

Scalan News

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300 Years



Archbishop Cusheley preaching at the Annual Pilgrimage Mass on Sunday 3 July 2016, the main event marking the 300th Anniversary of the Foundation of Scalan. On the left, Bishop Hay's chalice brought from Blairs for the occasion. Bishop Hay was consecrated bishop in the upstairs chapel at Scalan, in 1769.

Cover Photo: taken after the annual Mass on Sunday 3 July 2016.

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Three Hundredth Anniversary Mass.

Our main commemoration was the **Annual Pilgrimage Mass**, which took place on Sunday 3 July at 4.00pm. The Most Reverend Leo Cushley, Archbishop of Saint Andrews and Edinburgh, Metropolitan of the Eastern Province, was main celebrant at the Mass, and preached. His homily can be read within, beginning on page 8. We thank Archbishop Cushley for the time and care he took with preparing a homily which spoke well to the occasion, and which raised our spirits and determination to imitate the Faith and courage of those who inhabited The Scalan.

Also present were Archbishop Tartaglia, Archbishop Conti, Bishop Nolan and

Archbishop Vigneron of Detroit, USA, who was visiting Archbishop Cushley at the time. Archbishop Cushley was assisted by Deacon Vincent McQuaid. Also concelebrating the Mass were Fr. James Thomson (President of the Scalan Association), Fr. Michael Briody (Secretary/Treasurer), Mgr. John McIntyre (Past President), Fr. John McLean and Fr. Eddie McGhee (both retired priests of Galloway Diocese), Fr. John Allen (Inverness) and Fr. Isaac Nsiah (Elgin and Forres). Over 200 of the lay faithful supported the occasion. Fr. Colin Stewart, the local parish priest, provided the music and hymns for the Mass.

The weather on this special day gave sun and showers with no midges. There were two showers of rain during Mass. **Our piper, James Stuart**, piped the stream of visitors on their way. Before the Mass began, James had a break and **Alasdair Roberts and his grandson Thomas** played “The Little Spree”, written by the blacksmith to the chief of the MacGregors. He was said to be famous for his heroism in battle, heavy drinking and musical compositions, among which were the three laments, known as the big, middle and small “spree”. These were code names for tunes played to give notice to Catholics of a secret Mass in the hills in Penal Times.

Also present were **The Dominican Sisters** from Greyfriars Convent in Elgin. They do so much for the community, especially the children of all ages. Scalan is a special place for them, even in their long habits they walk up the track enjoying the peace and the open countryside. One year some of them walked the pilgrim route from the Well of Lecht to the Mass over the hill.

You will see from the photos that a matching set of green vestments was worn by the priests. These came from **St. Francis Xavier’s Parish, Carfin**, where the famous Grotto is situated. We thank Fr. Francis McGachey, Parish Priest, for the loan of the vestments.

Sancta Familia Media, a group of young people from Holy Family Parish, Mossend, Diocese of Motherwell, came and made a small recording of the event. It can be seen on their Facebook page at “sanctafamiliamedia”.

Bishop Hugh Gilbert, Bishop of the Diocese, was unable to be present and sent the following letter with Archbishop Cushley:

“Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am sorry not to be with you this afternoon to mark the 300th

anniversary of the Foundation of Scalan, but I very much want to welcome you all warmly to this Pilgrimage Mass, both those of you from the diocese and those from elsewhere. It is a further delight to welcome Archbishops Leo Cushley, Philip Tartaglia and Mario Conti, and Bishop Nolan. Their presence, like yours, is a sign of how deeply inscribed Scalan is in the history of the Catholic Church in Scotland.

We thank God for Scalan, for the faith and courage it expressed and for the vocations formed here. Let us also ask him to continue to raise up staunch believers in our own times and to inspire young men to offer themselves for the priesthood. Scotland needs the Catholic faith. May I wish you a joyful celebration of Holy Mass and a pleasant, uplifting time together.

