

PARISH BULLETIN St Kieran's, the Catholic Church



Hymns/Music

Processional (Sunday only)

516: The angel Gabriel from heaven came (Irwin)

Offertory

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

Communion

Niebiosa rosę (Heavenly dew)

Post Communion

53: Away in a manger (Gunterman)

Recessional

Sheet: Immaculate Mary (Keys)

in Campbeltown and Islay

Ceann Loch Chille Chiarain

24th December 2023

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

Sunday, 24th December,

the Fourth Sunday of Advent, Holy Mass, **10.00am.**

Shepherds' Mass of Christmas Eve, **9.00pm**

Monday, 25th December,

Christmas Day Mass, **10.00am**

Tuesday, 26th December, Feast of Saint Stephen: Holy Mass, **10.00am**

Wednesday: Holy Mass, **10.00am**

Thursday, Feast of the Holy Innocents: Holy Mass, **10.00am**

Friday: No Mass (no Scripture discussion)

Saturday, 30th December, *Vigil Mass*, **6.00pm**

Sunday, 31st December, *Feast of the Holy Family in the season of*

Christmas, Holy Mass, **10.00am.**

St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Bridgend, Islay

Sunday 14th January 2024, Holy Mass, 4pm



Psalm response

I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord.

Gospel acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the handmaid of the Lord:

let what you have said be done to me.

Alleluia!

Communion Antiphon

*Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son;
and his name will be called Emmanuel.*

Take Five

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

Monday, Dec 25, 2023

SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS)

The wonder of it all

In the early Church, Christmas was actually not a major feast, but over the centuries it grew in importance, and Saint Francis of Assisi catapulted its popularity in 1223 by creating the first nativity scene in a cave with live animals. Christmas Midnight Mass was celebrated there, and it was a huge hit with the whole town. The tradition of the Christmas crib was born. Francis loved Christmas, considering it the “Feast of Feasts,” because God chose to take the humble form of a poor baby. Let the wonder of the Incarnation imbue your day.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Night: Isaiah 9:1-6; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14; Day: Isaiah 52:7-10; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-18. “For today in the city of David a saviour has been born for you who is Christ and Lord.”*

Tuesday, Dec 26, 2023

FEAST OF SAINT STEPHEN, FIRST MARTYR



For the love of Saint Stephen

On this second day of Christmas, consider words about true love — and Saint Stephen — from Saint Fulgentius, a North African bishop of the sixth century: “Love was Stephen’s weapon by which he gained every battle, and so won the crown signified by his name. His love of

God kept him from yielding to the ferocious mob; his love for his neighbour made him pray for those who were stoning him.” Celebrate the Christmas octave with the same steadfast love the first Christian martyr showed his

persecutors.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Matthew 10:17-22. “They could not withstand the wisdom and the spirit with which he spoke.”*

Wednesday, Dec 27, 2023

FEAST OF SAINT JOHN, APOSTLE, EVANGELIST

Through thick and thin

Beloved! That’s what we know about today’s saint — John the apostle is the “disciple whom Jesus loved.” John was the last apostle to leave Jesus at the cross and one of the first to discover his Resurrection on Easter Sunday. He earned the title of evangelist by writing the fourth gospel (likely with help from his followers). His account of Jesus’ life has a more spiritual and mysterious air than those of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. But that doesn’t mean he’s otherworldly — after all, John is the patron saint of loyalty and friendships. Honour him today by visiting with a friend.

TODAY’S READINGS: *1 John 1:1-4; John 20:1a, 2-8. “What we have seen and heard we proclaim now to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us.”*

Thursday, Dec 28, 2023

FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS, MARTYRS

Mortal consequences

Amid the Christmas festivities, today the church has a sombre reminder of the infants in the vicinity of Bethlehem who were slaughtered by King Herod in his fruitless effort to destroy Jesus. They were “collateral damage” that paved the way for Christianity, a faith that confesses to protecting the most vulnerable. In honour of the Holy Innocents, we might consider the many innocents who are killed before coming into the world, die prematurely because of a lack of healthcare, and isolation that leads to an early death. Strive to be a force for life.

