

PARISH BULLETIN

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

Hymns/Music

Processional (Sunday only)

610 When I survey the wonderous cross (Guntermann)

Offertory

Sheet: From heaven you came (Keys[5])

Communion

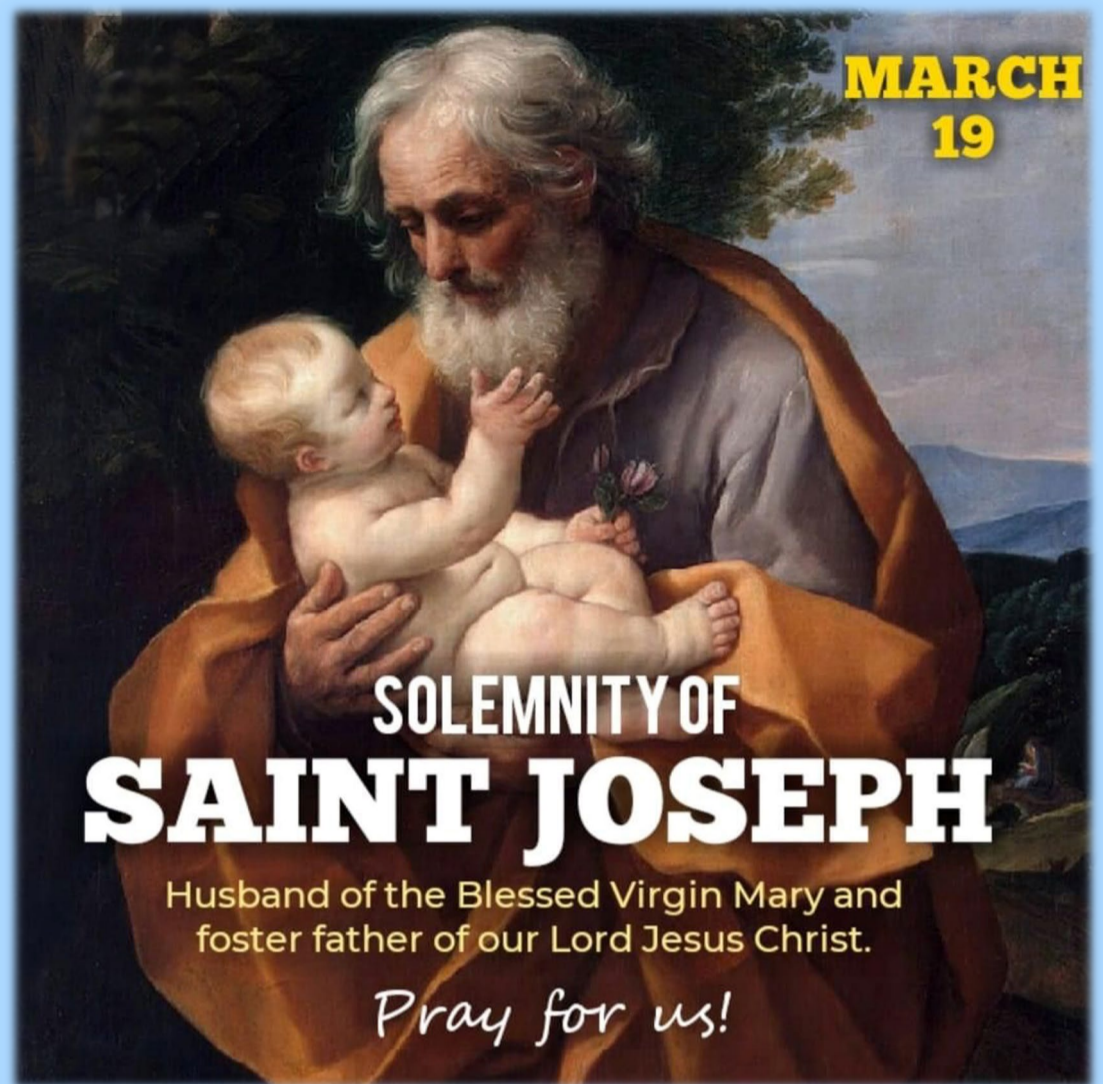
Tebe nojem (We sing to You)

