



**PARISH
BULLETIN**
**St Kieran's,
the Catholic
Church** *in*
Campbeltown and Islay

Ceann Loch Chille Chiarain

12th March 2023

**The 3rd Sunday of
Lent**

St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

Sunday, 12th March, 3rd Sunday of Lent, The Bitter Lamentations, 9.45am, Holy Mass, **10.00am.**

Monday: Holy Mass, **6.00pm**

Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday: Holy Mass, **10.00am**

Devotions: Wednesday: Mid-morning Prayer, 9.50am.

Friday: Adoration and Mid-morning Prayer, 9.30am.

Scripture Discussion: Friday: 10.30am

Saturday, 18th March, Vigil Mass, 6.00pm

Sunday, 19th March, 4th Sunday of Lent, The Lenten Lamentations, 9.45am, Holy Mass, **10.00am.**

St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Bridgend, Islay.

Sunday 19th March, Holy Mass, 4 pm

Hymns

Processional

190 Guide me, O thou great Redeemer (Keys)

Offertory

690 Eat this bread (McLennan)

Post Communion

46 As the deer longs (Keys)

Final

579 Vaster far than any ocean (Mayhew)



Psalm response

O that today you would listen to his voice! 'Harden not your hearts.'

Gospel acclamation

Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!

Lord, you are really the saviour of the world:

give me the living water, so that I may never get thirsty.

Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!

Communion Antiphon

For anyone who drinks it, says the Lord,

the water I shall give will become in him

a spring welling up to eternal life.

Take Five

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time.

Monday, Mar 13, 2023

LENTEN WEEKDAY

On the frontiers of servanthood

Isaiah had prophesied that the Messiah would come in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring freedom to those oppressed by sin and evil (see Isaiah 61:1-2). Jesus came to set people free from the worst tyranny possible – the tyranny of slavery to sin and the fear of death, and the destruction of both body and soul. God's power alone can save us from emptiness and poverty of spirit, from confusion and error, and from the fear of death and hopelessness. The Gospel of salvation is "good news" for us today. Get to know the joy and freedom of the Gospel.

TODAY'S READINGS: *2 Kings 5:1-15b; Luke 4:24-30. "Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place."*

Tuesday, Mar 14, 2023

LENTEN WEEKDAY

No room for resentment

If we do not forgive our fellow man, we cannot expect God to forgive us. Saint James says that judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy (James 2:13). Mercy is truly a gift and it is offered in such a way that justice is not negated. Mercy "seasons" justice as "salt" seasons meat and gives it flavour. Mercy follows justice and perfects it. To pardon the unrepentant is not mercy but license. C.S. Lewis, the Christian author wrote: "Mercy will flower only when it grows in the crannies of the rock of Justice: transplanted to the marshlands of mere Humanitarianism, it becomes a man-eating weed, all the more dangerous because it is still called by the same name as the mountain variety." If we want mercy shown to us, we must be ready to forgive others as God has forgiven us. Do you hold any grudge or resentment towards anyone?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Daniel 3:25, 34-43; Matthew 18:21-35. "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him?"*

Wednesday, Mar 15, 2023

LENTEN WEEKDAY

The truth is worth the struggle

The law of God is truth and when we live according to that truth it produces the fruits of righteousness, holiness, peace, and joy. Jesus taught reverence for God's law — reverence for

God Himself, for the Lord's Day, reverence or respect for parents, respect for life, for property, for another person's good name, respect for oneself and for one's neighbour lest wrong or hurtful desires master us. Reverence and respect for God's commandments teach us the way of love – love of God and love of neighbour. What is impossible to men is possible to God and those who have faith in God. God gives us the grace to love as He loves, to forgive as He forgives, to think as He thinks, and to act as He acts. The Lord loves righteousness and hates wickedness. As His followers we must love His commandments and hate every form of sin. Loving the commands of the Lord is the path to happiness.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9; Matthew 5:17-19. "Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life; you have the words of everlasting life."*

