

PARISH BULLETIN

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

18th January 2026



2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Hymns/Music for Sunday

Processional (Sunday only)

547 The Spirit lives to set us free

Offertory

243 In bread we bring you, Lord

Post Communion

498 Soul of my Saviour

Recessional

188 Go the Mass is ended

St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

Tuesday: **Holy Mass, 6.00pm**

Wednesday: Adoration and mid-morning prayer,
9.30am; **Holy Mass, 10.00am**

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

Next weekend:

Saturday: Vigil Mass, 6.00pm

3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time: Holy Mass, 10.00am

Sacrament of Reconciliation Saturday 5.00pm-5.30pm or
anytime on request.

St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Bridgend, Islay

Sunday, 18th January 2026: Holy Mass, 4pm

Sunday, 4th January: Holy Maass, 4pm

Psalm response

Behold, I have come, Lord, to do your will.

Gospel acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us;
to all who did receive him,
he gave the authority to become children of God.
Alleluia.*

Communion Antiphon

*You have prepared a table before me,
and how precious is the chalice that quenches my thirst.*

Take Five

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

MONDAY OF WEEK 2

19 JANUARY 2025

United we stand

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity began in 1908. Father Paul Wattson, cofounder of the Graymoor Franciscan Friars, proposed the dates. Pope Pius X blessed the idea, and Pope Benedict XV encouraged its observance. In the mid-1920s, Protestant leaders also promoted an annual octave of prayer for unity. With the founding of the World Council of Churches in 1948, the week gained wider recognition across many Christian communities. Today, take a moment to pray that, despite our differences, Christians may be one as the Lord desires (cf. Jn 17:21).

Today's readings: 1 Samuel 15:16-23; Mark 2:18-22. *"One puts new wine into fresh wineskins."*

TUESDAY OF WEEK 2

20 JANUARY 2026

Sabbath prayer

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

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

WEDNESDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINT AGNES, VIRGIN, MARTYR

21 JANUARY 2026

The most vulnerable deserve the most

protection

The stories of child sexual abuse that have recently come to light remind us in no uncertain terms that the exploitation of the youngest and most vulnerable among us is an ongoing and serious problem. Today in the church calendar we remember Saint Agnes, who died at the tender age of 13 back in AD 3004. It was said that as punishment for refusing a forced marriage to the son of a Roman official, young Agnes was dragged naked through the streets of Rome to a brothel where she was raped and then executed. A horrific tale of child abuse no doubt, but one that has been repeated in some form or another through the ages. It is time for Christians to speak with one voice worldwide to denounce the abuse of children wherever and whenever it occurs.

Today's readings: 1 Samuel 17:32-33, 37, 40-51; Mark 3:1-6. *"Go! The Lord will be with you."*

THURSDAY OF WEEK 2

22 JANUARY 2026

Touch the pain

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

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

FRIDAY OF WEEK 2

23 JANUARY 2026

Disagree without being disagreeable

Our faith and our shared humanity call us to cherish every human life, from conception to natural death. Yet our nation remains deeply divided over how to protect the child in the

womb. In a culture where real dialogue is rare, how can we listen, seek common ground, and work together for a consistent ethic of life? On this Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of the Unborn, let us renew our resolve to listen generously to those who differ from us, calling them not enemies but friends with whom we disagree.

Today's readings: 1 Samuel 24:3-21; Mark 3:13-19. *"May the Lord reward you generously for what you have done this day."*

SATURDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES, BISHOP, DOCTOR

24 JANUARY 2026

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 stylist 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 1:1-4, 11-12, 19, 23-27; Mark 3:20-21. *"Rouse your power, and come to save us."*

Readings for the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 49:3, 5-6

God's salvation is too big to restrict to the few; it is a universal invitation!

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

God doesn't ask us to bring sacrifices but to bring ourselves.

1 Corinthians 1:1-3

Saint Paul offers the community abundance: the grace and peace of God in Christ.

John 1:29-34

The world's sin is reconciled once and for all in the offering of a single Lamb.