Devotedly in Christ,

+ *HUGH OSB*”

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The 300th Anniversary has been marked in a variety of ways:

1. A New Book on Scalan. Dr. John Watts, author of “Scalan: The Forbidden College, 1716-1799”, has produced a new work, commissioned by the Scalan Association, entitled **“Scalan: Leaves from the Master’s Day Book”**.

In the study of history, it is said, the essential thing to capture is the mood or atmosphere of any particular period, but it is also the most difficult thing to achieve. Dr. Watts has, through the medium of a diary, built up a picture of daily life at Scalan, at its most perilous period (1741-56) which included the failed Jacobite Uprising of 1745 and its aftermath for the Highlands in general, and Catholics in particular. He has done this by a work of fiction: there is no Master’s Day Book; it does not exist, but, the events, personages, attitudes and details to which he refers are well-attested in the correspondence and other documents of the time. No one is more familiar with this territory than Dr. Watts, as his previous authoritative book on Scalan demonstrates.

In an early conversation, Dr. Watts said he wanted the diary to be an “open door into Scalan” so that we might all enter and taste something of the reality of life for those who lived there. In this he has succeeded beyond measure. No one will read this book without it leaving a lasting feel for how daily life unfolded for those who made up the

“fermtoun” of Scalan: the priest, Rev. William Duthie; the students, never more than five, at one point none at all, and for a long time only one; the servant-girl for the kitchen and the young worker for the farm; the neighbours who were loyal, protective and discreet. The diary reveals details of study and timetable; the weather and the landscape; the food and accommodation; cattle thieves, whisky smugglers, the redcoats and visiting bishops; disillusionment and low spirits but always Faith in the cause to which they were committed and for which they were prepared to suffer so much.

Details of how to obtain copies can be found on page 9.

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2. A new leaflet on Scalan has been written by Fr. Michael Briody, our secretary/treasurer. It contains historical and practical information. A copy is enclosed. If you would like to spread a few around to appropriate people or places, you can order them from the secretary at the address given on page 3. They are free of charge.

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3. A plaque has been attached to the wall which faces you just inside The Scalan which honours the founders of the original Scalan Association, which was a society of priests, and two of the pioneers who joined it when it was opened up to wider membership. The wording on the plaque can be read on page 16. Archbishop Conti was asked to bless the plaque at the Annual Mass because he, of all present, knew best the five people mentioned on it.

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4. A new sign has been erected at the fence-gate as you draw near to the Scalan. A photo of it can be seen on page 12.

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5. An Exhibition was set up in the Blairs Museum by Mary Hardy. We thank Ian Forbes, the manager of the museum, for bringing the exhibition to the Anniversary Mass. He also brought Bishop Hay's chalice and Scalan's "wooden" candlesticks which featured in the last "Scalan News".

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6. Modern Communications have caught up with the Scalan Association: We are on Facebook at www.facebook.com/1716Scalan1799 At the present moment, the Facebook page is tracing the story of Scottish Catholicism and has reached the time of Saint John Ogilvie. It is hoped to set up a new website by the Easter edition of the Scalan News

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7. The Michael J. Morrison Competition. Michael Morrison, Scalan Association member, provided cash prizes for a competition in writing and drawing to mark the anniversary. Both prizes were won by pupils of St. Peter's Primary School in Buckie. The winning entries, with judges' comments, can be found beginning on page 17.

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Important Dates:

The Annual General Meeting is due to take place on Tuesday 30 May 2017. It begins with Mass within The Scalan at 12.30, followed by a meal in the Braes Hall and then the meeting proper. We would hope for a bigger turnout at the AGM. Perhaps you can put it in your diary now.

The Annual Pilgrimage Mass takes place each year on the first Sunday of July, which this year is the 2nd of July, 2017. Mass begins at 4.00pm prompt. A punctual start is always important for those who have a long way to go home, so we start at 4.00pm even in the middle of an earthquake!