Post Communion

381 O bread of heaven (Keys)

Recessional

226 I am the bread of life (Keys)



17th March 2024

5th Sunday of Lent

St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

Sunday, 17th March, *Fifth Sunday of Lent* Holy Mass, 10.00am

Tuesday: Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Holy Mass, 10.00am

Friday: Holy Mass, 10.00am

Devotions:

Friday: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 9.30am

Saturday, 23rd March, Vigil Mass, 6.00pm

Sunday, 24th March, *Palm Sunday*, Holy Mass, 10.00am

St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Bridgend, Islay

Easter Sunday, 31st March, Holy Mass, 4pm

Fr Tony has COVID. There will be no Masses this week.
The situation will be reviewed on Saturday.



Psalm response

A pure heart create for me, O God.

Gospel acclamation

*Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!
Whoever serves me must follow me, says the Lord;
and where I am, there also will my servant be.
Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!*

Communion Antiphon

*Amen, Amen I say to you: Unless a grain of wheat
falls to the ground and dies, it remains a single grain.
But if it dies, it bears much fruit.*

Take Five

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

MONDAY: LENTEN WEEKDAY

18 MARCH 2024

Withhold your judgment

Think of how many times you judge people in a day. Sure, there are places for legitimate criticism of others. But we're talking here about the kind of things you would never say directly to the person, but to others, behind their backs. The problem with such judgment is that no one's innocent: We all have our own shortcomings – and they are frequently the ones we see in others. The Jesus-perspective on all this says only those who have no faults can fault others. That means none of us. Leave judging to the one in the best position to do it: God.

Today's readings: Daniel 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62; John 8:1-11. *“Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”*

TUESDAY: SOLEMNITY OF SAINT JOSEPH, HUSBAND OF THE BVM

19 MARCH 2024

Jesus the handy-man

Trust – even when risky – is at the heart of any good and lasting close relationship. Saint Joseph chose to trust a messenger from God, and he also chose to trust Mary at a time when many would have walked away claiming infidelity. Joseph too often fades into the background when biblical heroes are held up as role models, but he deserves to be front and centre. On this day the Catholic Church puts him there. Take a moment to reflect on how in your own most intimate relationships you can aspire to Joseph's great level of trust.

Today's readings: 2 Samuel 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16; Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22; Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24a or Luke 2:41-51a. *“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home.”*

WEDNESDAY: LENTEN WEEKDAY

20 MARCH 2024

That's a mouthful

W. C. Fields used to exclaim in his films, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego!” No doubt Fields enjoyed using these exotic biblical names as an expression, but behind them are three actual characters from Hebrew scripture. The Babylonian king had commanded them to worship the statue of a god or face immediate

execution. Their response was an interesting one. Of course they wouldn't bow down, and if God saved them, so be it. But if not, they *still* wouldn't deny their God. Now that's faith – both the willingness to give up their lives but also their affirmation that God did not have to prove anything to deserve their trust. Faith does not begin with what God will do for you if you believe. It starts with believing because God *is* God.

Today's readings: Daniel 3:14-21, 24-25, 28; John 8:31-42. *“If God were your father, you would love me.”*

THURSDAY: LENTEN WEEKDAY

21 MARCH 2024

Leave this stone unturned

Death-by-stoning is an ancient form of execution. Because it is slow, most would call it torture. Biblical examples are sparse, but they do exist, though later limits on the practice in Jewish law and tradition became so restrictive as to prohibit it for all practical purposes. Sadly, this cruel punishment is still legal in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Sudan, Iran, Yemen, the United Arab Emirates, and some states in Nigeria. Occurrences are documented as well in Afghanistan and Somalia. Stoning has been universally condemned by human rights groups and most nations and faiths. As Lent is a time of repentance, add your voice to the chorus calling the world to repent and do away with this and other cruel punishments.

