

PARISH BULLETIN

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

March 15, 2026

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Laetare Sunday

Hymns/Music for Sunday

Processional (Sunday only)

52 Awake, awake, fling of the night

Offertory

67 Blest are you Lord God

Post Communion

Sheet Open our eyes Lord

Recessional

87 Colours of day

St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

Tuesday: **Holy Mass, 10.00am**

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

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

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

Next weekend:

Saturday: **Vigil Mass, 6.00pm**

5th 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, 15th March, Confession, 3.30pm; Holy Mass, 4pm

Easter Sunday, 5th April, Holy Mass and the blessing of easter Water, 4pm

Psalm response

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Gospel acclamation

Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God.

I am the light of the world, says the Lord;

whoever follows me will have the light of life.

Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God.

Communion Antiphon

*The Lord anointed my eyes: I went, I washed,
I saw and I believed in God.*

Take Five

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

MONDAY OF THE 4TH WEEK OF LENT

16 MARCH 2026

Take Jesus at his word

What caused an anxious parent of a dying child to accept Jesus' word as sufficient? "Your son will live" is not medicine. These four words are not magic. Yet they were enough because of the authority of the one who spoke them. Do we believe in the words of Jesus in the same way? Try living as if you do. Start with accepting that your sins are forgiven. This is the miracle of new life that Jesus promises us now and when his Kingdom comes.

Today's readings: Isaiah 65:17-21; John 4:43-54. *"The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started on his way."*

TUESDAY: FEAST OF SAINT

PATRICK, BISHOP, MISSIONARY

17 MARCH 2026

Three is a lucky number

How would you explain the Holy Trinity to someone who has never heard of the concept? How do you explain three divine beings who are really one, united yet distinctive? Saint Patrick of Ireland had many legends associated with him. Some are quite fantastic (such as the claim he chased all the snakes out of Ireland), but one is so practical it is quite possibly true. It is said that Patrick taught the Irish about the Holy Trinity with the help of a shamrock, the legendary three-leafed plant. The shamrock has since become a central symbol for Saint Patrick's Day and for all of Ireland. God can be found in all of nature – where do you see the evidence?

Today's readings: Jeremiah 1:4-9; Luke 10:1-12, 17-20. *"Whatever house you enter, first say: Peace be to this house!"*

WEDNESDAY OF THE 4TH WEEK OF

LENT

18 MARCH 2026

Glad to be of help

The feeling that you are doing God's will on Earth activates a deep source of inner peace. On the other hand, the thought that you really should be doing something else creates a low-grade feeling of anxiety that you can ignore for only so long. Eventually the unease

accumulates until life becomes a heavy burden, or you get sick – or both. Your fear might be that God wants you to go to some hard place, to do some difficult task. Not so. As theologian Frederick Buechner put it, God calls you to "the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." To find that place of deep gladness you have to go within and you have to listen. Lent is the perfect time to do both.

Today's readings: Isaiah 49:8-15; John 5:17-30. *"I do not seek my own will but the will of the one who sent me."*

THURSDAY: SOLEMNITY OF SAINT

JOSEPH, HUSBAND OF THE

BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

19 MARCH 2026

Walk a mile in their shoes

Saint Joseph knew a thing or two about having to uproot a family and leave for another country in a hurry. The Gospel of Matthew tells us that Joseph fled to Egypt with Mary and the infant Jesus when he learned that King Herod planned to kill all the male infants in Bethlehem. For this reason Joseph is a patron saint of immigrants. In every age and region people have felt compelled to immigrate for a variety of reasons, but rarely for convenience. Pulling up stakes on one's life and seeking it elsewhere is never an easy or pleasant task. Take a moment to honour Joseph by reaching out to an immigrant in your own community. It may give you a new perspective on one of the day's hot-button issues.

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

FRIDAY OF THE 4TH WEEK OF LENT

20 MARCH 2026

How do we endure differences?

