

FATHER FRANK'S LOG: 30th JUNE – 7th JULY 2024

The last few days have been dominated by end of term/leavers Masses in our three primary schools, as well as shows, prizegiving, and presentation ceremonies. Each school had its own unique approach to the celebrations and thankfully all went well. I have great admiration for the commitment and dedication of the teachers and staff of these schools, in what is not an easy task these days, and I could see how they were all very much ready for a break. I hope that they are able to relax, enjoy it, and come back refreshed. Having two nieces who are primary school teachers, I know that every day of their holidays has been very hard-earned.

In the background of course, the Euros have been taking place and sadly, as I write, Scotland have already come home. *No sir, we can't boogie!* At least the team has come home, it may yet take a while for some of the supporters to come home, and some may never come home, if tales of Lisbon 1967 and Seville 2003 are to be believed. In our estate in Bishopbriggs, we must be considered very boring neighbours. At times like Christmas and Halloween, the houses and gardens in the estate, especially those with children, are magnificently decorated, including our nearest neighbours, while we take a rather minimalist approach. It was the same with the Euros, with Saltires and Lions Rampant in abundance, except for us. I suppose, with a Welshman, an Indian, and an Irishman in the community, and only two Scots, there wasn't universal interest and excitement. On the opening day of the Euros, we had our Friday take-away early, and then settled down to watch the *Scotland v Germany* game. By the time the second half started the rest of the community had disappeared to bed, and I was left sitting on my own to feel the pain. The late Father Lawrence's measure of a real Celtic supporter was whether or not you felt real pain in defeat. By that measure I must have proved myself a real Scotland supporter that night. I also suffered real pain through the next two games until the final humiliation of a last-second goal conceded to Hungary proved terminal. The following night, driving home to Bishopbriggs from my younger brother's house in Drumchapel, I was listening to *Superscoreboard* on Radio Clyde, where my older brother, the doyen of Scottish sports journalists, was one of the pundits. The presenter, tongue in cheek, introduced him to the accompaniment of the *Darth Vader* theme from the *Star Wars* movies, suggesting that my brother had been some kind of harbinger of death for predicting the kind of outcome that in fact turned out to be the case. As noted before, his wife, children and grandchildren would most likely have chosen the theme from *One Foot in the Grave*, as their perpetual nickname for him is Victor Meldrew – alias Mister Grumpy. Of course, he laps all this up with relish and good humour, and enjoys playing his role of doomsayer. It's all in a day's work.

Even though Scotland have come home, the Euros are still on, and I have to decide now who to switch my allegiance to. Having lived very happily in Rome for a while, and experiencing the passion and the pain that they feel, I always have a soft spot for Italy, and so perhaps that's who I will be cheering on. Of course, the next week or so will also be dominated by the forthcoming election, and I will have to decide where my allegiance lies there too. As this is the last log before the summer break, I expect that by the next time I write, we will be living under a very different regime. I am praying at this time for discernment in my voting choice.

Thank you, as always, for reading *Father Frank's Log*, whether that's weekly on the website, or monthly in the Flourish; and thank you for the affirmation and encouragement I receive. As you know, I write about anything and everything in the belief that God is there to be found in all the little ordinary, mundane, everyday things. God is in all things, and there is nothing too secular that it doesn't have an element of the sacred in it. I will look forward to resuming the log sometime soon. Life goes on, and so does God, always and everywhere.

As ever, protect yourself, your loved ones and others, and protect Christ in your lives.