

Christmas Reflection

Today, as the winds of war are blowing in our world and an outdated model of development continues to produce human, societal and environmental decline. Christmas invites us to focus on the sign of the child and to recognise him in the faces of little children, especially this for whom like Jesus, 'there is no place at the inn'. (Lk 2:7)

We see Jesus in the children worldwide wherever peace and security are threatened by the danger of tensions and new conflicts.

We see Jesus in the children of unemployed parents who struggle to offer their children a secure and peaceful future.

The sign of Christmas has been revealed to us, 'a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes'. (Lk 2:12)

Like the Virgin Mary and St Joseph, like the shepherds of Bethlehem, may we welcome in the baby Jesus, the love of God made man for us. May we commit ourselves with the help of His grace, to making our world more human and more worthy for the children of today and of the future.

**Pope Francis, Christmas message
2017**

A Short History

Our Society grew from a seed sown by Mgr. Philip Flannigan. He was parish priest at Sacred Heart Parish in Bellshill where he also looked after the spiritual welfare of staff and patients of the then largest maternity hospital in Lanarkshire, Bellshill Maternity. This was around the time of The Abortion Act (1967) of David Steel and the Mgr. and his assistant priests experienced first hand some of its worst effects.

As a result of his concerns and with the support of Bishop Thomson, the Bishop of Motherwell, the Society of the Innocents was formed in Lanarkshire in 1977.

Two Sisters of the Franciscans of the Immaculate Conception were deployed to work alongside volunteer counsellors.

Bishop Thomson initially made available the old Parish house in Laird St in Coatbridge. Three moves later we find ourselves back in Laird St. Coatbridge.

Over forty years, on the Society is supported by Right Reverend Joseph Toal, Bishop of Motherwell; Fr Hugh Kelly, Chaplain; our Franciscan Sisters, Sr. Rosaria & Sr. Maria Goretti, and volunteer counsellors.

What we do!

A range of services is available to any women or girl who thinks they may be pregnant and for whom the pregnancy is likely to cause a problem.

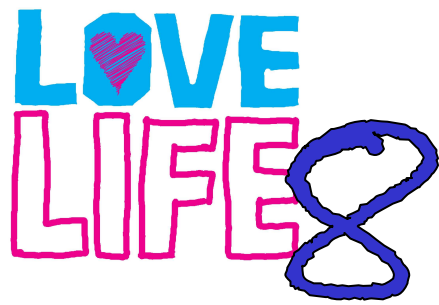
These services include:

- Practical help
- Confidential counselling
- Free pregnancy testing

IN ADDITION:

Counsellors also speak in schools on the development of the baby in the womb and the long-term effects abortion can have both emotionally and physically for the mother.

We are supported by Pro Life Cells which have been formed in schools, parishes & local communities. These groups offer support both practically, by providing layettes, and spiritually by praying for the pro life cause.



An informative day was held for secondary school pupils hosted by the Society of the Innocents. We held our eighth successful annual schools' conference in Motherwell Football Club on the morning of Friday 27th September.

The conference, titled Love Life 8, was attended by mainly fourth year pupils from five schools; Our Lady's High School, Motherwell, St Andrew's & St Bride's HS, Fernhill HS, St Maurices', and Trinity HS.

The speakers were the Society of the Innocents who gave a short introduction. Then Emmet Dooley from SPUC who talked about 'The Human Experience' followed by the Project Truth team who facilitated a workshop titled 'Qualities in a Partner'. And Finally Fr Michael Kane who discussed 'The Theology of the Body'.

The young adults were extremely enthusiastic throughout the whole session. This was one of our highest number of school attendances to date. We thank them for their interest and participation.

Keep an eye open for Love Life 9, September 2019.

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**JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL HOLY
INNOCENTS MASS ON FRIDAY 28TH
DECEMBER IN ST PATRICK'S,
COATBRIDGE AT 10AM.**

The Society of the Innocents Lanarkshire



Christmas Joy to

*Grant us, Oh Lord, a new appreciation
of the sanctity of human life.
Show us how to make our Society,
one in which no child is unwanted,
no adult feels abandoned,
and the pressures which lead to
abortion,
no longer exist.
Grant Lord that those who
acknowledge the sanctity of life,
will be inspired by your son to lead a
life of sanctity,
Amen*

December 2018