Words on Word

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At God's judgment a man stands and boldly says: Lord, throughout my life I have done nothing evil, no injustice, no crime. My hands are clean. That is true – replied the Supreme Judge – but they are also, alas, empty (K.W.).

* *

Have you ever felt that unsettling tug in your heart – like your conscience just won't keep quiet? That very feeling can guide us straight to Christ. Picture the scene: Jesus comes to John the Baptist, standing by the Jordan, right in the midst of a crowd. These folks aren't casual onlookers; they're people with troubled consciences who want to make things right. They show up carrying the burdens of their daily lives, hoping to find forgiveness. Their question is simple: "What must we do?" And so Jesus joins them, going through the ritual of baptism with John.

Then, an incredible moment happens: the Holy Spirit appears over the water in the shape of a dove, and Jesus – true God and true man – steps into the Jordan. His presence there forever changes the meaning of water for us in the Church. From then on, baptismal water would become a sign of Christ's cleansing and healing power. That's why we bring children to be baptised, so they can be washed clean and shine with the divine purity that flows from Jesus.

John the Baptist himself admits, “I did not know Him before” (John 1:31). But once he recognises the truth, he points to Jesus and says, “Behold, the Lamb of God” (John 1:36) – the ultimate sacrifice of love. Without love, everything is empty. It’s possible to look at Jesus without really seeing Him; sometimes life gets so hectic that we don’t give God any time. Before long, we may lose the desire to seek Him, and then it can feel like we’ve drifted too far. This is how entire communities – and even nations – can wander not just from God, but from all that is good and meaningful.

The German philosopher Dietrich von Hildebrand describes two attitudes: uprightness and unrighteousness. For him, “upright” people are those who can sense true goodness and respond to the call of higher values – this is the core of a moral life. The “unrighteous” are often proud and dismissive, assuming they already know everything. They don’t recognise the beauty and meaning shining from every corner of creation: the warmth of the sun, a plant in bloom, the innocent smile of a child, even a sinner’s tears. They miss those deeper realities because they simply refuse to see.

God’s blessing pours out on anyone who pushes past all the obstacles that might keep them away from Him. These believers affirm, “Yes, God exists,” and they trust in eternal salvation. In doing so, they join all “who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be holy, together with everyone who calls upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (see 1 Corinthians 1:2). May we be counted among them, letting that persistent stirring in our conscience lead us closer to Christ. And may we always cherish the gift of recognising the values that point us to God’s love, truth, and mercy.

* * *

*To be baptized with the Holy Spirit.
To see for the blind.
To speak for the mute.
To be strength for the weary.
To be hope for the despairing.
To teach to forgive and to forget.
To perceive God’s signs and wonders. (R.B.)*

In Christ’s love,
Fr Anthony



Russian: *Sophia, Divine Wisdom*
18th-19th century, The Regional History Museum of Brest

CHRIST IN ICONS: 14. SOPHIA, DIVINE WISDOM

Sophia, or Divine Wisdom, has quite a long history in the Judeo-Christian tradition. In the Old Testament, she appears personified as a woman who embodies Eternal Wisdom. By the time we get to the New Testament, however, she’s associated with the Second Person of the Holy Trinity – although this link didn’t gain much traction in Western theology. In Eastern Christianity, on the other hand, this concept took on major significance.

We see some of the earliest portrayals of Sophia in the 4th–5th century Alexandrian catacombs. Later, the oldest known depiction from Rus’ is found in an 11th century composition originating in Novgorod. That icon set the standard for numerous subsequent

images, including slightly altered versions from the Yaroslavl and Kyivan schools. Typically, these

icons show Sophia as a winged female figure seated on a throne, surrounded by John the Forerunner and the Mother of God in reverent poses. She's dressed in imperial garments, crowned, and holds a sceptre – her divine essence highlighted by a golden halo. Meanwhile, the Mother of God is shown holding the image of the Saviour Emmanuel.

Above Sophia, we usually find Christ depicted in a mandorla, and the whole scene is topped by an arch. Centrally placed on this arch – amid various angelic hosts – are a Eucharistic throne and instruments symbolising the Lord's Passion. Over time, Sophia came to be understood as representing ecclesial doctrine and even serving as an image of the Holy Spirit. In Novgorod iconography, her throne rests on seven pillars – an obvious nod to the Book of Proverbs.

