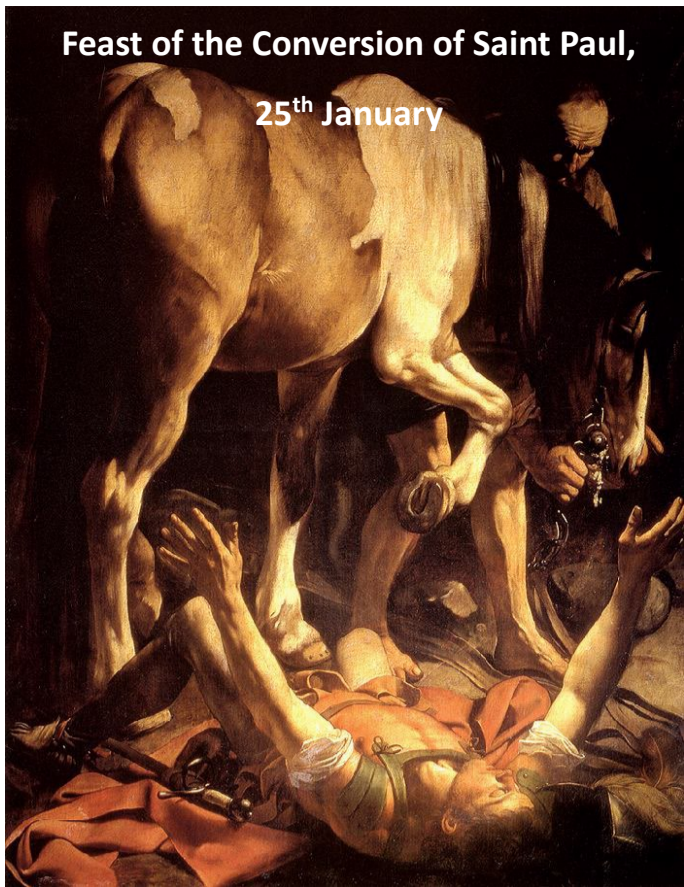


Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul,

25th January



PARISH BULLETIN

St Kieran's, the Catholic Church *in*

Campbeltown and Islay

Ceann Loch Chille Chiarain

21st of January 2024

3rd Sunday of Ordinary Time

St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

Sunday, 21st January, 3rd

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: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Mid-morning Prayer and Holy Mass, 9.30am

Scripture Discussion: Friday: 10.30am

Saturday, 27th January, Vigil Mass, 6.00pm

Sunday, 28th January, 4th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Holy Mass, 10.00am

St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Bridgend, Islay

Sunday 4th February, Holy Mass, 4pm



Hymns/Music

Processional (Sunday only)

716: Jesus Christ is waiting (McLellan)

Offertory

28: All that I am (McLennan)

Communion

Teбе појем (We hymn thee)

Post Communion

744: One bread, one body (Mayhew)

Recessional

Sheet: Will you come and follow me (Keys)



Psalm response

Lord, make me know your ways.

Gospel acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

The kingdom of God is close at hand:

repent, and believe the Good News.

Alleluia!

Communion Antiphon

*I am the light of the world, says the Lord;
whoever follows me will not walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life.*

Take Five

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

MONDAY

22 JAN 2012

Let grace and love unite

During the Reformation, the Church headed into the chaos of conflicting views of how it should function. It was a dark time in church history that saw much division and persecution. Through all this darkness, however, the light of Christ was still present. Even though the Church was divided, there was still hope. When we tear one another apart, we lose sight of what is truly important — God’s grace and love. Instead of creating divisions among us, let’s embrace a sense of community and compassion for one another to allow God’s grace to shine through the darkness and enter our hearts.

Today's readings: *2 Samuel 5:1-7, 10; Mark 3:22-30* “If a kingdom is divided against itself, the kingdom cannot stand.”

TUESDAY

23 JAN 2012

Unstoppable

God’s love is consistent, unwavering, unconditional, and unstoppable. We may choose to separate ourselves from him, but nothing will make Him ignore us, leave us, or treat us unkindly. He will pursue us, love us, and call us to return to Him no matter what might stand in the way. It is His nature to love. That is why He created us – to be united with him and to share in his love and unity of persons (1 John 3:1). God is a trinity of persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – and a community of love. That is what Jesus challenged His followers and even His own earthly relatives to recognise.