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Subscriptions. You will be able to tell by your envelope how you stand on your subscription. If your envelope has "Scalan News 2017" on it, or later, that means you are up to date. If it has "2016" or nothing at all, you are a year behind, at least. However, we are not chasing you for these. What we would like you to do is pay your subscription for the coming year and pay a further donation if you are able, as all members are encouraged to do each year. The policy of the Scalan Association has been, for several years now, to peg the subscription at £10 while asking those who want to give more to do so. **If you have thrown out the envelope before reading this and are doubtful about your subscription, you can phone the treasurer and he will clarify things for you. His phone number is on page 3.**

Archbishop Cushley's Homily

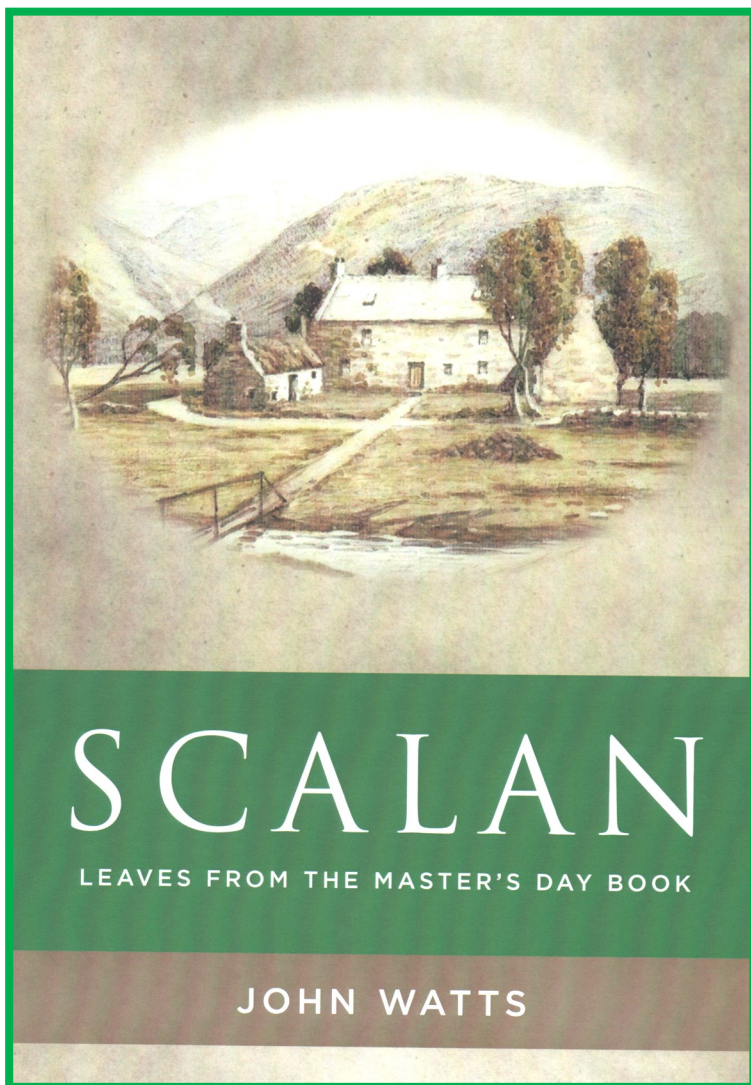
My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I was very grateful to be invited to celebrate this Mass today by Fr Michael Briody and Fr Jim Thomson on behalf of the Scalan Society. In your name, I'm pleased to welcome to brother bishops Archbishop Philip Tartaglia, Archbishop Mario Conti, and Bishop Nolan, as well as my guest in these days, Archbishop Allen Vigneron of Detroit. It's also a pleasure to welcome many of you who, through your spiritual, financial and practical efforts have endeavoured to keep the spirit of Scalan alive.