If it were up to us, everyone would share our opinions, uphold our values, imitate our manners, and vote the way we do. What a wonderful world that would be! What a land of harmony! We live, however, in a land of free will and endless variety, and that – regrettably at times – includes the way other people think,

act, perceive reality, and believe. We can therefore proceed in historically predictable ways. We can kill everyone who thinks differently (obviously that hasn't worked). We can suppress all other perspectives. Or we can learn to dialogue across the differences. As you fast from meat today, imagine a world of mutual respect, free of the spirit of condemnation.

Today's readings: Wisdom 2:1a, 12-22; John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30. *"Merely to see him is a hardship for us, because his life is not like that of others, and different are his ways."*

SATURDAY OF THE 4TH WEEK OF LENT

21 MARCH 2026

"God made me do it"

Some folks claim God told them to do something – run for political office, for example.

Interestingly, you don't hear much about people saying God told them not to do something. At any rate, discerning messages from God can be a tricky business. The prophetic books of Hebrew scripture record many of what are presented to be direct quotes from God. These prophets, however, were not using God to advance themselves or gain power. Instead they were reminding the nation of the ways of God the people knew perfectly well but were ignoring. So, the next time you hear someone speaking of how God told them to do such-and-such, ask who's really doing the talking. The best way really to hear from God is through prayer and a life of faith.

Today's readings: Jeremiah 11:18-20; John 7:40-53. *"I knew their plot because the Lord informed me; at that time you, O Lord, showed me their doings."*

Readings for the Fourth Sunday of Lent

1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a

Despite improbable odds, David is anointed the next king of Israel.

Psalms 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6

With God as our guide and guardian, even the dark valley is no threat.

Ephesians 5:8-14

We awaken from the sleep of death into the light of Christ!

John 9:1-41

A blind man teaches the sighted how to see clearly.

Words on Word

Shedding Light on Our Spiritual Blindness

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Let's face it: we all have our moments of spiritual blindness. Sin, that ever-present reality, is often described in Sacred Scripture as darkness or blindness, and it affects each and every one of us. Picture it this way: we're all carrying around the consequences of sin, which means we can't see quite clearly.

Our blindness comes in two flavours. First off, there's the inability to see the light of God, who is embodied in Jesus Christ. We're often stuck seeing only what our senses allow – kind of like when you're fumbling around in a dark room and can't find the light switch.

Then there's the second kind of blindness, which is perhaps even more troubling: we struggle to see ourselves in the right light. We carry an image of ourselves in our minds, but it's largely a concoction – one that's often distorted and misleading.

Sometimes we hate what we see when we finally confront the truth about ourselves, leading us to fabricate a more palatable version of who we are. (F. Blachnicki)

* *

The inspiring story of a man born blind illustrates this beautifully. At Jesus' command, he washed his eyes in the pool of Siloam and suddenly saw – not just the world around him for the first time, but also the light of the world itself, Jesus. When he encountered Jesus again, he declared, “I believe that you are sent by God,” and bowed down in worship. Between these two moments, he didn't just keep his miraculous experience to himself; he boldly shared his testimony with the Pharisees, asserting that God listens to sinners.

This narrative, like the story of the Samaritan woman, underscores the importance of meeting Jesus. The man born blind didn't just gain physical sight; he gained a relationship with Christ, which led to his realisation of faith and worship. As we hear in the Preface at Mass, “He came as the true light which enlightens every man,” and likewise through our faith and baptism, we too are invited to become children of the light.

Just as Jesus healed that blind man, He comes to us today, offering His light. It's in that light that we can finally glimpse the true nature of God and ourselves. Jesus is extending that invitation to us all, guiding us out of darkness and into the light – if we choose to let Him.

But here's the thing: Jesus warns us not to fall into spiritual blindness ourselves. He says, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” These words were directed at the Pharisees, yes, but they ring true for us today, especially for those who think they know better than others. Pride can trick us into missing God and His will entirely.

Next Sunday, we'll witness another powerful story when Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. You'd think people would be awestruck, but instead, some will plot to have Him killed. Even in the face of miraculous signs, a hard heart can still blind us to the truth.

So, let's take a moment to reflect. Do we recognise God's handiwork in our lives, or are we among those who remain oblivious to His light? Like the man born blind, we have the opportunity to allow ourselves to be led by God, who is indeed the light of the world.