Wounded Light

Commentaries on the Gospel of St John

Saint John's Gospel is used in the lectionary for Sundays on particular occasions, feasts and solemnities, and also in certain seasons, e.g. Easter, Christmas.

Chapter 7(d) The Rescuer

John 1:39

Imagine someone drowning in the sea. A rescuer dives right to the bottom, grabs hold of that struggling person and hauls them back to the surface. That's exactly what God's Son does for us – He's our rescuer, our only true help. In the Book of Nehemiah, we read about a priest named Ezra, and funnily enough, his name means "help" or "rescue." It's such a perfect reflection of what God does for us.

When you're drowning, the sensible thing to do is cling to your rescuer for dear life. But how irrational would it be to push that saviour away while still claiming to "believe" in him? Yet some people do just that, insisting, "I don't believe in any God, I don't need help – when I die, I'll simply disappear." But it doesn't work like that. If we've come into existence, we'll live on forever, one way or another. Atheism can't destroy God; it only destroys the atheist's own hope.

Irvin Yalom – an atheist who focuses on material things – once admitted he longs to be filled with a divine spark and reunited with his loved ones forever, yet he won't accept that there's something beyond our world. He ends up living with a hidden despair, because a life without faith in new life ends up being more like waiting around for a biological clock to wind down and nothing more – like a chick in its shell, convinced there's nothing but darkness outside.

We're all faced with a decision: do we believe Christ or not? If there's no life beyond this one, that's it – whatever we do here is rendered meaningless. But if He's telling the truth, then this world isn't the end. I choose Christ because His promise feels like the only thing that makes sense. He offers a place with no death, no suffering, no fear, and no sin. From His cross, He cried out, "Father, forgive them." That includes me, with all my mistakes – every time I've used my words or actions to hurt others. I cling to His mercy and trust in that powerful cry from the cross.

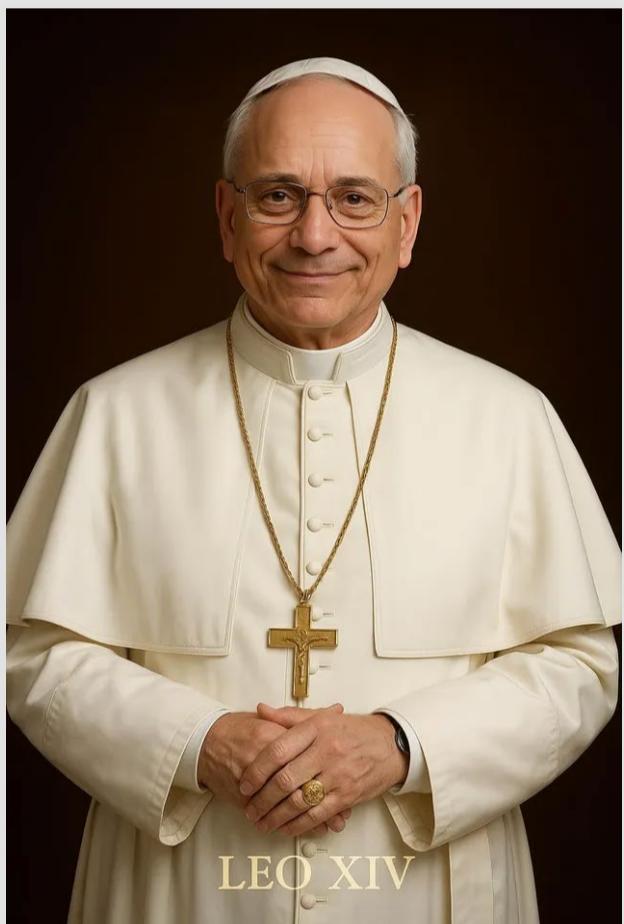
Let's be honest: none of us can escape that slow drift towards death. But Jesus is the one person who's actually conquered the grave. All He asks is that we hold on to Him – trust Him

