

PARISH BULLETIN St Kieran's, the Catholic Church

*Rorate Mass, Saturday,
6.00pm, 23 December*



St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

Sunday, 17th December, *Gaudete Sunday of Advent*, Holy Mass, 10.00am.

Monday: No Mass

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

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

Friday: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament & Mid-morning Prayer, 9.30am.

Discussion on the Infancy Narratives: Friday, 10.30am

Saturday, 23rd December, *Rorate Mass*, 6.00pm

Sunday, 24th December, *4th Sunday of Advent*, Holy Mass, 10.00am.

Shepherds' Mass of Christmas Eve, 9.00pm

Monday, 25th December, *Christmas Day Mass*, 10.00am

St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Bridgend, Islay

Sunday 17th December, Holy Mass, 4pm

Psalm response

My soul rejoices in my God.

Gospel acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me.

He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor.

Alleluia!

Hymns/Music

Processional (Sunday only)

224: How lovely on the mountains (Keys)

Offertory

384: O come, O come, Emmanuel (Mayhew)

Communion

Niebiosa rosę (Heavenly dew)

Post Communion

365: My soul is filled with joy (Mayhew)

Recessional

514: Tell out my soul (Keys)

in Campbeltown and Islay

Ceann Loch Chille Chiarain

17th December 2023

*The Third Sunday
of Advent*



Communion Antiphon

Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear.
Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.

Take Five

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

Sunday, Dec 17, 2023

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (O WISDOM)

Oh, Antiphons!

At evening prayer tonight, the Church begins to invoke seven names for Jesus traditionally called the O Antiphons. These names — Wisdom, Sacred Lord, Flower of Jesse's Stem, Key of David, Radiant Dawn, King of All Nations, Emmanuel — suggest to us how the stories of the Old Testament foreshadow the arrival of God-With-Us. As Mary Winifred observes in *Hasten the Kingdom: Praying the O Antiphons of Advent*: "The Word, which joyfully shouted all the galaxies into being, left All Power and came silently into the womb of a young girl." Seek to encounter Jesus today in wise people, books, and practices.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28.*

"[John] came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him."

Monday, Dec 18, 2023

ADVENT WEEKDAY (O SACRED LORD AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL)

Pray for safe passage

Today's O Antiphon of Advent, the second of seven leading up to Christmas Eve, is "O Sacred Lord and Leader of the House of Israel, giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai: come to rescue us with your mighty power!" Today is also International Migrants Day, which recognizes the contributions of migrants, their challenges, and their human rights. Migrants number in the hundreds of millions the world over — some by choice but many forcibly displaced. Jesus and his family became migrants fleeing for their lives soon after the birth that we are preparing to celebrate. Make safe migration and the humane treatment of migrants everywhere your prayer intention with this O Antiphon.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Jeremiah 23:5-8; Matthew 1:18-25.* "When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home."

Tuesday, Dec 19, 2023

ADVENT WEEKDAY (O FLOWER OF JESSE'S STEM)

Grafted onto Jesus' family tree

Near Bethlehem stands an olive tree scientists say is 5,000 years old. It's not uncommon for olive trees to reach the ripe old age of 900+ years in Mediterranean countries. Once they grow so old that they stop bearing fruit, olive trees are cut down to mere stumps. But that stump? Leave it alone for a couple of years, then suddenly new shoots spring forth. A shoot or root in this context does not symbolise fragility but rather hardiness and promise. Such are the descendants of the House of David, a spiritual family tree that includes Jesus and us.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a; Luke 1:5-25.* "Though you are barren and have had no children, yet you will conceive and bear a son."

Wednesday, Dec 20, 2023

ADVENT WEEKDAY (O KEY OF DAVID)

Stand together

On this International Human Solidarity Day, enacted by the U.N. in 2005, we remember Blessed Michael Piaszczyński, who in the early 1900s taught at the diocesan seminary of Łomża, Poland. Modest and compassionate, Father Piaszczyński had a deep respect for Judaism and even invited rabbis to speak at his school. During World War II he was imprisoned by the Nazis and often shared his bread with elderly Jewish inmates. Piaszczyński died in the camp in 1940. He was beatified by his compatriot, Pope John Paul II, in 1999. What small ways can you show solidarity with your fellow humans, especially those who seem different from you?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 7:10-14; Luke 1:26-38.* "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God."

