

PARISH BULLETIN

St Kieran's,
the Catholic Church in Campbeltown and Islay
Ceann Loch Chille Chiarain



7th of January 2024

The Epiphany of the Lord

St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

**Sunday, 7th January, *Epiphany of
the Lord*, Holy Mass, 10.00am**

Monday, 8th January, *The Baptism
of the Lord: Holy Mass and Dedication of the Altar*, 6.00pm

Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday: Holy Mass, 10.00am

Saturday, 13th January, *Vigil Mass*, 6.00pm

**Sunday, 14th January, *2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time*, Holy Mass,
10.00am.**

Hymns/Music

Processional (Sunday only)

601: We three kings or Orient are (Keys)

Asperges

579 Vaster far than any ocean (Mayhew)

Offertory

243: In bread we bring you Lord (McLennan)

Communion

Gdy śliczna Panna (Piotr Wilczyński)

Post Communion

523: The first Nowell; Vv 1-3 (Jackson)

Recessional

523: The first Nowell; Vv 4-6 (Guntermann)





Psalm response

All nations shall fall prostrate before you, O Lord.

Gospel acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

*We saw his star as it rose
and have come to do the Lord homage.*

Alleluia!

Communion Antiphon

(Vigil Mass) *The brightness of God illumined the holy city Jerusalem,
and the nations will walk by its light.*

(Sunday Mass) *We have seen his star in the East,
and have come with gifts to adore the Lord*

Take Five

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

Sunday 07 JAN

SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

Bless this threshold

Think of everything that goes on in your home. Whether you live in a studio or on an estate, home is where the action is. Meals eaten, laundry folded, conversations shared, faults confessed, injuries forgiven, promises made, dreams spoken out loud, victories celebrated, defeats laid to rest, births welcomed, wanderers embraced, sickness tended, disappointments endured, deaths grieved—these are the many elements by which the vitality of our homes is measured. Doesn't a space this important deserve a New Year's blessing? Celebrate a ritual for these rooms where love puts down its roots.

Today's readings: Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6; Matthew 2:1-12. *"Nations shall walk by your light, and kings by your shining radiance."*

Monday 08 JAN

FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Be prepared

Moments of great insight and personal revelation, such as the experience Jesus had when he emerged from the waters after John baptized him, are a gift from God. But the ground is ours to prepare. It is doubtful that Jesus arrived at this moment of his life, which

marked the beginning of his public ministry, without having spent a good deal of time in prayer and quiet reflection. We can do the same. Working with the limitations of time and the circumstances of your life, create a time and space every day for prayer and quiet contemplation or meditation. Many people make it the first thing in their day. That way it doesn't get lost. Prepare the ground, so that when the Spirit "descends like a dove" with a revelation for you, it will find a solid place to perch.

Today's readings: Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7 or 55:1-11; Acts of the Apostles 10:34-38 or 1 John 5:1-9; Mark 1:7-11. *"One mightier than I is coming after me."*

Tuesday 09 JAN

FIRST WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME

What possessed you?

It's worthy to note that the "unclean spirits" in the gospel stories speak in the plural: "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?" Why is that? The "possessed" person is one who has lost his centre, whose soul is divided, split and without grounding or foundation in the "Holy One of God." He is dominated by one voice, then by another. No wonder he speaks in the plural. Today, we might take a moment to ask ourselves, *What is my centre? From where do*

my thoughts and actions flow? Then make any necessary adjustments.

Today's readings: 1 Samuel 1:9-20 or 1:1-8; Mark 1:21-28 or 1:14-20. *"The man with the unclean spirit cried out, 'I know who you are, the Holy One of God!'"*

Wednesday 10 JAN

Healer, heal thyself

You may have heard the expression "wounded healer." It suggests that you don't have to be perfectly healthy to help others. But you have to be careful not to bring your unresolved problems into helping relationships with others, or you could do a lot of damage. Scripture makes it clear that taking care of your personal spiritual health should come first. Peter's mother-in-law took to her bed when she was ill and only served the apostles after Jesus healed her. You can give of yourself only if you have something to give. Think about some ways you can improve your spiritual health—by doing some spiritual reading, praying more, seeking the sacrament of Reconciliation, or going on a retreat.

