

PARISH BULLETIN

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

March 1, 2026

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

1st March 2026

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.**

Discussion Group: the scriptures during Lent,
10.30am in the Chapel House

Next weekend:

Saturday: *Vigil Mass*, 6.00pm

***3rd Sunday of Lent*: Holy Mass, 10.00am**

Sacrament of Reconciliation Saturday 5.15pm-5.45pm or anytime on request.

St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Bridgend, Islay

Sunday, 1st March, Confession, 3.30pm; Holy Mass, 4pm

Psalm response

*May your merciful love be upon us,
as we hope in you, O Lord.*

Gospel acclamation

*Glory to you, O Christ, Wisdom of God the Father.
From a bright cloud, the Father's voice was heard:
'This is my beloved Son, listen to him'.
Glory to you, O Christ, Wisdom of God the Father.*

Communion Antiphon

*This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased;
listen to him.*

Hymns/Music for Sunday

Processional (Sunday only)

52 Awake, awake fling off the night

Offertory

355 My God, accept my heart this day

Post Communion

297 Lead kindly Light

Recessional

136 Fear not, for I have redeemed you

Take Five

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

MONDAY OF THE 2ND WEEK OF LENT

2 MARCH 2026

Tell it like it is

The biggest saints were often some of the biggest sinners. The difference between them and us may be that they sought liberation through confessing their wrongdoing. Holding onto sin means letting it hold onto us, or as Saint Alphonsus Liguori said, “After we have offended God, the devil labours to keep the mouth closed.” The sixth-century monk John Climacus was even more picturesque about it: “Eggs warmed in dung hatch out. Unconfessed evil thoughts hatch evil actions.” Don’t let the spirit of jealousy, resentment, or dishonesty hatch out! Run, don’t walk, to the sacrament that liberates!

Today’s readings: Daniel 9:4b-10; Luke 6:36-38. *“Ah, Lord, great and awesome God . . . we have sinned and done wrong.”*

TUESDAY OF THE 2ND WEEK OF LENT

3 MARCH 2026

Be a Lenten do-gooder

Today’s gospel reading from Matthew gives us Lent in a nutshell: “Make yourselves clean, cease to do evil, learn to do good.” The spiritual rewards for following this Lenten regimen are great. That’s why so many of us try – but, sadly, too many of us fail. Our biggest stumbling block seems to be the final step of learning to do good. It’s not that we don’t know how to be good; we simply fail to make doing good a consistent, regular practice. This Lent, try following these steps toward becoming a daily do-gooder: Volunteer in your parish or community, be helpful and available to family and friends, donate money to charity, act cheerful – even when you’re not.

Today’s readings: Isaiah 1:10, 16-20; Matthew 23:1-12. *“Make yourselves clean; cease to do evil, learn to do good.”*

WEDNESDAY: COMMEMORATION OF SAINT CASIMIR

4 MARCH 2026

Raise a cup in praise of a saint

Saint Casimir, a 15th-century Polish prince renowned for his piety, is the patron saint of

Poland and Lithuania. For centuries Lithuania has marked his feast day each year with a large folk art and crafts fair called the Kaziuo muge, literally “Little Casimir’s Fair.” The music, drink, and dance attract multitudes of visitors as well as artisans from far and wide. It is good to commemorate a saint’s day with a celebration of life because sainthood is in a sense the very highest expression of a human life – life well lived in service to others. Live yours in such a way that others will wish to celebrate in your memory some day!

Today’s readings: Jeremiah 18:18-20; Matthew 20:17-28. *“Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant.”*

THURSDAY OF THE 2ND WEEK OF LENT

5 MARCH 2026

Be a good steward of yourself

In the season of Lent, tradition calls on Christians to fast. Fasting has a long history, going all the way back to biblical times. Jesus fasted in the wilderness before embarking on his ministry. As a spiritual discipline fasting points to a period of preparation – in Lent, preparation to celebrate the Easter mysteries. It reminds you to clear away distractions and look more closely at yourself and where things come from and where they go. Think of all the “resources” in your life: time, money, food, possessions, even love. Are you using them well? Now’s the time to find out.