Many of us priests here are Blairs boys, and all of us learned early on of the name of Scalan and of the extraordinary men who founded this place, of those who persevered against considerable and constant odds to keep it going, and to keep going what it symbolised: the ancient Catholic faith of the land, still alive after the passage of many centuries, holding on patiently, tenaciously, even happily, in the face of all that the civil and religious authorities could do, to make the Auld Kirk and the Auld Faith unwelcome in a place where it had been welcome since Ninian and Columba, since Kentigern and Machar, since Cuthbert and Margaret.

Today we do something that in 1716 was illegal and dangerous, something that risked exile, hunger, financial ruin, social exclusion, and occasionally even death. Today we offer the Sacrifice of the Mass. Today we celebrate the Sunday Eucharist according to the Roman Rite. Just like the ancient Romans of North Africa as they were condemned to death, just like our brave forebears who once stood here in this place, we dare - with slightly less danger to ourselves - to make their noble words our own: "We cannot live without the Eucharist".

And our fathers in the faith undoubtedly underwent a considerable struggle that we, living in happier times, often no longer call to mind. I think first of all of what the spiritual landscape must have looked like in 1716. It was only a hundred years since the men of the Scots College in Rome had vowed as one man to return as priests to the Scottish mission. In 1716 the Jacobite party had failed in an attempted coup d'état the year before, and the prospects of a Stuart restoration looked pretty bleak. There were very, very few people who could or would support Catholicism in the country. And it was to due to get worse before it would get better. With the defeat a few years later of Prince Charles Edward in 1745, all sorts of penal laws would be put in place that would add to the burdens already placed upon Scots Catholics and their language and culture, especially the Gaels among them. So the



“Scalan: Leaves from the Master’s Day book” was written by Dr. John Watts, commissioned by the Scalan Association, to mark the 300th anniversary of the foundation of the Secret Seminary at Scalan.

It is a work of fiction. There is no Master’s Day Book, but Dr. Watts has compiled it from his extensive knowledge of the documents and correspondence of the time, as well as known facts and dates, to give us flavour of daily life at Scalan at the most precarious period of its existence, 1741-56. This encompassed Bonnie Prince Charlie’s failed Jacobite Uprising of 1745-46, and its destructive aftermath for the Highlands in general and Catholics in particular.

Apart from attempting to train (very few) students for the Priesthood, “The Master’s Day Book” reveals the comings and going of whisky smugglers, cattle thieves, the “redcoat” soldiers and visiting bishops, as well as the daily round of studies and prayer and attending to the farm of a few fields which was attached to the college. Scalan was a “fermtoun”, with more people living there then than today.

One copy costs £3. It is worth much more. It could easily have cost £7 or £8, but the Scalan Association wanted only to cover expenses so that the price would be attractive to more people.

Postage and packing, **(if necessary)**, costs: £1.30 for one copy.
 £1.70 for two copies.
 £3.00 for 3 to 10 copies.

Cheques should be written out to “The Scalan Association”.

Orders can be sent to our secretary/treasurer, Fr. Michael Briody, St. Michael’s, 133 Glenmanor Avenue, Moodiesburn, G69 0DL.



Photo taken at the end of the 300th Anniversary Mass. It was a bit blowy, but no midges!



SCALAN

THE SECRET SEMINARY
IN GLENLIVET (1716-1799)

On the left is the front page of the new Scalan leaflet. It has six pages in a threefold, typical of many tourist-type leaflets printed nowadays.

The new leaflet was written by our secretary / treasurer, Fr. Michael Briody, and printed by Burns Publications, Glasgow. It is free of charge to all.

You should find that one copy has been enclosed with this edition of the “Scalan News”.

If you think that you could distribute some more of them, please be in touch with Fr. Briody,. His contact details are on page three.

Perhaps your local parish priest would be happy to have some available at the church, or you may know of tourist outlets locally which would accept them for display.

On no account should they be sold. They are offered free to all.

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New Scalan Leaflet

The new sign at Scalan erected to mark the 300th Anniversary.



men who took up the challenge of keeping the flame of the Catholic faith alive here in Scalan were truly extraordinary in their bravery, in their tenacity, in their good cheer, in their heart.