Today's readings: 1 Samuel 3:1-10, 19-20; Mark 1:29-39. *"Jesus took her by the hand and lifted her up. The fever left her, and she began to serve them."*

Thursday 11 JAN

Take in the outcast

In the gospel era, lepers were considered rejects of society. According to the law of Moses, they had to announce their presence to everybody within earshot so they could be avoided. Yet, with a simple choice, a word, and a gesture, Jesus restored a leper to health so he could be around others without being afraid. How many people will we encounter today who, by their appearance or their language, will announce their rejection by society? Part of doing God's will is choosing to welcome the stranger and include those whom society rejects into our lives.

Today's readings: 1 Samuel 4:1-11; Mark 1:40-45. *"A leper knelt before Jesus and said to him, 'If you choose, you can make me clean'."*

Stick with the basics

The Gospel of Mark is the story of Jesus told in simple language for simple folk, without big words or extra commentary. But even without embellishment, extraordinary things happen—friendship so phenomenal that a paralytic makes an unlikely grand entrance followed by a more dramatic exit. It's plain to see Jesus works wonders, not just forgiving unforgivable sins but proving his right to do so by giving the paralyzed power to walk. If we're paralyzed today, it's because we've made life more muddled than Mark, wrapped up in rationalizations and fancy phrases when all we really need is "Jesus saves."

Today's readings: 1 Samuel 8:4-7; Mark 2:1-12. *"They removed the roof above Jesus and let down the mat on which the paralytic lay."*

Saturday 13 JAN

FEAST OF SAINT KENTIGERN, BISHOP

Do not be afraid!

Therese of Lisieux, a Carmelite nun who died of tuberculosis at the age of twenty-four, wrote to a friend: ". . . Jesus has so incomprehensible a love for us that He wills that we have a share with Him in the salvation of souls. He wills to do nothing without us. The Creator of the universe awaits the prayer of a poor little soul to save other souls redeemed like it at the price of all His Blood." When God's word is spoken His kingdom is revealed and His power is released. When people respond to God's word with faith and obedience they are changed and made "a new creation" in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). God chooses ordinary people, like you and me, as His ambassadors and He uses the ordinary circumstances of our daily lives and work situations to draw others into His kingdom.

Today's readings: Isaiah 52:7-10; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Luke 5:1-11. *"And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him."*

Readings for the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

Isaiah 60:1-6

The whole people of Israel will become like light to the nations.

Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13

The just king will receive the homage of many nations and peoples.

Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6

Here is the revealed mystery: Gentiles become partners with Israel in the divine promise.

Matthew 2:1-12

While the Magi do homage to the newborn king, the present king broods and schemes.

Words on the Word

God with Him . . .

Today the Magi find, crying in a manger, the one they have followed as he shone in the sky. Today the Magi see clearly, in swaddling clothes, the one they have long awaited as he lay hidden among the stars.

Today the Magi gaze in deep wonder at what they see: heaven on earth, earth in heaven, man in God, God in man, one whom the whole universe cannot contain now enclosed in a tiny body. As they look, they believe and do not question, as their symbolic gifts bear witness: incense for God, gold for a king, myrrh for one who is to die. . . (St. Peter Chrysologus).

* * *

In 2015, the total number of migrants in the world reached a record high of 250 million, according to a report published by the World Bank. The massive influx of refugees to European Union countries contributed significantly to increasing this number. Constantly moving has become part of our lives. Plato already noticed that life is a journey towards the land of happiness; everything we experience in the world is only an allusion to this experience - and therefore something that only announces it. That's why a person tends to constantly cross borders, he has seen many landscapes, but he keeps saying: not this, not this, not this. There is insatiability in us. For the rest of our lives, we have the desire to see something new, to cross another border.