Today’s readings: Jeremiah 17:5-10; Luke 16:19-31. *“I the Lord test the mind and search the heart, to give to all . . . according to the fruit of their doings.”*

FRIDAY OF THE 2ND WEEK OF LENT

6 MARCH 2026

No regrets?

You may be tempted to believe you have “failed” Lent; you might have relaxed your resolutions or Lenten practices. But you should not think that your Lent is over the instant you stumble. The third and fourth century Church father Saint John Chrysostom reminds us that our task is rather simple: “Have you sinned? Mourn and annul the sin. How toilsome is this? . . . I am not telling you to cleave the oceans, or

to navigate slowly into port from the high seas, or to march, or to depart on an endless journey . . . Then what? Mourn the sin.” Always be willing to reevaluate your goals for this Lent, keeping in mind that repentance is all that is asked of you.

Today’s readings: Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a; Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46. *“Jesus said to them, ‘Have you never read in the scriptures: The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone?’ ”*

SATURDAY: COMMEMORATION OF SAINTS PERPETUA AND FELICITY, MARTYRS

7 MARCH 2026

Give it your all

The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas is an early Christian document that records the

martyrdom of four catechumens – Perpetua, Felicitas, Saturninus, and Revocatus – and their catechist, Saturus, Perpetua’s brother. Although Christians were heavily persecuted in the third century, these young people were so compelled by the life and message of Jesus that they were willing to face torture and death to be part of the Christian community. The process for most catechumens today is not as dangerous, yet still there remains a profound sense of giving one’s life to God and being willing to give one’s life for others. Let us pray for catechumens who this Lenten season are being immersed in the mystery of our faith. May they and their catechists have the spirit, courage, and peace of these martyrs.

Today’s readings: Micah 7: 14-15; Luke 15: 1-3, 11-32. *“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.”*

Readings for the Second Sunday of Lent

Genesis 12:1-4a

Good news begins here, in the story of a man who would become God’s blessing.

Psalms 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22

For those with eyes to see, the world is full of the kindness of the Lord.

2 Timothy 1:8b-10

Endure whatever it takes to bring the gospel to all those who have not heard it.

Matthew 17:1-9

Listen to Jesus, the beloved Son who pleases God more than sages and prophets.

Words on Word

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(...) he was transfigured before them. Not abandoning the nature of a true body, but revealing the glory of future resurrection: his or ours, because just as he appeared now before the apostles, so will he appear to all the chosen after the resurrection. And at the time of judgment, he will be seen by the good and the evil in the guise of a servant, so that the deceitful may understand that this is the same judge whom they earlier rejected with contempt (Bede the Venerable).

* *

Jesus, fully aware of the humiliation that awaited Him, chose to reveal His glory to the disciples as a means of bolstering their faith. In that moment, their desire to remain on the mountain with their Master was palpable. Yet one must ponder: how enduring was their zeal? We, too, often yearn to witness the immediate triumph of God’s cause in our contemporary world. We long for the day when the adversaries of our holy faith and the Church are brought to shame and humiliation.

History recounts instances of a “Triumphant Church,” where kings wielded swords against paganism and internal threats such as heresy. Various leaders, believing themselves to be God’s Anointed, did not shy away from eradicating smaller nations, exemplified by the treatment of the Baltic Prussians. Furthermore, many nations have experienced periods when clergy and bishops occupied senatorial seats, wielding significant influence in political matters. While some even ascended to the role of prime ministers, shaping international politics, the results for the faith of the People of God were often less than beneficial. In fact, this intertwining of church and state sometimes bred cynicism and scandal, as seen in the case of Cardinal Richelieu. Even prominent religious orders, such as the Jesuits, sought to extend God’s kingdom on earth by gaining influence within royal and noble courts. However, their approach often led to disappointment, and their services were ultimately rejected by both the world and the Church, culminating in the suppression of their order.

When examining the state of the Church in Germany and other affluent Western nations, one might find it perplexing that churches are frequently half-empty. The Church’s initiatives are thoughtful and dedicated, encompassing operational Catholic preschools, well-heated churches, televised Catholic programmes, and respect for faith in universities and hospitals. Yet, what seems to be lacking? Perhaps it is humility? Or a genuine plea for God’s assistance?