* * *

In the spirit of prayer, let's turn to the words of Francis Blachnicki, whose beatification is in motion:

“Lord, You are the Light of the world. We are blind and engulfed in darkness. I struggle with my faith and often can't see myself as You see me. I believe You're here with me, wanting to shine Your light into my heart. So, please, send Your Holy Spirit to illuminate my path and reveal the truth about who I am. I trust You with my sins and my blindness. Be my guiding light, Lord. Amen.”

In short, let's embrace the light of Christ and allow it to transform us – because in that light, we discover not just who we are, but also who we're meant to be.

In Christ's love,
Fr Anthony

Revealing the Hidden Struggles: The Battle Against Evil in Modern Society

In an era where Christian values appear to be fading, a troubling trend is emerging: a growing interest in superstitions and occult practices. As fewer individuals engage in prayer and neglect the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist, many are turning to dubious sources for guidance amid the moral confusion of today's world. Activities such as divination and spiritism signal a desperate search for meaning and direction.



Scripture offers a solemn warning regarding the consequences of sin. In 1 John 3:8, it is written, "Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil." Such a sentiment highlights the enduring presence of evil in contemporary society, a force that many now face with growing apprehension.

Perhaps the most concerning plight is found in individuals who lack genuine conversion and persist in a life of mortal sin. These individuals expose themselves to demonic influences, resulting in substantial psychological and emotional distress. Many suffer in silence, fearing the stigma of mental illness, oblivious to the fact that their moral choices may have opened them up to malevolent forces.

Prominent mystics have issued stark warnings regarding the dire consequences of sin. As revealed through acts of impurity and spiritual infidelity that not only affect the individual but can also imperil entire nations.

The societal landscape today often appears to embrace sin, with behaviours such as sexual promiscuity and the misuse of substances becoming more prevalent. These actions contradict God's commandments and ensnare many in cycles of despair that lead only to destruction.

As advocated by the mystic Alicija Lenczewska, each person carries within them the choice of "Heaven or hell." This concept underscores the importance of rejecting sin, as succumbing to it distances us from the Divine, allowing darkness to overshadow our true purpose.

Moreover, leftist ideologies have further eroded moral standards, distorting fundamental concepts like family and human dignity. Historical efforts by groups such as the Freemasons to undermine the Church and its teachings have long been recognised as

dangerous strategies, noted by figures like Blessed Pope Pius IX.

The existence of Satan and his minions remain an essential tenet of Catholic teaching. Saint Paul VI emphasised the need for vigilance against evil, asserting that demonic forces are not only real but also actively present in our world, often masked by rationalism or intellectualism. Disregarding this reality only empowers such entities and allows their malign agendas to flourish.

Yet, despite the darkness, hope remains. The ultimate victory rests with Jesus Christ, whose death and resurrection vanquished the forces of evil. The Church, representing the Body of Christ, offers a haven for the faithful, providing pathways to salvation through the sacraments.

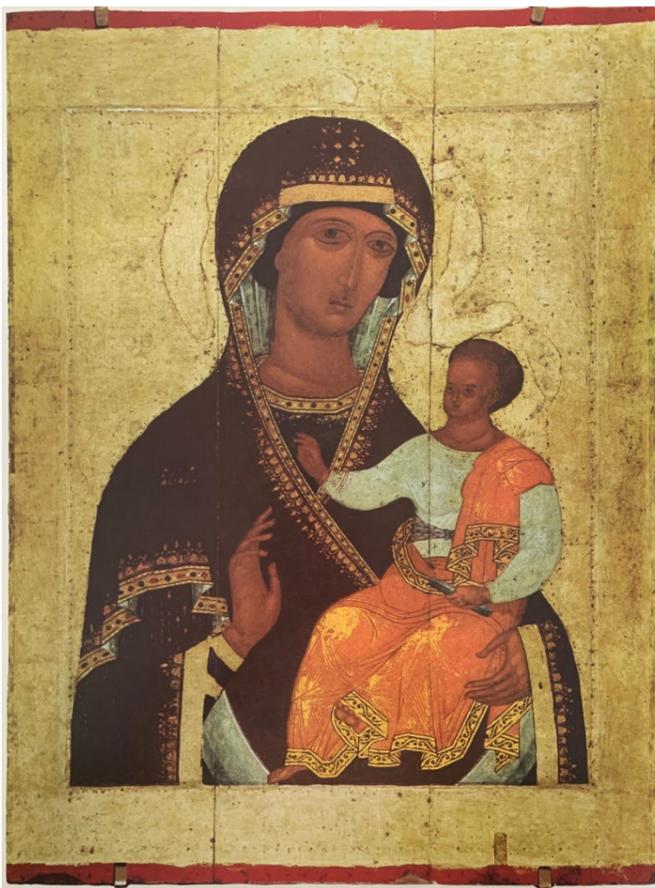
In a world that often feels dominated by evil, believers are called to engage in their faith with conviction. Jesus' teachings remind us that true salvation lies in Him, and living a life rich in confession, Eucharist, and prayer is crucial in resisting the allure of sin.