Thursday, Mar 16, 2023

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Let God carry it

The comedy-drama *The Banshees of Inisherin* features a man gloomy about his eventual death going to Confession over a period of weeks. Each time, the priest asks, "And how is the despair?" implying despair itself might be seen as a sin — rather tough but also tender in the way the priest wants to understand the whole man. The Church upholds hope as a virtue and warns against despair because it can leave no room for God's grace. That said, the Church has long shown compassion for the complexities of depression in its many forms. Whatever your emotional state, consider turning today's burdens over to God.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Jeremiah 7:23-28; Luke 11:14-23. "But if it is by the finger of God that I drive out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you."*

Friday, Mar 17, 2023

FEAST OF SAINT PATRICK, BISHOP

As luck would have it

The Lord expects great things from us: namely, to love God with our whole heart, soul, and mind, and to love our neighbour as ourselves. Are humans really capable of such love? Irish writer Oscar Wilde had his doubts: "I sometimes think that God in creating man somewhat overestimated his ability." We human

beings do tend to make a mess of things when left to our own devices, but luckily for us, we have a loving God who sent Jesus to show us the way to love, and the Holy Spirit to keep us on the path of love. In honour of Saint Patrick, remember to draw on the Trinity as you continually recalibrate your trajectory toward love.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Peter 4:7-11; Luke 5:1-11. "Leave me, Lord; I am sinful man."*

Saturday, Mar 18, 2023

COMMEMORATION OF SAINT CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

The fragrance of forgiveness

Cyril, a fourth-century bishop of Jerusalem and a doctor of the church, was instrumental in forming the church's doctrinal understanding of the Holy Spirit. He wrote, "The Spirit comes gently and makes himself known by his fragrance. He is not felt as a burden for God is light . . . The Spirit comes with the tenderness of a true friend to save, to heal, to teach, to counsel, to strengthen and to console." The formula for absolution in the sacrament of Reconciliation identifies the Holy Spirit as sent "for the forgiveness of sins." Celebrate the sacrament this Lent.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Hosea 6:1-6; Luke 18:9-14. "O God, be merciful to me a sinner."*

Readings for the 3rd Sunday of Lent

Exodus 17:3-7

In the desert, the people grumble about the God who ignores their thirst.

Psalms 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

God is the Rock of salvation from which flows living water.

Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

Jesus did not die for a just people, but for sinners.

John 4:5-42

Jesus offers living water to a woman who dares to ask a few questions.

Words on the Word



Jesus, the Samaritan woman, and the water of life

The encounter with Christ, faith and baptism as the way to eternal life

On the first Sunday of Lent, we accompanied Jesus into the desert. Together with Him, we took up the fight against Satan's temptations. Last Sunday we were assured that after the sufferings of this life, glory is prepared for those who are faithful to Christ. Today we listen to Christ's explanations about the living water (cf. Jn 4:5-42). Jesus taught us about the water of life when He met the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well near the town of Sychar (cf. Jn 4:3). The woman used to come to the well to draw water necessary for life. We all know

that without water there is no life. There is only desert and unquenchable thirst. You can survive for weeks without food, but you cannot survive without water. Without water there is no present or eternal life, because the ordinary way to eternal life is faith and baptism with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. It should also be added that the way to eternal life is an encounter with Christ, a union with Him.

Life-giving encounters: Abraham's servant and Rebekah- Jesus and the Samaritan woman

The Samaritan woman was very lucky to meet a tired-out Jesus at Jacob's well at noon. Her meeting with Jesus reminds of a similar meeting from the history of salvation described in the Book of Genesis – of Abraham's servant with the future wife of Isaac, Rebekah, granddaughter of Nachor, Abraham's brother (Genesis 24:15; see Gen 24). Abraham sent his servant to his family side to Aram-Naharaim, that the servant should bring a wife promised for his son, Isaac. This servant arrived at the indicated place. "There, in the evening, he unsaddled camels by the well outside the city, just when the women went out to fetch water. And he prayed, Lord God of my Lord Abraham, make me meet her today. (...) let the girl to whom I say: Tilt the pitcher for me that I may drink, and she will answer me: Drink . . . be the one you have appointed for your servant Isaac; then I will know that you are kind to my master" (Genesis 24:11-12, 14). And that's how it happened. The servant received the sign he had prayed for. Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel, a very beautiful virgin, "quickly lowered her pitcher" (Genesis 24:18) and gave drink to the servant of Abraham.

