

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

Campbeltown and Islay
Ceann Loch Chille Chiarain
26th March 2023

The 5th Sunday of Lent

St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

Sunday, 26th March, 5th Sunday of Lent; The Bitter Lamentations, 9.45am;
Holy Mass, **10.00am.**

Monday: Holy Mass, **6.00pm**

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

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

Scripture Discussion: Friday: 10.30am

Saturday, 1st April, (1st Saturday), Holy Mass and Holy Rosary, 10.00am; **Vigil Mass, 6.00pm**

Sunday, 2nd April, Palm Sunday, The Bitter Lamentations, 9.40am;
Blessing of Palms, 9.55am; Holy Mass, **10.00am.**

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

Palm Sunday, 2nd April, Blessing of Palms and Holy Mass, 4.00pm

Easter Sunday, 9th April, Holy Mass and the Blessing of Easter water, 4.00 pm

Psalm response

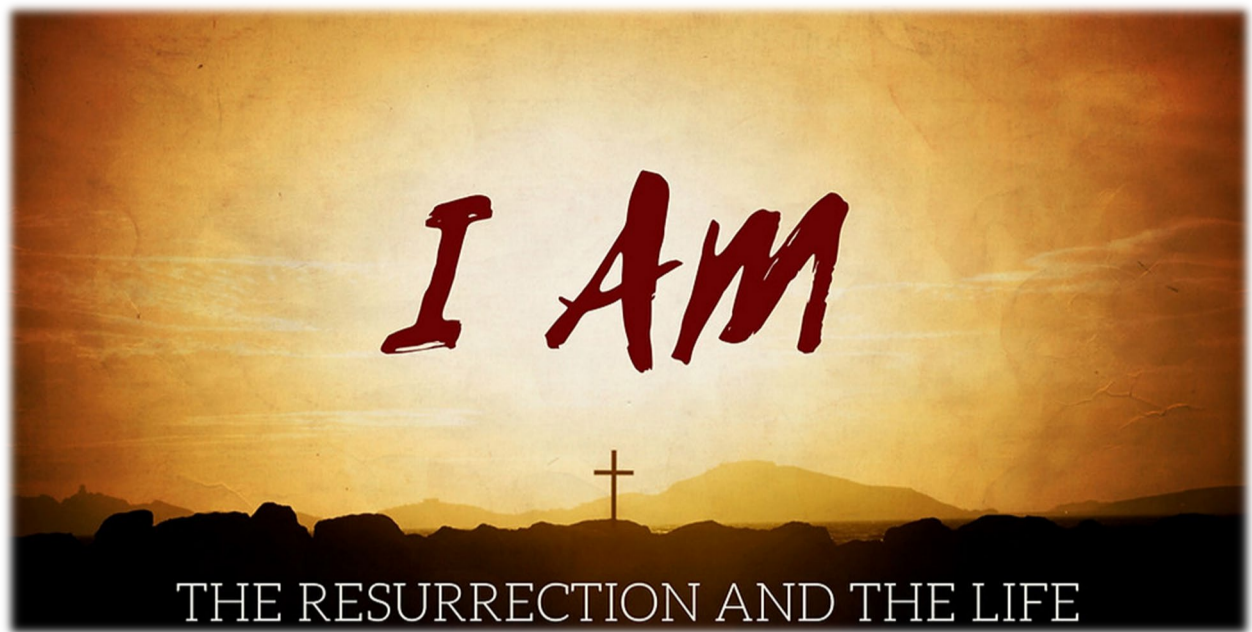
With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

Gospel acclamation

*Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!
I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord;
whoever believes in me will never die.
Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!*