Today's readings: *2 Samuel 6:12b-15, 17-19; Mark 3:31-35* “Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”

WEDNESDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

24 JAN 2012

The great communicator

In 1923 Pope Pius XI proclaimed Saint Francis de Sales a patron saint of writers and journalists because he made extensive use of flyers and books in his work as a spiritual director and defender of the Catholic faith. De Sales, who served as bishop of Geneva from 1602 to 1622, was also a polyglot, known as a clear and gracious author in French, Italian, and Latin. He even developed a form of sign language in order to teach a deaf man about God

and thus is also the patron saint of the deaf. There are many ways to communicate the glory of God to the world. What is your particular gift and how will you use it to spread the Good News?

Today's readings: *2 Samuel 7:4-17; 13-17; Mark 4:1-20*. To what shall we compare the Kingdom of God? It is like a mustard seed that . . . is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth. But once it is sown, it springs up and becomes the largest of plants.”

THURSDAY: FEAST OF THE CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL, APOSTLE (Conclusion of Christian Unity week)

25 JAN 2012

You're never an impossible mission for God

The details of the story vary, but whatever happened to Saint Paul on the road near Damascus was literally a turning point in his life. What was so incredible about Paul’s “turning around” — his conversion — was not only the dramatic suddenness of it but also the fact that it happened in the midst of his persecution of Christians. He literally changed sides in mid-stride, switching his allegiances completely. Paul’s conversion was a decisive statement on God’s part that personal change is always possible. Have faith, and therefore hope, in that power today.

Today's readings: *Acts 9:1-22; Mark 16:15-18* “About noon a great light from the sky suddenly shone around me.”

FRIDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINT TIMOTHY AND SAINT TITUS

26 JAN 2012

Get fired up

Known as the “Light to the Gentiles,” Saint Paul was a master with words and images, which continue to resonate 2,000 years after they were first written. Picture what happens when you stir a smouldering fire: Sparks snap and fly then a flame bursts from the centre and a warm, reassuring blaze ignites from the ashes. Our eternal, internal flame never dies but merely dims through forgetfulness. It needs only to be revived by our memory. Suddenly we become aware of the inner resources we had forgotten or didn’t know we had. Today when your spirit is flagging, conjure an imaginary stick and kindle into flame the presence of God that is within you. Make it a blazing fire, generating great quantities of heat and light.

Today's readings: *Titus 1:1-5; Mark 4:26-34* “. . . but he explained everything to his disciples when they were

alone.”

SATURDAY: OPTIONAL MEMORIAL OF SAINT

ANGELA MERICI, VIRGIN

27 JAN 2012

Step out and step up

Saint Angela Merici did two things that may seem small now but, in her time (16th-century Italy), were huge: She organized a group of single laywomen to teach the uneducated girls of her town. In her time, very few women had any schooling, let alone became teachers, and the ones

who did have some education were nuns, who, like other unmarried women, rarely went out on their own. Her community eventually became the Ursuline religious order. It's easy to ignore the fact that things people now take for granted came about because of someone who had a daring idea and the courage to carry it out. Their example can also serve to inspire you as well to take a bold step to do good in the world.

Today's readings: *2 Samuel 12:1-7a, 10-17; Mark 4:35-41* "Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?"

Readings for the 3rd Sunday of Ordinary Time

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

God is moved by the wholesale repentance of a very wicked people.

Psalms 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

Those who seek the paths of the Lord will walk in truth.

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Paul warns his community not to hold onto the present world too closely.

Mark 1:14-20

Jesus begins his mission, and another version of the call to discipleship is modeled.

Words on the Word

The Lord Jesus called the first apostles at their place of work. They had courage and were not afraid of risk. They went out every night to the lake, where many a boat sank during unsettled weather. They were a hard-working and particular people. We don't know whether they had met Christ before, but this one encounter became decisive.

The Lord Jesus Himself is on His way and says to the apostles: "Follow me." He pulls the ones chosen out from their places and calls them to action. They went and didn't ask needless questions, even though they couldn't have understood what it meant: "I will make you into fishers of men." Here their faith and trust were revealed. Their lives have changed.

Basically, they had to break with what they were used to: family, neighbours, life plans, etc. What Jesus offered them was incomprehensible. He included them in His saving plans, but at first He offered them a journey and teachings, then, after years, they suffered persecution and finally died a martyr's death.

Through holy baptism, we too were included in the new saving order introduced by Christ. Each person has a different, unique way.

