

PARISH BULLETIN

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

Memorial of
**ST. TERESA
OF AVILA**

October 15th



12th October 2025

28th Sunday of Ordinary Time

St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

Tuesday: **Holy Mass, 6.00pm**

Wednesday: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Mid-morning Prayer, 9.30am;
Holy Mass, 10.00am

Friday: Mid-morning Prayer, 9.50am; **Holy Mass, 10.00am**

Hymns/Music for Sunday

Processional (Sunday only)

449 Praise my soul (Mayhew Bb)

Offertory

67 Blest are you Lord God of all
creation (Mayhew)

Communion chant

Bless the Lord my Soul (Kyiv Chamber
Choir – Liturgy of Peace)

Post Communion

677 Bless the Lord my soul (John Keys)

Recessional

375 Now thank we all our God (John Keys)

Next weekend:

Saturday: **Vigil Mass: 6.00pm**

**29th Sunday in Ordinary Time: Holy Mass,
10.00am**

Sacrament of Reconciliation 5-5.30pm Saturday or
anytime on request.

St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Bridgend, Islay
Sunday, 5th October: Holy Mass, 4pm

Psalm response

*The Lord has shown his salvation to the
nations.*

Gospel acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

In everything give thanks;

for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Alleluia.

Communion Antiphon

*When the Lord appears, we shall be like him,
for we shall see him as he is.*

Take Five

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

MONDAY

13 OCTOBER 2025

A sign that's hard to miss

When in Luke's gospel Jesus uses the phrase "the sign of Jonah," most of us would think of the whale. But Jesus has something else in mind. Jonah had been a prophet sent by God to convert the pagan city of Nineveh – a job Jonah didn't want. But when he finally buckled down and did what God asked, the people – much to Jonah's astonishment – converted! So for Jesus the "sign of Jonah" recalls the Ninevites' acceptance of God's Word through God's prophet. At the judgment, Jesus says, those Ninevites will shame his own generation because they were humble and smart enough to accept God's invitation. We who have been given the gospel and are surrounded by so many signs of God's love have even less justification for not hearing the Word of God and keeping it.

Today's readings: Romans 1:1-7; Luke 11:29-32. *"This generation . . . asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah."*

TUESDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINT CALLISTUS, POPE, MARTYR

14 OCTOBER 2025

Just another irony

One of the great ironies of our church is that even though Jesus scolds the religious leaders of his day because they love presiding over the assembly and being recognized in public, we still occasionally find such leaders in our parish communities. But the Lord is really good at changing water into wine. Take Saint Callistus (d. 222?). He was such a bad manager that he was twice jailed for his incompetence. Then they made him pope. Go figure. But that's how God does things. As one of the church's prayers for martyrs says, "You choose the weak and make them strong in bearing witness to you."

Today's readings: Romans 1:16-25; Luke 11:37-41. *"You Pharisees . . . inside you are full of greed and wickedness."*

WEDNESDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINT TERESA OF ÁVILA, VIRGIN, DOCTOR

15 OCTOBER 2025

You're not alone

Much has been written about Saint Teresa of Avila's mystical experiences and reflections on

the spiritual life. It would be easy to assume that she had no problem relating to God. But Teresa herself tells us that she had many tough periods in her life when she felt alone, as if God weren't listening or speaking to her. One passage sums up well the kind of struggles she faced and many people today face: "I was by myself, having no one in whom I could find any comfort; unable to pray or read, like a person stunned by heavy trials . . . utterly disquieted and wearied, not knowing what would become of me" (Life of St. Teresa of Jesus). Have you ever been there? Persevere, as Teresa did, and trust that even in those moments, God is with you.

Today's readings: Romans 2:1-11; Luke 11:42-46. *"Woe to you Pharisees! For you love to have the seat of honour in the synagogues."*

THURSDAY

16 OCTOBER 2025

A milestone reached, with miles left to go

The recently completed Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial in Washington, D.C. is an impressive site, complete with a 30-foot-tall sculpture of King and a 450-foot-long granite wall inscribed with quotations from the slain civil rights leader. While we can be pleased the nation is honouring the prophetic King in this way, we need to guard against the tendency to confuse the monument with the message, the statue's dedication with the dream that inspired it. The words of the poet Robert Frost could be applied to where we are as a nation, when it comes to addressing the issues King raised: We still have "miles to go" before we sleep. None of us can do it alone, but all of us can do something. What can you do for the cause of justice?