“Share in suffering and hardship for the gospel by the power of God!” (2 Timothy 1:8) – Saint Paul’s words resonate today. He grounds us in the reality of our world, unflinchingly declaring that hardships and trials exist and must be borne for the sake of the Gospel. This is not merely Saint Paul’s opinion; it is the Word of God.

The most challenging truth to accept is that earthly triumph may elude us. There will be a Cross and a Good Friday before the resurrection can occur. Christ has walked this path, and no other has been laid out for the Church.

At times, Christ elevates us and the entire holy Church to the Mount of Transfiguration, prompting us to exclaim, “It is good for us to be here.” Yet, inevitably, He returns us to “the world,” where we are once again confronted with “labours and adversities.” As Christians, we are familiar not only with bitterness and loneliness but also with those fleeting moments of divine presence that illuminate our hearts, strengthen our faith, and equip us to persevere in our daily lives.

* * *

Perhaps this is what Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer writes about in those moments:

*In a moment of pure rapture, I found myself transcending,
No longer tethered to existence, but adrift in boundless void,
Like seagulls gliding toward the horizon's embrace.
In the distance, trees shimmered with a golden hue,
While sunlit houses basked in warmth,
Surrounded by the infinite expanse of azure skies.*

*In that sacred stillness, I felt naught of earthly ties,
It was as if I brushed against Your garment, O God,
A fleeting memory, stripped of all that binds,
For an instant, I soared, as if lifted to heaven's embrace.*

In Christ’s love,
Fr Anthony

THE MOTHER OF GOD IN ICONS: 19. THE DORMITION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The Eastern Church never recognized the dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, instead, on August 18th it celebrates the Feast of the Dormition, in memory of the event attested in apocryphal writings. In iconography there are two types of depictions of Mary's

Dormition: the first shows the scene in which Christ, invisible to those gathered, comes for her soul; the second portrays Christ carrying the Blessed Virgin Mary, dressed in white robes, up to heaven where angelic choirs greet them. The icon shown here is a composite of both variants.

The composition is divided into two zones – earthly and heavenly. Around the body of the Blessed Virgin Mary laid out on the bier, the apostles mourn over her. The central axis of the composition is defined by the figure of Christ in a mandorla. Angels surround Him, and a seraph carries in his arms Mary's soul, depicted in the form of an infant. In the foreground we see Jephonias, a Jewish priest, attempting to desecrate the body of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Right behind him, Archangel Michael swoops in with a sword in hand to prevent him. Architectural motifs symbolize Zion. Besides the apostles, witnesses to the event include bishops: Dionysius the Areopagite, James, and Timothy.

In the heavenly realm is Mary depicted in a mandorla, lifted by angels into heaven, where angelic choirs await her. The colour palette of the icon is kept in warm tones. By contrast, cool blue-grey shades are used to portray the figures invisible to those gathered in the earthly realm.



Unknown Artist: *Dormition of the Virgin Mary*, Benaki Museum, Athens 1500-1530

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 in certain seasons, e.g. Easter, Christmas.

Chapter 12

The Greatest Honour

John 6:16-23

When we think about the Gospel story of the storm on the lake, it's clear there's more to it than just the surface. Every time I dive into Scripture, I look for deeper meanings that relate to our everyday lives. The images of twilight, darkness, storm, and fatigue really tap into the messy nature of life – it's hardly ever calm and easy. The real light that guides us comes from the wisdom of these sacred texts. In the Gospel, it says, "At twilight, his disciples went down to the lake, got into a boat, and started crossing to Capernaum. It was already dark, and Jesus

hadn't joined them yet..." Those moments of darkness often hit hardest when we feel alone, when God's presence seems far away. That line about the lake being churned by strong winds captures how life can feel chaotic without Jesus – like a wild lake in the middle of a storm. We all get tired and struggle against the waves of life.



As the disciples rowed away, right in the middle of that vast water, they spotted Jesus walking toward them. Their fear quickly turned into comfort when He said, "It's me, don't be afraid!" When they welcomed Him into their boat, it's like their journey was sped up, and they found themselves right where they wanted to be. This moment teaches us that with Christ by our side, our challenges become manageable, our fears fade, and we can find true peace. We're really called to focus on what matters most: to know, love, and serve God. As Saint John Vianney wisely said, "Everything else is just wasting time." It's so

easy to chase after all sorts of things – material or otherwise – while forgetting our deepest longing: a relationship with God. Only He can fill that hunger for joy and peace.

