



# DIOCESE OF PAISLEY

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## Good Shepherd Sunday 2025 Pastoral Letter

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today, the universal Church celebrates Good Shepherd Sunday, the World Day of Prayer for Vocations to the Priesthood and the Consecrated Life. As we pray for vocations on this day, we also pause to reflect on and give thanks for the life and ministry of Pope Francis, our Good Shepherd, who has returned to the House of the Father.

As Cardinal Re eloquently remarked in his homily at Pope Francis's funeral, “The outpouring of affection witnessed following his passing into eternity tells us how deeply he touched minds and hearts...<sup>1</sup>.”

It was my privilege to attend the funeral Mass in Rome, representing the Catholics of Scotland, particularly those in the Diocese of Paisley. I carried with me your gratitude for his life, lived profoundly in God's presence, and your prayers for his eternal peace.

Over the years, it was my joy to meet regularly with Pope Francis. He always showed keen interest in the life and challenges of our Diocese, particularly our efforts to support those on the peripheries of our communities. His sincere concern extended to our young people, our schools, and the myriad challenges they face. I can assure you that the Diocese of Paisley, its people, and its priests remained in his prayers.

Throughout the course of his Pontificate, Pope Francis held a steadfast concern for the formation of priests, emphasizing that a vocation to the priesthood is a profound call to love and service<sup>2</sup>. On this Good Shepherd Sunday, let us pray to the Lord for the blessing of shepherds fashioned after His own heart—shepherds in the mould of Pope Francis.

While this day is dedicated to our praying for vocations, it is also an opportunity, as Pope Francis often highlighted, to recognize those engaged in “hidden” vocational ministries. Today we think of the faithful who regularly pray for vocations, those who offer their daily

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<sup>1</sup> [register.com/commentaries/pope-francis-funeral-full-text-homily-cardinal-re](https://register.com/commentaries/pope-francis-funeral-full-text-homily-cardinal-re)

<sup>2</sup> [atican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/vocations/documents/20250319-messaggio-62-gm-vocazioni.html#:~:text=Message%20for%20the%2062nd%20World%20Day%20of%20Prayer%20for%20Vocations%202025%20%7C%20Francis&text=Dear%20sisters%20and%20brothers%2C,your%20lives%20as%20a%20gift.](https://atican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/vocations/documents/20250319-messaggio-62-gm-vocazioni.html#:~:text=Message%20for%20the%2062nd%20World%20Day%20of%20Prayer%20for%20Vocations%202025%20%7C%20Francis&text=Dear%20sisters%20and%20brothers%2C,your%20lives%20as%20a%20gift.)



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Rosary for priests, and parishes setting aside time for Eucharistic Adoration to pray for an increase in vocations within our diocese and beyond. I commend these efforts and find consolation in knowing they continue.

As I write to you, the news has just been announced that Cardinal Robert Prevost has been elected as Pope Leo XIV. We thank the Lord for speedily sending us a new Shepherd. We thank too Pope Leo for continuing to say 'yes' to God's plan for his life. At this time, we lift him and the universal Church up to God in prayer. As we reflect on the events of recent weeks, the words of Pope Francis in his last message on vocations have a particular resonance: 'God knows the human heart and does not abandon us. We are loved, called, and sent as pilgrims of hope—and the future of the Church, as always, belongs to God.'

I entrust your continued journey in following the Lord to the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church and Mother of vocations. Keep walking as pilgrims of hope on the path of the Gospel. I accompany you with my blessing and kindly ask you to pray for me as well.

Yours in Christ,