

PARISH BULLETIN

St Kieran's, the Catholic Church *in*

Campbeltown and Islay

Ceann Loch Chille Chiarain

14th of January 2024

2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time

St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

Sunday, 14th January, 2nd

2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time, Holy

Mass, 10.00am

Monday: Holy Mass, **6.00pm**

Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday:

Holy Mass, **10.00am**

Devotions:

Wednesday: Mid-morning Prayer,
9.50am

Friday: No devotions

Scripture Discussion: Friday: 10.30am

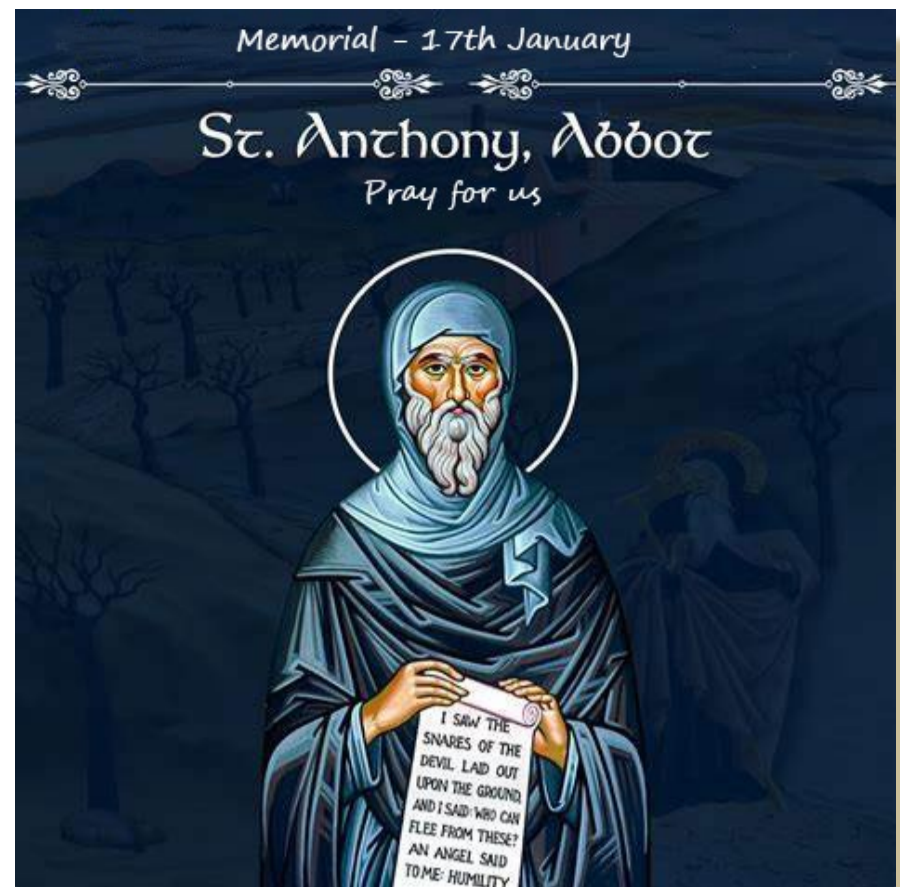
Saturday, 20th January, Vigil Mass, 6.00pm

Sunday, 21st January, 3rd Sunday of Ordinary Time, Holy Mass, 10.00am

St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Bridgend, Islay

Sunday 14th January 2024, Holy Mass, 4pm

Sunday 4th February, Holy Mass, 4pm



Hymns/Music

Processional (Sunday only)

607: When Christ our Lord to Andrew cried (Mayhew)[552]

Offertory

510: Take my life and let it be (McLennan)[467]

Communion

Тебе пожем (We hymn thee)

Post Communion

498: Soul of my Saviour (McLennan)[455]

Recessional

Sheet: Lord, you have come to the seashore (McLennan[5])[sheet]



Psalm response

Here I am, Lord! I come to do your will.

Gospel acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

*We have found the Messiah – which means the Christ –
grace and truth have come through him.*

Alleluia!