Today's readings: Genesis 17:3-9; John 8:51-59. *“They picked up stones to throw at him.”*

FRIDAY: LENTEN WEEKDAY

22 MARCH 2024

How do you live beyond fear?

Fear is a reasonable response in an unreasonable time. Check the daily news and within minutes you'll have a long list of motivations for barricading the door to keep the spirit of vengeance, violence, and evil away from yourself and those you love. But fear is not a Christian response to the world or toward your fellow human beings. “Fear is useless,” Jesus once told a man despairing for his daughter's life. “What is needed is faith.” As you surrender the option of meat today you might also opt for courage over fear – a courage born of your trust in God.

Today's readings: Jeremiah 20:10-13; John

10:31-42. "I hear the whisperings of many:
'Terror on every side!'"

SATURDAY: LENTEN WEEKDAY

23 MARCH 2024

Homecomings

Think of all the leaving and returning people do. Every day you probably leave home for some reason and come home at some point. Young people leave to start lives of their own. Relatives gather for holidays and other celebrations. Babies arrive in the world while

other folks depart it. In scripture's story of the people of God, there's a lot of leaving and coming back as well. The Israelites scatter only to regather on a number of occasions. Even Jesus splits the scene a few times when the opposition to him heats up. We are entering the last days of Lent, a season of returning to God. Whatever you have done or not done, it's never too late to come back to your true home.

Today's readings: Ezekiel 37:21-28; John 11:45-56. "My dwelling shall be with them; I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Readings for the 5th Sunday of Lent

Jeremiah 31:31-34

In the days of the new covenant, all people will have personal knowledge of God.

Psalms 51:3-4, 12-13, 14-15

God's mercy offers us hope of a clean heart and renewed spirit.

Hebrews 5:7-9

The reverent heart gains a hearing in the presence of God.

John 12:20-33

Some Greeks – outsiders to the story – seek personal access to Jesus.

Words on the Word

Failure is not defeat; but a step on the way to ultimate success

Failure doesn't have to be a defeat, but a challenge

Our life is not an uninterrupted series of successes. There are failures that are difficult for us to accept. Yet they play no less a role in our lives than achievements. Temporary disintegration can be something positive - an inspiration for new ideas. We cannot think about life in a fainthearted and pessimistic way. We are called to develop. When striving for a noble goal, we can count on failures, but they may pose a challenge for us. After all, even the life of the God-Man himself was not a success story. The example of Jesus' life is for us both a call to personal development and help in difficulties. From Him, our Master and Lord, we want to draw strength to be faithful to ideals, especially in times of trial. We believe that God can bring good even out of the greatest evil. This is where the Good News lies – the Gospel.

From Jesus' death "life springs forth"

The greatest evil and the greatest drama in the history of humanity was the terrible suffering and death on the cross of Jesus Christ. But this death has paradoxically become a source of salvation and life for all of us, as we sing about it in the song about the cross, on which, "Life dies by death, but from this death life springs forth."

Christ was aware of His coming death. He knew that it was an important step of His earthly mission; carried out by the will of God the Father. He announced His crucifixion several times. A few days before his death, He made it clear to His disciples; that He knows perfectly well what

awaits Him; He said: "Now the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. [...]. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all men to myself." (John 12:23,32). Jesus combined the announcement of His death with an indication of the path that His followers had to follow: "If a man serves me, he must follow me, wherever I am, my servant will be there too. If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him." (John 12:26). Jesus, in Saint John's account, clearly emphasised that His death on the cross is also His glorification, judgment over the world and victory over Satan (cf. John 12:31) and that the path of His disciples to glory cannot be other than through the cross. Jesus illustrated His teaching with the image of a seed, which prolongs its existence only when it falls into the earth and dies, turning into a new plant that brings abundant fruit. Jesus said: "Anyone who loves his life loses it; anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for the eternal life." (John 12:25).