Jesus tells us He is like the manna, the heavenly bread that fed the Israelites. This manna was more than just food; it was thought to be the very light from heaven, given for our nourishment. As Qoheleth says, light itself can be sweet. The light of God, hidden in the Eucharist, gives us joy, yet so many of us don't fully experience it. Traditionally, manna was believed to come from heavenly mills for the righteous. The Apostle Paul once described an incredible experience of being before the third heaven, tasting this divine light as a great blessing. When Jesus talks about the Bread from heaven, He's not just talking about regular bread; He's referring to the incredible honour of heaven itself. In the Eucharist, we don't just see symbolic bread; we're meeting with God in a real and profound way. This sacred meal changes us, connecting us to God's life – it's like heaven and earth coming together.

It's so important that we connect the act of consuming this sacred bread with our approach to Jesus. Through this Eucharistic nourishment, we not only get closer to God but also bring unity among ourselves – reflecting what the Church should be. The Eucharist and the Church are completely intertwined; you can't fully embrace one without the other. Henri de Lubac put it beautifully: there aren't two separate Christs – one as a person and another as the Church. If we ignore the Eucharist, we push ourselves away from Christ.

When we hear Jesus's powerful words during the Last Supper – "This is my body, which will be given up for you" – it's impossible to ignore the amazing sacrifice involved. He gave up everything, even His life, for us. Every time I look at the Host, I'm reminded of how deep His love is and what it cost Him to share this communion with us. Skipping Communion seems like completely missing the point of His passion. This realisation pushes us to act; we can't stay indifferent in the face of such love. In a world where the message of the Cross has been shared throughout the ages, it's hard to understand how someone could miss its significance.

So let's really embrace this truth: the stormy waters of life will always calm down in the presence of Christ. Together, let's take hold of the incredible gift of the Eucharist and let it shape our lives and nourish our souls as we journey closer to God.

Fr Anthony



Around the World

USA – IRAN

Will “bad things happen”?

President Donald Trump has given Iran until early March to agree to a nuclear deal with the United States. While this deadline does not directly imply that a military strike is imminent, it indicates that both nations, particularly the U.S., are preparing for the possibility of conflict. The central issue at stake is Iran's nuclear programme, which the American government wants to limit. Trump's recent statement makes this clear: “Either we get a deal, or it will be unfortunate for them; ‘bad things will happen.’” This remark highlights the increasing tensions between the U.S. and Iran, suggesting that failure to secure an agreement could escalate into military confrontation in the Middle East.

Considering these rising tensions, the U.S. has sent its largest military deployment to the region in 23 years and is strengthening its presence further. This military build-up serves as a strong warning to Tehran, indicating that continuing its nuclear development could have serious consequences. According to CNN, the U.S. military has various strategies at its disposal. While targeted strikes remain a possibility, a more extensive military campaign – potentially in coordination with Israel – seems increasingly likely. The option of regime change in Tehran has also not been ruled out.

Sources from CNN suggest that the U.S. military is prepared for action; however, Trump has not currently indicated that an attack is imminent. Satellite imagery analysis shows that Iran appears to be accelerating the rebuilding and strengthening of its important military and nuclear sites. In conclusion, while the deadline may not lead to an immediate outbreak of armed conflict, it illustrates the fragile state of U.S.-Iran relations. Both countries are evidently preparing for various potential outcomes, and the threat of significant military engagement remains a critical concern.

Latest: The USA and Israel have, as expected, launched a military attack on Iran and Iran is retaliating.

IN THE NETWORK

The Kremlin's Mission

In recent years, the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) has significantly increased its presence in Africa, establishing more than 350 parishes across 34 countries. This growth is particularly notable in areas historically influenced by Protestant denominations, such as Liberia, where the ROC's footprint has traditionally been minimal. Although no parish has been established in

Liberia thus far, efforts to engage the local population appear to have resulted in some conversions to Orthodoxy, with new followers adopting Russian names as a symbol of their commitment.