TODAY’S READINGS: *1 John 1:5—2:2; Matthew 2:13-18. “God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all.”*

Friday, Dec 29, 2023

FIFTH DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

The Catholic bucket list

Gift-giving at Christmastime is a common custom. Whether it's at home under a lit tree or at the works party, it's fun to give and receive. "Experience" gifts are becoming more a part of this custom: tickets to see a musical, an art class, a hiking trip. Experience gifts can be given any time, and we can even treat ourselves. Since it's the season of Christmas, let's think of Catholic experiences that we'd enjoy and create a kind of "Catholic bucket list." See the grotto at Carfin? Volunteer for the food bank? Visit Assisi? Take a scripture class? Spend the rest of the Christmas season creating your own list.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 2:3-11; Luke

2:22-35. "It had been revealed to [Simeon] by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord."

Saturday, Dec 30, 2023

SIXTH DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

What is the purpose of life?

This age-old question has as many answers as there are questioners. For Catholics though, there is one simple answer: love. But when is love ever simple? Deep love can be complicated and even gut-wrenchingly hard. It can bring pain, longing, disquiet, questioning, loneliness, and sacrifice. Yet, "The pain that comes from deep love makes your love ever more fruitful," writes Henri Nouwen.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 2:12-17; Luke 2:36-40. "Whoever does the will of God remains forever."

Readings for the Fourth Sunday of Advent

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16

God establishes the house of David to endure forever.

Psalms 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29

God's goodness is for all generations.

Romans 16:25-27

What was hidden in the past is revealed now by God's command.

Luke 1:26-38

Mary accepts the word of God into her life and into history.

Words on the Word

God's presence

They are both about 90 years old. They live in two rooms in the cheerful old people's home – which is to testify to the love and charity of their children. They have their four walls, bright pleasant, in which they can accommodate their favourite furniture and have a pleasant view from the window. Joy and pride can be seen in the eyes of the husband. The wife is rather taciturn, but eventually explodes and cries out in a low voice: "Yes, they put us away, I know our children. They did it quietly in the dark and silence of night so that we couldn't prevent it." A long-suppressed wave of despair fell. "They've put us away, although they live three streets away" – this is the last station.

Memories come back: the birth of children, their growth, joy and parental care with children, when they were still under their wings. "Is that all now?" "Is everything behind us now?"

Both don't have now much time to get used to their new situation (R. Breitenbach, Sechs-Minuten-Predigten).

* * *

This new situation also became a chance that both of them would see a new heaven and new earth together, a new kingdom of life and love. Here, despair or renewal can be born – renewal, i.e., a return in the right direction, towards the One who, coming into the world, brings us new life. To be able to find a positive side in every situation in life is a great art. There is a saying that whoever can't enjoy, quickly becomes a sad man. The great happiness and grace of God is the ability to find joy in unity with God, because He accompanies us in the various situations of our lives. Whoever understands these old people knows what the words from today's first reading mean: *I was with you on all your expeditions* (2 Sam 7.9). Our God turned out to be a faithful companion of His people's journeys, He was with them in all their needs and saved them from many dangers. And a time came in the history of the chosen people that they themselves, even in trouble, extolled God: *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me* (Ps 23:4).

And God says to us: "I am with you wherever you go." Do I believe it? Can I repeat the above – mentioned words of the Psalm with faith and conviction? His presence with us, the awareness of this presence, can bring us a lot of joy and become an extraordinary help. Is it important to be aware of what you want? If I want an easy life, I can suffer disappointments, if I want recognition or friendship – it may come about or become a source of new disappointments. It's precisely in Advent we have time to get our desires in order. We are not always aware of God's desire, and yet it is fundamental and rules our lives. Saint Augustine says: "The human heart is restless until it rests in the Lord."

God, accompanying Israel's journey; David's people wanted to build a house of stone and wood. Can God's dwelling be limited to the walls of the temple, be encompassed in the appropriate liturgy of the Church and in this way assure it of peace and respect, as in a cheerful old people's home? Can such a home testify to the love of children for the Heavenly Father?

David, Solomon's son, built a wonderful temple. However, God did not "become accustomed to" this situation. His presence in the world He "defined" anew. His presence in the world has taken a higher and final form. He doesn't live in the temple, not even in the middle of the People of God, but in His people, as Saint Peter said: *You also, like living stones, are built as a spiritual temple* (1 P 2:5). God remains not only a companion on the wilderness path of life, but He is also the Lord of minds and hearts, the Lord of human consciences. Being lost and wandering gives the power to start again. In all dimensions of human functioning, God's path should be our paths. Advent exists so that we can enjoy the chance of becoming more mature, more complete entering the path of life, be awakened to a fuller renewal of faith in God.