There are values in life that are more valuable than life; those for which it is possible and worth sacrificing your life – to sacrifice it in order to gain it for eternity. It was the logic of the seed indicated by Jesus – which must die in order to bear abundant fruit – that strengthened Christians in the face of persecution. Martyrs for their faith valued fidelity to Christ more than earthly life. They knew that their sacrifice would not be in vain. Tertullian expressed this belief in the famous quote: "The blood of martyrs is the seed of new Christians."

The blood of modern martyrs is the seed of new Christians

Unfortunately, the persecution of Christians is not only about the past. They continue. On November 14, 2008, the Internet portal, www.gloria.tv, reported that several Christians had been murdered in the Iraqi city of Mosul and that believers in the city were receiving threatening leaflets: "You have 24 hours to leave your home. If you don't do this, you will die. A just punishment that our Muslim religion provides for those who, like you, worship the cross." A few days later, on November 20, a report by the international Catholic organization "Aid the Church in Need", entitled "Persecuted and Forgotten 2007/2008", was presented. According to this report, in just two years, over 170,000 Christians have given their lives for their faith, and nearly 250 million are persecuted. The report shows that Christians are the most persecuted of all the followers of various religions in the world. Is this not the seed that will bear much fruit? Isn't that the kind of sowing the Christians persecuted in China, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Nigeria and Sudan, and even in India, where they constitute only two and a half percent of the population? It is enough to mention only a few countries, although their list is long.

Father Joice Lanithottam from India, working in Germany, visited his religious house in Kerala in August 2008. Right after entering it, he noticed a coffin. The experience was even more sad because his brother, with whom he was ordained a priest, was murdered by Hindu fanatics.

When thousands die, it's statistics. When even one person dies, it is a great tragedy. The dying have names and surnames, they have friends and relatives not only in their immediate neighbourhood, but also in the world, which has become a global village.

The historical experience of the Church does not allow us to doubt that today the blood of the martyrs will become the seed of new Christians; the seed that dies will bear much fruit. The sacrifice of the martyrs is already a source of strength for us.

The food of martyrs and followers of Christ

From where have Christians throughout the centuries drawn the strength and courage to make the greatest sacrifice, the sacrifice of life for faithfulness to Christ? From nowhere else but from the word of God and the Eucharist. They are also food for us in times of trial. God does not

demand from us, at least for now, testimonies of faithfulness by sacrificing one's life. Our testimony is to remain grateful to the Lord in times of failure. It is easy to be grateful to God when everything in life goes according to our plan, but it is more difficult when our plans have to be ruined because an illness or physical limitation has come to light that we were not aware of before, or because our loved ones failed us, because the exam wasn't passed, because we were deprived of work and fair pay for it.

Failure does not have to be the reason for failure in life. We can discover a new challenge there. God knows our weaknesses and our possibilities. He does not expect anything from us that is beyond our strength. He expects faithfulness and gratitude, especially in times of trial and in the most ordinary life situations.

Sometimes life's adversities act as a red light that saves us from danger. At first we rebel, but after some time it often turns out that there is nothing wrong with it; which could turn out to be good. This life wisdom comes from experience. So let us be grateful to God in every situation in life; also when everything doesn't work out as we would like. Let us seek God's will in everything and follow the path of Christ: through the cross to glory.