Today's readings: Romans 3:21-30; Luke 11:47-54. *"Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed."*

FRIDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINT IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, BISHOP, MARTYR

17 OCTOBER 2025

What's your name?

Groups tend to reflect where people put their loyalty: an ethnicity, political party, nationality, and so on. And when you are part of a group

you get to call yourself something: Scot, SNP member, British. What makes being Christian a little different, though, is that the loyalty is to a person, Jesus. Believe in Jesus and act like it, and you get to bear his name. The early Christian martyr Saint Ignatius was bishop of the city of Antioch, where followers of Jesus were first called Christians. What have you done recently to honour this title?

Today's readings: Romans 4:1-8; Luke 12:1-7. *"Be aware of the yeast of the Pharisees, that is, their hypocrisy."*

SATURDAY: FEAST OF SAINT LUKE,

EVANGELIST

18 OCTOBER 2025

Travel lightly

Luke's gospel tells the story of Jesus sending out disciples ahead of him. The disciples are to take nothing with them – except peace. Their job: to prepare the way for Jesus. When most people go on a long trip, however, they usually pack a suitcase full of stuff. Luke's story reminds us of the importance of our "spiritual suitcase." That's the piece of luggage that goes with us wherever you go. The contents – peace, respect, care for others – not only prepare us for what's ahead in life. They also manifest the values of Jesus in a world greatly in need of them. What do you carry in your spiritual suitcase?

Today's readings: 2 Timothy 4:10-17b; Luke 10:1-9. *"Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household.'"*

Readings for the 28th Sunday of Ordinary Time

2 Kings 5:14-17

Naaman, formerly a leper, is healed by a surprising tip from a foreign prophet.

Psalm 98:1, 2-3, 3-4

Songs of praise come readily from those who remember the kindness of God.

2 Timothy 2:8-13

The word of God is not bound but at liberty to have its restorative effect.

Luke 17:11-19

Ten lepers ask for pity from Jesus and get it. One knows the right response.

Words on Word

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*Temptation often appears in the form of excuses and complaints, as if many conditions had to be fulfilled for joy to come into being. This happens because "the technological society has managed to multiply opportunities for pleasure, yet it does not easily bring about joy." I can say that in my life I have seen the most beautiful and spontaneous joy among very poor people who can count on very little. I also recall the authentic joy of those who, amid many professional obligations, were able to keep a believing, generous, and simple heart. These joys, in various forms, draw from the ever greater source of God's love revealed in Jesus Christ. I will tirelessly repeat the words of Benedict XVI, which introduce us into the heart of the Gospel: "At the beginning of being a Christian there is not an ethical decision or some great idea; rather there is an encounter with an event, with a Person, which gives life a new horizon and, at the same time, a decisive direction" (Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*).*

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You might have heard this Sunday's Gospel and thought, "Oh yes, the ten lepers – we know this one." Ten are healed, and only one, a foreigner, comes back to say thank you. But that's not the

end of the story; it's the start. The Gospel isn't a tale locked in the past – it's alive now. What Jesus did then, he does today. So the real question is not what happened to those men long ago, but what we'll do when someone, trusting in our kindness and Christ's mercy, cries out to us: "Have mercy on me."

There are people around us who've already given up hope. They're cut off, worn down, and can't see a way forward. Yet it matters that, after meeting us, they feel fresh hope – like that leper did when he cried to Jesus: "Have mercy on me." Anyone who crosses our path should be able to rely on God's power – and also on our love.

And that goes for us as well. There are moments when we, too, whisper, "Lord, have mercy," because other help has run out and our wounds feel more raw by the day. The nine who were healed in Jesus' time went back to ordinary life – and fair enough, that's what we all want. But only one turned back to give glory to God. He was the one who saw clearly: if you've met God and tasted the wonders of his love, you turn your heart towards him and say thank you.