Communion Antiphon

*We have come to know and to believe
in the love that God has for us.*

Take Five

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

MONDAY 15 JAN

Stick with the routine

How many of us have tried to get in shape for a big event, like a reunion or wedding? We eat less, exercise, and hope to make a good impression. Once the big day arrives, there's little more to do than enjoy ourselves. That's what the apostles were doing while Jesus was in their midst. After years of praying for a saviour, Christ finally arrived, so there was nothing more to do than savour the moment. The real challenge is to continue healthy practices once the big event is over so that we're more prepared for the next event. What exercises will help you prepare for the next big spiritual event in your life?

Today's readings: 1 Samuel 15:16-23; Mark 2:18-22. *"Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"*

TUESDAY 16 JAN

Sabbath prayer

While the Pharisees may have overemphasized strict observance of the Sabbath, perhaps we have swung too far in the opposite direction. Look around you on any Sunday afternoon — you'll see people shopping, working, rushing about. And most of us are right in the thick of things. While having options on how to spend our free time is a good thing, what seems to be getting lost is the notion of a qualitative difference in the pace of life, the "quiet Sunday afternoons" of times past. We all need a space in our crowded lives for time apart, time to reconnect with ourselves, our loved ones, and our God. Whatever your own Sunday choices might be, make sure you find a way to "keep holy the Sabbath." After all, as Jesus taught, the Sabbath was designed for our benefit. God doesn't need a day of rest—we do.

Today's readings: 1 Samuel 16:1-13; Mark 2:23-28. *"The Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath."*

WEDNESDAY 17 JAN

MEMORIAL OF SAINT ANTHONY, ABBOT

Go for broke

At one point in the gospels, Jesus says, "Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother

and sister and mother" (Matthew 12:50). Saint Anthony, the fourth-century Egyptian considered the founder of Christian monasticism, would have easily qualified as Jesus' "family." Sitting one day in church, he heard the gospel passage, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me" (Matthew 19:21). He immediately sold what he owned, arranged for the financial support of his sister, gave the rest of his money to the poor, and went into the desert to live as a hermit. Sometimes we need a "here I am Lord" faith that gets up and does the will of God before we can talk ourselves out of it.

Today's readings: 1 Samuel 17:32-33, 37, 40-51; Mark 3:1-6. *"Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath rather than to do evil, to save life rather than to destroy it?"*

THURSDAY 18 JAN

Touch the pain (Christian Unity Week begins)

When people are hurting, they seek the healing power of physical touch, just as those who followed Jesus did. Perhaps that is one reason why healing massage is one of the fastest-growing phenomena in our society. We seek to be healed physically, emotionally, and spiritually of what ails us, what causes us "dis-ease," and the power of touch can help in all these areas. Be a healer yourself, by offering a comforting hug or shoulder to cry on, a handshake of praise, a kiss to a loved one. To touch and be touched in healing, healthy ways is as natural and human as to breathe and walk. Reach out and make the connection today!

Today's readings: 1 Samuel 18:6-9; 19:1-7; Mark 3:7-12. *"He had cured many and, as a result, those who had diseases were pressing upon him to touch him."*

FRIDAY 19 JAN

Jesus chooses his teammates

When it comes to Christian unity, Jesus points us in an odd direction by his example. When he calls his 12 closest followers, it's not pretty: Roman collaborators, men smelling of fish, a political agitator, and a thief, among others. Many of these will never distinguish themselves beyond their

denial, betrayal, and doubt of the one whom they follow. Why does Jesus make such eccentric choices? We might as well ask why Jesus wants you and me. Jesus calls whom he calls, and if we don't all go to the same church, is that his problem or ours?

Today's readings: 1 Samuel 24:3-21; Mark 3:13-19. *"Jesus called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to him."*

SATURDAY 20 JAN

MEMORIAL OF SAINT FABIAN, POPE, MARTYR
Serve when called

Can a layperson be chosen pope? It happened in the year 236, when it is said that those who had

gathered to elect a new bishop of Rome saw a dove alight upon the head of Fabian, an unknown layman and farmer who happened to be visiting the city. He was at once proclaimed bishop of Rome by acclamation. Fabian made important contributions to the church, including his decision to send seven bishops to Gaul to evangelize the region we know today as France and Belgium. Be prepared for service both great and small at any time of day or night.