As we navigate these challenging times, vigilance is paramount. Saint Paul's exhortation to "be strong in the Lord – with the power of His might" encourages spiritual preparedness. This call to arms is not merely about belief; it requires active participation in the pursuit of holiness and truth.

Evil may be ever-present, but we must cling to the truth that, through Christ, we have the means to overcome. The power of His love, alongside the intercession of Mary, fortifies us against threats to our spiritual welfare, guiding us towards redemption. In this enduring struggle against darkness, our strength and salvation are found solely in our relationship with the Saviour.

THE MOTHER OF GOD IN ICONS: 21. HODEGETRIA – SHE WHO SHOWS THE WAY

Let's dive into the fascinating world of religious art with the Hodegetria, an iconic portrayal of the Mother of God that has captivated believers for centuries. According to tradition, this beloved image was first painted by Saint Luke the Evangelist himself. Originally hailing from Jerusalem, it eventually made its way to Constantinople, where it was housed in the church of Ton Hodegon. This is how the icon earned its name – Hodegetria, which literally means "She who shows the way."



Dionizy - *Mother of God Hodegetria*, 1502,
the Russian Museum of St. Petersburg

So, what does the Hodegetria look like? In this depiction, the Mother of God is shown from the waist up, cradling the Child Jesus on her left arm. With her right hand, she points to her Son, almost as if she's presenting Him to the world. Christ is depicted in a manner that exudes divinity, with His right hand raised in a blessing gesture. In His left hand, He typically holds a scroll, although some versions feature Him clutching the Book of the Gospel or an imperial orb. Interestingly, the Mother of God's maphorion (that's a fancy term for her veil) is adorned with stars, symbolising her perpetual virginity.

The way the Hodegetria is presented offers a sense of majesty and solemnity. The icon is characterised by its formal style: the figures are placed in a frontal pose, their gestures are hieratic and motionless, and the heavy drapery of their garments flows gracefully downward. There's a certain detachment here – no emotional connection displayed between Mother and Son, as both figures gaze outward, directly engaging with the viewer. In the sacred space of the iconostasis, the Hodegetria typically occupies the lowest row of icons, positioned to the left of the Royal Doors, further enhancing its significance.

Among the miraculous versions of the Hodegetria, a few stand out, such as the Smolensk Hodegetria, the Tricheirosa Mother of God, and the famous Our Lady of Częstochowa. These images are often referred to as “renowned for grace,” a testament to their enduring spiritual impact.

In a world filled with fleeting trends, the Hodegetria reminds us of the timeless beauty and profound significance of faith expressed through art.



Emmanuel Lambardos - *Our Lady Hodegetria*, 1570-1599, Benaki Museum, Athens

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 14

The Purest Kiss

John 6:54, 60–69

In a profound exploration of Christ's teachings about His Body, we find a fascinating connection to the Letter to the Ephesians, which beautifully depicts the bond between husband and wife. The Church, described as the Bride of Christ, mirrors this sacred union, illustrating a powerful statement about unity. “What God has joined, let no one separate,” rings true here, highlighting the oneness that marriage represents.