The events and people described in today's Gospel are an opportunity to deepen our understanding of ourselves. The wise men from the East come to the fore, i.e. modern people who are looking for God in their lives. They are ready to abandon their current lifestyle. After all, the wise men risked their entire lives to see the newborn King to whom the star led them. The expectation of this King's appearance was common in their land. However, only a few people can put all their eggs in one basket and go to Him - just as in the past and today. The only certainty for the wise men was the appearance of a mysterious star. People often don't notice the star, they prefer to wait - in peace and safety. Only few people are ready for a life awakening and a breakthrough. The majority - even though they realise that their work and earnings cannot be the whole meaning of their lives - cannot change anything. These people will not decide to make a breakthrough. The star showing the way is already there, Christ has been born in the world. God revealed himself to people. Whoever wants to find Him will find Him. But first, a person must become open to searching.

Shouldn't we ourselves abandon the routine and start anew? Maybe it is worth looking for what is good in people with constant determination, forgiving and getting involved in the defence of the weak and disadvantaged - wherever it is needed. Strength is given by the same One whom the star announced to the wise men.

The second character described in today's Gospel is Herod. He is presented as the embodiment of evil power, influence, self-satisfaction, and a sense of grandeur and impunity. Anything that

could be superior to him in any way was a threat to him. Even the thought of God becomes unbearable. Herods were in the world, are and will be, they decide on many issues: power, money, lies, deceit, all evil in thousands of forms. Sometimes one would like to agree with the words of George Orwell: "If you want to imagine the future, imagine a shoe that constantly tramples on a human head."

In such a world, man needs people who are the opposite of Herod. The world always, even today, needs people who are ready to use their influence and wealth in the service of other people; who can even sacrifice themselves to alleviate human poverty and human suffering. This is the new King of the Jews born in Bethlehem. His life and death fill human longings, both then and now. In royal palaces we rarely find people ready to make sacrifices.

Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem. The shepherds were the first to worship Him, but today they may be people rejected by their surroundings. This was also His fate: rejection and disregard, just a few days after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. We want to imitate Him, but He left us a warning: they persecuted me and they will persecute you.

When the wise men had worshiped the Newborn, they returned to their land by another route. Likewise, those who have experienced an encounter with Christ do not want to return to their old lives, to old mistakes.

* * *

*My God is hungry
he has a skinny body and ribs
he has no money
tall cathedrals of silver*

*He is not helped by
long songs and candles
he has a sunken chest
he doesn't want medicine from the pharmacy.*

*Helpless
government ministers gendarmes
only with love
my God feeds me
(Rev. J. Twardowski).*

From the adoration of the Magi to baptism in the Jordan

What do the celebration of Epiphany, the celebration of the Baptism of Lord Jesus in the Jordan and the sacrament of Christian initiation have in common for each of us?

Epiphany (from the Greek *epifaneia* - revelation, appearance), popularly known as the Three Kings, is a Christian feast that is intended to celebrate God's manifestation to the human race, to make us aware of His presence in human history and encourage us to a reasonable knowledge of God. It is one of the first known feasts in the Church. In the East it was already celebrated in the 3rd century, and in the Western Church at the end of the 4th century. The Magi came to Christ, guided by the Star of Bethlehem. Their identity is unknown. They were perhaps Persian.

The Holy Bible about the Magi

In the Holy Scriptures, only the Gospel of St. Matthew (cf. 2:1–12), contains information about the Magi. Their number is not exactly known. The biblical accounts only mention three gifts, and it is on this basis that the commonly accepted number of the Three Wise Men is derived. Three Magi also most often appear in paintings in the catacombs. However, there are also paintings that depict two, four, six, and even twelve Magi. Their names – Casper, Melchior and Balthazar – come from the Middle Ages. According to exegetes explaining this text from

Matthew, it does not have the character of a story being told but rather, it is a catechesis intended to explain the mystery of the person of the historical Jesus, who fulfils the Old Testament prophecies about the Lord's Messiah. The Three Kings worship Christ. It is extremely symbolic because it covers both the pagan world and people from various social classes and nationalities.