The ROC's mission in Liberia is closely linked to its activities in neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire, where it has been active since at least 2021. The church aims to solidify its presence in West Africa, with plans to open new parishes and establish missions in Togo, Benin, Ghana, and Guinea. The involvement of Kremlin representatives in these initiatives raises questions about a larger strategy, positioning the ROC as a significant player in advancing Russian interests in the region.

This influence is particularly evident in African nations with established ties to Russia, such as South Africa and Angola, as well as in the Central African Republic. A parish in Bangui, founded in 2013, has become a crucial tool for Russia to extend its influence in a nation predominantly composed of Catholics, various Protestant groups, and a Muslim minority.

The ROC's expansion invites serious inquiry into the motivations behind its initiatives and their potential consequences for Africa's religious landscape. While some may view these efforts as genuine attempts to spread Orthodoxy, there is a strong argument to be made that they also function as strategic moves to enhance Russia's geopolitical position under the guise of religious outreach.

In assessing the ROC's actions, it is essential to consider both the ecclesiastical aspects and the possible political motivations. The blending of religious and geopolitical interests presents a complex challenge, particularly in relation to Catholic principles of solidarity, the common good, and human dignity. The necessity of religious freedom also arises, as the diverse faith landscape in Africa must be approached with respect for the rights and responsibilities of all believers.

As observers, we must scrutinise this intersection of faith and foreign policy, recognising that the ROC operates not only as a religious entity but also as a potential instrument of Russian state interests in Africa. The unfolding narrative of the ROC's activities on the continent warrants careful analysis, given its immediate impact on local communities and its broader implications for the relationship between religion and politics in an increasingly interconnected world.

EURO-BUREAUCRACY

Without Brakes

The European Union (EU) faces a significant challenge with its complex regulatory framework, which often imposes limitations that can stifle economic growth. Recognising this issue, the European Commission has taken steps to reduce bureaucratic obstacles, acknowledging that excessive regulation may hinder the EU's economic potential. A pressing call for "debureaucratisation" has emerged from EU leaders, reflecting a strong desire for reform and a more streamlined approach to governance.

Valdis Dombrovskis, Vice-President of the European Commission, has suggested that important changes in economic regulations are on the horizon, aiming to eliminate outdated rules by 2029. The goal of these reforms is clear: to enhance Europe's economic competitiveness and sovereignty. Outdated regulations not only incur unnecessary costs but also deter investment and squander resources that could be better utilised for innovation.

To tackle these issues, Dombrovskis has proposed a 30% cut in implementing and delegated

acts, targeted for completion by 2026. This represents a proactive stance towards addressing the inefficiencies that have been characteristic of EU bureaucracy. However, it is essential to approach these developments with cautious optimism. Historical precedents suggest that past commitments to reform have sometimes led to disappointments; for example, the European Commission faced criticism for implementing approximately 1,500 new regulations in 2025, which contradicted its stated aim of simplification.

Moreover, the projected administrative costs, set to reach nearly €120 billion in the budget for 2028-34, underscore the continuing struggle with bureaucratic excess. Additionally, the rising salaries of EU officials, among the highest in Europe, raise valid concerns regarding resource allocation and the genuine commitment to alleviating bureaucratic burdens considering substantial administrative spending.

In conclusion, while the European Commission's commitment to reform is a positive step towards achieving greater economic agility, the true effectiveness of these initiatives remains uncertain. The path towards a more efficient regulatory environment will necessitate not only ambition but also a strong emphasis on transparency and accountability, particularly given previous disappointments. The EU stands at a critical crossroad, striving to balance the need for sound governance with the essential goal of fostering an innovative and competitive economic ecosystem.

From a Catholic perspective, the principles of subsidiarity and social teaching are relevant here. The principle of subsidiarity holds that matters ought to be handled by the smallest, least centralised unit capable of addressing the issue effectively. (“Subsidiarity and the Reform of the Welfare of the Nation State”) In this context, it invites a reconsideration of whether some regulatory aspects could be decentralised and managed at local or national levels, which might lead to more effective governance and greater empowerment of communities. Coupled with Catholic social teaching, which emphasizes the common good, solidarity, and dignity of the individual, the EU's journey towards reform should prioritise the development of structures that serve and uplift all citizens, ensuring that economic growth does not come at the expense of anyone’s welfare. The commitment to reform must genuinely reflect these values to achieve a just and equitable society.