enough to do as He says. It's like a rescuer telling us, "Keep holding on, don't let go, or you'll slip under again." Our faith isn't just a matter of saying, "Lord, Lord!" We need to do the Father's will, which Jesus Himself reveals to us in the Bible. Know Scripture; let it guide you. Some people think, "I've never done anything really bad – so surely I'll be saved. The priest will hold a funeral, people will pray, and that'll do." But if we don't hold on to Jesus in our everyday lives – if we don't at least try to do His will – then all the ceremonies in the world won't help. Even the "good deeds" we're proud of won't do the job of saving us, because, as Isaiah says, "All our righteous deeds are like a filthy rag" (Is 64:6). That rough image reminds us we can't rely on our own merit.

In Nehemiah's time, we're told the priest Ezra stood on a wooden platform and read from the Book while everyone listened attentively. That scene points forward to Christ on the cross, declaring once and for all what our situation is. Jesus, raised high on that cross, announces hope and forgiveness, making it possible for each of us to stand up from our gloom, desperation, and captivity. His power to save starts with that decree: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

He is our Rescuer, always ready to pull us out of the depths – if only we will cling to Him.

Fr Anthony



We Read Pope Leo

"God does not look at the world from afar, without touching our lives, our wounds, and our expectations!"

I appeal to all nations to guarantee full freedom of religion and religious worship to each of their citizens. We must not forget that the persecution of Christians is still one of the most widespread human rights crises, affecting over 380 million faithful around the world. On account of their faith they experience high or extreme levels of discrimination, violence, and oppression. This phenomenon affects about one in seven Christians worldwide and worsened in 2025 because of ongoing conflicts, authoritarian regimes, and religious extremism. Sadly, all this shows that religious freedom is in many contexts treated more as a "privilege" or concession than as a fundamental

human right. (...)

In its international relations and actions, the Holy See consistently advocates for the defense of the inalienable dignity of every person. We cannot overlook the fact that every migrant is a person and, as such, has inalienable rights that must be respected in every situation. Not all migrants move by choice; many are forced to flee because of violence, persecution, conflicts, and even the effects of climate change, as is the case in various parts of Africa and Asia.

Address to the Members of the Diplomatic Corps, 9 January 2026.

Children whom you now hold in your arms have been made new creatures. Just as they received life from you, their parents, so now they receive the meaning for living it: faith. When we know that something is an essential good, we immediately seek it for those we love. Which of us would leave infants without clothing and food, waiting until they grow up and decide for themselves how to dress and what to eat? Dearest ones, if food and clothing are necessary for life, then faith is more than necessary, because with God life finds salvation. His providential

love is manifested on earth through you—mothers and fathers who ask for faith for your children. Of course, the day will come when they will be too heavy to carry in your arms; the day will also come when they will support you. May Baptism, which unites us in the one family of the Church, always sanctify all your families, giving strength and steadfastness to the affection that unites you.

Holy Mass and the Baptism of twenty children, Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, 11 January 2026.

God does not look at the world from afar, without touching our lives, our wounds, and our expectations! He comes among us with the wisdom of his Word, which became flesh, drawing us into an astonishing plan of love for all humanity. That is why John the Baptist, full of wonder, asks Jesus: "Do you come to me?" Yes, in his holiness the Lord submits to and receives Baptism like all sinners, in order to reveal the infinite mercy of God. The Only-Begotten Son, in whom we are brothers and sisters, comes to serve, not to rule; to save, not to condemn. He is Christ the Redeemer: he takes upon himself what is ours, including sin, and gives us what is his, namely the grace of new and eternal life.

Angelus, Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, 11 January 2026.

In my opinion

Marxism – Leninism – Satanism

Nothing in our world happens by sheer accident, and once an idea takes root, it can spark astonishing, sometimes shocking, consequences. To truly understand what's unfolding on the global stage today, we need to look deeper – right to the sources of those ideas, which people nowadays are often discouraged from exploring.