The Samaritan woman to whom Jesus said, "Give me a drink" (John 4:7) started a conversation with Him, during which she asked if Jesus was greater than the patriarch Jacob, whose mother was Rebekah. These two women have something in common: Rebekah contributed to the fulfilment of God's promises, gave birth to Jacob and ensured the continuity of Abraham's descendants. After meeting Jesus, the Samaritan woman returned to her town and told others about Him: "Come and see a man who has told me everything I ever did; I wonder if he is the Christ?" (J 4:29). Rebekah met the servant sent by Abraham. The Samaritan woman met the Servant of Yahweh, the Son sent by God the Father. There are also differences between the two women. Rebekah was at the root of the promise given to Abraham. The Samaritan woman lived to see the hour of this important watershed in the promises of God. The sign of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was circumcision in the flesh. The sign of the heirs of Jesus is birth through water and the Holy Spirit. Rebekah quenched the thirst of Abraham's servant. The Samaritan woman asked Jesus to give her a drink from the spring of living water, which becomes "a spring inside, welling up to eternal life" (J 4:14).

Our life-giving encounter with Jesus

Today the Samaritan woman plays the role of a disciple of Christ who has understood the mystery of the living water. She humbly accepted the truth about herself and recognized it, and then she told others about Jesus, leading the inhabitants of her town to meet Him. And after meeting Jesus and listening to Him, they themselves confessed: "Now we no longer believe because of what you told us; we have heard him ourselves and we know that he really is the saviour of the world" (J 4:42).

Abraham's servant led Rebekah to Isaac. Jesus led the Samaritan woman to know the true God. It remains to include the Church and people in this history of salvation. The Church leads us to faith in God, and in the Church we are reborn through Baptism to eternal life.

Water is a double symbol: on the one hand it is life-giving and on the other it is deadly. It can be a powerful element that brings death, which we find out whenever we hear about tsunamis or floods. This dual symbolism perfectly illustrates the reality that takes place in the sacrament of baptism.

In his encyclical on faith, *Lumen Fidei*, Pope Francis referred to the ambivalent symbolism of

baptismal water when he wrote: "water is at once a symbol of death, inviting us to convert our 'I' so that it opens up to a greater 'I', but also a symbol of life, the womb in which we are reborn, imitating Christ in his new existence (...). The action of Christ touches us in our personal reality, transforming us radically, making us become adopted sons of God, partakers of his divine nature." In baptism, we also received the gift of the Holy Spirit, which enables us to proclaim Jesus as Lord and Saviour. First, when we were children, someone else told us about the Lord Jesus as the Messiah, as the Samaritan woman told the inhabitants of her town. Then, listening to the words of the Lord Jesus, we ourselves became convinced that He is the Saviour of the world.

Constantly calling Jesus "give me a drink"

The great Spanish mystic St. Teresa of Ávila (1515-1583) very much liked the image of the Samaritan woman sitting by the well. She knew that God, in His mercy, denied no one the desire for eternity, the desire to be united with Him in love. Teresa felt this desire and prayed, saying: "and with this I die because I cannot die."

Living, Teresa, you die wounded

by the love of the Lord who lives in you;

You have given your soul and heart to Him,

but you are dying because you cannot die.

Burnt by the heat of longing beyond your strength,

every day waiting for the moment to depart,

death you already experience death so as to unite with God,

but you are dying because you cannot die. (Hymn on the Memorial of St. Teresa of Ávila, Vespers)

May this desire also fill our hearts. We were born from the life-giving source of Holy Baptism and received the gift of the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us in all our affliction (cf. Jn 14:16; 2 Cor 1:4). We have already received what the Samaritan woman desired – streams of living water welling up to eternal life (cf. Jn 4:14; 7:38). Before His meal in Jerusalem, after "the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him" (Jn 7:32b), Jesus referred to the topic He had raised with the Samaritan woman and "proclaimed, 'If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, *Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.*' Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." (John 7:37-39).