Communion Antiphon

*Everyone who lives and believes in me
will not die for ever, says the Lord.*



Hymns

Processional

610 When I survey the wonderful cross (McLennan)

Offertory

158 Gifts of bread and wine (McLennan)

Post Communion

381 O bread of heaven (Keys)

Final

404 O Lord, my God (Mayhew)



Take Five

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

Monday, Mar 27, 2023

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Turn it around

The scribes and Pharisees wanted to entrap Jesus with the religious and civil authorities. That is why they brought a woman caught in adultery before Jesus. Jesus turned the challenge back towards His accusers. In effect he said: *Go ahead and stone her! But let the person who is without sin be the first to cast a stone.* The Lord leaves the matter to their own consciences. When the adulterous woman is left alone with Jesus, He both expresses mercy and He strongly exhorts her to not sin again. The scribes wished to condemn, Jesus wished to forgive and to restore the sinner to health. His challenge involved a choice – either go back to your former way of sin and death or to reach out to the new way of life and happiness with Him. Jesus gave her pardon and a new start on life. God's grace enables us to confront our sin for what it is – unfaithfulness to God, and to turn back to God with a repentant heart and a thankful spirit for God's mercy and forgiveness. Do you know the joy of repentance and a clean conscience?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Daniel 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62; John 8:1-11.* "Go, and from now on do not sin anymore."

Tuesday, Mar 28, 2023

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Keep your aim on the target

To sin conveys the meaning: *'to miss the mark'* or *'to be off target'*. The essence of sin is that it diverts us from God and from the true purpose of our lives – to know the source of all truth and beauty which is God Himself and to be united with God in everlasting joy. When Adam first sinned, he hid himself from God (Genesis 3:8-10). That is what sin does; it separates us from the One who is all loving, all-wise, and all-just. Jesus went on to explain that if people could not recognise Him in His word then they would recognize Him in the Cross – when the Son of Man is lifted up. The cross is the ultimate proof of God's love for us. *God so loved the world that He gave us His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life* (John 3:16). To fail to recognise Jesus and where He came from is to remain in spiritual darkness; to believe Jesus and His

words is to walk in the joy and light of God's truth. There are certain opportunities in life that come and do not return. Each of us is given the opportunity to know and to accept Jesus Christ, as Lord and Saviour. But that opportunity can be rejected and lost. Life here is limited and short, but how we live it has everlasting consequences. Take advantage of the present time to make (more) room for God so that your will chooses life with God for eternity.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Numbers 21:4-9; John 8:21-30.* "You belong to this world, but I do not belong to this world."

Wednesday, Mar 29, 2023

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Redemption is at hand

Though they, along with other ancient societies, engaged in some forms of household slavery, Jews as a general rule frowned upon the institution. Slaves who were not Jewish were to be offered conversion to Judaism and if they became Jews, immediately freed. Jews were also required to redeem Jewish slaves from non-Jewish owners. Memory of their own captivity in Egypt and Babylonia loomed large, and they resented Jesus promising to free them. But when Jesus spoke of the truth setting Jews free, He was talking about another kind of enslavement, the kind we all fall into through inept actions, behaviours, habits, compulsions. Look honestly at what might be restricting your inner freedom and ask Jesus to redeem you.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Daniel 3:14-20, 91-92, 95; John 8:31-42.* "We are descendants of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How can you say, 'You will become free'?"

Thursday, Mar 30, 2023

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Help your unbelief

Can a believer doubt? It can be a relief to learn that a whole school of thought among Catholic theologians asserts that doubt, while seemingly corrosive, can actually bolster faith in the end. Doubt can lead to exploration, which often leads to better understanding, greater clarity, or sometimes simply a willingness to not know, to live without all questions fully answered, leaning into religious practice with an open heart. Most would call that an adult faith. What questions nag at you? Doubt, dig, and remain

open to God.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Genesis 17:3-9; John 8:51-59. "Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever keeps my word will never see death."*

Friday, Mar 31, 2023

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Miles to go

Jesus is the perfect teacher in that He does not base his claims on what He says but on what He does. The word of God is life and power to those who believe. Jesus shows us the way to walk the path of truth and holiness. And He anoints us with his power to live the Gospel with joy and to be His witnesses in the world. Are you a doer of God's word, or a forgetful hearer only?