* * *

The image of renewal is spring, because when it arrives in the country, all nature wakes up from sleep to new life. When on a sunny May day, we enter the orchard, clad in a fresh garment of greenery and flowers, we are ready to think that the spring renewal of nature depends on the leaves and flowers. And yet this is not the case. This renewal did not occur on the ends of twigs, but inside the hard trunk, deep under the bark (...). It reached the twigs through the branches and stimulated them to release the leaves and flowers, which are a visible effect and manifestation of the rebirth of spring.

The same is true with religious renewal. It does not depend on the fact that here and there we will bring some amendment in lifestyle. It does not depend on the multiplication of external religious acts, nor does it constitute the number of holy

banners. This renewal must take place not on the surface of life, but deep inside the soul. In the spring of Christ, hearts must first come to life, and then the regenerative spring energies will spread from them to the whole of life (Cardinal A. Hlond).

Readings for the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord (night)

Isaiah 9:1-6;

The love of God will clear out and clean up all that evil has burdened us with.

Psalm 96:1-3,11-13

All creation will rejoice at the coming presence of the Lord, the sea, the land, the trees, and us.

Titus 2:11-14

God's grace has been revealed to the whole of the human race.

Luke 2:1-14

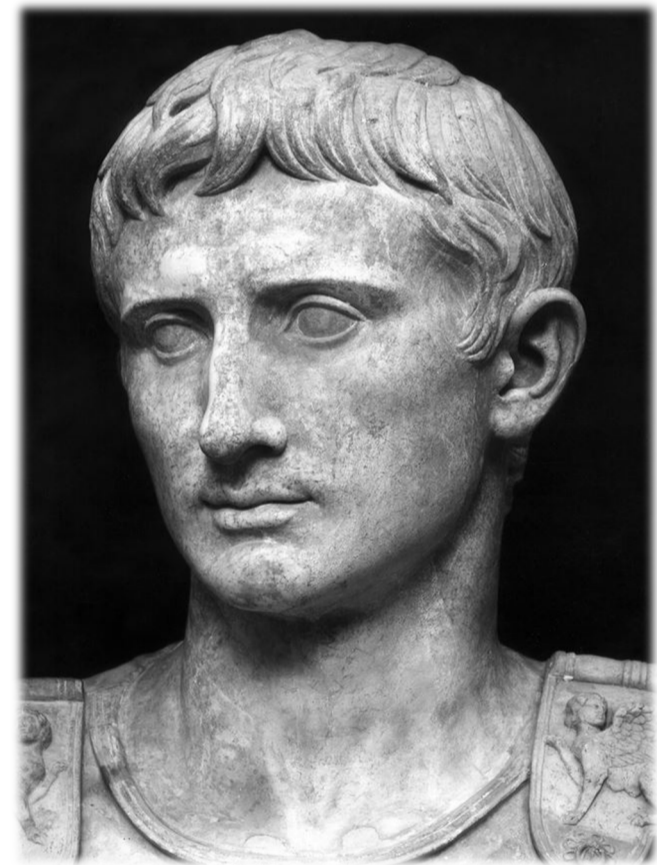
In the town of David, Bethlehem, the 'town of bread' a saviour has been born.

Words on the Word

Christ enriched us with his poverty

The Son of God was born during the reign of Caesar Augustus

Caesar Augustus died two thousand years ago. From the 9th year before Christ, the inscription of Priene, a city of ancient Miletus, in the western part of today's Turkey, praises his birth. It says that he changed the appearance of the world that would be destroyed if the birth of the Roman emperor did not fill everyone with happiness. According to the inscription, it is right to see the beginning of life in his birth. Providence gave him such gifts that he became the saviour of all generations. With his appearance, the hopes of ancestors were met. He not only surpassed all benefactors of humanity, how they were before him, but it is impossible for someone greater than him to appear. From his birth, the calculation of time must begin. In some cities of Asia Minor, time was actually counted for a certain period of time from the birth of Caesar August, i.e., from 63 BC. He took power after his uncle Julius Caesar was murdered in 44 BC. He ended a hundred years of civil wars and although bloody battle persisted at the borders of the Roman Empire, the time of the Romans themselves was the time of peace called Pax Romana. Caesar Augustus died on August 19, 14 AD. A little earlier, on September 17, 10 AD, the Roman Senate elevated Caesar Augustus to the assembly of gods.