Interestingly, the biblical narrative gives us a striking image: Eve was created from Adam's rib. Some translations even refer to “ribs,” which serves to reinforce the marriage allegory even further. In a thoughtful pairing, the lectionary aligns the discourse on marital unity in Ephesians with Jesus' groundbreaking words about the Eucharist – a notion that left many of His followers stunned. This raises a beautiful image of Christ, as the ultimate loving husband, who unites with the Church and every individual soul through the Eucharistic Body. It's akin to a divine marriage, a calling from the Father drawing us into the light.

But there's more to ponder. Could Jesus' references to His Blood also resonate with Jewish marriage customs? Traditionally, during the wedding ceremony, bridegroom and bride sip wine from a shared cup under the CHUPPAH – symbolising their togetherness under one roof. Saint

Cyprian even went so far as to refer to Holy Communion as OSCULUM, or “a kiss,” representing the soul’s communion with God’s love.

When reflecting on these connections, it’s easy to envision the Church not as a sterile parish office but as a joyful procession of spouses walking down the aisle to Mendelssohn’s march. Just as Jewish tradition finds deep meaning in the Song of Songs as an allegory of Israel's relationship with God, Christians can certainly see the same profound love mirrored in the Eucharist, evoking the parable of the king hosting a wedding banquet for his son.

Interestingly, the bride is notably absent in that parable. Why? Perhaps it’s because all those invited are a part of that bride! The same mystery surrounds the wedding at Cana, where the bride’s presence is also overlooked. The depth of God’s love for you and me is truly astounding! If only we could truly open our eyes and see how joyfully God looks upon us.

Yet, how many of us genuinely experience Holy Communion in this way? When we kneel and open our mouths, do we grasp the magnitude of what’s happening as we encounter the Body of the Son of God? There’s so much we could learn from the woman who wept at Jesus’ feet, lavishing kisses and oils. Wouldn’t it be wonderful to experience that same profound connection during our own Communion?

The invisible God assumed a visible form because He longed for connection – He wanted to be... kissed. There’s something breathtaking about a pure kiss, but its beauty can also make it vulnerable to betrayal. This is exemplified in Scripture with Judas, who betrayed Jesus with a simple kiss. Love for Jesus was widespread, but so was hatred.

In the opening chapter of the Song of Songs, there’s an earnest plea: “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!” This heartfelt longing from the Bride to the Bridegroom resonates deeply. Jewish tradition interpreted this yearning as Israel’s desire for the Word of God. And if God’s words can be seen as kisses from the Holy Spirit upon our souls, how much more precious is it that we are allowed to kiss Christ’s holy Body?

We should accept ourselves as we are – not as we wish to be. Holding onto unrealistic ambitions can lead to despair and disappointment. Take Miriam, for instance; she never directed complaints at God despite facing life's hardships. Imagine the bitterness a widow might feel watching her son endure shame and suffering. Yet, she chose to live quietly in her small home in Ephesus, ultimately embraced by God’s love without bitterness.

In these reflections, we see the immense beauty of love, unity, and divine connection, a call to embrace our own journeys within the heart of God.

Fr Anthony



Around the World

EUTHANASIA

Help a'la Canada

According to data from the Chief Coroner of Ontario and the Medical Assistance in Dying Review Commission (MADR), 2023 has seen a staggering number of individuals – 65 – who were granted medical assistance in dying (MAID) and died on the same day they submitted their requests. Additionally, another 154 individuals passed away the following day.

Canada first legalised medical assistance in dying in 2016, instituting a 10-day waiting period between the approval of a request and the administration of the procedure. However, a significant shift occurred in 2021 when Parliament eliminated this waiting period for individuals deemed to have a "reasonably foreseeable" natural death. As a result, if two physicians confirm the criteria are met, the procedure can be performed on the same day as the request.

This rapid turnaround raises serious ethical questions about the safeguards in place to protect vulnerable individuals. In many instances, the process of euthanasia is executed almost instantaneously, often leaving little room for reflection or second thoughts in cases where palliative care might have been a viable alternative. The implications of such practices warrant a careful examination, as the boundaries of medical ethics and the sanctity of life continue to be tested in the ever-evolving landscape of assisted dying in Canada.