Today's readings: 2 Samuel 1:1-4, 11-12, 19, 23-27; Mark 3:20-21. *"Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save life or to kill?"*

Readings for the 2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time

1 Samuel 3:3b-10, 19

Samuel, asleep near the ark of God, is awakened by an unfamiliar voice.

Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10

God prefers attentive ears and a faithful heart to a lifetime of sacrifice.

1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20

Immorality has no place in a body destined for glory.

John 1:35-42

Andrew is the first to learn that the long-awaited Messiah has arrived.

Words on the Word

Being with God to testify about Him

We seek God, and God seeks us

Looking at the shelves in real bookshops or online, one can conclude that there is no shortage of people interested in the issues of supernatural life. Words such as "God" and "Jesus Christ" are frequently entered into Internet search engines. The human being seeks God and desires to know Him. However, it is also true that God is looking for human beings. Starting with the first question addressed to Adam: "Where are you" (Genesis 3:9), God does not stop searching for man. He sets out first to the encounter. This is why it is possible. We are not able to steal God's goods, as the mythical Prometheus dreamed of. However, there is no such need. God himself has revealed himself to us, humans. He made himself known most in Jesus Christ. During His baptism in the Jordan, the voice of God the Father was heard, and the Holy Spirit appeared in the visible form of a dove (cf. Mk 1:6b-11). Christ, anointed with the Holy Spirit, began his public activity, drawing disciples with him.

God reveals himself to man

Jesus came to earth to fulfil God's plan to save people. The words of the refrain of the responsorial psalm refer to Him in the highest degree: "I come to do your will." John the Baptist called Jesus the Lamb of God (cf. Jn 1:6), and the later apostles, John and Andrew, who were John the Baptist's disciples, heard what he said and followed Jesus. "And when Jesus saw them following Him, He said to them, 'What are you looking for?'" (John 1:38).

This theme of searching returns many times in the Gospel story of Saint John. During the conversation in the Upper Room, before His passion, Jesus said to the apostles: "Children, I am with you for a short time. You will look for me, but - as I told the Jews, so I tell you now - where I am going, you cannot come" (John 13:33). A little later, He asked those who came to the Garden of Olives: "Whom are you looking for?" (John 18:4). When they answered, "Jesus of Nazareth" (John 18:7), He said to them: "I am." This statement, known to them from the revelation of God Yahweh on Sinai: "I am who I am" (John 3:14), caused disquiet among those who came into the garden and "they drew back and fell to the ground" (John 18:6). Later, after His resurrection, Jesus asked Mary Magdalene a similar question: "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" (John 20:15). And when He addressed her by name, she recognised Him as the Rabbi - the Teacher, the Master.

God invites you to be with Him

Jesus allows himself to be found. God allows himself to be found and invites us to be with him. When John and Andrew asked Jesus where He lived (cf. Jn 1:38), "he answered them, 'Come and see.' So, they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about ten o'clock" (John 1:39). They remembered exactly the moment that determined the course of their lives.

They became fascinated with Jesus, just as the young boy Samuel became fascinated with God whose voice he heard. The Lord called to the boy three times, "Samuel, Samuel!" (1 Sam 3:4, 6, 8). Until finally, the fourth time, the boy, instructed by the priest Eli, recognized the voice of God in this call and "answered, 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening'" (1 Sam 3:10). John and Andrew, and later also other disciples of Jesus, received the grace of being with Him. They accepted His invitation to remain constantly close to the Master. In this way they became witnesses of His words and deeds. It was being in the company of Jesus together with the other apostles, "beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us" (Acts 1:22), that was the criterion for choosing the twelfth apostle to replace Judas after his suicide. Only those who had been with Him in the community of apostles from the beginning of His public activity could be included among the first witnesses of Jesus' resurrection.

God sends his beloved ones into the world

The testimony of the apostles about Jesus resulted in the dynamic development of the Church. Many people were convinced that Jesus was the Son of God and that he had a real impact on people's lives. Hundreds and then thousands of additional disciples and followers of Jesus joined the group of the Twelve. According to Hans Forster of the University of Vienna, historians have estimated that the number of Christians at the end of the 2nd century was around one hundred thousand. This number represented 0.17 percent of the population of the then sixty million Roman Empire.

