



The Right Revd Ian Paton
Bishop of St Andrews
Dunkeld and Dunblane
Scottish Episcopal Church

1 August 2024

Dear friends,

THE OLYMPICS

The Olympics are a wonderful spectacle. The Opening Ceremony and the procession of boats along the Seine and Celine Dion singing for the Eiffel Tower was impressive and beautiful. But we've been hearing from many quarters about the 'offensive' nature of one element in the parade - the depiction of Greek pagan gods at a Dionysian feast - believing it to be an offensive parody of the Last Supper painted by da Vinci. At the risk of adding to the flurry of words about this, I would like to say that:



- People may believe that bad language or mockery attacks God, and this was another example. But God is not capable of being harmed by human language. The Cross is God in Christ bearing and overcoming all human hatred, by love.
- Treating a painting of the Last Supper as holy is not defending God. There is such a thing as bad taste and bad artistic judgement, but that is not the same as attacking God or Jesus Christ.
- But in any case this was not an attack on God or Jesus Christ. The Greek gods and their celebration are at the very origins of the Olympics. The depiction in Paris was a portrayal of the feast of Dionysus, part of Greek mythology. It has often been depicted in Western art. I doubt that the Last Supper was anywhere near the thinking of the Paris artist or the directors.
- Even if it was, there are other things that do offend God:
 - children going hungry and living below the poverty line.
 - wars and the arms trade that feeds them, and the tens of thousands of civilians who are killed and harmed.
 - the widening of the gap between the super rich and the desperately poor.
 - a way of life that damages the environment.
 - persecution and violence against people for their religious beliefs, their ethnic identity, or their way of life.

These are things that truly offend God. But God is Love, and God's response is to come alongside us and to enable us by faith to deal with the injustices and hatreds that cause real harm to people and the planet.

ST COLUMBA'S, STANLEY



Thank you to all the congregations who have supported the renewal of St Columba's, Stanley, with your donations. The building is almost ready, and will re-open for worship on Sunday 4 August. **The Eucharist for the Re-dedication of the church will take place on Sunday 18 August at 11am**, when we hope to invite local groups, other churches in the area, and friends from the Diocese. Seating is limited, but if you would like to come, please let me know - you will be welcome.

The Diocesan Curacy will begin when Ross Stirling-Young is ordained deacon to serve as assistant curate in Stanley, linked to the Cathedral. **The Ordination will be on Sunday 29 September at 3pm**, and members of the Diocese are very welcome and encouraged to attend. Clergy and Lay Readers are invited to robe - alb and white stole or cassock, surplice and scarf.

A NEW PROVOST

In September the Diocese will welcome the new Provost of Perth Cathedral, **the Revd Dr Stephen Holmes**. Stephen and his family will be very welcome as they join us. All members of the Diocese are invited to attend the Institution and Installation of Stephen as Provost of St Ninian's Cathedral, on **Sunday 15 September at 3pm**. Clergy and Lay Readers are invited to robe - alb and white stole or cassock, surplice and scarf. **RSVP by 31 August** to office@perthcathedral.co.uk or 01738 632053

WELCOME

to other clergy who are taking up new roles in the Diocese:

The Revd David Gordon - is being Licensed as Priest-in-Charge of St Michael, Elie and St John, Pittenweem, 1 August. David and his family have come from the Diocese of Brechin, and they are very welcome.

The Revd Mariusz Wojciechowski - is being Licensed this month as an assistant priest at St John, Perth, and in the Diocese. Mariusz has been serving in the Diocese of Edinburgh, and he is very welcome as he joins us.

THANK YOU

to others who are leaving the Diocese:

The Revd Dean Norby - retired on 1 August as Rector of the All Souls Group of churches in south Fife. I thank Dean for all he has done in this Diocese, and wish him and Elizabeth the happiest of retirements.

The Revd Stephen Graham - is moving from being Chaplain at Glenalmond College to new ministry in the Diocese of Europe. My thanks to Stephen for his work with students and staff at the school, and for playing a full part in clergy gatherings and Diocesan life. We send our best wishes for his ministry in Antwerp.

Holly Scott - is moving to new work nearer her home, after serving as Bishop's Secretary for a year and a half. Holly has been a friendly and welcoming helper to many in the Dioceses, and especially to me as the Bishop. Thank you, Holly, and every blessing in your new job.

IN MEMORIAM

Denis Fitzsimmons - Lay Reader at St John's, Alloa, has very sadly died. Denis served the congregation of St John's faithfully and lovingly during their long vacancy, and he is well remembered and loved by them. May Denis rest in peace and rise in glory.

DATES FOR THE DIARY



Diocesan Gathering 22 September (afternoon)

The Diocesan Environment Group invites every congregation in the Diocese to the second **Diocesan Environment Gathering**, Sunday 22 September 2024 at St Ninian's Cathedral, during the Season of Creation.

The event will be held in the afternoon and all are welcome. Contact - the Revd Elaine Garman, Convener of the Diocesan Environment Group revelainegarman@outlook.com

Continuing Ministry Development

The next CMD Day for those in authorised ministry will be held from 10 am to 3 pm on Wednesday 23rd October at The Threshold, St John's Church, Princes St, Perth.

'**Accessible Church?**' will be led by the Revd Rosie Addis, Chair of Deaf Action, and Dr Léon van Ommen, Co-director of the Centre for Autism and Theology, University of Aberdeen. More information and registration near the time.



THANK YOU



I would like to repeat my thanks to all the congregations and people who gave generously to my Lent Appeal for the Nari Dana 'Ray of Hope' project in Kolkata. The final gift being sent to Kolkata is over

£11,000. Thank you, once again, for this wonderful gift to women in Kolkata, and for the many lives that will be changed by your giving. Please pray for Nari Dana ("women's wings" in Bengali) for the staff, volunteers, and the women whose lives are being transformed.

FINALLY

Thank you to for your life as a congregation, and for all you do to be a sign of God's love in your community. It is one of the greatest joys of a Bishop's work to worship with congregations on Sundays, and I hope you will invite me to join you one Sunday during the next year. I always value your prayers, especially as I serve as acting Bishop of Argyll and The Isles until the end of August, and from the beginning of August as acting Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney. May God give healing and hope to you and all his Church.