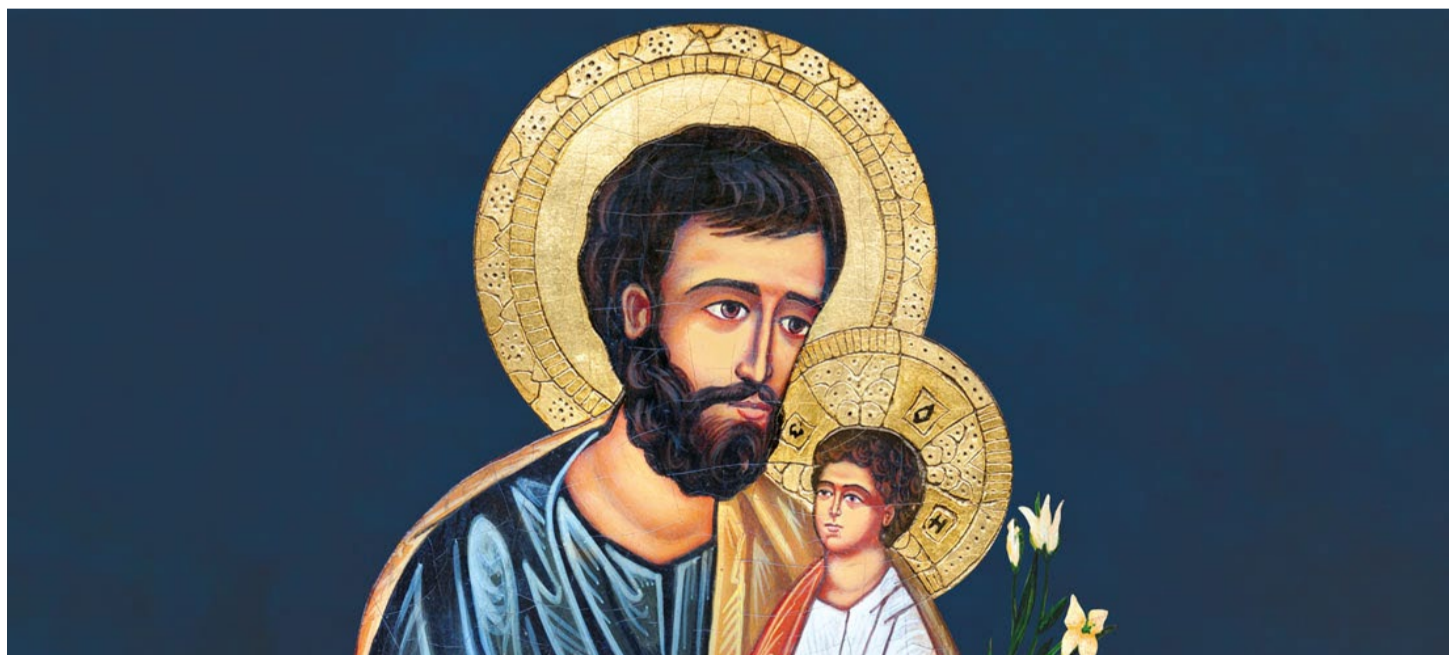
This doesn't mean that we should be passive towards the evil that befalls us. Evil must be overcome with good, as Christ and His followers did for centuries.

Lord, You said: "If a man serves me, he must follow me, wherever I am, my servant will be there too. If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him. [...]. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all men to myself" (Jn 12:26,32). We trust, Lord, Your word. We want to follow You and contemplating Your passion draw the strength to carry out God's will and to daily take up the cross. Strengthen our faith and give us the gift of courage, so that we do not run away from the cross, but always know how to protect ourselves in its shadow. Amen.

The best specialist in choosing a husband

To the question: "Do you know any really happily married couples?" most of our friends think intensely for a few minutes and find it hard. Certainly, the examples we are presented with in TV soaps are far from happy.

There are, of course, exceptions, but they are so rare that a couple holding hands becomes a neighbourhood sensation, even greater amazement the longer their marriage lasts. Deep down, however, all gossip mongers envy such a couple for what allows them to walk hand in hand.



I was surprised when on one occasion discussing the state of marriage today at a friend's house, I heard this short but powerful testimony:

I'm a married woman who thanks God every day for a wonderful husband and for the happy family we are building together. However, I realise that my current happiness is not a

coincidence, but a result of a fully conscious commitment and work on building harmony. And it is hard work, because it involves constantly struggling with one's own sins, selfishness and joyfully seeking the good of one's spouse. How abundantly the Lord God gives us the graces we need for this. . . The beginning of the path to a happy marriage was a persistent prayer to Saint Joseph. For years I described to him what I would like my future husband to be like. And he got me one! 100% satisfaction! Listen, Saint Joseph is a specialist in this field. Entrust your vocation to Him!