The others probably thought, "We got lucky – the healer fixed us." Only one said, "Thanks be to God." Isn't that how it often goes? Plenty of people doing well tell themselves they owe it all to their own talent, to the right contacts, or favourable circumstances. Far fewer will admit, "God helped me," and then actually thank him.

It's common today to shrug and say, "I'm fortunate; others aren't," as though that were the whole story. But the deeper truth is this: what we have is gift, and the Giver is good. Gratitude to God is becoming rare, replaced by the feeling that everything we possess is owed to us by default.

I saw a telling moment on a German television programme: children were asked what they wished for. They wanted larger playgrounds, more pocket money, more freedom. Parents and teachers got criticism and demands. Not one child managed a simple "thank you" for what they already had. It's not that children are ungrateful by nature – far from it. It's that we're all tempted, at any age, to forget the Giver and fixate on the gifts.

When we stop giving thanks, we shrink inward. We cut ourselves off, and love has no room to breathe. We lose the sense that we are gifted, chosen, loved – and that we ought to be grateful. Today's Gospel invites us back onto the path of thanksgiving – back to the gentle, steady rhythm of "thank you, Lord," for everything we've received.

And the most beautiful place to learn that rhythm is the Holy Mass – the great thanksgiving of the Church. The Eucharist literally means "thanksgiving." If we enter into it with heart and voice, we are united with our Saviour, thanking the Father for every blessing: for the health we enjoy, the shelter we have, the daily bread on our table, the people who love us and the grace that holds us together.

At the altar we speak together to Jesus, and we can say it personally too: "Thank you, Lord, for calling us. We're here because you've summoned us into your service. Let our love and our faith stretch towards those who lack them – those who seem to have everything, yet are poor in spirit. Make us people who return, like the grateful leper, to give you glory."

One came back. Let's be that one.

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Indeed, do not despair. You are sick; come to Him, and you will be healed. You are blind; come to Him, and you will be enlightened. You who are healthy, give Him thanks. You who are sick, run to Him for healing. Truly, He has made you once God made you what you yourself could not make yourself. Therefore, since you already are, you too can do

something yourself. May you run to the Physician and beg the Physician, who is everywhere (...). When you accuse yourself and glorify Him who made you. He who died for you will come to you and give you life. Remember these words and abide by them. Let there be no discord; let no one be leprous. Inconstant, formless teaching signifies the leprosy of the mind, from which Christ cleanses... Truly, it is to Him that we owe that we live, that we think, that we are human, that we live well, that we think rightly - to Him, indeed, we owe it. From ourselves we have nothing but sin, for what do you have that you did not receive? (1 Cor 4:7). And you who have learned the most from what you have heard, lift up your hearts to be cured of disease and cleansed of discord, and give thanks to God (St. Augustine; † 430; Latin writer, Doctor of the Church).

In Christ's love,
Fr Anthony

A LITTLE MORE ABOUT ICONS: 7. Scenes from the Life of Christ

When the Church paints the life of Jesus, she does so with Scripture in one hand and the liturgy in the other, sometimes colouring in a few narrative details from early apocryphal writings and ancient hymns. Icons aren't just religious décor; they teach, evangelise and pray. They formed the imagination of whole generations, speaking to everyone – especially those who couldn't read – about the saving work of Christ. They spell out the heart of the faith, beckon us to prayer, nudge us towards conversion, and quietly hold up models for us to imitate.

The great moments return again and again: the Nativity; the Presentation in the Temple; Christ at twelve among the teachers; the Baptism in the Jordan; the Transfiguration; the Raising of Lazarus; and the whole sweep of Holy Week – the Entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, the Washing of the Feet, the Agony in Gethsemane, the Betrayal by Judas, the Scourging, the Crucifixion, the Deposition from the Cross and the Entombment. Then come the Descent into Hell (the Harrowing of Hell), the Resurrection and the Ascension. As in the West, Eastern iconography also lingers over the Myrrh-bearing Women at the Tomb, Christ's meeting with Mary Magdalene – Noli me tangere, "do not cling to me" – and the encounter with Saint Thomas, whose doubt gives way to the bold confession, "My Lord and my God!"