Write upon my heart, O Lord, the lessons of your holy word, and grant that I may be a doer of your word, and not a forgetful hearer only.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Jeremiah 20:10-13; John 10:31-42. "If I do not perform my Father's works, do not believe me; but if I perform them, even if you do not believe me, believe the works."*

Saturday, Apr 01, 2023

LENTEN WEEKDAY

A well-travelled pilgrim helped shape Holy Week

Holy Week begins tomorrow. It's in the description of Jesus' last week — immediately ahead of His death and Resurrection — that all four Gospels resemble each other the most. The Church's liturgical celebration of Holy Week, however, was a late development. Originally, Christians had only a single Paschal liturgy to observe Jesus' suffering, death, and Resurrection. Specific Holy Week liturgies for Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, and Good Friday grew from individual shrines in Jerusalem where each event occurred. Thanks to a detailed travel journal, written in 383 by a remarkable woman pilgrim to the Holy Land named Egeria, these liturgies began to take shape. As Holy Week begins, let's not only honour the women at the empty tomb but the woman who helped define Holy Week.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Ezekiel 37:21-28; John 11:45-56. "He prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, and not only for the nation."*

Readings for the 5th Sunday of Lent

Ezekiel 37:12-14

The Lord promises that the grave will not possess those who are God's own.

Psalms 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

Trust in the Lord through the long dark night of the soul.

Romans 8:8-11

The body will surely die, but the living spirit of Christ will lift us up body and soul.

John 11:1-45

Does our faith hold true, now and at the hour of our death?

Words on the Word

Two hermits had to say goodbye to each other. The younger of them had fallen ill with an incurable disease that was progressing rapidly. The elder watched him and marvelled that this dying confrere did not lose his cheerfulness. So, he asked him about the reason for such a cheerful attitude in the hours of dying. The terminally ill young hermit replied: after all, loving God means waiting joyfully to meet Him (R.B.).

* * *

Many people live in constant fear: of illness, death, job loss or family misfortune. When such an unfortunate event occurs, they fall into despair. No words of comfort have any effect, silent presence is best.

In fact, we are never prepared for calamity, and our faith cannot always soothe the pain. Even some religious and practicing people panic when they hear about cancer. It is difficult to

even say to them that it is not a misfortune they are approaching, but the Saviour. Most believers would find such comfort inappropriate.

Martha and Mary of Bethany had a similar experience. Hospitable Martha's house was again filled with acquaintances, but this time they came to bury her brother. Jesus also came and was met with the complaint: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (John 11:21). This phrase betrays a deeply hurt and disappointed person. Jesus does not react – He is silent. We notice, however, that even in the words of reproach there is still something related to the Person of Christ. "Lord, if you were here", after all meant not just that "you were not there when we needed you", but it also means faith that Jesus could reverse it, that death would obey Him. In fact, it is a very deep profession of faith that Jesus Christ is the Lord of life and death. Jesus reinforces this faith and gives us all the important teaching: "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, even if he dies, he will live" (John 11:25).

This clear teaching of Jesus that there is life after death and that death does not have the last word, means ultimately life wins. Yet before death every person must experience a continuous dying: our plans die, dreams die, friendships and love too. Saint Padre Pio encouraged his brothers: " 'Today, brothers, let us start doing good, because so far, we have done nothing good'. These words, which the Angelic Father St. Francis in his humility referred to himself, let us make ours. Truly, we have done nothing good until today, and if we have done anything good, it has been very little. Succeeding years [and days] followed each other, and we didn't even ask ourselves how we used them. Was there nothing in the past to be corrected, removed or added to our conduct? We have lived mindlessly, as if one day the eternal Judge would not call us to Him and demand an account of what we have done, how we have used our time."

A man who experiences great misfortunes becomes more willing to let go of small attachments, accept failures, and focus on what is important. Just as we return from the grave of a loved one to life, so we can easily say goodbye to what is sinful in our lives, and attach more weight to what is valuable. We're getting smarter in choosing friendships, in bestowing trust. This awareness of the transience of everything is a great gain.