During a pilgrimage on May 20, 2006, Pope Benedict said:

Like Saint Peter, we can cry out: "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man," because it is difficult for us to believe that it is us who have been called by Christ. (...) And Jesus' loving gaze fell on each of us, and we must trust His gaze. Let us not give in to the temptation to rush, and let not the time devoted to Christ in silent, personal prayer seem wasted time. It is then that the greatest fruits of pastoral service are born. There is no need to be discouraged by the fact that prayer requires effort, and that Jesus seems to be silent during it. He is silent, but He acts. Regarding this, I would like to mention an experience from last year in Cologne. I then witnessed the deep, unforgettable silence of a million young people at the moment of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament! This prayerful silence united us and lifted our spirits.

These words were addressed to priests, but they can be applied to any vocation.

The Lord Jesus calls every person to His service, but the service of each of us looks different. Mary Magdalene was healed by Christ and then followed Him, certainly taking care of meals and washing clothes. After his resurrection, the Lord Jesus allowed her to run to the disciples with the Good News, but they did not believe her.

Our vocation is to adopt such an attitude that we can be recognised as disciples of Christ – everywhere, whether in the family, at work or in the neighbourhood. So that they say about us: "Yes, the Gospel plays a great role in their lives." God does not require anything more, nor does he require anything less.

* * *

It is difficult to understand God,
Because He doesn't prevent wicked deeds,
He doesn't punish malice,
He won't prevent violence,
He won't silence the wars,
He will not avenge hurt,

It seems strange to us because it says:
that our open hand can become a response to violence,
that we can say "peace" rather than "war",
that this is not the case: as you did to me, I do to you,
that like people who are not of this world, we can say:
Forgiveness is not fruitless or vain
(R. Breitenbach, *Sechs-Minuten-Predigten*).

Let's pray that we will survive

The Gospel according to Mark 13:24-27

But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

I don't know what kind of darkness this is – whether it's the kind where the sun will no longer be visible in the sky, or whether it's a moral darkness; that moral ignorance reigns, and there's no light of hope, or perhaps a darkness of the kind in which people will be in complete despair and there's nothing that can be done to comfort them, even for a moment. I don't know what darkness he's talking about, but he was talking about darkness, and it's a symbol of something very evil.

When Saint Paul spoke about darkness, he told people to throw off the works of darkness because the night is far gone and the day, that is Christ, is at hand. And when he's talking about works of darkness, he primarily means sins. As it is also in the 9th chapter of Revelation, the angel of darkness opened the shaft of the bottomless pit and caused darkness to reign in the world. People suffered incredible torture and torment for a symbolic period of 5 months, and they sought death but couldn't find it. This a very symbolic image of our world in which everyone is fed up with life, but they try to get as much pleasure as they can but can't actually find Heaven, because, as it seems to me, they make counterfeit ones for themselves.

Let's remind ourselves of the Lord's parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids. The foolish bridesmaids had no oil but had lamps and they remained in the outer darkness as a symbol of their rejection from God. And even though they knocked at the door calling out "Lord, open up", the Lord did not open it to them, because they had no inner oil.

The speechless man at the banquet, who didn't know what to say when the king asked him where his wedding garment was – he was also thrown out into the outer darkness.

So, what is darkness? And why do we Christians have to explain darkness to ourselves?

For Jesus says: "What I tell you in the dark, utter in the light". What is Jesus telling you in the darkness? What sort of darkness are you in as the Lord speaks to you?

In my darkness, when I have no light, when I have already experienced rejection, the closed door of hope, when it seems that I experience hell on Earth, when everything that surrounds me is like a black, viscous, painful, unbearable tar, not able to be washed away, when it now seems that it will never end, and

yet in this darkness the Lord speaks to us. What does He say? He speaks words that are a burst of hope. He

says: "What I tell you in the dark, utter in the light [. . .] Even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are more valuable than many sparrows. So, every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is heaven." These words breathe great hope and love. These words tell us that God in the darkest night, when we have the darkest thoughts, and around us are the darkest types, and when we have the darkest feelings, He speaks to us with hope and says "Persevere, because I am with you. I see you, and this hell, which is on the Earth, will pass". Keep my word which is as a vow, that I will not abandon you, that I will not leave you, and all your enemies and all those who tear you down and crush, ridicule and scoff at you, will pass as clouds do, they cross the sun, as the moon during an eclipse. It passes, because in this world everything passes away, even hell. Rather let's be afraid of that hell which never passes away.

No, let's not be afraid of people, and let's not be afraid of all those experiences that may be overwhelming us and that take away our hope and make us worry. Let's remember what Jesus says elsewhere in Matthew 6:33: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well".