Thursday, Dec 21, 2023

ADVENT WEEKDAY (O RADIANT DAWN)

Radiant reminders

Monks, nuns, and others who take part in evening prayer are now chanting the O Antiphons, a rich series of references to the

coming Christ recited from December 17-23. Today's antiphon proclaims: "O Radiant Dawn, splendour of eternal light, sun of justice: come and shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death." Look around you today and seek out the many lights associated with Christmas: Advent candles, lanterns, strings of light, etc. Let each one remind you of the light of Christ coming into the world.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Song of Songs 2:8-14 or Zephaniah 3:14-18a; Luke 1:39-45.*

"Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

Friday, Dec 22, 2023

ADVENT WEEKDAY (O KING OF ALL NATIONS)

The "O Hail No!" antiphon

Few have direct experience of royalty, and so the words "queen" and "king" might do little other than remind us of some TV or streaming series. For some though, the terms hit hard because within their culture, people experienced oppression and violence from ruling classes. Singing the O Antiphon, "O King of All Nations," then, might not evoke a hopeful experience of God. How might we tap into the deeper meaning of the antiphon? What words and images can help us experience the longing for God who brings peace and right relationship, who removes barriers that divide,

and who breathes life into our tired bodies?

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Samuel 1:24-28; Luke 1:46-56.* "My spirit rejoices in God my saviour."

Saturday, Dec 23, 2023

MEMORIAL OF SAINT JOHN OF KANTY, PRIEST (O EMMANUEL)

We stand corrected

John Kanty (1390-1473) was a Polish priest, philosopher, physicist, and theologian. He helped develop early scientific theories of inertia that Newton would later use to formulate his laws of motion. Kanty's theories also helped Galileo figure out the orbital motions of the planets around the sun. During Kanty's time, the Catholic Church taught the geocentric model that the planets and the sun orbited around the Earth. In 1632 Galileo's work was condemned by Pope Urban VIII, and he was placed under house arrest for the rest of his life. Kanty was canonized in 1767, around the same time Rome finally capitulated to Galileo's heliocentric model of the solar system. Give thanks for the Church that corrects its faults.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24; Luke 1:57-66.* "Then fear came upon all their neighbours, and all these matters were discussed."

Gaudete Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11

The one anointed with the spirit of God brings good news to the poor.

Luke 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54

We "magnify" the Lord for the great things done for us.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Paul offers short, memorable imperatives for remaining "perfect in holiness."

John 1:6-8, 19-28

John the Baptist brings testimony to the light so that all might believe.

Words on the Word

Who are yer?

Let's imagine that at our Mass, a reporter appears and asks us such questions:

Who are you all, in reality?

How about yourself?

Why are you baptising your children and why do you receive Holy Communion?

What do you, who call yourself the Catholic Church, want?

Just why are you in this world?

What are you needed for?

* * *

Those Christians who call themselves the Church say with all humility that they are only the voice of their Lord and Master that in the ocean of errors and false opinions of this world they always turn towards Him. They say about themselves that they are only a finger or sign pointing toward Him. He is light in the midst of darkness, the truth among error, life in the midst of death.

We are called the Church of Christ, but we are weak people who make mistakes. Our Lord – only He is the Saviour, our hope and the way, which leads towards life. Everything that we can offer as the people of the Church is His work and His gift.

Christians live on earth and gather for the Eucharist in order to testify to the Light so that because of their testimony many people can believe. They are not the light, but they are to testify to the Light.

It would be beautiful if after all the centuries of Christianity it could be said of today's believers that in this wilderness of errors, which is the world, living Christians are a light – just as Jesus Christ is the light. The proclamation of this truth is the purpose and meaning of the Church. Martyrs were dying in her name, and missionary efforts and benevolent works are also done in her name. To preach this truth, Pope Saint John Paul II travelled the whole world.

Do we live and offer the Eucharist in such a way so that we can be recognised as His light on earth? That the reporter could add to his questions: "It's worth joining this group called the Catholic Church. Consider their message." This message sounds as follows: among us is the One whom you do not know.

Isn't it like that, that for me, a believer, many of these ordinary and extraordinary events are arranged into an entirety, which shows that God guards me and leads me to himself? Not to property, success, satisfaction with power or fame, but to Himself.