Over time, however, the Good News about Jesus changed the lives of millions of people. Today, especially in Africa and Asia, the number of Christians is growing. However, the quantitative development of the Church is not the most important thing. **The Lord Jesus was never interested in having many disciples, but that they would be faithful. Only consistent believers can become credible witnesses.**

During each Eucharist, we are in the real presence of God and in the community of the Church. This experience, we believe, gives us strength to be credible witnesses of Christ in our daily lives. We regret that, as a result of the sins of Christ's disciples, historical divisions have occurred in the Church in the past. Although it is not possible for all Christians to participate in a

common Eucharist, we can undertake charitable activities together and pray in the Holy Spirit through Christ to God, who is the Father of us all. It must also be a goal to ensure that further divisions do not occur. Today we pray that, by accepting the Body of Christ, we will remain in mutual unity: "Lord, our God, breathe into us the Spirit of your love and in your goodness unite all those whom you have nourished with the same Eucharistic Bread. Through Christ our Lord." Amen.

The trees bloomed in the middle of winter

An inexplicable mystery to scientists is the astonishing phenomenon of blackthorn trees blooming in the middle of winter, which grow next to the sanctuary of Our Lady in the town of Bra, in the diocese of Turin. This extraordinary phenomenon has been repeated between December 15th and January 15th every year for 665 years.

Scientists from the University of Turin began researching and observing this winter flowering in the 16th century and to this day they have not been able to find a scientific explanation for this fact despite the continuous advances in science.

The blackthorn plum trees that grow in the area bloom once a year in spring, at the turn of March and April, with the only exception being the trees growing next to the sanctuary. Geophysical, biochemical, electromagnetic and other causes that could explain this natural anomaly have been ruled out.

These trees bloomed for the first time during the apparition of Our Lady on December 29th, 1336. It was then, on a frosty winter evening, that a young married woman, Egidia Mathis, who was very pregnant, was passing by a roadside shrine with an image of Our Lady on a pillar. There, two mercenaries approached her menacingly. Terrified, Egidia began to call for help from Our Lady.

She had no chance to defend herself when suddenly a blinding light came from the pillar and Our Lady appeared waving the mercenaries away, which frightened the aggressors so much that they fled the scene in great panic. Then Our Lady comforted and reassured the terrified Egidia.

When the apparition ended, Egidia felt severe labour pains, so she sat under the shrine of Our Lady and gave birth to her firstborn child without any complications. With great love she wrapped it in a shawl and with difficulty reached the nearest buildings.

The news of this event quickly spread throughout the village. In a short time, despite the darkness, snow and frost, a large crowd of people gathered to pray at the place of the apparition. There were blackthorn (sloe) trees around the area, and to the great surprise of those gathered, the leafless trees were covered with beautiful white flowers as if it were spring.



After a few years, a sanctuary of Our Lady was built in the place of the apparition, which exists on the site to this day. Trees still grow around it and, contrary to all the laws of nature, they begin to bloom every year around December 29th, the anniversary of the apparition. This flowering lasts for 10 days. The same blackthorn plum trees that grow outside the sanctuary "behave normally" and bloom in spring.

However, scientists noted other strange facts, namely in December 1887, the trees at the

sanctuary in Bra unusually did not bloom. However, they began to bloom on the day of the election of Pope Leo XIII, February 20, 1878. Also in 1898, there was an exception "to the rule". The trees bloomed exactly on December 29th and had flowers for three months, i.e. throughout the entire period of public exposition of the Shroud of Turin (and the occasion on which Secondo Pia took the famous photograph of which the negative baffled the world).

Two exceptions to the winter blooming were in 1915 and 1939, as if tell the world of the winters of world war were coming.

The trees of the sanctuary in Bra, blooming in the middle of winter, remind us of the apparition of Our Lady who miraculously protected a pregnant woman. They also recall the biblical truth that Mary, through her humble love, received from God "so great power over the devils that - as they were often forced to confess through the mouths of those possessed - they are more afraid of one sigh of Her for a soul than the prayers of all the saints; They fear one of Her threats more than any other torment," writes St. Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort.