Fundamentally, there are two opposing viewpoints driving the debate: theism and atheism. Theism holds that there is a highest, holy reality that orders everything. On the other side, atheism puts humanity on a pedestal, treating man as the ultimate measure of all things. Communism aligns with atheism, although it also contains shades of Gnosticism and a kind of eschatology. Meanwhile, every variant of liberalism has elements leaning either towards theism or pantheism. Because of these underlying beliefs, communism often leads to state tyranny, while liberalism ends up in the hands of transnational corporations – yet both sides gradually converge in their hostility to anything that upholds belief in God, especially Catholicism.

Liberal pantheism has gone so far as to deify nature, sex, and other specific facets of life, removed from a richer, all-embracing vision of the world. In pantheism, the universe is always creating itself, leaving no room for God's involvement. Although this is a very old quarrel, it's surprising how muddled it seems nowadays. Yet in essence, it's straightforward: both beliefs rest on faith. Atheists firmly believe there is no God; those of us who hold to theism stand by faith in His existence and action. In that sense, atheism functions almost like a religion: once God is removed, humanity assumes a divine-like role – and, tragically, can fall into the clutches of the Evil One. It's no wonder that Marxism, at its core, has often been referred to as satanic.

Karl Marx's own life story offers a glimpse: in his youth, he wrote an unfinished poem called "Oulanem" (an anagram the German for "Emmanuel") that brims with hatred for the Christian God and glories in every kind of wickedness. Within its pages, everyone is portrayed negatively, and Marxian ritual is made to look like a satanic initiation. As understood by Marx, communism is one long revolt against all the institutions and customs formed by the Christian world – a rebellion that uses aggression and destructive force to achieve its ends. Unsurprisingly, real-life communism has racked up over 100 million victims.

Marx labelled religion "the opium of the people" and thought that stamping out all traces of faith would be the only way to "free" society. Vladimir Lenin, who rode the wave of the revolution in a country with almost no recognisable "working class" or "bourgeoisie," pushed

the point even further, claiming that “religion is opium for the people.” That small shift in wording led to massive persecution of the Orthodox Church and other churches across the Soviet empire. Never before had there been persecution on such a scale as in the aftermath of the Bolshevik triumph, under the leadership of a syphilitic Lenin.

Ironically, despite Marx’s loudly proclaimed materialism, he believed that history was driven by an unfailing force. He borrowed this notion from Hegel, who described it as the “spirit of history” or demiurge, making itself known as events unfold. Modern-day Marxists, especially those inspired by the Frankfurt School, tried to downplay this idea, realising that Marx’s slogan “being determines consciousness” hadn’t delivered global Marxist victory. Instead, they simply flipped it to “consciousness determines being.” This seemingly tiny adjustment has massive repercussions – just look at how (neo-)Marxists have taken hold of education and culture today, often injecting elements that many would call satanic.

Pleasure is now glorified above any sense of duty, and the unrestrained pursuit of base instincts is marketed as true freedom. The old beatnik mantra¹ “it is forbidden to forbid” re-emerges on our streets in cries of “do whatever you want!” The cultural and educational spheres have fallen under this influence, and the upshot is a relentless assault on all deistic ideas, with Catholicism remaining the primary target.

Yet, for those of us rooted in a Catholic worldview, there is cause for hope. If nothing truly happens by accident, then God has His hand in history, guiding us back to the truth even when the forces of rebellion seem strongest. In recognising the ultimate clash between belief in God and rejection of Him, we can stand firm in faith and keep proclaiming the fullness of life – found only in the One who is truly Holy.

Tony Wood

Prayer



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

Please keep in your prayers Nancy Winstanley (2021) and all those whose anniversaries fall around this time.

News and Events

Tea and coffee this Sunday in the parish hall, all welcome.

Artem and Oleksii have safely settled into their new home after a lengthy 14-hour journey! They’re already looking forward to visiting us this summer. Their many contributions to our church, hall, and chapel house are far too numerous to list, and I remain deeply grateful for everything they’ve done.

Would you like to join me in showing appreciation? Thank you for your generous support!

Cleaning rota: there are still spaces on the church cleaning rota.



campbeltown@rcdai.org.uk



www.stkieranscampbeltown.org



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

¹ Beatniks were members of a social movement in the mid-20th century, who subscribed to an anti-materialistic lifestyle.