* * *

A man returned home after a journey of several months. The next day he took the whole family to the shopping mall. When he handed his daughter a banknote and asked her to buy a gift for herself, the girl threw her hands around his neck and shouted: "I don't want money, I want you." If we really consider God a loving Father, we recognise that His company as the greatest of treasures.

A time to recognise the signs



Today the Church also says: "Prepare the way of the Lord in the desert" (Is 40:3). For communities devastated by poverty and hunger, for multitudes of refugees, for those whose rights are systematically trampled on, the Church wants to be like a guardian standing on the high mountain of faith and proclaiming: "Behold your God! Behold, the Lord God comes with power! » (Isaiah 40:11).

Justice and peace are gifts of God, but they need men and women who, as "fertile ground", are ready to receive the good seed of His Word.

The signs tell us: we have walked this path before you, it is possible to reach the goal, learn, enjoy. . . What's stopping us from doing so?

Interpreting the Time

He also said to the multitudes, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, 'A shower is coming'; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat'; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky; but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?"

"And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? As you go with your accuser before the magistrate, make an effort to settle with him on the way, lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer put you in prison. I tell you, you will never get out till you have paid the very last copper." (Luke 12:54-59).

The sign means that we have the opportunity to find out what and how. That you know what to do. And that there is a goal.

But what good is it if we don't ask? And even if we ask, we don't expect an answer. Signs are for those who know where they are going.

Two images, two warnings: against hypocrisy and lack of prudence. Two questions that go straight to the heart: "How can you pretend you don't recognise?" and "How can you be so foolish as not to know where your actions will end up?"

When is it that Jesus talks about this? The Evangelist Luke recalls these two images in the context of knowing who the One who "came to cast fire on the earth" is: because it is God we must recognise, because it is ultimately about the path of following Him.

This bitterness in Jesus' words: you do not recognise; you do not do what is right. There were crowds around Him then, at that time the recipients of this statement – and we are the same today, with churches at our fingertips, the Bible on the shelf, with liturgy celebrated every day. Apparently, these are two of the most painful words: "Too late."

In some way we give signs to one another. The signs tell us: we have walked this path before you, it is possible to reach the goal, learn, go for it. . . What's stopping us from doing so? Sometimes there may be a lack of abilities. Unfortunately, it's more often pride, a sick sense of one's own uniqueness, and simple stubbornness. This internal GPS that we blindly follow towards the abyss, the road to nowhere.

The zeal of His saints, their lives put on the line. Human misfortunes caused by abandoning good. Grief for wrongs we don't know how to put right. The incalculable value of service, perseverance and prayer. All signs that speak of God's presence, the truthfulness of His words, the correctness of the path He shows to man.

Choose agreement instead of dispute, settling the debt instead of proving your own point. Give of yourself to those who deserve it. Give yourself to God. Advent as *kairos*, a time of grace, and its actions.

Should we use holly in the church? Its role in the symbolism of Christmas.

How well do you know your Christmas decorations and the history they represent? In the last Parish Bulletin, the place of the Christmas in the church was discussed. And the conclusion now reached is that the Christmas at the front of the church, even without blinking lights, is 1) not an appropriate symbol in tune with the liturgy, and 2) is distracting. But holly, that bright green and red symbol of all things Christmas, actually has a long history, dating back to ancient civilisations and bringing plenty of rich stories and tradition along with it. As we begin to decorate for the coming holy season, let's consider the appropriateness of this seemingly-unassuming plant that holds so much meaning.

Holly, Ivy and other greenery such as Mistletoe were originally used in pre-Christian times to help celebrate the Winter Solstice Festival and ward off evil spirits and to celebrate new growth. When Christianity came into Western Europe, some people wanted to keep the greenery, and to give it Christian meanings, but wanted to ban its use in decorating homes and other spaces celebrating Christmas. The UK and Germany were the main countries to keep the use of the greenery as decorations. Here is a description of how holly gained its Christian meanings . . .

Way before holly was hung in houses to accompany Christmas trees, it was considered to be a sacred plant by the Druids. While other plants wilted in winter weather, holly remained green and strong, its berries a brightly coloured red in the harshest of conditions.

