

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD – 11th January 2026

Parish Bulletin continued ...



St Ignatius' Primary School Infant Enrolment for August 2026

For the attention of parents and carers whose children become 5 years old between:
1st March 2026 and 29th February 2027.

Our enrolment times are as follows:

Tuesday 13th January – 9.30am – 11.30am and 1.30pm – 3.30pm

Wednesday 14th January – 9.30am – 11.30am

Thursday 15th January – 9.30am – 11.30am

Your child's birth certificate and proof of address, in the form of the current council tax bill, must be produced at enrolment.

If you know of anyone whose child is due to be enrolled, please give them the above information.



St Thomas' Primary School Infant Registration for August 2026

**Attention Parents and Carers whose children will reach the age of 5 years old between:
1 March 2026 and 28 February 2027**

Enrolment dates for St Thomas' Primary School are as follows:-

Monday 12th January	1.30pm – 3.30pm
Tuesday 13th January	10.00am – 11.30am and 3.00pm – 4.30pm
Wednesday 14th January	8.30am – 10.30am
Thursday 15th January	10.00am – 11.30am

Please bring along your child's birth certificate and proof of address (current Council Tax letter).

If you know of anyone who has a child due to commence school in August, please advise them of the above dates.

Bishops of Scotland and the Catholic Parliamentary Office regarding the establishment of buffer zones within 200 metres around abortion facilities in Scotland



At Christmas, Christians across Scotland gathered around the crib to contemplate the life of a vulnerable child; God entering our world as a baby in need of care, protection and love. Christmas places fragile human life at the centre of everything.

It is therefore unsettling that this season saw the first person in Scotland charged under the new so-called “buffer zone” law in Scotland; a law the Church believes curtails Scotland’s commitment to freedom of expression and conscience, and restricts critical voices from democratic debate in the public square.

The Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) (Scotland) Act 2024 establishes “buffer zones” of up to 200 metres around abortion facilities — currently around 30 locations across Scotland. Within those zones, any conduct deemed to “influence” a decision about abortion may be criminalised. That vague description should trouble anyone who values legal clarity or free expression.

The Catholic Church does not condone harassment or intimidation, but that was not the intention of this law. The Church has been clear: harassment, intimidation and obstruction are wrong and unacceptable. But Scotland already has robust laws to deal with harassment, public disorder and threatening behaviour and it is telling that, when consulted on the proposed new law, Police Scotland did not ask for more powers, and went as far to state in written evidence to Parliament that, “existing powers and offences are sufficient to address any unlawful behaviour in the vicinity of healthcare premises.” When parliaments introduce criminal offences where existing law is already sufficient, questions should be raised and alarm bells ring.

We oppose this law because it is disproportionate and undemocratic. It represents state overreach and curtails basic freedoms. The Church would similarly oppose legislation mandating buffer zones outside nuclear weapons facilities or refugee detention centres. This should concern every Scottish citizen, regardless of their views on abortion.

As the Parliamentary Officer for the Catholic Church in Scotland pointed out, women experiencing crisis pregnancies may be “denied the opportunity to freely speak to people and organisations who may be able

to help them.” A law supposedly designed to protect choice risks doing the opposite — eliminating one side of a conversation and one set of choices altogether.

Even more troubling is what the legislation anticipates. Official documentation accompanying the Act acknowledges that the law envisages criminalising “praying audibly” and “silent vigils.”

This is unprecedented in modern Scotland, and it is no wonder it has raised eyebrows around the world, with concerns raised around Scotland’s commitment to human rights and freedom of expression and religion.

The implications go further. The Act extends to private homes within designated zones. A pro-life poster displayed in a window, a conversation overheard, a prayer said by a window; all could, in principle, fall within the scope of criminal sanction. When asked directly whether praying by a window in your own home could constitute an offence, Gillian Mackay, the Scottish Green Party MSP, who spearheaded the legislation, replied: “That depends on who’s passing the window.” That sends a chill down the spine of anyone who cares about civil liberties. Criminal law that depends on the perception of a passer-by is certainly not the hallmark of a free Scottish society.

The law also potentially criminalises a person standing alone in a buffer zone without any visible expression of protest, but who is deemed by others to be offering a silent pro-life inspired prayer. Even Police Scotland expressed unease. Superintendent Gerry Corrigan told Parliament that policing thought is an area they “would stay clear of,” adding: “I do not think we could go down the road of asking people what they are thinking or what their thoughts are. That feels really uncomfortable.” Yet, this is the territory into which Scottish law now ventures. Bishop John Keenan, President of the Bishops’ Conference, noted that “none of the arguments made were able to get around the basic premise that Police Scotland had never asked for more powers.” and that the law is “draconian” and “unnecessary,” particularly considering its impact on people of faith.

Some parliamentarians attempted to mitigate the effects of the law— proposing a reasonableness defence, or exemptions for chaplains who might be criminalised for pastoral conversations. All amendments were rejected or withdrawn.

We support all those who, motivated by conscience and compassion, stand up for the right to life. It cannot be a crime to give our voice and our prayers to the unborn.

Christmas is the message that every human life has infinite dignity from its beginning. That truth is not confined to private thoughts. A society confident in its values does not fear opposing voices. It does not criminalise silent prayer. It does not ask its police or judges to peer into the minds of its citizens.

Scotland’s buffer zones law represents a profound shift in the relationship between the State and the individual — one that restricts free speech, free expression and freedom of religion in ways that should concern us all.

As we look to the child in the manger this Christmas and Epiphany, we are reminded that babies do not have a voice of their own. It is a shame that the State has now also curtailed the voices of ordinary citizens who advocate for them within its borders.

The Catholic Bishops of Scotland



PRESS RELEASE

*A Chilling Christmas for Freedom
of Conscience in Scotland*