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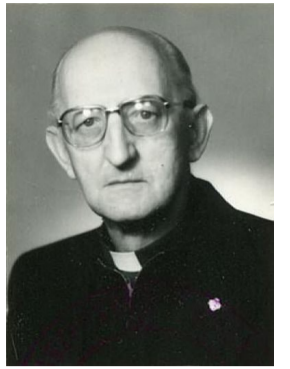
We have to realize; that it is not about what happened in Bethany, but what is happening now, what is happening in our lives. "The hour will come when the dead in their graves will hear the voice of the Son of Man" (cf. John 5:28). It will happen. Each of us will be a participant in this event. Everyone will also hear the voice of Almighty God, the Giver of life, who will free us from the grave and each of us will stand before Him. The hour will come, it is already the hour when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God. Those who hear will live. This is the present moment. We are dead in spirit; but we have the word of God. If we accept them by faith, we are already passing from death to life. Those who hear these words, and believe the Gospel, will live. And this is our first resurrection. It takes place when we believe in the word of Christ, when we accept the word of life into our hearts, when we respond to the call: I believe Lord – then we already pass from death to life . . . (Francis Blachnicki).

Who was Fr Francis Blachnicki? Venerable Servant of God.



Franciszek Blachnicki as a prisoner of KL Auschwitz, camp number 1201. Oświęcim 1940

Franciszek Blachnicki (born March 24, 1921 in Rybnik, died February 27, 1987 in Carlsberg, West Germany) - Polish Catholic priest, lecturer at the Catholic University of Lublin, organizer of the Temperance Crusade, founder of the Light-Life Movement, creator of the Human Liberation Crusade and the Christian Liberation Service Nations, prisoner of concentration



camps, persecuted by the Security Service of the People's Republic of Poland, Venerable Servant of God of the Catholic Church, founder of communities of consecrated life: the Institute of the Immaculate Mother of the Church, the Community of Christ the Servant and the Union of Priests of Christ the Servant.

In 1942, while in the Auschwitz concentration camp, he spent five months in the same cell of Block 13 (the 'Death Block'), in which St. Maximilian Kolbe would later be killed. His death sentence was then commuted to 10 years hard labour, which was to begin after the end of the war. Until the liberation by American forces, he spent these years in Nazi camps and prisons. On his return to Poland, he began training for the priesthood and was ordained in 1950.

In 1961 he was arrested and accused of printing illegal publications. After spending 4 months in detention, he was sentenced to 13 months imprisonment suspended for 3 years.

At the declaration of Martial Law in 1982, Fr Franciszek was in Rome and couldn't return to Poland because a warrant had been issued for his arrest. He moved to Carlsberg, West Germany, and continued his work with the Polish youth there. In 1987, he died suddenly from what was reported as a pulmonary embolism.

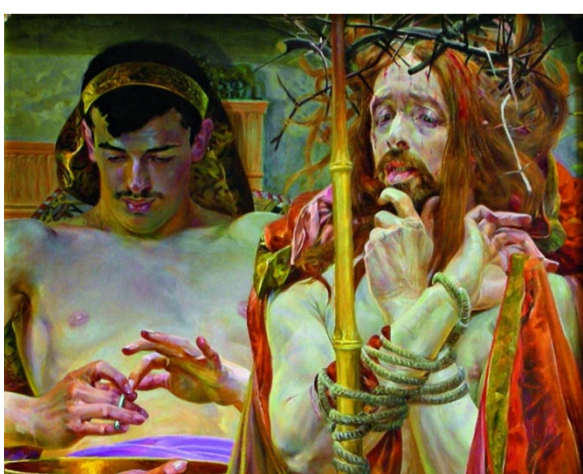
The results of an investigation conducted by the Institute of National Remembrance in 2001–2005 showed that Fr. Franciszek was under surveillance by the communist Security Service by his closest associates (the married couple of Jolanta and Andrzej Gontarczyk, who turned out to be secret collaborators of the SB), and there were also indications that he might have died of poisoning.

On April 21, 2020, the investigative division of the Institute of National Remembrance in Katowice decided to resume the investigation into the circumstances of the death of Fr. Franciszek Blachnicki. This included the exhumation of his body.

On March 14, 2023, the Institute of National Remembrance announced that the death of Fr. Franciszek Blachnicki on February 27, 1987, was the result of murder by administering deadly toxic substances to the victim. This was demonstrated by the investigations carried out in Poland and in Germany, Austria and Hungary by the Branch Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation in Katowice.