That's why one of the Magus is black, the other is young, and the third is old. They come to Bethlehem to worship the One who was born to bring salvation to the whole world. The Adoration of the Three Magi is

therefore a symbolic announcement of the pagan world's recognition of Jesus as God's anointed and ruler of all nations.



In the time of Christ, frankincense and myrrh were among the most expensive gifts. They were worth their weight in gold. This resin from rare trees with a strong and pleasant smell was smoked for pleasure in rich palaces. The custom of blessing gold, frankincense and myrrh appeared at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries. Blessed incense made of juniper resin is used to fumigate houses and homes to protect against diseases and misfortunes. Consecrated gold is touched to the neck to prevent any diseases. Since the 18th century, chalk has also been blessed, with which many householders still write the letters C+M+B (*Christus Mansionem Benedicat* – May Christ bless this house) on the doors of their houses. In this way, we want to testify before the whole world that we have welcomed the Son of God into our home, that we believe that He came to redeem us all.

Baptism in the Jordan is the beginning of Jesus' public mission

The after the Epiphany comes the feast of the Baptism of Jesus in the liturgical calendar. It closes the period of celebrating Christmas, although the tradition in some regions carols continue to sung for almost a month, as a “window” is left open until 2nd February, the day on which the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple is celebrated (. The latter feast is also known as Candlemas since Christ is proclaimed as the “light for the gentiles”. In the Roman liturgy, the baptism of Jesus did not have a separate celebration, even though it is mentioned in the Gospels. This commemoration was established only in the 20th century and was set on January 13th, instead of the former octave of Epiphany (the eighth day from Epiphany, i.e., 6th January). In turn, the post-conciliar reform of the liturgical calendar in 1969 defined this day as the feast of the Baptism of the Lord and set the day of celebration on the Sunday after January 6th. But then the date of Epiphany was stirred up (just to add to the confusion) and so: “When the Feast of the Epiphany is not celebrated on 6 January, it is celebrated on the Sunday between 2nd and 8th January, and the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is celebrated on the Monday following the Epiphany”. This feast has a strong connection with the celebration of the

Epiphany. The news of the birth of the Redeemer was carried to the whole world by the Magi. By being baptized with water by John, Jesus began His public ministry, and God himself testified that He was the Son of God. Christ, as an adult man, was baptized by John the Baptist in the waters of the Jordan. John baptized with water, the most desired element of the desert. It is only there that the true value of water, which gives birth, sustains and purifies, is appreciated. He chose a place for this ritual where the waters of the Jordan were not too deep, which motivated people to cross there because crossing the river was not dangerous. People moved by the charismatic preacher's calls often changed their lives. Although he did not have the power to forgive sins, the baptism he administered was only a symbolic act, but it expressed the longing for the Saviour and the need to change one's life. Jesus' baptism is something deeper than an inversion of the baptism of repentance that John performed. Jesus did not need a baptism of repentance. Even though He was without sin, He did not distance Himself from people and their sins. He sanctified the water to open the heavens to those who were tainted by Adam's sin. During this event, Jesus is presented by His Father as the Son sent for the redemption of humanity. In this event, the entire Holy Trinity appears for the first time.

What was baptism in the Jordan for Jesus? From this moment, with His baptism in the Jordan, Christ begins His public activity. The Spirit descended on Jesus to strengthen Him in the mission entrusted to Him by the Father. In the Gospel according to Saint Mark, Jesus appears for the first time in the baptism scene. He was 30 years old then. In the Jewish tradition, this age was necessary for men to appear in public, to teach.