USA – RUSSIA

In the crosshairs

In a recent visit to Ukraine, a group of U.S. Democratic senators expressed grave concerns regarding the deliberate targeting of American businesses by Russian forces. Senator Richard Blumenthal articulated his shock in response to the extent of damage inflicted upon these firms, with particular emphasis on critical infrastructure such as grain silos, manufacturing plants, and offices. These attacks, involving drones and rockets, have reportedly impacted a significant number of American companies operating in Ukraine. In Odesa alone, nearly 80% of these firms have sustained damage, highlighting the severity of the situation.

This context raises important questions about the principles of solidarity and the common good, particularly in a nation beset by conflict. As we examine the implications of these attacks, it is crucial to consider the interconnectedness of nations in our increasingly globalised world. The principle of solidarity invites us to recognise that the wellbeing of businesses and communities transcends national borders. The suffering of American companies in Ukraine is not merely a corporate concern; it reflects a broader issue affecting livelihoods and economic

stability in a nation already grappling with the ravages of war.

Furthermore, the principle of subsidiarity invites us to contemplate the role of local governance and institutions in addressing these challenges. In the face of such deliberate aggression, it may be advisable for local and national authorities in Ukraine, in concert with international allies, to explore avenues for more robust protection measures for businesses. This underscores the importance of empowering local entities to respond effectively to the unique circumstances they face.

The incidents described call into question the fundamental rights and responsibilities inherent in this situation. While companies have the right to operate safely and without the threat of violence, there exists a corresponding responsibility for governments and international bodies to ensure the protection of these rights, reinforcing the need for diplomatic engagement. During a time of such distress, dialogue and negotiation should remain at the forefront of international relations, with a view toward promoting peace and stability.

Moreover, it is essential to uphold the inherent human dignity of all individuals affected by these actions – both business owners and ordinary citizens who rely on these companies for their livelihoods. The attacks on businesses are not just economic assaults; they also have profound implications for the human dignity of workers, families, and communities. As we reflect on these attacks, we must advocate for a response that prioritises human dignity and seeks restorative justice rather than retribution.

In summary, the targeting of American companies in Ukraine raises significant ethical and moral questions, rooted in Catholic social teaching. As we engage with these temporal matters, let us be guided by the principles of solidarity, subsidiarity, the common good, and the respect for human dignity. It is through these lenses that we can formulate a compassionate and just response to the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, reaffirming our commitment to the protection and flourishing of all individuals in the face of adversity.

We Read Pope Leo

During Lent, let us make room for silence; let us quiet our televisions, radios, and smartphones for a moment. Let us relinquish what is superfluous . . .



“Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’” (Joel 2:17). The prophet’s question is like a thorn. It also reminds us of those thoughts concerning us, which arise among those who observe the people of God from the outside. For Lent encourages us to change course – conversion – that makes our proclamation more credible. (...) “Where is their God?” – peoples ask. Yes, dearest, history asks us

this, and before that, conscience: to name death by name, to bear its marks, yet to give witness to the Resurrection. Confession of our sins so as to turn back is already a foretaste and testimony of the Resurrection: for it means to stand among ashes, yet to rise and rebuild. Then the Paschal Triduum, which we shall celebrate at the culminating moment of Lent, will outwardly reveal all its beauty and meaning.

Homily at Holy Mass, Ash Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Humanity is in a state of fracture, which people alone cannot remedy, although the longing for unity dwells in their hearts. Into this condition enters the action of Jesus Christ, who through the Holy Spirit conquers the forces of division and the very Agent of division. Gathering for celebration, believing the Gospel message, is experienced as a drawing enacted by Christ's cross, which is the supreme revelation of God's love; it is the sense of being called together by God: thus the term *ekklēsia* is used, that is, an assembly of persons who become aware that they have been summoned. Hence there is a certain convergence between this mystery and the Church: the Church is a mystery – a secret – which has become visible. This calling – precisely because it is made by God – cannot, however, be limited to a certain group of persons, but is meant to become the experience of all people. (...) The Church in the history of humanity is the expression of what God desires to accomplish; therefore, by looking at the Church one can to some extent grasp God's plan, the mystery: in this sense the Church is a sign, a sign which acts. (...) Through the Church God attains the goal of uniting persons to Himself and gathering them together with one another.