STRAIT OF HORMUZ

Stranded Mariners

Approximately 20,000 sailors remain trapped on their vessels following Iran's blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, which commenced in the early days of the escalating conflict in the Middle East. This assessment comes from Arsenio Dominguez, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), an agency operating under the auspices of the United Nations.

The blockade has not only affected these sailors but has also left around 15,000 cruise ship passengers stranded. Dominguez noted that threats issued by Iran have effectively halted maritime activities in this critical region. The Strait of Hormuz is a pivotal chokepoint on the global trade map, connecting the Persian Gulf to the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. It facilitates the transit of up to one-third of the world's maritime oil transport, as well as a significant portion of natural gas shipments.

In response to recent military actions by the United States and Israel against Iran, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has warned that vessels within the Gulf have no right to navigate through a strait that falls under Iranian jurisdiction. This ultimatum has resulted in the immobilisation of hundreds of oil tankers.

The blockade has triggered a sharp increase in oil and petrol prices, but its ramifications extend further, threatening food supplies to Gulf nations and exacerbating the already significant food inflation in Iran. According to analytical firm Kpler, Saudi Arabia imports approximately 40% of its grains and oilseeds through its eastern ports in the Gulf, while the United Arab Emirates relies on Dubai's port for about 90% of such imports. This vital route also transports perishables to Bahrain and Qatar, indicating that the ports serve a population of 45 to 50 million people.

Iran, too, faces a severe food crisis due to these developments. Historically, Tehran has repeatedly threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz, a prospect that looms ever larger amidst the current tensions.

GERMANS

Consider Leaving

A recent study commissioned by the German government's representative for migration and integration has revealed that more than one-third of EU citizens residing in Germany are contemplating leaving the country. Of these, 13% have already taken initial steps toward departure.

The survey highlights significant challenges faced by these individuals, including language barriers and obstacles to accessing the job market. As of the end of 2023, approximately 5.1 million people in Germany held citizenship from other EU nations, illustrating the country's diverse population.

The primary reasons driving the desire to leave include the rising cost of living, with 42% citing housing expenses as a major concern, and 36% expressing worries about the overall cost of maintaining a household in Germany. Additionally, an alarming 39% of respondents reported feelings of dissatisfaction with their living conditions, suggesting a deeper sense of unease within this community.

Significantly, nearly 15% of those surveyed mentioned experiences of discrimination, further contributing to their inclination to seek a new life outside of Germany. The findings call for urgent attention to the issues impacting EU citizens in the country, as their contributions and integration remain vital to the social fabric of contemporary Germany.

We Read Pope Leo

We lift up our humble prayer to the Lord, that the roar of bombs may fall silent, the weapons be stilled, and a space for dialogue be opened.

Holiness of the Church consists in the fact that Christ dwells within it and continually gives Himself through the littleness and fragility of its members. By contemplating this ongoing miracle unfolding in it, we understand God's "method": He becomes visible through the weakness of His creatures, ceaselessly revealing and acting. Thus Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* encourages all to learn "to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other" (no. 169). This also empowers us today to build the Church: not merely by organizing its visible structures, but by raising up that spiritual edifice which is the Body of Christ, through communion and love among us. For love continually begets the presence of the Risen One. "May heaven grant," said Saint Augustine, "that all keep in view nothing but love: for love alone conquers everything, and without it, everything has no worth; wherever it is found, it draws all things to itself" (Sermo 354, 6, 6).

General Audience, 4 March 2026.

Lent invites us to acknowledge Christ as the highest hope of mankind. I encourage you, dear young people, to be courageous witnesses of the Gospel, to exert a positive influence in the various circles of life. To you, dear sick, I recommend the virtue of patience, so that your suffering, united with Christ's suffering, may be a sacrifice pleasing to the Father. To you, dear



newlyweds, I urge you to discover the value of prayer in the “domestic Church” that you have formed.

Appeal after the General Audience, 4 March 2026.