If you've ever stood before an iconostasis – the great screen of icons in an Eastern church – you'll often see these moments gathered in the festal row, set above the Deesis row (Christ enthroned with the Mother of God and Saint John the Baptist interceding for us) and beneath the solemn prophets of the Old Testament. It's a visual catechism and a window into heaven: the Gospel preached in colour, inviting us not just to look, but to live what we see.



19th-Century Orthodox Resurrection Icon, with Border Scenes

Waves of Grace

Comments on the Gospel according to Luke

Year C in three-year cycle of Gospel readings focuses on the Gospel according to Luke. So, here we consider some of the main events in Luke's narrative.

Chapter 26

Temple of the Body

Luke 23, 44-46.50.52-53; 24, 1-6a

The sight of a dead human body can stir dread. Sunken eyes, a blackened, swollen form, a harsh odour – such things make us think about the cause of death and the sorrow of it all. And then we ask: what is the soul, if its absence leaves the body in this terrible state?

Death is grievous, yes – but sin is the deeper, more radical death. What have we done with our bodies over the years that, at the hour of death, they seem so unlovely and then fall silent?

Look for a moment at Joseph of Arimathea and his noble care for the Body of Christ. Joseph was wealthy, yet his greatest treasure became the Lord's Body. He was like the merchant in the parable who found a treasure, hid it, and sold everything for it. He went to Pilate, obtained Jesus' Body, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. That clean linen is your purity and respect for the body – less about hygiene, more about the spiritual. Joseph covered the naked, wounded Body of Christ with modesty. In that gesture there's a quiet reversal of Ham's act, when he exposed his father Noah and brought a curse upon himself and his descendants.

The Church is the Body of Christ; and by the Incarnation and our Eucharistic union, each of our bodies, in some sense, shares in that mystery. Joseph's care teaches us reverence for the whole Church. Too often harsh words fall from our lips against brothers and sisters in the same community. Too often we expose and wound the human body across the world, grinding down dignity. Modesty, bashfulness, chastity, virginity – these are mocked as if desire and gratification were the only truths. Joseph of Arimathea challenges you and me to recover respect for the human body and for what belongs to it: sexuality, fertility, dignity, holiness. The body must not be lynched by impurity and exploitation, exposed and trampled on the Golgothas of pornography.

In the Book of Numbers we read of the Kohathites, a priestly clan tasked with caring for the holiest objects of the Tabernacle. They carried the Ark covered with a veil of purple and with dolphin skins (Num 4:6). It's a striking image: dolphin skins in the desert. Perhaps holiness must be guarded with a kind of intelligent care, with lowliness too – beneath the surface, deep and humble. Jonah, in his three days of abasement, was as if wrapped by a great fish; and the sign of Jonah points to the Resurrection. To obtain 'dolphin skins' in the desert suggests immense effort – a striving that crosses boundaries, even the edge of the absurd. Faith does exactly that: it gives us the grace to step beyond the impossible, to draw up from the depths what will protect the mysteries that come from the heights of heaven.

The Kohathites' work calls to mind Joseph's care for Christ's Body. Carry the Body of Christ within yourself with modesty and purity. We grow in modesty and purity when we treat our own body – and the bodies of others – with modesty and purity. The body is a temple of the Spirit; it deserves sensitivity and reverence, even when seeing that through can seem nonsensical to the world.

Is it fitting, on All Souls' Day, to speak like this about respect for the human body? Isn't death itself crowned by reverent burial? But consider: do we not, during life, kill and desecrate the body by sins against it? The lack of moral respect for the body is the beginning of the death of the spirit. It's striking how neglecting the body can have such far-reaching spiritual

consequences, yet the body is the material sign of spiritual existence. It isn't something tacked onto the soul or separate from it. The first effect of Adam and Eve's sin was the discovery of their nakedness – a shock of shame and fear that unsettled them so deeply they hid from God. So, while we remember the dead, let's think about the living human body. What's the point of a beautiful grave, lavish bouquets, and burning candles if we have no respect for the body while it's alive? Perhaps, while we're still here, we ought to buy ourselves bouquets and light candles – and live with reverence.