One thing that I think it's important to remember on such occasions is this: let's not forget that the Auld Kirk never actually died here. We know, through the studies of priests such as Innes and Anderson and those more recently of our own Mgr Brian Halloran, that the Scottish secular clergy that this place was built to nurture, nearly *but never quite* died out after the Reformation. We know this from various sources, including the Kirk's own records denouncing the existence of certain stubbornly Catholic priests in the early decades immediately after the Reformation. We know that other Scots priests came here from the Continent, in particular the Jesuits and the Franciscans. Priests of such congregations were just as brave as their secular counterparts, but they also had the advantage of belonging to communities who would support them. The secular priests, on the other hand, faced a much harder task. When Propaganda Fide was founded in 1622 it did of course help fund the Scottish secular priests – but only when it saw results that it liked. Occasionally however they turned the money off – and the secular priests were left high and dry, with practically no help of any kind while working here in the field. No wonder some of the men in training in the Scots College in Rome or Paris or Madrid were tempted to join a religious congregation, or only to serve here for short period of time. Imagine being a priest here when you don't have any money; you don't know who the Catholics are because you can't talk about the faith openly without being arrested, imprisoned, exiled or worse; you are getting older or you're sick; you're certainly going to be lonely often as well, and perhaps you've not have a proper roof over your head very often. It makes me think of the extremities that someone like Francis Xavier went through in Japan... So it must have been a very demanding mission for a very long time. And I for one am filled with admiration for the men who stood here in this place before us.

That's why I was struck by the quotation from the then Father John Geddes, addressing the students of the Scots College in Spain, where he says in 1777, "The time by the goodness of God will come when the Catholic religion will again flourish in Scotland; and then, when posterity shall enquire, with a laudable curiosity, by what means any sparks of the true faith were preserved in these dismal times of darkness and error, Scalan and the other colleges will be mentioned with veneration, and all that can be recorded concerning them will be recorded with care".

Today therefore we celebrate the memory of these Scots Catholic men who, for love of Christ and the Church, showed themselves brave, and dedicated, and

tenacious. They knew their roots. They loved their country. They loved the ancient faith of Scotland. They had a tough life. But they were also far-sighted, And, again and again, I also glimpse in their story a joy and an upbeat sense of purpose that helped them to see everything in the light of God's providence. The men who began here lived through very testing times. But those very times helped them to grow, to grow in their quiet and patient determination, and to look to the future with hope and confidence. I am sure they will be very pleased to see us gathered here today to celebrate the Sunday Eucharist – legally, unmolested, in public, and with dignity – and to know that the Catholic faith is practised freely and by many people. And they will be pleased to see that the Church once more contributes to life in the public square – untrammelled, and renewed, and fortified by the extraordinary example of the men of Scalan.

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Points of interest

1. Spring was late in coming this year which affected the birds. Those that arrived were late in pairing and nesting. The exception were the curlews that had a good year but the swallows were well down. The continual wet upset the ground nesting birds like the skylarks and the grouse whose young found the wet difficult to cope with. September saw the first of the geese heading south, earlier than usual. Scalan itself remained watertight despite the Crombie flooding the grounds.
 2. Visitors' numbers were down. This is the first year we have not had any large groups though there seems to have been a larger number of priests from the UK and abroad.
 3. The track to Scalan was repaired. Potholes were filled in but the tractors are gouging out new holes which are filling up with water. Everywhere was tidied up for the anniversary; if only it could stay that way but it costs Scalan to have it done.
 4. The money has been allocated by the lottery fund to preserve the two barns. They have a lot of graffiti in them which includes many drawings of pigs. Considering there have been no record of pigs at Scalan, it seemed odd. According to RACHMS, now part of Historic Scotland, who recorded the graffiti it represents the devil. There must have been a lot of devils in the area! As far as the lottery money is concerned, it will take two years for details to be worked out and the work itself will be spread over five years.
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Bishop James Gordon (1665-1746) was the founder of Scalan. How that all happened is well covered in the new Scalan leaflet which is enclosed with this edition of the “Scalan News”. The purpose of this small piece is to say something about his life and other activities.

