.

Before it begins, I am having a break during August to visit my family in Roy Bridge and in Ireland.

With my prayers and best wishes,

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Joseph Toal". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

+ Joseph Toal