His case for beatification is now with the Holy See.

Did Jesus have to die?



"Jesus before Pilate" in the Art Gallery, Lviv

The Cross on the way – The whole life of Jesus was the way to the cross. The crucifixion was the consequence of His freedom: He gave up Himself to live for God and for men. He sought neither suffering nor death. He accepted them when they turned out to be the price of love.

Was Jesus' death necessary? Couldn't God have saved the world otherwise? The first answer that comes to mind is: "God doesn't have to do anything, He can do anything." Of course, a person has the right to ask . . . but do they really want to hear the answer? Aren't we putting God in the dock? Where thought wants to dominate, where man insistently demands that God explain everything to him, there is a danger of missing His message and Himself. The humble speech of the cross is heard by the humble. Only they have a chance to understand anything. Pilate tried to be an impartial witness, he wanted to keep a safe distance, he wanted to keep a cool head, he even tried to be just. He did sign the death warrant of an innocent man. The cross of Christ is related to our lives on a much deeper level than intellectual consideration. The tree on which Jesus died is rooted in the deepest truth of my life. There are no neutral sermons on the passion. The cross of Christ crosses with my paths; with choices, calling, sin, pain, loneliness, love, and death.

It is not easy for the righteous

When asking about the causes of Jesus' death, we should not jump too quickly to the level of high theology, wondering whether God the Father willed it or not. We have to start from the human history of this crime. The crucifixion was caused by men, not by God. From the beginning of His ministry, Jesus exposed Himself to the Old Testament guardians of worship and the Law of God. He disturbed their peace, provoked them. In a situation of increasing conflict, the decision to condemn Him was the result of a mixture of ordinary sins: anger, stupidity, envy, adherence to patterns, meticulousness, sectarian thinking, ingratitude, fear of one's position, etc. The trial of Jesus was one of many human courts that convict the just and innocent. These things happened and are still happening. Four centuries before Christ, Plato wrote in "The Republic" that the just must be persecuted in this world – "Then they will say that the just under these circumstances will be scourged, tortured, bound, their eyes burned out, and finally, after all these torments, they will be crucified." The Christian reads this text of Plato with emotion. Deep philosophy senses something of the drama of the cross.

A very similar insight appeared in the Old Testament. In the Book of Wisdom, we find terrifying deliberations made by a group of people: "Let's ambush the just one, because he is inconvenient for us: he opposes our affairs, accuses us of breaking the law, reproaches us for the faults of our morals. He boasts that he knows God, he calls himself a child of the Lord. He is a condemnation of our plans, the very sight of him is painful to us, because his life is unlike others and his ways are different. He has regarded us as something false, and he keeps away from our ways as from impurity. He declares the end of the just happy and boasts of God as father. Let us see whether his words are true, let us examine what will happen when he comes down. For if the just man is the son of God, God will stand by him and deliver him from the hand of his adversaries. Let us touch him with reproach and torment, that we may know his gentleness and test his patience. Let us put him to a shameful death, because, as he said, he will be saved" (2:12-20). Moral righteousness stings the eye. Hence the idea to eliminate the righteous. A mechanism as old as the world.

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?

Life After Death

Accounts of people who have experienced clinical death indicate that although the brain stops working as a result of clinical death, the soul (or spiritual mind) continues to exist. A person still retains his or her identity, awareness, and ability to follow events on earth. The experiences of people who were on the brink of death belie the materialists' claims that mind, self, and consciousness are merely the product of electrochemical processes in the brain. Such views are not based on documented, scientific research, but on a naive belief in the atheistic dogma that nothing exists beyond the material reality.

Some scientists recognize that when studying out-of-body experiences in people who have experienced clinical death, it is advisable to consider the supernatural aspect. This was the conclusion of Pim van Lommel's article on NDE issues. This text was published in 2001 in *The Lancet*, which is one of the most important scientific journals in the world (No. 358, p. 2040). However, it is important to remember that accounts of some of the people who experienced NDEs can be corrupted by the action of evil spirits or by wrong ideas and beliefs. Therefore, it is always necessary to be careful and

examine the credibility of these accounts in the light of the teaching of the Catholic Church.