Why doesn't God reveal himself more clearly?

If God exists, why is He hiding? – **Vittorio Messori** asked the Holy Father in his book-interview "Crossing the Threshold of Hope" – Why doesn't He reveal Himself more clearly? Why doesn't He give everyone more tangible and accessible proof of His existence? Why does His mysterious strategy seem to be that of playing hide-and-seek with His creatures?

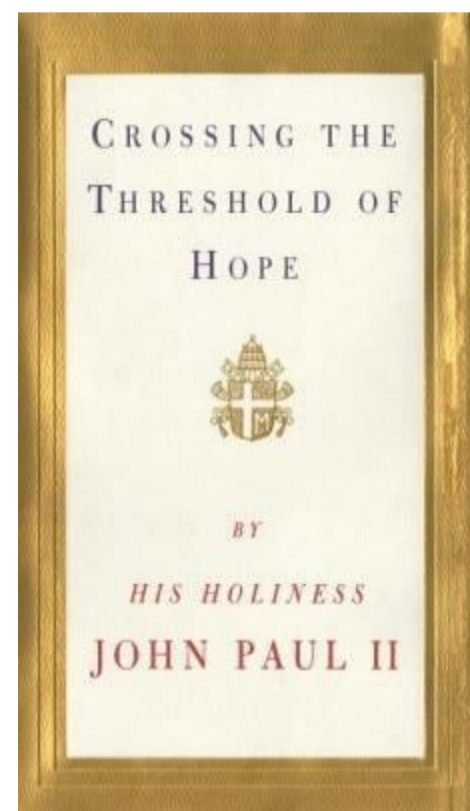
Reasons certainly do exist to believe in Him; but — as many have maintained and still maintain — there are also reasons to doubt, or even deny, His existence. Wouldn't it be simpler if His existence were evident?

John Paul II's answer: He is He who is, the *absolute uncreated Mystery*. If He were not Mystery, there would be no need for Revelation, or, more precisely, there would be no need for *God to reveal Himself*.

Your questions would only be legitimate if man, with his created intellect and within the limits of his own subjectivity, could overcome the entire distance that separates creation from the Creator, the contingent and not necessary being from the Necessary Being ("she who is not," according to the well-known words Christ addressed to Saint Catherine of Siena, from "He who is": cf. Raimondo da Capua, *Legenda Maior* 1, 10, 92).

The thoughts that concern you, and which also appear in your books, are expressed by a series of questions. They are not only yours. You wish to be a spokesman for the people of our time, placing yourself at their side on the paths — which are often difficult and intricate, often seeming to lead nowhere — in their search for God. Your anxiety is expressed in your questions: *Why isn't there more concrete proof of God's existence? Why does He seem to hide Himself almost playing with His creation? Shouldn't it all be much simpler? Shouldn't His existence be obvious?* These are questions that belong to the repertory of *contemporary agnosticism*. Agnosticism is not atheism; more specifically it is not a systematic atheism, as was Marxist atheism and, in a different context, the atheism of the Enlightenment. (. . .)

God's self-revelation comes about in a special way by his "becoming man." Once again, according to the words of Ludwig Feuerbach, the great temptation is to make the classical reduction of that which is divine to that which is human. It was from Feuerbach's words that Marxist atheism was inspired, but — *ut minus sapiens*, "I am talking like a madman" (cf. 2 Cor



11:23) — *the challenge comes from God Himself*, since He really became man in His Son and was born of the Virgin. It is precisely in this birth, and then through the Passion, the Cross, and the Resurrection that the self-revelation of God in the history of man reached its zenith — the revelation of the invisible God in the visible humanity of Christ.

Even the day before the Passion the apostles asked Christ: “Show us the Father” (Jn 14:8). His response remains fundamental: “How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? . . . Or else, believe because of the works themselves. . . The Father and I are one” (cf. Jn 14:9–11; 10:30).

Christ’s words are far-reaching. We are almost at the point of *that direct experience* to which contemporary man aspires. But this immediacy is not the knowledge of God “face to face” (1 Cor 13:12), the knowledge of God as God.