Bishop James Gordon (1665-1746) was born in The Enzie. Aged 14, he went to the Scots College, Paris, and was ordained a priest there before returning to Scotland in 1702. He was “missioner” in The Enzie for ten years. In 1702 he went to Rome as assistant to the Scots Agent, a post which kept contact between Scotland and Rome. He was chosen to be co-adjutor vicar apostolic to Bishop Nicholson, the first vicar apostolic, and ordained in Italy in 1706 - in secret, because there were other agents there keeping an eye on any developments that would interest the authorities in London and Edinburgh. Bishop Nicholson died in 1718 and Bishop Gordon succeeded him at once. He undertook long and arduous visitations of the whole of Scotland, including The Hebrides, assessing the Catholic presence in each place, administering, in particular, the Sacrament of Confirmation to large numbers who had been waiting for a bishop to come, and he gave much-needed encouragement to priests and people alike.

On his travels, Bishop Gordon could see the need for a recognition of the divide in Scotland between Gaelic and non-Gaelic language and culture, and he petitioned the authorities in Rome to find a Gaelic-speaking Vicariate with its own Gaelic-speaking Bishop. This led to the appointment of Bishop Hugh MacDonald (one of the first students at both Loch Morar and Scalan,) in 1731, to be Vicar Apostolic of the new Highland Vicariate, with Bishop Gordon becoming head of the Lowland Vicariate. The division was not necessarily how we might imagine it. Places that we would consider Highland were actually in the Lowland District. The Enzie Catholic stronghold around Buckie was considered Lowland, as was Scalan.

Bishop Gordon acquired a co-adjutor, Bishop Alexander Smith, in 1735. He was now 70 years of age. He died on 18 February 1746. Bishop John Geddes (1735-99) records some details in his memoirs of the ‘45: “Bishop Gordon died at Thornhill near Drummond Castle in the house of M^{rs} Mary Drummond, a Catholick lady, and was buried at Innerpeffery, the burial place of the family of Perth. Before his corpse was removed from Thornhill, a party of King George’s army had already come to Drummond Castle.” They were chasing the retreating Jacobite army and visiting suspected sympathisers on their way north. Catholic aristocrats, while few in number, made their home a “safe house” for travelling clergy.

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In the 300th Anniversary Year of the Foundation of Scalan
(1716 – 2016)

and the 70th of the beginning of the Scalan Association

This plaque was erected in grateful memory of

Fr. Sandy MacWilliam
Fr. David McRoberts
Canon Peter Bonnyman

who rescued this house in 1946
and founded the Scalan Association of Priests

and

Bill and Jane McEwan
who joined the Association in 1987
when it was opened to wider membership
and worked devotedly and untiringly for Scalan
for twenty years.

The New Plaque at Scalan

Scalan Competition – Essays

judged by Alasdair Roberts

1st Jack Hutcheson

Jack shows a pleasant awareness of beauty in the Braes of Glenlivet, and ‘Scalan in the distance’ is good. He also has been able to imagine the priests, giving them suitable clothing. The presence of ‘proud and loving parents’ has a kind of poetic reality although I doubt if any mother ever took her son to that masculine retreat. Jack’s Malcolm and Joseph (appropriate names of the time) bring the focus on to what it would have been like as a new Scalan boy. There is a neat description of the premises. Jack’s unusual title ‘What’s the Matter with Malcolm?’ sets the tone for student-centred drama. Good ending, with ‘fully trained priests’ the point of it all.