Isn't it a paradox expressed by the Evangelist that the *Lord* who *rules* the world was born during the *reign* of Caesar Augustus? How different these two rulers are from each other. The reign of Augustus had its beginning and end, it was filled with intrigues to maintain power. Christ's reign is total, extended beyond time and space, there is no beginning or end and expresses itself most in love. The Son of God left the revelation of His power and glory until the Parousia, i.e., His re-appearance on earth. Appearing in time, He chose the path of

humility and simplicity.

The Simplicity of Christmas

The story of God in human flesh begins very modestly. His parents were simple, ordinary people. They didn't play any important significance in the politics of their nation. They subjected themselves to the reigning order of Caesar Augustus prevailing at the time and went to Bethlehem to take part in the universal registration of people: "While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn" (Luke 2:6-7).

The God-man allowed himself to be wrapped in nappies. Contained in this image is the truth that the unlimited God has been embraced in what is human: human history, customs and relationships. Nothing human is foreign to Him. God in Christ was pleased with what is modest, humble, and not so significant. Jesus, being rich, became poor for us to enrich us with His poverty (cf. 2 Cor 8:9).

God entered human history as a man

According to the ancient custom, all priests can celebrate three Holy Masses on the solemnity of the Nativity: at night, at dawn and during the day. A separate form and reading are provided for each of them; In each of them, one of the aspects of Christmas is emphasized. During the Holy Mass at night, we hear the historical account of the evangelist Luke about what happened during the registration of the population ordered by Caesar Augustus, when governor of Syria was Quirinius.

The first to have the birth of the Messiah announced to them were simple people – shepherds. It was the angel that came to them and announced the joyful news (cf. Luke 2:8-20). The vision of the prophet Isaiah was fulfilled, which – as we heard – about 730 BC announced to a frightened nation the arrival of better times, times of joy and peace, which would come with the birth of the Prince of Peace (cf. Is 9:1-3,5-6).

Events of the greatest importance in God's eyes were somehow on the margins of human history: among the poor and humble people, tormented and fighting for survival on a daily basis. Heavenly hosts heralded peace to people who pleased the Lord (cf. Lk 2:14). God declared to the poor – defined in Israel as the *Anavim* – that He has pleasure in the people. You don't have to gain His kindness or to sacrifice so as to protect yourself from His anger, as the ancient Greeks did with their mythical gods. God, who manifested Himself in Christ, is a philanthropist – the One who loves people. On Christmas night "the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared" (Titus 3:4). So, in this day's liturgy we adore God's wonderful action and thank Him, saying that "in the mystery of the Word made flesh a new light of your glory has shone upon the eyes of our mind, so that, as we recognise in him God made visible, we may be caught up through him in love of things invisible" (First Preface of the Nativity of the Lord).

Let's open our hearts to simple and poor people

The fate of the God-man who has entered human history is the fate of many poor and simple people. How hard it is for many young people to find a place in modern society! How difficult it is to get good work and an inexpensive, sufficiently spacious flat. Christmas increases our sensitivity to those in need. We are happy to support various charitable actions. We remember that sharing with others is a privilege. The poor were given to us

and given as an opportunity. By respecting their dignity and showing them kindness, we serve God ourselves. Remember that the sick and poor, the silent and humble are the privileged addressees of God's grace – they are under the special care for God.

A legend says that among the shepherds who hurried in the night to Bethlehem to give homage to the Saviour one of them was very poor, so poor that he had nothing that he could offer the Messiah heralded by an angel, and he was very ashamed of it. When the shepherds came to Mary, Joseph and the Child, they tried to out-do each other to offer the modest gifts they brought to him. Mary was embarrassed because she didn't know how to accept them because she was holding the tiny Jesus. She saw a shepherd, who stood empty-handed, and gave the newborn Saviour to hold for a moment. The poverty of a shepherd became a blessing for him; into empty hands was the hope of the world laid – the Prince of Peace.

Good God, penetrated with the new splendour of the Incarnate Word, please, may our deeds reflect the light, which through faith brightens our souls. Let Your radiance disperse all darkness. Amen.

The Incarnate Word and human solidarity

In Advent, the Church goes on pilgrimage to Bethlehem, which became the meeting place of heaven and earth, when Jesus, the Word Incarnate, announced by the prophets, was about to enter the arena of human history.