General Audience, February 18, 2026

The Liturgy, through this Word of Life, encourages us to view Lent as a pathway full of splendour, on which, through prayer, fasting and almsgiving, we may renew our cooperation with the Lord in creating the one-of-a-kind masterpiece that is our life. It is a question of allowing Him to remove stains and heal wounds that sin may have left in our life, and striving that it may blossom in all its beauty, up to the fullness of love – the only source of true happiness. (...) In this time of grace (...) let us make room for silence; let us quiet our televisions, radios, and smartphones for a moment. Let us meditate on the Word of God, approach the sacraments; let us listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, which speaks to us in the heart, and let us listen to one another – in our families, in our workplaces, in communities. Let us devote time to those who are alone (...). Let us give up what is unnecessary, and share what we save with those who lack what is essential.

Angelus, February 22, 2026

In my opinion

Reason and truth

In today's world, where division and conflict seem to be the norm, the idea of forgiveness stands out as something we really need, even if we often overlook it. When we forgive others, we're not just freeing them; we're also letting ourselves off the hook from feelings of bitterness and the urge to get back at someone. Saying "I'm sorry" carries a lot of weight – it's about feeling regret, shame, and a genuine wish to make things right. But let's be honest, we often rush through it, treating it like just another thing to check off our to-do list. Sometimes, it's even hard to get those words out, like they're stuck in our throats.

Apologising can be one of the bravest things we do. In a time when people often hide their mistakes instead of facing them, public apologies can feel more like PR stunts than sincere gestures. Even private apologies can be awkward, leaving us feeling unsure about their sincerity. Nowadays, being "right" often seems more important than being truthful, which can create a tricky situation where we must choose between being correct and keeping our relationships intact. Admitting we're wrong can feel like a weakness, especially on social media, where a single mistake can leave us vulnerable to criticism.

But here's the thing: when we say "sorry" with real intent, that simple word can spark genuine healing. Forgiveness doesn't mean we forget what happened; it's a conscious choice to not let

the past ruin our present. It's about freeing ourselves from the negative effects of holding onto anger and the cycle of revenge. In a way, forgiveness is a smart move for our own peace of mind.

It's also worth noting that forgiveness doesn't always happen straight away. Just because we apologise doesn't mean the other person has to forgive us right away. Acknowledging that we've hurt someone is the first step towards fixing our relationships, no matter how small the issue may seem.

As youngsters, we learn to say "I'm sorry" just to fit in, but as we grow up, we realise that it comes with a cost – our pride, our self-image, and sometimes even our sense of security. Apologies only become powerful when they're genuine and not just a forced response. The same goes for forgiveness; it must come from a place of free will, not pressure.

At the end of the day, apologising and forgiving are two sides of the same coin, reminding us of our shared humanity. We all make mistakes, but we can also find redemption. This back-and-forth between weakness and strength, guilt and understanding, doesn't offer easy answers but gives us hope. In a world full of judgement, we can still find the courage to say things like, "I'm sorry," "Forgive me," and "I forgive you."

It's crucial that we relearn how to apologise and forgive – without clichés and calculations – recognising that these acts are not weaknesses but rather expressions of our humanity. Those who get this right not only have the power to mend relationships but also to understand themselves better. After all, if you struggle to say you're sorry, you might not fully grasp what love is all about.

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 Alice Dunn (2016), William Robertson (2019), Thomas Finn, Irene O'Neill **and all those whose anniversaries fall around this time.**

Please pray for the innocent people of Iran, that they be protected, courageous and retain hope.

News and Events

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

The bishop's visit: Bishop Brian will be making his parish visit to Campbeltown on 7/8th March. There will a **Second Collection** to support SCIAF's work.

The Deanery Meeting will be in Campbeltown on the 10th March. Mass on that Tuesday will be at 10am with the priests of the Deanery.



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