Scalan Competition – Paintings

judged by F Bushe and A Dean

1st Ellie Powrie

Ellie’s picture is of the interior of Scalan and shows an understanding of the life of the students – their dormitory and the steep stair to reach it; the clock which marked the boys’ rising in the morning, their time studying and the time for going to bed. It is an interesting piece of work, imaginatively arranged and drawn; the colours used show a real feel for Scalan.

Ellie’s picture is on page 19.

What's the matter with Malcolm?

1716 May 18th at 7 in the morning Malcolm and Joseph were walking down a bumpy country road on the way to Scalan with their parents. It was a warm, spring morning without a cloud in the bright blue sky. You could smell the sweetly smelling air with the beautiful harmony of birds singing in the trees, almost hypnotizing you to sing along. They could see the newly cut grass with big golden pheasants roaming the area. The breeze was warm and subtle, almost cooling you down from the heat of the wonderful spring morning. They could see Scalan in the distance while eating homemade bread for an early snack, also drinking tea just the right temperature to be drunk.

After a gobsmackingly brilliant walk in the countryside, they arrived at Scalan. The priests were outside to meet Malcolm and Joseph. The priests were dressed in lovely and long white robes with beads and all sorts. The priests had a long and detailed conversation with Malcolm and Joseph's parents, talking about what the 2 boys would be doing at Scalan, the rules and all of the times they would get to do what they wanted [2 hours a day]. The conversation went on for about half an hour, then it was time for Malcolm and Joseph's proud and loving parents to say their goodbyes and leave the boys to pursue what they wanted to do. The 2 boys got shown around Scalan, the dormitory, the kitchen and all the other curious rooms the wonderful building had to offer. It was tiring work considering the fact it was a blazing, hot morning. Finally, the tour was over and Malcolm and Joseph were aloud 1 hour's free time. Malcolm and Joseph were both excited about putting their great lives to it and becoming priests but nervous and sad at the same time for having their parents gone for an awfully long time.

One day, during free time, Joseph wanted to talk to Malcolm about what boys would have talked about at the age that they were. Joseph couldn't find Malcolm inside, but then he thought to himself, "why would anyone be inside on such a nice day?", " So Joseph went outside to look for Malcolm. Maybe 10 or 15 minutes Joseph was searching, he was actually starting to get quite worried. So Joseph decided to tell 1 of the priests. The priest told Joseph's worried face not to stress about it, " there is probably somewhere you haven't looked." The priest said in a low and secretive voice. They both started looking. No sign of poor Malcolm. After a few agonising minutes the priest got everyone to start looking. 10 minutes later, no luck. Half an hour later, no luck. 45 minutes later, still no sign of Malcolm. 1 whole hour later, Joseph spotted a figure in the corner of his eye beside a clear, fast running river. It was Malcolm. It turned out Malcolm missed his family, but Joseph was a really good friend and he cheered Malcolm up in no time. They all went back to Scalan including Malcolm with great big smiles on their faces and Scalan turned out to be no regret at all.

The years had passed by and everyone could leave Scalan to go back to their proud beyond measurable parents. Guess what, Joseph and Malcolm had done it, they were fully trained priests.

By Jack Hutcheson





The time by the goodness of God will come, when the Catholic religion will again flourish in Scotland; and then, when posterity shall enquire, with a laudable curiosity, by what means any sparks of the true faith were preserved in these dismal times of darkness and error, Scalan and the other colleges will be mentioned with veneration, and all that can be recorded concerning them will be recorded with care...”

The above comes from an address given by Rev. John Geddes to his students in the Scots College, Valladolid, Spain, on 18 June 1777, at a meeting of the community known as “The Academy”. He was the saviour of Scalan as its rector, 1762-67, built the house we can visit today, and established it as a centre of excellence in piety, learning and even agriculture. In 1770 he was sent to Spain to rescue the Scotch College, Madrid. He re-established it in the northern city of Valladolid where it flourished for over 200 years before it re-located to Salamanca in 1988. There are many priests in Scotland today who are “Spaniards”, as they are known, former students of the Royal Scots College, Spain.