Care about God, God cares about of you. As we care about God, so God will take care about saving us from our hell. Because this hell on earth is passing. That one doesn't go away. "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them can fall to the ground without your Father's knowledge. Even the hairs on your head have all been counted". It's hard to believe that God predicts every flap of a sparrow's wing or knows the exact number of our hairs. But of course, why not? He even knows the make-up of the genome of everyone of us. Why shouldn't He know this, since He is omniscient? In the end He is God and some god. God, and not some idol. He is not someone brilliant, He is someone beyond brilliant. And He doesn't forget about those who don't forget about Him.



*Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil; for you are with me.*

This is why today, my brothers and sisters, we have to say once more to ourselves: God vows that He will pull us out of every pit, from every darkness, even from death. God gave His Son so that we would not perish in the darkness.

Let's have hope in the future. Let's pray that we will survive any hellish stage of our existence. Let's thank God that He gives such words in the Bible which allow us to believe in the sense of perseverance and allow us to awaken perseverance and an expectation in the coming of God's Help in all that is for us an overwhelming darkness. This gloom which is unbearable. Whatever would be unbearable for me or for you, will pass. If we would hold the hand of God. Amen.

I thought I was a "super-Catholic"

A TESTIMONY



I prayed hard for my husband. I did not expect that the enormity of these graces and promises would come to me. After all, I was fine - he was the one who needed healing. I am married, 36 years old, have three children (14, 15, and 16), my own house, a beautiful garden and a car. You could say – you don't need anything else to be happy. However, a critical moment in my life has come, although nothing indicated it was coming . . .

The enemy came unexpectedly and very insidiously. Well, I noticed that my husband began to come home from work under the influence of alcohol more and more often (it happened over three months, almost every day) drinking during the day – without it being any occasion. In my head – which, I now think, was a great gift of God's care – a warning light went on, especially since my requests, threats and explanations were ineffective. So, I reacted immediately and asked my husband to go with me on a retreat, without telling him exactly what it was about.

And here came the most important turning point and moment - but it was in my life! Honestly, when I look at everything that happened later, from the perspective of 25 years later, I see that it was a time intended and carefully planned by God for me. During this three-day retreat, I prayed fervently and earnestly for my husband's healing and for him to come to his senses, thinking to myself what a good and wise wife I am. I was full of admiration for my cleverness and ingenuity – I told God to take care of my husband, and in my mind I was planning a meeting with my friends at a party, because it was Easter time . . .

On the third day of the retreat, I heard that a special time had been given to us, because this day was Divine Mercy Sunday, at which St. Sister Faustina writes in her Diary: "On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My mercy. The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. On that day all the divine floodgates

through which grace flow are opened. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet. My mercy is so great that no mind, be it of man or of angel, will be able to fathom it throughout all eternity. My mercy is so great that no mind can fathom it for all eternity..." (Diary 699).

So, I stayed in the so-called Chapel of Miracles and prayed hard for my husband. I had absolutely no expectation that the enormity of these graces and promises would come to me. I was fine – he was the one who needed healing. I "went" to church, participated with my children in the rosary and May devotions, and in the Stations of the Cross; my son serves at Mass, the girls sing in the choir. Jesus, look how cool I am!

But Jesus probably had a different opinion, because at the end of the retreat the priest asked about its fruits, the Holy Spirit suggested to me more and more clearly and loudly the words: "start with yourself!", "if you see a speck in your brother's eye, first remove the plank from your own!".

I really wrestled with myself back then; I thought it was some kind of mistake, but the words were too real. I had nothing to reproach myself for, which, over time and God's guidance, turned out to be a big whopping lie and hypocrisy. As I have already written, after a great struggle with myself, I signed the Crusade for Human Liberation (i.e., I decided to completely abstain from alcohol for 1 year) for my husband, because there was a lot of talk about it during these retreats. Due to the sort of lifestyle I liked (and I was often called the life of the party), this was quite a challenge for me, automatically removing me from the list of people invited by my friends.

Coming home, I felt that I was not the same person. On that Divine Mercy Sunday, a miracle happened for me: my heart began to truly come alive. Jesus, as usual, turned out to be truthful and faithful to His words, because He took away my "heart of stone and gave me a heart of flesh", "opened my eyes and ears", I felt incredible peace, lightness, and joy.

The most beautiful thing about it all is that after returning home, everything started to change completely, and I didn't have to force myself to do anything. I received from the Merciful Jesus a beautiful gift and the enormous potential of His grace, which aroused in me all these new and previously unknown desires. I began to "look for God" with great zeal; I read many books because I found that as a "super-Catholic" I knew nothing about my faith – about God, about what happens during the celebration of the Eucharist. I also bought (because we didn't have one at home) a Bible and started reading, pondering and exploring it with great enthusiasm. I faced the truth and couldn't stop marvelling at God's love, goodness and infinite mercy towards me. I saw what lies and spiritual poverty I had been living in until now.

