

Roamin' Catholic



Corrie Young visits the Redemptorist mission in St Patrick's, Coatbridge



The church's pews were filled, much more than you would expect on a Tuesday night. St Patrick's in Coatbridge was hosting a Redemptorist mission – a retreat for a parish. Throughout the week there was Confession and Mass, with each evening having its own special event. On Tuesday it was the remembrance service praying for the deceased and 'celebrating those who passed the Faith on to us.'

Each parishioner was given an unlit candle upon entering, with most bringing their rosary as well.

After some initial preaching from Fr Royston Price C.Ss.R, Luke's account of the death and resurrection of Jesus was read. A large candle was alight in front of the altar, and as each passage recounting His death was read, one-by-one the ceiling lights were turned off.

Upon the words 'he had breathed his last', the room was black, save for the lone candle at the front.

There was a moment of silence, rain was pouring against the Church roof. A violin began to play.

Two priests - Fr Royston and Fr Kieran Brady C.Ss.R - walked down the aisle with lit candles, lighting one parishioner's candle from every second row. What followed was like a sign of peace, each parishioner looking to light the others.

The room was lit once again, much darker this time. The book registering the parish deaths was brought forward to the altar, and the parish prayed for their deceased.

"It's particularly a response to the pandemic," said Fr Royston, one of the two Redemptorist priests at St Patrick's.

"People have lost loved ones, not able to get proper funerals. It's a traumatic thing. We wanted to have something to mark that in a parish."

The Redemptorists were founded by St Alphonsus Liguori, a former knight who gave up his sword for a rosary, which hangs on the side of their habit – itself similar to what 17th century Neapolitan priests wore.

"He noticed," Fr Royston said, "that

whilst there were lots of priests in the city of Naples, out in the countryside there were a lot of people who had been baptised, but after that the Church couldn't be bothered with them.

"He wanted to form a group of priests to go out and evangelise them, to know of the wonders of the Catholic Faith."

The Redemptorists have been carrying out these parish missions in Scotland for 150 years. They live in a monastery, such as St Mary's in Kinnoull, Perth, and travel out to foster the Faith. Fr Kieran, the other priest visiting St Patrick's, said that each mission is different depending on the individual parish's needs.

"Some missions would have more lay participation, others would have a lot of involvement with schools," he said.

"Every night we would have a different para-liturg, a theme that would influence what we would do."

Fr Royston, coming from an Anglican background, appreciated the 'deep roots' of Catholicism in Coatbridge. "The Faith



Fr Kieran and Fr Royston C.Ss.R

"In the past, you could get away with being a pretty average Catholic, whereas now, you're probably going to be the only Catholic that someone meets, and people will judge the truth of the Catholic Faith on your actions

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is really present," he said. "But people can't become complacent: think of all the places throughout the world that have had really solid Catholic cultures that have faded away. That can't happen to Coatbridge."

The Redemptorist missions offer a parish the opportunity to rediscover the vibrancy of their Faith, and give the lapsed a chance to re-enter a relationship with the Church.

In our secular and transitory world, we're a lot like the country-Catholics recognised by St Alphonsus, not rooted in an entirely Catholic society like the urban Neapolitans of his time.

and the way you live your Faith.

"That's terrifying, but also a good opportunity to see that being Catholic isn't ticking the right box or supporting Celtic: it's fundamental to who we are as human beings." ■

For more information

about Redemptorist parish missions you can email

missions@redemptorists.co.uk

or for a retreat at
St Mary's Kinnoull

www.kinnoullmonastery.co.uk