Scripture tells us Jesus' Body was laid in the tomb that same day, buried by Joseph of Arimathea. Roman practice was harsh: the body of a condemned man could be left on the cross for birds to eat, to rot, then be discarded. To spare a body from such treatment took extraordinary favour; anyone seeking it seemed to court the absurd. Among the Jews, however, the condemned were buried quickly, since an unburied body brought misfortune upon the land. Joseph, it seems, used all his influence to recover Jesus' Body and laid it, without delay, in his own tomb. He brought a hundred pounds – about 33 kilograms – of myrrh and aloes, and wrapped the Lord's Body tightly in linen with those spices. The reverence is astonishing. By comparison, at the funeral of the renowned Gamaliel, Paul's teacher, only about 22 kilograms were used.

Myrrh whispers of unforced sorrow, true feeling, tears of love. It's a resin that beads like tears, drawn naturally from the myrrh balsam. Creation itself gives us an image of sincere compassion – tears that aren't staged. Nothing is more precious than the sight of someone moved to tears out of love. Many may call it small, but a single true tear shed for Him who, as Revelation says, 'will wipe every tear from our eyes' (Rev 7:17), is worth more than all formal ceremonies. All the more, since He died so our lives wouldn't be an unending despair.

So let's treat the body – yours, mine, and every neighbour's – as a temple. Let's wrap it in the clean linen of purity, modesty, and mercy. Let's guard it with intelligent care and humble love. And let faith lead us beyond the desert of cynicism to the living water of grace, where the Body is honoured and the soul finds peace.

Fr Anthony

In Defence of Life

“Democracy without values turns into totalitarianism.”

Saint John Paul II wasn't being dramatic; he was being accurate. **A democracy is not simply the arithmetic of 50 per cent plus one. It only makes sense if it recognises a moral order that precedes the vote – an order grounded in the truth about the human person as revealed by God.** Once that framework is jettisoned, law becomes little more than the will of the stronger side, dressed up as progress.

The Church has always insisted that the foundations of any just society are found in



Exhibit at the Auschwitz Museum displaying the toys and clothing of children who were killed in the camp

the Decalogue and fulfilled in Christ. Reject those, and you end up rejecting the very idea of objective right and wrong. History bears grim witness: ideologies that deny the Ten Commandments and the Gospel's vision of the human person have repeatedly given birth to regimes where the state decides who counts – and who doesn't.

Here is the heart of it: every human being, from conception to natural death, possesses an inviolable dignity and an inalienable right to life and to freedom of conscience. These are not benefits Parliament can bestow, revise, or withdraw; they are properties woven into us by our Creator. "By His incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 22). In each human person "there shines forth a reflection of God Himself" (*Evangelium Vitae*, 34). "For that reason, the result of human procreation, from the first moment of its existence, must be guaranteed that unconditional respect which is morally due to the human being in his or her totality and unity as body and spirit: **The human being is to be respected and treated as a person from the moment of conception**; and therefore from that same moment his rights as a person must be recognized, among which in the first place is the inviolable right of every innocent human being to life" (*Evangelium Vitae*, 60).

Let's be blunt: dignity does not track IQ, social status, stage of development, or utility. It rests on the astonishing fact that Christ has joined Himself to our humanity. That's true for the strong and the weak, the healthy and the sick, the unborn and the elderly, the believer and the sceptic. **It is in everyone's interest – across religion, race, language and nation – to build a social order on this truth: every person has equal dignity and enjoys the inalienable rights to life and to freedom of conscience.**

We've seen what happens when a society forgets this. Under National Socialism, the disabled and mentally ill were targeted in the name of "cleansing" the nation; Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, Poles and others were reclassified as subhuman and marked for elimination. The horror didn't spring from nowhere. It was the rotten fruit of rejecting the Decalogue and nurturing a hatred for Christianity, especially the Catholic Church. When God is pushed out, the state rushes in.