Ritual washings were known in ancient times among many peoples. It was an external sign of the desire for internal transformation, regret for the sins committed and the desire to make reparation for them. However, none of these ritual washings had and does not have the value of Holy Baptism.

The transition from John's baptism to Christian baptism is an important breakthrough. The place of the symbol is taken by the sacrament, which, without losing its symbolic dimension, is God's action towards man. In Christian baptism, as in other holy sacraments, God himself reaches out to man. However, faith, acceptance and response are necessary on the part of each of us.

Epiphany is the revealing of the Lord to the whole world, taking place thanks to the Magi who experienced an encounter with the eternally existing Son of God. He came into this world through the Incarnation, and today He realises Himself through every baptised person. During His baptism in the Jordan, Jesus reveals Himself to the world and begins His public activity. Therefore, the feast of the Baptism of the Lord reveals to us, on the one hand, the Son of God, sent by the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit for the redemption of humanity, and on the other hand, this feast draws attention to the reality of our baptism. In the sacrament of baptism, we experience the saving power of Christ, which frees us from the slavery of sin. On the feast of Epiphany, let's thank God for the gift of the Son in whom we become children of God (cf. Rom 8:29; Gal 4:5-7). Let's also ask for the gift of being witnesses to Him, like the Magi, wherever God sends us. On the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, let's give thanks for Christ who became Man to save us. Let's also renew on this occasion what the Easter Vigil encourages us to do. Let's renounce "Satan and his works and promise to serve God in the holy Catholic Church."

My Holy Baptism

Baptism is the fundamental sacrament with great mystery. It shows man's primal striving for a new, better life in this world and a better world in the future. Baptism, as a sacrament of initiation, meaning first of all "putting on Christ" (Gal 3:27). "Baptism is necessary for salvation

(...). The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude (...)” (CCC 1257). Let’s remember that baptism first gives faith and imprints an indelible spiritual mark on the soul, and is also the basis of communion between all the baptised. It takes away original sin and all personal sins and gives a new, supernatural birth. The baptised becomes a "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17). The Holy Trinity grants sanctifying and justifying grace and dwells in the baptised (cf. Jn 14:23). It is also important that it opens the way to other sacraments that are to help the baptised person reach heaven. Thanks to the sacrament of Holy Baptism, we have a chance to live forever. Hence, its date is more important than the date of physical birth in this world. Thanks to this sacrament, God's grace supports us. Although in Confirmation we consciously open ourselves to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, He works in us from the moment of baptism. Sacraments operate *ex opere operato*, that is, by virtue of the administration itself. Let’s not forget that the sacraments also work *ex opere operantis*, i.e., we are to cooperate with the grace of the sacrament. For grace builds on nature. We are to cooperate with the grace of God.

Do we know the date of our own baptism? Do we know where our baptismal candle is, the symbol of the Light of the world, Jesus Christ? Let us remember to light it at important moments in our lives, and when we leave this world. By asking for baptism for our children, do we realise that we are opening them to eternal life and undertake to help them by the example of our own life in the spirit of faith: daily prayer, the use of the holy sacraments, and especially the example of participation in Sunday Holy Mass?

Prayer



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

Please remember in your prayers George Williams (2013), Fr. John Bentley (2011) **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 to join us. Please do come.

Dedication of the altar: let’s gather tomorrow evening to celebrate the dedication of our altar for the celebration of the Eucharist. Bishop Brian will then the celebrate the first Eucharist on this altar. We join together again after Holy Mass in the Hall for refreshments.

Let’s bless our homes at beginning of the year, on feast day when the Holy Family received into their home the Magi who had travelled from the East. May we always be welcoming and show hospitality to the person who carries the image of God within them. “A guest in the home, is God in the home”. Collect your blessed chalk from the porch, and instructions for the blessing if you need them. 20†C†M†B†24



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