The testimonies of people who experienced clinical death tell us that the whole person does not die. After the death of the body, a person's soul continues to live as a purely spiritual, personal self, with full awareness, reason, and free will.

This is what the Lord Jesus says about the immortal human soul: "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28) The Lord Jesus assures us of the existence of life after death and about the existence of Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory. All those who go straight to heaven are the ones who, during their earthly life, have matured in love, having become saints by doing God's will and keeping His commandments.

Hell exists – as the final consequence of man's total rejection of God and the gift of His mercy. Purgatory exists – as a painful state of maturing in love and overcoming all the consequences of one's sins.

Human language cannot describe life after death. Mystics, to whom God gives the gift of experiencing the reality of heaven, hell, and purgatory, describe it with images taken

from earthly life; however, they are unable to fully express what they see.

Let us live in a constant desire for heaven and for uniting ourselves in love with God and with the community of the saved. Let us be afraid to live in sin and in contempt for God's commandments and His mercy, because abiding in mortal sin is the easiest way to hell. "Most of the souls in hell are those who did not believe hell existed," wrote St. Faustina. (*Diary*, 741)

Let us remember that the most important moment of our life on earth is the moment of our death. This is when our eternity will be decided: either salvation or damnation. **Nobody will escape from their responsibility for their entire earthly life, which is both unrepeatable and unique.** At the moment of death, there will be a judgment, and then everyone will receive whatever reward is due to him or her: "If you sow in the field of self-indulgence, then you will reap a harvest of corruption; but if you sow in the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit." (Galatians 6:8)

Let the awareness of judgment at the moment of death motivate us to entrust ourselves to God's mercy in our daily prayers, works of mercy, and above all in the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist. The Lord Jesus appeals to us in the words written by St. Faustina: **"Write, speak of My mercy. Tell souls where they are to look for solace, that is, in the Tribunal of Mercy (the Sacrament of Reconciliation). There the**

greatest miracles take place and are incessantly repeated. To avail oneself of this miracle, it is not necessary to go on a great pilgrimage, or to carry out some external ceremony; it suffices to come with faith to the feet of My representative (a priest) and

to reveal to Him one's misery, and the miracle of Divine Mercy will be fully demonstrated. Were a soul like a decaying corpse, so that from a human standpoint there would be no hope of restoration, and everything would already be lost, it is not so

with God. The miracle of Divine Mercy restores that soul in full . . . From this fountain of mercy, souls draw graces solely with the vessel of trust. If their trust is great, there is no limit to My generosity." (*Diary*, 1448, 1602) ■

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 Maureen McLaughlin (2018), Patrick Dunne (1986), **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.

Thanks to Alina and Mykola for the work done in Chapel House and around the house and hall. They're still looking for suitable work.

Fr Tony away on Wednesday 29th for the Chrism Mass in Oban. All are invited to attend the Chrism Mass, which is at 6.30pm, followed by refreshments.

Holy Week and the Triduum: the liturgies will be as follows –

Passion (Palm) Sunday: **9.40 am**, Lenten Lamentations;
9.55 am, Blessing of palms, outside or in porch;
10.00 am, Holy Mass.
4.00 pm, Holy Mass (Islay)

Holy Monday-Wednesday: as usual.

Maundy Thursday: **7.00 pm**, Mass of the Lord's Supper;
8.00-8.45 pm, watching with the Lord
8.45 pm, Night Prayer, 8-9.00pm

Good Friday: 10.00 am, Walk of Witness (meet at the cross)
11.00 am, Stations of the Cross;
2.45 pm, Prayer in the Day (Afternoon);
3.00 pm, Commemoration of the Lord's Passion.

Holy Saturday: **4.00 pm**, Blessing of Easter Food
8.30pm, Kindling of the Easter Fire
. . . followed by the Service of Light and the Vigil Mass.

Easter Sunday: **10.00 am**, Holy Mass (Campbeltown)
4.00 pm, Holy Mass (Islay).

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



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www.stkieranscampbeltown.org



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