We have already received the Holy Spirit, because Jesus was glorified by his passion, death, resurrection and ascension: "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom 5:5). Every day we can draw from the inexhaustible source that is Jesus. We can drink the "spiritual drink" from the accompanying "spiritual rock, and this rock is . . . Christ" (1 Cor 10:4). Every day we can and should invoke the Holy Spirit: "Come, Holy Spirit, send down from heaven the stream of your light taken (. . .). At work you are coolness, in the heat you are living water, in weeping you are a comfort".

Lord Jesus, give us Your Spirit every day. Let us draw from the source of the water of life.

Strengthen our faith in Your word. Give us the strength to abandon the deep darkness of vice and the sources of harmful passions, and kindle in us an unquenchable thirst for You, the source of eternal life (cf. Ambrosian Preface).

Is There Life

After Death?

Do we have scientific proof for the existence of an immortal human soul, one that continues to live after the death of the body, but in an even more intense and complete way than on earth?

According to a Gallup poll, 5% of all people have had an experience of getting a glimpse of the next life after recovering from what was apparently a clinical death. (P. van Lommel, *Consciousness Beyond Life: The Science of the Near-Death Experience*, 2007). This experience is referred to as a near-death experience (NDE). **Many famous personalities have survived clinical death, during which they had an NDE.** They include American actresses Elizabeth Taylor and Jane Seymour, as well as the English actor and director Peter Sellers. The Italian scientist, eurobiologist

Umberto Scapagnini, who survived clinical death, met both his mother, who had died a year earlier, and St. Padre Pio during this experience (cf. Antonio Socci, *Those who have returned from beyond*, Kraków 2014, p. 107).

In the years 1975-2005, 42 scientific papers were published regarding 2,500 people who had experienced clinical death and had subsequently come back to life (resuscitated). Thanks to these publications, the scientific community began to change its attitude towards the accounts of people who had experienced recovery from clinical death.

The breakthrough came with the scientific publication of Pim van Lommel and a team of Dutch experts in the medical journal *The Lancet*. These researchers studied 60 patients who survived clinical death. In each case, the ECG (heart) recorded cessation of function, and the EEG (brain) was flat. From a medical point of view, these patients were clinically dead, at which point their souls left their bodies. After leaving the body, these souls retained full self-awareness. They could see and hear everything clearly, but they were invisible to people on earth.

Blind Since Birth

In his book *Eternal Consciousness*, Dr. van Lommel cites testimonies of survivors of clinical death. It describes the case of Vicki, a woman blind since birth, who experienced clinical death as a result of a car accident.

It happened in 1973 when the woman was 22 years old. During the accident, Vicki was completely unconscious. Her skull was fractured and her cervical and thoracic vertebrae cracked. **When the doctors confirmed her clinical death, the girl's soul left her body and she began to see everything clearly for the first time in her life.** From above, she watched the wreckage of the car; then she saw her body as it was



being transported to the hospital; and the medical team that was performing the resuscitation.

Vicki recognised her body through the wedding ring, which she knew only by touch. She described her extraordinary experience as follows: “I had never seen anything before: no light, no shadow, nothing at all . . . In dreams, I did not see pictures or any visual representations. My senses were just taste, touch, sound and smell. I didn’t experience any visual sensations. The first thing I remembered after the accident was myself at the Harbour View Medical Centre looking down on everything. I was afraid because I had never seen anything before, I had never had any visual experiences before! At first, I was terrified. Eventually, I recognized my wedding ring and my hair. I thought: is that my body lying down there? Have I died or what? They kept shouting, “She’s still not breathing, still not breathing!” And they kept doing something with the body that I had just discovered was my body. I had this feeling: ‘What for? Why are they trying so hard?’ I decided to leave because I couldn’t

communicate with these people anyway. As soon as I thought that, I flew up and passed through the ceiling as if it wasn’t there. It was wonderful to be outside and to be free. I wasn’t afraid of hitting anything. I didn’t know where I was going. I heard vivid sounds, like wind chimes as well as other sounds that were the most incredible imaginable – from the lowest to the highest tones.