I would like to ask all happily married couples to share their experiences and efforts with other, maybe younger or troubled couples.

The Third Episode: DISGRACE – THE ONLY RESCUE

Concern for ordinary sparrows, God's concern for the smallest of creatures, makes me consider my existence and its meaning for God. His Son took such great care that I can always be with Him that He submitted Himself to a martyrdom as gruesome as the crucifixion. After all, He didn't die to be risen only for Himself, but so that I would have faith in a new life and have a share in this new life beyond death and above death. A sparrow, which, according to the text, was worth a few pennies, is the object of exceptional care by God. According to a certain Jewish legend, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, who lived several decades after the death of Christ, leaving the cave one day during the Emperor Hadrian's persecution, after the Second Jewish Uprising around 135, saw a hunter catching birds. Each time Shimon heard a voice from heaven: *Dimissio!* – In Latin: "Give up" – the hunter couldn't catch the bird and missed, but when he heard the voice from heaven: *Specula!* – "Look-out" – the bird was caught by the hunter. Then Shimon thought: "If even a bird does not die without God's will, how much more a man, such as me". There is even a Japanese proverb, which says that even a hunter doesn't shoot a bird who is looking for shelter in his garments, and what does this say about God, in whom we are looking for shelter! God looks at us primarily with an impassioned commitment of love. Getting to know yourself and your identity is doomed to error, if you don't know how He loves you and who we are for Him. And He looks at us so intensively that He has us in the pupils of His eyes. In Spanish, the pupil is PUPILA, and it's similar in other Western languages. Everyone knows what it means to be someone's PUPILA – to be the apple of their eye – to be a favourite. This is remembered by everyone who wants to be recognised by God, even at the price of being avoided by people! This is how God sees us, each of us as His favourite. If you are aware of this, you know who you are. Our name is Christian – the one who is in Christ. He looks at each of us, as if at His own son, if only in Him, in Christ, we live thanks to Holy Communion. When you are aware of this, you

**That
which
is most
import
ant**

Part one

For a hair . . .

know who you are, you avoid fear. The awareness of how He looks at you, how He loves you, what He guarantees you, makes fear decrease. This is a fundamental realisation, the most important truth about my identity and my destiny. Other things, specifying my distinctiveness and uniqueness, will emerge in time. In the book of Deuteronomy, it is written:



**YOU ARE THE
APPLE OF GOD'S
EYE**

“When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of men, he fixed the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God. For the Lord’s portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage. “He found him in a desert land, and in the howling waste of the wilderness; he encircled him, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.” (Deut 32:8–10).

Looking for Jacob, they would find an insignificant man, a nobody, a zero in history, he was not a pharaoh or king of Babylon, his wife was not called Nefertiti, nor his palace hide the hanging gardens of Babylon, nor did he have the army of Nebuchadnezzar. He was found in the midst of the wild beasts. And yet . . . and yet God looked after him like the apple of His eye! For centuries He had such love for Israel, and when someone hurt this nation, God reacted as if someone had hurt Him. And yet Jacob was a deceiver, a stray, for Isaac a child in the background, overlooked by his father, deceived by Laban and the one who deceived his father – his family from the point of view of today’s psychology could be diagnosed as dysfunctional or pathological. And many of us may now think in our hearts: that’s what I am – cheated and a cheater, a stray, and I grew up among the wild howling of curses in the family, in a quarrel and a void of meaninglessness. And yet . . . and yet the Lord talks about Jacob and you:

For this is what the Lord Almighty says: “After the Glorious One has sent me against the nations that have plundered you — for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye” (Zech 2:8).