Today's threats look cleaner, but the logic is painfully familiar. A culture hostile to Christianity cheerfully "solves" problems by making the most vulnerable disposable: abortion for the unborn, euthanasia for the elderly and terminally ill, the destruction of embryonic human beings created in vitro, and creeping forms of eugenics that screen out the "undesirable". Let's not kid ourselves with the language of compassion when the reality is lethal. No legislature has the authority to authorise a breach of "You shall not kill". A majority cannot make murder moral. It is precisely the measure of our civilisation that we welcome with love those whom others are tempted to label as burdens – children with disabilities, adults with mental illness, the frail and the forgotten. It is barbaric to declare them better off dead or simply inconvenient.

Saint John Paul II put it with prophetic clarity: "Laws which legitimize the direct killing of innocent human beings through abortion or euthanasia are in complete opposition to the inviolable right to life proper to every individual; they thus deny the equality of everyone before the law. It might be objected that such is not the case in euthanasia, when it is requested with full awareness by the person involved. But any State which made such a request legitimate and authorized it to be carried out would be legalizing a case of suicide-murder, contrary to the fundamental principles of absolute respect for life and of the protection of every innocent life. In this way the State contributes to lessening respect for life and opens the

door to ways of acting which are destructive of trust in relations between people. **Laws which authorize and promote abortion and euthanasia are therefore radically opposed not only to the good of the individual but also to the common good; as such they are completely lacking in authentic juridical validity.** Disregard for the right to life, precisely because it leads to the killing of the person whom society exists to serve, is what most directly conflicts with the possibility of achieving the common good. Consequently, a civil law authorizing abortion or euthanasia ceases by that very fact to be a true, morally binding civil law” (*Evangelium Vitae*, 72). And again: **“Abortion and euthanasia are thus crimes which no human law can claim to legitimize. There is no obligation in conscience to obey such laws; instead there is a grave and clear obligation to oppose them by conscientious objection”** (*Evangelium Vitae*, 73). In short: when positive law contradicts the natural moral law, conscience must not be bullied into silence.

Democracy, then, is not sanctified by the ballot box. God’s Word is strikingly direct: **“You shall not fall in with the many to do evil”** (Exodus 23:2). The sheer number of votes can never confer goodness on an evil act. When Germans, in 1933, handed power to Hitler, they became co-responsible for the horrors that followed. The lesson is uncomfortable but necessary: citizens are morally accountable for what they enable at the polls.

That has consequences for us, here and now. A Catholic cannot, in good conscience, give political support to programmes that attack the innocent. **A voter who, with full knowledge and deliberate consent, chooses a candidate precisely to advance abortion, euthanasia, or the destruction of embryonic human life commits grave sin and shares responsibility for the ensuing evils.** Where every viable option is compromised, one may work to limit the harm while resolutely advocating the culture of life – but the direct support of intrinsic evils is never an option. The defence of life and freedom of conscience isn’t a “single issue”; it’s the precondition of every other right and the spine of the common good.

Once a state permits the killing of the weak, its claim to neutrality dissolves. The law becomes a mask for raw preference. Saint John Paul II warned of exactly this slide: when rights are unmoored from the dignity of the person, they become whatever the strong say they are. **Democracy then contradicts itself and becomes a form of totalitarianism: “The State is no longer the "common home" where all can live together on the basis of principles of fundamental equality, but is transformed into a tyrant State,** which arrogates to itself the right to dispose of the life of the weakest and most defenceless members, from the unborn child to the elderly, in the name of a public interest which is really nothing but the interest of one part” (*Evangelium Vitae*, 20). Call it what you like – when the state presumes the right to decree who may live, we are already miles down that dark road.

What, then, are we to do? Our Lady at Fatima warned against practical atheism – living as if God did not exist – because its end is spiritual ruin. The only credible answer is evangelisation in word and deed: to announce and embody the joy of the Risen Christ present in His Church; to offer the world again the truth about the human person; and to rebuild a culture where law serves life rather than erases it.