As I approached a particular area, I saw trees, birds and a few people. It was as if they were woven out of light. I could see them, it was amazing, really great. I was stunned by this discovery because I could never imagine light. And there was something else. I still feel touched when I talk about it . . . I had the impression that I could have any knowledge I wanted. In this other world I met some friends who welcomed me. There were five of them. Debby and Diana were my friends from school who had died long ago, one of them at the age of eleven years old and the other at the age of six. Both were blind and mentally challenged, but here they could see and they looked radiant and beautiful. They were healthy

and full of life. They were no longer children, but rather at the age of the peak of female beauty. Aside from them, I saw the Zilks, a couple who took care of me when I was a child. They were both already dead. Then I met my grandmother who actually raised me. She died two years before my accident. Grandma stood back a little and reached out her arms to give me a hug . . . and then I was sent back to my body. The pain was unbearable.”

What Vicki saw at the time of clinical death has been verified and confirmed by eyewitnesses. So these were not the hallucinations of a young woman, but an objective view of reality. Vicki’s body was dead, so neither her brain nor her senses were functioning, but despite the death of her body, she came back to life. During the time when she was clinically dead she had acute awareness, memory, and the ability to see and recognize. Vicki’s testimony about her experience of the fullness of life after death of the body refutes all atheistic dogmas that man does not have an immortal soul and ceases to exist at the time of death.

(Part 2 next Sunday)

Scotland’s Catholic Bishops issue statement on the Relationship between Conscience and Politics

The Bishops’ Conference of Scotland has today issued a statement on conscience and religion in the political sphere. In the statement, the conference state: “holding or expressing religious beliefs and values does not and should not debar any individual from leadership in public office”. It adds: “we are particularly troubled by the increasing prevalence of political parties removing the right of conscience from their parliamentarians on votes involving contentious moral issues”.

The full text of the statement is shown on the next page.



Bishops' Conference of Scotland

Statement on the Relationship between Conscience and Politics

Although the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion are fundamental human rights and an individual's religion and belief are protected characteristics in equalities legislation, recent events have left many citizens seriously concerned over the negative characterisation of religion in civic life. These concerns focus on two interconnected issues: disqualification from political leadership and the silencing of conscience in general. We share these concerns.

Regarding leadership, it has been suggested that Kate Forbes MSP is unsuited to leading her party and to becoming First Minister because of her religious convictions. We feel obliged to restate the well-established civic principle, that holding or expressing religious beliefs and values does not and should not debar any individual from leadership in public office.

Regarding the silencing of conscience in general, we are particularly troubled by the increasing prevalence of political parties removing the right of conscience from their parliamentarians on votes involving contentious moral issues. Such actions inhibit freedom and are insidiously conformist in nature. They compromise open and honest debate and risk marginalising minority groups.

In his address to parliamentarians and civic leaders in Westminster Hall in 2010 Pope Benedict XVI lamented the "marginalisation" of religion which he described as a worrying sign of "a failure to appreciate" what he described as "the legitimate role of religion in the public square." He went on to offer a positive prospectus where "the Church and the public authorities can work together for the good of citizens" through the promotion of "dialogue and respect at every level". We echo these sentiments and urge our civic leaders to recognise the dignity of the human person and the right of everyone to participate without discrimination in civic society according to their beliefs and conscience; without this guarantee our society cannot be free nor fair.

Prayer

Please pray for those who are sick, in need or have asked for our prayers:

Lilian Cox, Madge McWhirter, Sarah Carmichael, Catherine Walker, Ailsa Stewart, Meg Douglas (Mull), Doleen Durnin, and Russell Carroll.

Please remember in your prayers John Savage, Jane (Jean) Finn and all whose anniversaries occur at this time.



News and Events

Tea and coffee in the hall after Sunday Mass. Our visitors are most welcome, please come along.

The SCIAF Wee Boxes are available in the church porch. Collect your change and bring them back for Palm Sunday.

Readers for Holy Week: Palm Sunday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil all need extra readers in addition to the scheduled reader. Please let Fiona Fox or Fr Tony know if you are available.

Live streaming – on Facebook (see below for link).



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