Most people base their identity on what they do and how it is assessed by the human eye, not on who they are in God’s eyes. Looking at Christ, we can easily see that His identity was based on who He was in relation to His Father, God, and not on what He did. For Him, what was most important was the bond with His Father, everything else flowed out of this bond. So often it differs with us, we define ourselves with what we do, what we do for others and in their eyes we look for approval and the answer to the question of who we are. This is very boggy ground – an anxious and neurotic soil, it can kill us. I lost many years trying to build my image in the eyes of other people, it costs not only hypocrisy, but also neurosis and depression.

That is why there is so much anxiety and uncertainty in us, because we are constantly afraid of what others will think about us and what opinion they have of us, and this is why we are prepared for people to trample on us, just to get some human attention. Meanwhile, Jesus shows us a completely different model of finding the value of existence. During the baptism of Jesus and later at the Mount of Transfiguration, the Father said over Jesus the words that He was pleased and that He is His Son – He said these words to the people, but above all to His Son. Jesus has never doubted this love, because it was eternal love, but we are constantly afraid and we are not sure who we are, because instead of looking for our identity in God, to see in God’s eyes love and acceptance, we look restlessly into the eyes of people. And we are looking for affirmation from them. Meanwhile, people are fickle and even those who love us do not guarantee eternal love. We’re not sure about what they say about us, and we don’t know if what they do say is true. After all, we don’t know who we are. Jesus knew who He was because He knew who He was in His Father’s eyes. He never doubted His love and therefore did not doubt who He was. His name JEHOSHUA means the exclamation: HELP OF YAHWEH, or salvation! He knew that on the one hand He was the cry of all humanity directed to His Father by Him, on the other hand He is the response to mankind by God, who only gives salvation in this Name.

To free yourself from the obsession of being deserving in the eyes of others for attention and appreciation – to free yourself from that strong search to be noticed even at the cost of being

trampled by others – you only need one thing: a scandal and fiasco – without experiencing this there is no question of a spiritual life. Until you disgrace yourself in the eyes of people, you will not free yourself from seeking admiration from them. This is how the exceptional grace of liberation happens – the grace of disgrace – and you have to be thankful for it, and not get angry. The prodigal son only then began to appreciate life as a reflection in his father's eyes when he had the disgrace of sitting in the pigsty with the pigs. Only then did he feel in his hair the fingers of his father's hand hugging his head to his heart. Then every hair on his head mattered and he felt it. He cuddled up like a dove into a crevice in the rock before the storm. At the house of the Pharisee Simon, a woman washed the feet of Jesus with her hair, expressing repentance and shame, disgraced by her current life, not having the courage to reveal her face – she covered it with her hair and washed the feet Jesus' with it. Didn't every one of her hairs matter in the eyes of Jesus? In the Gospel according to St. Luke it's written:

“and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.” (Luke 7:38).

Jesus did not trample on her with either a foot or a look, He didn't reject her and didn't despise her. He preferred Simon to doubt whether this rabbi of Nazareth was a prophet rather than to avoid a disgraced woman who, regardless of what others say, expressed true love for Jesus. And you need to know that it is better to be trampled on than to trample others. Because the trampled, insulted, disgraced, return to God with a pure heart – the soul is freed from seeking human recognition – and the one who tramples others does so to be noticed by people. Which do I belong to? Which are you? Today you can decide which side you want to be on. To renounce human recognition is to confess Jesus, to be noticed by Him. To deny Jesus – all you have to do is subjugate your whole life to taking care of your image, your prestige, and your position.

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 John Savage (2019), and recently deceased Irene O'Neill and Canon Roddy Johnston **and all whose anniversaries occur at this time.**

News and Events

With sorrow we hear of the death of Canon Roddy Johnston, until recently Vicar General. He passed away on Saturday morning in the Belford Hospital after a sudden and short illness.

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

Thanks to those who organised, helped out and donated to the Book and Jigsaw Sale on Saturday.

Parish duties: In agreement with Bishop Brian, for the time being, Fr Tony is relieved of parish duties during the week days, Monday to Thursday, for health reasons.



campbeltown@rcdai.org.uk



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