We live in a society threatened by the loss of memory. Our age has an extraordinary capacity for transmitting information, but an increasingly weak capacity for internalizing it. Memory is often “externalized” and accessible, yet not always internalized and activated. But for the Church it is a living conscience: not an accumulation of data, but a continual summons to responsibility; not nostalgia, but the root from which prophecy springs forth. For Christians memory has a unique character: it is the celebration of God’s entrance into history, for the Christian faith rests on historical fact, and salvation is not an idea, but a living person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Address to participants in the events organized by the Italian Police Ordinariate, 7 March 2026.

From Iran and throughout the Middle East there continue to come reports that cause deep sorrow. To the cases of violence and destruction and to the spreading atmosphere of hatred and fear is added the concern that the conflict may expand and that other countries in the region, including dear Lebanon, may once again be plunged into destabilization. We lift our humble prayer to the Lord, that the roar of bombs may fall silent, the weapons be stilled, and a space for dialogue be opened in which the voices of peoples may be heard. Mary, Queen of Peace, I entrust the following intention: may she intercede for those who suffer because of war, may she guide hearts along paths of reconciliation and hope.

After the prayer The Angelus, 8 March 2026.

In my opinion

The Mendacious Path of Donald Trump

As Donald Trump faces another challenging chapter in his political journey, there are significant concerns regarding his potential foreign policies, especially regarding Central Europe.

A pressing question arises: what might happen if Trump were to announce agreements with Vladimir Putin, fundamentally altering the geopolitical landscape? Although his first term was marked by controversy, the current situation appears even more unstable.

Emerging traits of egotism and megalomania in Trump suggest a shift in the political narrative that could have far-reaching impacts on global affairs. These are not merely personal shortcomings; they represent a larger concern for international relations that could define a significant historical moment.

Henryk Sienkiewicz’s description of a nobleman in *Fire and Sword*, “It is a strange man in whom both good and evil seem to dwell”, encapsulates Trump’s complex political persona. While he has indeed taken strong stances against progressive ideologies – challenging institutions like the World Health Organisation and the United Nations, confronting narratives surrounding Black Lives Matter, and promoting conservative foreign policies – his recent actions have become increasingly unpredictable.

Initially, Trump presented himself as a pragmatic leader, breaking free from left-wing critiques and promoting American industrial growth. His calls to end foreign interventions, particularly relating to Ukraine and Middle Eastern conflicts, suggested a more cautious American approach to foreign policy. However, there then followed a whole series of

strange statements that sounded completely irresponsible: the problem of Greenland, Cuba, and most recently the threat of breaking off relations with Spain, which was unfavourably disposed towards attacking Iran.

Trump's strong ties with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are particularly alarming. The notion that eliminating Iranian leaders would not impact the nation's influence raises serious questions about his understanding of the regional dynamics. Current indicators suggest that Trump may have aligned himself with Israel's broader ambitions, risking U.S. involvement in a conflict with Iran that could result in significant financial and diplomatic consequences.

Unlike previous military interventions, the situation with Iran is fraught with complications, particularly given the involvement of Chinese intelligence in Iranian matters. This development could set the stage for a dangerous form of global proxy warfare. Moreover, Trump's rhetoric often fails to align with the reality of his administration's actions, leading to discontent among conservatives and those who previously viewed him as a pragmatic option.

The implications of Trump's apparent support for Netanyahu's policies could have dire consequences, igniting tensions within NATO and accelerating the trend of de-dollarisation in the global economy. British supporters of Trump may overlook these issues as long as he remains a bulwark against Russia, yet the possibility of a sudden shift in his stance towards Russia while seeking a closer relationship with Putin is alarming.

The fate of Central Europe hangs in the balance. As we move forward, the coming months are crucial. Should Trump alter his foreign policy significantly, the ramifications could reach well beyond political statements, potentially reshaping alliances and influencing the course of history. It is imperative to remain vigilant.

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 Canon Roddy Johnstone (2024), Jane (Jean) Finn (2018), Annie McMillan (2005) **and all those whose anniversaries fall around this time.**

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

News and Events

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

SCIAF Collection ends this Sunday. Please also continue to top up your Wee Boxes, and bring them in during Holy Week.

The Chrism Mass will be celebrated on 25th March in the Cathedral, Oban, at 12.30pm.



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