

This Week in our Parishes ...

Sunday 25 January	Third Sunday of the Year —Year A Children's Liturgy at both morning Masses today 10.30 St. Columba's: Sister Karin's Sacramental Preparation groups for First Confession, First Holy Communion and Confirmation Teas and coffees after morning Mass in each Parish
Monday 26	7.30pm, RCIA meeting, St. Peter's Parish room
Tuesday 27	Teas and coffees after Mass at St. Columba's 7pm, St. Columba's Parish Pastoral Council meeting, Parish room
Wednesday 28	7 - 8.30pm Catholic Teens Group, St. Columba's hall
Thursday 29	7 - 9pm, Our second 'Eat and Share' will take place in the St. Peter's Parish Room
Saturday 31	After 12noon and 5.30pm Vigil Mass: fundraising stall raising school fees for children in India*
Sunday 1 February	Fourth Sunday of the Year —Year A At 09.30 and 11.30 Masses today we celebrate the Rite of Illumination Children's Liturgy at both morning Masses today 10.30 St. Columba's: Sister Karin's Sacramental Preparation groups for First Confession, First Holy Communion and Confirmation Teas and coffees after morning Mass in each Parish - and at St. Peter's there will be a fundraising stall raising school fees for children in India*

The special collection for the **White Flower, SPUC Appeal** raised **£1205.55** (St. Columba's £647.17 and St. Peter's £558.38). Thank you for your generosity to support SPUCs vital work protecting life from conception to natural death.

The next **Teens Group is on Wednesday 28 January, 7pm** (for P7- S4). Join for games, chat and snacks the last Wednesday of the month at St. Columba's halls. New members from any school or Parish warmly welcomed. Ask your Parent/guardian to register your interest at teens.stcolumbaedinburgh@staned.org.uk.

Our second 'Eat and Share': 7-9pm, this Thursday 29 January, St. Peter's Parish Room. Bring food to share; Fr. Daniel will lead a discussion on the topic of The Diocese of Bauchi and the differences between his experience in his own diocese and his first 4 months with us.

Next Saturday 31 January & Sunday 1 February. St. Peter's Parish Council has a project to help vulnerable people in India, through our partner, the St. Agnes charitable foundation, who help poorest Indian children living in some of the worst conditions. We aim to raise **£500 to pay school fees** (St. Agnes foundation will provide the schooling). £75 covers a year's school fees/needs for one child. The average price of a coffee in Edinburgh is £3.50, 21 cups equals the fee for a school year. Could you pay the price of a coffee towards the school fees of a child in India or buy a jar of jam or cacti for your home? You can do this Saturday 31 January & Sunday 1 February at the St. Peter's Parish charity stand. We can't help everyone but maybe we can help fellow Catholics in a country which is not covered by large international organisations.

Next Sunday 1 February we celebrate the **Rite of Illumination** at the 09.30 and 11.30 Masses. In



Concise History and Geography of the Catholic Diocese of Bauchi.

Fr. Daniel Magaji

The Catholic Diocese of Bauchi is situated in north-eastern Nigeria and historically covered the territories of Bauchi and Gombe States, with a vast combined land area of about 69,000 km², making it one of the largest dioceses in Nigeria by geographical size. The region lies within the Sudan-Sahel savannah belt, marked by open grasslands, wide plains, and seasonal rivers. It experiences a tropical climate with a long dry season from October to May, often intensified by the harmattan, and a short rainy season from June to September. Much of the diocese is rural, with scattered settlements and challenging terrain, factors that significantly shape pastoral outreach and missionary activity.

Although the total population of the area runs into about 9 million or more, Catholics remain a small minority, estimated at 70,000–100,000 faithful, roughly 1% of the population. This minority status has given the diocese a distinctly missionary character. Today, pastoral ministry is carried out by 63 diocesan priests, 4 military priests, 16 religious priests, 4 transitional deacons, 10 religious sisters, and 37 seminarians, alongside other pastoral agents.

Early Missionary Foundation From Edinburgh: A decisive turning point in the history of the local Church came with the Edinburgh Diocesan Mission to Bauchi in the early 1960s. Inspired by a strong missionary vision, Scottish priests, drawing on experience of a similar missionary zeal with SMA missionaries already present, laid firm foundations for evangelisation. Frs. Danny Simpson and McAllister (1964) were among the pioneers, later joined by other Scottish missionaries. Who were Fr. John McKinnon in 1964, Frs. Tony McNally John Gibbons and David McCann in 1965, Fr. John Agnew in 1966 and the last was Fr. Aidan Canon who came in 1976 and still the last to leave in 1991.

In 1965, Fr. Danny Simpson opened the strategically important but isolated mission of St. Giles, Gambar, an area difficult to access, especially during the rainy season. Missionary outreach soon expanded to the Tangale people around Billiri, where St. Andrew's Mission was established, opening a new horizon for evangelisation in the region.

Political Crisis and Missionary Trials: The mission developed amid intense national upheaval. In December 1965, the death of Fr. John Gibbons, parish priest of Bauchi, following a tragic road accident, deeply affected the young mission. Barely a month later, Nigeria was plunged into crisis by the January 1966 military coup, which claimed the lives of key national leaders and destabilised the country. These events disrupted missionary work and highlighted the fragility of Church structures in Northern Nigeria.

Growth through Religious Congregations: Despite these challenges, the mission expanded steadily. In 1973, the Ursuline Sisters Sr. Patricia Fogarty, Mary Teresa Ryan and Mary McCluskey from Edinburgh arrived in Bauchi, marking a major boost to healthcare and social outreach, particularly in Gambar, where a clinic was expanded and officially opened in 1974. Their dedicated service left a lasting legacy and inspired further missionary commitment beyond Bauchi.

In 1977, the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus arrived in Bauchi town to strengthen Catholic education and parish ministry, consolidating the Church's presence in the urban centre.

Structural Challenge: By the mid-1970s, however, declining missionary vocations in Scotland led to a gradual withdrawal of personnel. The mission was eventually returned to the Diocese of Jos around 1981, but limited manpower hindered sustained growth across such a vast territory.

These challenges underscored the long-recognised need for a distinct ecclesiastical structure for Bauchi, capable of ensuring continuity, local leadership, and long-term pastoral commitment—an aspiration that ultimately shaped the emergence and identity of the Catholic Diocese of Bauchi as a missionary Church rooted in perseverance, service, and hope today.

Reflection

Christ is the light of the world.
His light was not lit once in Palestine and then extinguished.
It continues to shine for all who believe in him.
It is a persistent and defiant light that no darkness can overpower.

Lord Jesus, may your gentle and sure light guide us along the unfolding road, so that we may walk with confidence towards the light that never fades and the life that never ends.