Let’s try to be impartial in our reasoning: *Could God go further in His stooping down, in His drawing near to man*, thereby expanding the possibilities of our knowing Him? In truth, *it seems that He has gone as far as possible. He could not go further.* In a certain sense God has gone too far! Didn’t Christ perhaps become “a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles” (1 Cor 1:23)? Precisely because He called God His Father, because He revealed Him so openly in Himself, He could not but elicit the impression that it was too much.... Man was no longer able to tolerate such closeness, and thus the protests began.

This great protest has precise names — first it is called the Synagogue, and then Islam. Neither can accept a God who is so human. “It is not suitable to speak of God in this way,” they protest. “He must remain absolutely transcendent; He must remain pure Majesty. Majesty full of mercy, certainly, but not to the point of paying for the faults of His own creatures, for their sins.”

From one point of view, it is right to say that God revealed too much of Himself to man, too much of that which is most divine, that which is His intimate life; He revealed Himself in His Mystery. He was not mindful of the fact that such an *unveiling would in a certain way obscure Him in the eyes of man, because man is not capable of withstanding an excess of the Mystery.* He does not want to be pervaded and overwhelmed by it. Yes, man knows that God is the One in whom “we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28); but why must that be confirmed by His Death and Resurrection? Yet Saint Paul writes: “If Christ has not been raised, then empty is our preaching; empty, too, your faith” (1 Cor 15:14).

Saint John Paul II, "Crossing the Threshold of Hope", pp. 47-49

Messages of Saint Sharbel

There is God and His kingdom. Every person is called to participate in it by uniting in love with God. There is only one path that leads there, and that is Jesus Christ, the truest God who became the truest man. This path of maturing into love is a difficult spiritual climb. We should love each other with selfless, unconditional and unlimited love. In order to mature towards such love, we must constantly draw from its Source, which is Jesus Christ. Everyone, without exception, can draw from this one Source - through daily, persistent prayer and the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist.

Only Jesus can free a person from all sins, problems and worries. He suffers greatly when a



person redeemed by His blood falls into sin. God wants us to be free and happy. However, people look for happiness where they will never find it, on earth, in material goods or in other people. Full happiness can only be found by uniting in love with Christ.

At the moment of death, the sinner will most fear and mourn his lack of response to God's infinite love. Every person who does not love because he has destroyed the ability to love through sins is in a state of death of the spirit because he has voluntarily broken the bonds of life and love that united him with God. Love is the only treasure that you can accumulate in your earthly life and that will last forever. All material wealth, fame, power, social position and various successes will remain in this world after death. At the moment of death, only love will count. Whoever stands before God without love will have to bear all the consequences of his sinful choices and selfish behaviour. It will be a terrible experience of true death of the spirit, a waste of one's entire life. Love should reign in your hearts and humility in your minds.

Arrogance always leads to sin, and lack of forgiveness and hatred - to eternal damnation. Pray and convert.

Pray from the bottom of your heart and God will hear you. Open the gates of your hearts to Christ so that He can dwell there and give you peace. Remember: pray with your heart, sincerely and with trust, not just with your lips. The sound of frogs croaking will reach God faster than empty words that do not come from the human heart. In prayer, listen to the voice of God. Unfortunately, there are few who listen and understand, even fewer who listen, understand and implement. So, listen to what God tells you constantly and in various ways, trying to understand and fully fulfil His holy will.

Every person is like a lamp of God. His job is to illuminate the darkness in the world. God created each lamp with clear and transparent glass to allow light to penetrate and illuminate the darkness of the world. However, people forget about the light and only care about the glass. They colour and decorate it until it becomes so dark that it does not allow light to penetrate. And that is why there is so much darkness in the world. The glass of your lamps should become transparent again so that your light shines in the world. Therefore, after each fall, you must immediately go to confession to always remain in a state of sanctifying grace.

Prayer



Please pray for those who are sick, in need or have asked for our prayers: Tommy McGrory snr, 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 Connie Graham whose funeral was last week, together with 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.

Thanks to all who made the dedication of the altar on Monday a special occasion expressing Christian unity.



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