And we need to recover the simple weapons the Lord Himself chose. As Saint John Paul II urged: “Jesus himself has shown us by his own example that **prayer and fasting are the first and most effective weapons against the forces of evil** (cf. Mt 4:1-11). As he taught his disciples, some demons cannot be driven out except in this way (cf. Mk 9:29). Let us therefore

discover anew the humility and the courage to pray and fast so that power from on high will break down the walls of lies and deceit: the walls which conceal from the sight of so many of our brothers and sisters the evil of practices and laws which are hostile to life. May this same power turn their hearts to resolutions and goals inspired by the civilization of life and love” (*Evangelium Vitae*, 100).

The point isn’t to withdraw from democratic life but to purify it. Democracy needs conversion as much as individuals do. It needs voters who won’t be mesmerised by slogans; legislators who know that conscience is not a private hobby but the inner witness to objective moral truth; judges who understand that justice is more than procedure; and citizens who will defend the smallest among us as if our own dignity depended on it – because it does.

If we refuse the fiction that numbers make right, if we put the person before the programme, and if we let the law be law by conforming it to the truth about man and God, democracy can breathe again. If not, the drift towards a tidy, smiling totalitarianism will continue, and we will have only ourselves to blame. The time to choose the civilisation of life and love is now.

We read Pope Leo XIV

**No one should be exploited or oppressed because he is in need or a foreigner!
Human dignity must always come first!**

The Resurrection of Jesus is not a pompous triumph; it is not vengeance or retaliation against His enemies. It is a wondrous witness to how love can rise after a great defeat to continue its way, which cannot be stopped. When we rise after being wounded by others, our first reaction is often anger, the desire that someone pay for what we have suffered. The Risen One does not react in that way. Having come forth from the abyss of death, Jesus does not seek revenge. He does not return with gestures of power, but with meekness He shows the joy of a love greater than every wound and stronger than every betrayal. (...)

God forgives, raises up, restores trust. This is the heart of the Church’s mission: not to exercise power over others, but to convey the joy of those who were loved precisely when they did not deserve it. This is the strength that gave birth to and developed the Christian community: men and women who discovered the beauty of returning to life, so as to be able to offer it to others.

General Audience, 1 October 2025.

The whole Church is missionary and is one great people moving toward the Kingdom of God. Today our missionary brothers and sisters and migrants remind us of this. Yet no one should be forced to leave, exploited, or oppressed because he is in need or a foreigner! Human dignity must always come first!

Angelus, 5 October 2025.

Today a new missionary epoch begins in the history of the Church. If for a long time we associated mission with “setting out,” going to distant lands that did not know the Gospel or were immersed in poverty, today the frontiers of mission are no longer geographic, because poverty, suffering, and the longing for greater hope are drawing near to us. The story of many of our migrant brothers bears witness to this: the drama of their flight from violence, the suffering that accompanies them, the fear that they will not make it, the risk of dangerous sea crossings along the coasts, their cry of pain and despair: brothers and sisters, those boats that hope to glimpse a safe harbour where they can stop, and those eyes full of anxiety and hope that seek firm land on which to set foot, cannot and must not be met with the chill of

indifference or the stigma of discrimination! (...)

I address in particular the Church in Europe: today a new missionary surge is needed among lay people, religious, and presbyters who would offer their service in mission lands; new vocational proposals and experiences are needed, capable of awakening this desire, especially among the young.

Homily at the Mass for the Jubilee of the Missionary World and the Jubilee of Catechists, 5 October 2025.

In my opinion

On the need for wise homilies – a letter to this author and others

Dear Brother Priests,

take heart. Speak plainly about what's stirring in your souls. The people will meet you with attention, gratitude and help.

Let me start with something symbolic and very practical: the pulpit. I want to urge priests to climb the pulpit in their own churches. Not because I'm nostalgic for old furniture, but because perspective matters. Stand there, look out, and feel the weight of what you are about to do. From that height you don't toss out banalities. You're not chatting; you're proclaiming the Word of God to people who are hungry, confused, wounded and hopeful. The pulpit isn't a stage. It's a place of witness.