The Son of God, as we pray in the Creed, "For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man." In "*Gaudium et spes*" of the Second Vatican Council we find the statement that "the very Word made flesh willed to share in the human fellowship" (No. 32). This means that the Son of God "chose to lead the life that is proper to an artisan of His time and place."

Jesus' presence in the life of the community of His times meant participating in wedding feasts and noticing the socially excluded, i.e. tax collectors and sinners. The Lord revealed the affairs of the Father's kingdom in an understandable way, using familiar images from everyday life. At the same time, He was aware of His submission to the then prevailing law and took up occupational activity as a carpenter. He also pointed out the fundamental importance of family relationships, thanks to which social bonds are formed. Jesus' teaching is a model of social relations in which people treat each other as brothers and build unity among themselves, guaranteed by the presence of the Holy Spirit. The credibility of words was confirmed by the Divine Master with the testimony of love until the end, when He gave His life for everyone. He also taught His disciples, who became the foundations of the Church community, fraternal love, i.e., working with one another, not against one another.

Thanks to solidarity between people, we can build relationships with others and actively strive and participate in creating the common good. In this way, we have a sense of co-responsibility with others and for others in the face of needs and situations in which we suffer harm or are threatened with danger. A concrete expression of solidarity is developing the imagination of mercy through acts of Christian love towards the soul and body. In this way, we show support to others, cooperate with them, share responsibilities, and help those in need, both materially and spiritually.

This solidarity with others, following the example of Jesus, means selfless service towards

others and use of resources for the poor. So, it's not about spectacular successes that everyone talks about, but about multiplying love in your heart. And acting in the spirit of love towards people, in whom we must constantly discover God dwelling. "Even when the best efforts end in failure, it is important that they are the best efforts to ensure the quality of the work. Such a person was not a failure in God's eyes because they wanted to do their task as best as they could. They will continue to be a collaborator with the Creator because God sees love put into action. You can also be exhausted by work, work until you drop, but unless work is combined with love, it is useless" (Fr. S. Urbanski).

Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that the essence of God's closeness to people is love. "Christmas, which will soon be here, will remind us of this fundamental truth of our faith, and standing before the manger, we will taste Christian joy when we contemplate in the newborn Jesus the face of God who drew close to us out of love" (*Angelus*, December 14, 2008).

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 all whose anniversaries occur at this time.

News and Events

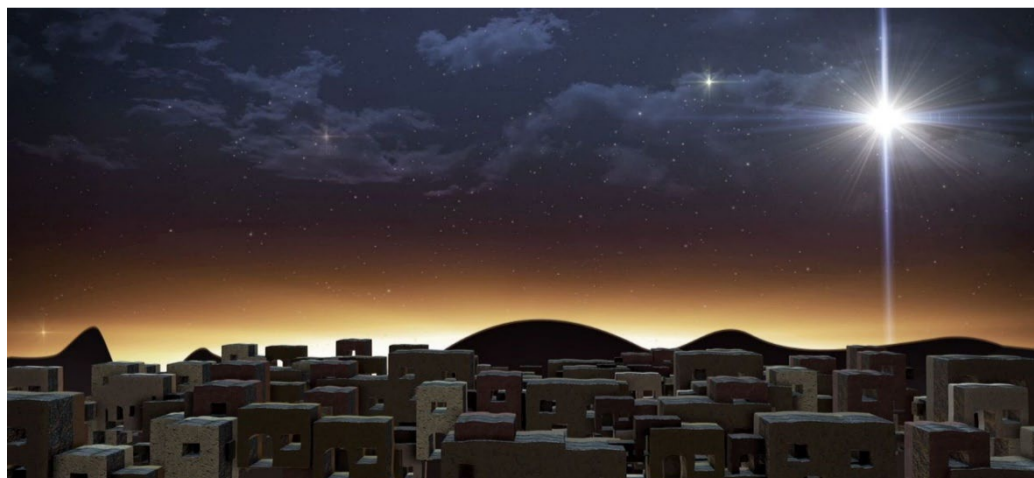
Tea and coffee in the hall after Sunday Mass. Our visitors are most welcome to join us. Please do come.

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

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.

Wishing everyone a blessed and joyful Christmas. May the Incarnation of our Lord bring happiness and peace into your lives. Many thanks for your wishes and gifts. *Fr Tony*

Thanks to everyone who has made the preparations in the church for the celebration of the Birth of God into the world.



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