The Druids regarded holly as a symbol of fertility and eternal life, thought to have magical powers. In Druid lore, cutting down a holly tree would bring bad luck. In contrast, hanging the plant in homes was believed to bring good luck and protection. Holly was also thought to protect homes against lightning strikes. Romans associated holly with Saturn, the god of

agriculture and harvest, and decked the halls with its boughs during the festival of Saturnalia. Early Christian calendars mark Christmas Eve as *templa exornatur*, meaning “churches are decked,” though supposedly Saturnalia celebrators didn’t allow some Christians to hang boughs in honour of Christmas. Christians adopted the holly tradition from Druid, Celtic and Roman traditions, and its symbolism changed to reflect Christian beliefs.

The prickly leaves represent the crown of thorns that Jesus wore when He was crucified. The berries are the drops of blood that were shed by Jesus because of the thorns.

In the northern countries of Europe it is known as *Christ’s Thorn*.

Both of these symbols are meant to serve as a reminder to Christians of Jesus’ suffering, but they aren’t the only stories tying holly to Jesus. One claims that the cross on which Jesus was crucified was constructed of holly. Another says that holly sprang up from his footsteps. Less common symbolism includes the holly’s white blossoms representing purity.

In pre-Christian/pagan times, Holly was thought to be a male plant and Ivy a female plant. There was also the idea that if the holly used to decorate a home for Christmas is prickly, the man will rule the house for the coming year; but if the holly used is smooth, the woman will rule!

Legionary of Christ Father Edward McNamara, professor of liturgy at the Regina Apostolorum university, advises that “Within the church proper, apart from the crib, Christmas may be evoked by using, for example, traditional poinsettias, holly and other traditional elements according to the culture” (Zenit, Nov. 29, 2005).

Prayer



Please pray for those who are sick, in need or have asked for our prayers: Connie Graham, Lilian Cox, Sarah Carmichael, Ailsa Stewart, Meg Douglas (Mull), Doleen Durnin, and Russell Carroll.

Please remember in your prayers Patrick Brannigan (2010), Mary McAllister (2019) **and all whose anniversaries occur at this time.**

Advent prayer to the Virgin Mary

In the face of history-shattering changes, let’s feel the shudder of the beginning for ourselves.

Holy Mary, Virgin awaiting,
give us oil, for our lamps are going
out.

See: reserves have dwindled.
If we can't wait long today,
it's because we lack hope.

Holy Mary, Woman awaiting,
comfort mothers in their pain
caused by their children,
who left home one day and never
came back:

because they died in a road
accident,

or because they were seduced by the calls of the jungle;



because they were distracted by the fury of war,
or because they were caught up in a vortex of passion;
because they were swallowed up in a storm at sea,
or because they are consumed by the storms of life.

We feel more like children of twilight than prophets of Advent.

In the face of history-shattering changes
Let's feel the shudder of the beginning for ourselves.

Make us understand that it is not enough to accept: we must know how to wait.
Acceptance is sometimes a sign of resignation.
Waiting is always a sign of hope.

So, make us servants of waiting.
And may the coming Lord, O Virgin of Advent, find us
And also by your maternal cause,
with lamps in hand.

News and Events

Tea and coffee in the hall after Sunday Mass. Our visitors are most welcome to join us. Please do come.

After Christmas Day Mass there will be tea, coffee, sherry and mince pies.

Why does holly have special place in the religious symbolism of the first coming of Christ? If you manage to describe three of these reasons, you are doing well.

The evergreen leaves -	He come to bring us eternal life.
The berries that appear in the winter -	providing fruit in the winter months, as food and a sign of hope in dark days
Red berries -	the colour of blood, foretelling the Passion Christ will enter
The spikey leaves -	the crown of thorns

Dedication of the altar: the bishop is able come on **8th January**. This is a Monday, and the Mass and Dedication of the Altar will be at **6.00pm**. This is a special event in parish life, the altar cannot be used for the Eucharist until this has taken place, and I am sure you will all prioritise this event in your calendars. We should also organise a gathering afterwards with some seasonal fare – both solid and liquid.

Advent and Christmas liturgies:

<i>Rorate Mass (Vigil Mass)</i> , Saturday December 23 rd , 6.00pm Sunday 24 th December, Holy Mass: 10.00am
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<i>The "Shepherds' Mass"</i> , Christmas Eve, Sunday 24 th , 9.00pm <i>The Mass of Christmas Day</i> , Monday 25 th , 10.00am
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The second day of Christmas, Feast of St. Stephen, Tuesday 26th, 10.00am



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