Fathers, please don't let anyone reduce you to a harmless elder caste. You're not a club of respectable functionaries. You have an office that is both terrifying and beautiful. You must shepherd today's peoples through a fog of confusion and the cynical engineering of conflicts between pseudo-values. Every Sunday, in parish after parish, you have a chance to order minds and affections according to the Gospel and the Church's teaching. So beat your breast and ask, before you preach: what am I actually saying, and what does it mean for the real dilemmas of our people this week?

I'm not claiming no one is doing this. Neither am I claiming I do. Recently I was in a parish church in Łódź. The church was full to the last seat, with people standing at the back. That's not common in the big city. During the homily I understood why. The pastor spoke clearly and with conviction. He didn't flatter the congregation or dodge the awkward bits. He named what is happening in the country and in families, and he sought remedies in Scripture, Tradition and the Catechism. I confess I watched the people. They were engaged, focused. It wasn't a short sermon, but no one drifted. There were hard sentences that condemned particular deeds and habits. There were also words that gave breath and courage by pointing to a way out. Most of all, you could sense the living presence of Jesus Christ drawing near in that church. The priest finished, left a pause for silence, and later, in the parish notices, eased the air with a simple line: believe that you will not be alone. That's pastoral intelligence.

Why is such preaching still the exception? Is it fear of headlines? A habit of keeping the peace at any cost? Fatigue? Or the temptation to turn the homily into a TED talk on the one hand, or a cloud of pious abstractions on the other? Resist both. The homily is part of the liturgy, not a slot for commentary or therapy. It should be faithful, concrete and ordered to the altar. Preach the Word in season and out of season. Name sin without hedging. Announce grace without stinginess. Give practical counsel that a mother, a student, a pensioner can actually try on Monday. Teach the faith: the commandments, the Beatitudes, the Church's social doctrine. Lead people to the confessional, to prayer, to works of mercy.

This takes work. Prepare. Pray over the readings until they burn. Read the Fathers and the Catechism. Study what the Church actually teaches about the questions agitating our society. Ask the Holy Spirit for *parrhesia*, that apostolic boldness which speaks truth with charity. Then speak in ordinary, human language. Use examples from daily life, from the saints, from our own history. Avoid slogans, party lines and soft evasions. We have enough of those on television. From you we need clarity seasoned by mercy.

Also, remember who the protagonist is. It isn't you, and it isn't the news cycle. It is Christ. A good homily does not draw attention to the preacher; it draws souls to the Lord present on the altar. Still, don't vanish behind phrases. Let your conviction show. Let people hear that you yourself have wrestled with the Word and let it wound you first. Authority comes from obedience to the truth, not from volume or sentiment.

Finally, please trust the faithful, they are not allergic to difficult words. They are allergic to emptiness. They will gladly be challenged if they're also shown the path to confession, reconciliation, justice and hope. They don't want political rants, and They don't want cosy bromides. They want wise homilies: orthodox, courageous and compassionate, rooted in the Church's tradition and addressed to the concrete world we inhabit.

So, climb the pulpit. Look at your people. Tell us what Christ is saying to His Church today. They will respond with engagement, prayer and help. And perhaps, like that parish in Łódź, churches will quietly fill again – not because the homily is entertaining, but because it is true.

Tony Wood

Prayer



Please remember to pray for those who are unwell, in need, or have requested our prayers: Claire Wiggins, Russell Carroll, Lucy Cunningham, Tommy McGrory Senior, Sarah Carmichael, and Doleen Durnin.

Please keep in your prayers all those whose anniversaries fall around this time.

News and Events

Join us for tea and coffee in the hall after Sunday Mass. We warmly welcome visitors and would be delighted to share our hospitality with you. We hope to see you there!

Church gas boiler is now repaired and safety checked. As a consequence of the considerable expense, please remember the Winter Heating donation box. The house gas boiler also a replace part and safety check, though less expensive.

Artem and Oleksii have been busy with works around the church and house. They have keen to do these jobs and have been generous with their time. We thank them for this.

Lighting in the hall and kitchen. Regrettably even more expense. Some of the lighting battens have deteriorated with age and are causing fuses to blow. The battens will have to be replaced. The opportunity to change all battens with LED lights will be taken advantage of. The batten units have been purchased. Just waiting for an opportunity to install them.



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