Today I no longer "go to church", but with joy I run to meet the living Lord who died for me, and in the Eucharist I draw from Him the strength and power to overcome everyday hardships and problems and fight my faults and weaknesses. Today I know that His blood cleanses me and enables me to achieve all goodness.

I don't need to mention what kind of reaction my "miraculous transformation" received among my close relatives and friends. Most of them said that I had gone completely crazy – and I was not surprised at all, because from a person who liked company, parties, dancing and loud music, I became a person who could only talk with great enthusiasm about God and what He did for me. It's no wonder that our house, previously full of noise, quickly became strangely empty, became quiet and turned into a place where many unnecessary activities, i.e., television (soaps), loud music, idle conversations (chatting) were replaced by silence, prayer, reading books and Holy Scripture. It was the most beautiful, wonderful and blessed time for me.

As a result of all this, as if it were not enough, merciful Jesus freed me from the addiction of

smoking cigarettes and from using profanity (because "sweet and bitter water cannot flow from one source, the mouth cannot bless and curse at the same time"). I also decided not to drink alcohol for the rest of my life – which brings wonderful results among my loved ones, because many people have already offered their abstinence in order to save those who cannot cope with the addiction of alcoholism.

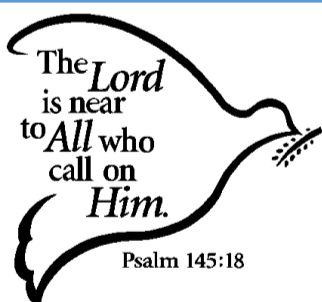
I try to talk about God's unfathomable mercy to all those who have problems and are devastated by various experiences and diseases. In a miraculous way, Jesus helps them all, and we have already experienced real miracles many times in our family (recovering from cancer, miraculous survival from a serious suicide attempt, life transformation). In October 2010, it was a year since my husband stopped drinking – he also signed the Crusade for Human Liberation. Our fourth child will also be born this month. Is that still not enough?

Today I can thank God for everything that happened to me – and there were moments when our house was full of quarrels, screams, curses and violence. Today I can say that it was "thanks" to my husband and his problem that I turned to God for help. I did not follow the spirit and propositions of "this world", which offers quick and easy solutions, such as divorce – and the problem is solved. I wasn't disappointed. The fight was hard, but it was worth it, especially since I was led by the Master and Teacher himself – the merciful Jesus.

For 2 ½ years, my whole family and I have been kneeling at 3 p.m. to beg for God's mercy for us, our loved ones and the whole world, praying with the chaplet of Divine Mercy. I wake up every morning saying, "Jesus, I trust in You." Today I enjoy every day, I see the beauty of the world around me, nature and I know that it is all a gift. Merciful Jesus "created me anew", revived me and breathed into my heart the Holy Spirit, who guides me and helps me live in the truth and in the light of God's Word, which I ardently desire to accept and apply every day in relationships with my loved ones, at work, with others, neighbours, husband and children. It is not an easy path, because you often have to deny yourself, but "I can do all things in Him who strengthens me."

The heart would still like to speak of much more, because my gratitude knows no limits. The only thing I can promise Jesus are the words repeated after Saint Sister Faustina that "I will sing about God's incomprehensible mercy forever before all people", while asking for the grace of zeal, courage to "go against the flow", and for the grace of perseverance and great love.

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), and Doleen Durnin.

Please remember in your prayers Johan Theresa MacPherson (2021), Mary McDonald (2016) **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.

Healing for victims of abuse

Grief to Grace is a specialised 5-day programme of spiritual and psychological healing for anyone who has suffered from sexual, physical, or emotional abuse or neglect in childhood, adolescence or adulthood, including those abused by a religious / member of the clergy. If you are interested in this confidential healing retreat, please contact: Grief to Grace (Scotland) at margaret.clarke@griefftoGraceuk.org



campbeltown@rcdai.org.uk



www.stkieranscampbeltown.org



<https://www.facebook.com/campbeltownrcchurch/>

A Parish of the R.C. Diocese of Argyll and the Isles; Charitable Trust, a registered Scottish Charity, SC002876

Parish Priest: Fr. A. Wood, St. Kieran's, Campbeltown; Tel. 01586 552160