

PARISH BULLETIN

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

1st February 2026



4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Hymns/Music for Sunday

Processional (Sunday only)

61 Be Thou My Vision

Offertory

67 Blest are you, Lord

Post Communion

337 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Recessional

66 Blest are the poor in heart

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

5th 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, 1st February: Holy Mass, 4pm

Sunday, 15th February, Holy Mass, 4pm

Psalm response

Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Gospel acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

Rejoice and be glad,

for your reward is great in heaven.

Alleluia.

Communion Antiphon

*Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.

Take Five

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

MONDAY: FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD 2 FEBRUARY 2025

When children are present

Like most parents, Mary and Joseph wanted the best for their child. They were faithful Jews and desired their son to be raised in the faith that had sustained them. They took Jesus to the Temple to be consecrated and presented to God, where they met Simeon and Anna, elders of the community. The elders immediately recognized Jesus as the Messiah, the fulfilment of God's promise to Israel, a light to the whole world. What can you do this day to call forth the gifts of a child and encourage them to use their gifts to give light to the world?

Today's readings: Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 2:22-40. *"The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him."*

TUESDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINT BLAISE, BISHOP, MARTYR

3 FEBRUARY 2026

Have faith

How can a woman be healed from her haemorrhaging by only touching the cloak of Christ? He tells her that the sincerity of her faith had saved her. The church confirms the power of faith through its place as one of the three "theological virtues," along with hope and charity. The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that faith is when "a person freely commits his entire self to God," and by which he or she can accept everything given by God. But unlike the "cardinal virtues," faith is truly not of our own accord; rather, it is a grace both from God and toward God. How often do we stop to ask for faith?

Today's readings: 2 Samuel 18:9-10, 14b, 24-25a, 30 – 19:3; Mark 5:21-43. *"Jesus said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.'*

WEDNESDAY OF WEEK 4

4 FEBRUARY 2026

Drop everything

Would you ever consider stopping all you are doing and going in an entirely different direction? With obligations to family and jobs it's unlikely you would suddenly turn your back on your responsibilities to pursue something else, but in a way that's what the first apostles did. Their recognition of Jesus to be the saviour was immediate and their decision to literally drop everything was just as abrupt. They saw something so compelling and necessary for their lives that they had no hesitation in following him on the spot. You might not imitate their footloose example to the letter, but their actions do show how quick disciples of Jesus should be, whatever their situation, to respond without hesitation!

Today's readings: 2 Samuel 24:2, 9-17; Mark 6:1-6. *"A prophet is not without honour except in his native place and among his own kin and in his own house."*

THURSDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINT AGATHA, VIRGIN, MARTYR

5 FEBRUARY 2026

In solidarity with saints

When facing challenges, we can turn to the saints for help. The Church raises up women and men who are in solidarity with us, including saints who have experienced some of the same horrors that people today have. As we fight for human dignity and the protection of life, we can look to saints like Saint Agatha, who knew personally the terror of sexual assault and torture, or to Saint Josephine Bakhita, who was sold into slavery at the age of 7 and eventually won her freedom and became a Canossian sister, or to the saints among us, including many contemporary Catholic sisters, who are at the forefront of the struggle against human trafficking. Play your part in protecting the dignity and freedom of all people.

Today's readings: 1 Kings 2:1-4, 10-12; Mark 6:7-13. "He called the twelve . . . and gave them authority."

FRIDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINTS PAUL MIKI AND HIS COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

6 FEBRUARY 2026

Hidden gifts

Paul Miki received the martyrdom of Christ, the crucifixion, at Nagasaki along with 23 other clergy and laity. The Japanese Jesuit priest (contemporary with Saint Teresa of Avila in Spain) had been persecuted by a government who saw Christianity as a threat to the recently achieved unification of national rule. First jailed, Miki and his community of Christians were forced to undertake a 600-mile march from Kyoto to Nagasaki. When the prisoners finally arrived at the site of their martyrdom and saw that they were to be crucified, they sung the *Te Deum* in thanksgiving. Miki preached even from the cross, calling the witnesses to conversion and forgiving the guards. What do you perceive as suffering that may also be received as a gift?

Today's readings: Sirach 47:2-11; Mark 6:14-29. "Mighty powers are at work in him."

SATURDAY OF WEEK 4

7 FEBRUARY 2026

Be careful what you ask for

The wisest thing Solomon ever did was to ask for wisdom. Given the chance to ask for anything, he didn't go the route of wealth, fame, immortality, but rather chose the road less travelled. For, as one biblical commentator put it, wisdom is "a bountiful crop with a meagre harvest." Often personified in biblical testimony as the feminine face of the Divine, Proverbs tells us that she "cries aloud in the street, in the markets she raises her voice; at the head of the noisy streets she cries out; at the entrance of the city gates she speaks: 'How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple?'" We are Solomon, and the choice is ours to make. What will you choose?

Today's readings: 1 Kings 3:4-13; Mark 6:30-34. "As Jesus went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them."

Readings for the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13

Humility is identified as the key virtue from which a remnant can be harvested.

Psalm 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10

Our faithful God will fulfil the longing of every human heart.

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

God shows a curious preference for investing in the lowly, foolish, weak, and irrelevant.

Matthew 5:1-12a

Jesus builds a stairway to the Kingdom on the merits of lowly ones.

Words on Word

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A well-known atheist, Mr Johns, has passed away. He had nothing to do with the Church. When his wife knelt down to pray with their children, he used to ask condescendingly, "What are you doing?" As their son grew older, Mr Johns even encouraged him to stop praying with his mother and to skip going to church with her. His attitude towards faith wasn't a secret – people around him knew well how he distanced himself from believers.

Johns had a sick heart, not just physically, but spiritually – closed off to God and shutting out those who lived their faith. Knowing his life and opinions, maybe he wouldn't have wanted a Catholic funeral or prayers. But, despite this, his family was deeply rooted in faith. One day, after his passing away, his mother and daughter came to the parish office. They said to the priest, "Father, you know us. You know we care about the Church, we believe in God. And because we believe in His mercy, we know how much Dad needs our prayers now."

* *

That's the thing about God's mercy – it's so much bigger than we can imagine. Saint Thomas Aquinas called mercy the greatest characteristic of God. And we, when we show mercy, are reflecting His goodness. It's worth asking ourselves: what does following Christ really look like? What does He want from us?

Today's Gospel reminds us of the Beatitudes – those blessings Jesus shared. He lifts up the broken-hearted, the meek, the ones hungry for justice, the peacemakers, those who show mercy, the pure in heart - and yes, even the persecuted. The Beatitudes are a huge comfort when life feels like a loss, when we're not strong enough, rich enough, or successful enough by the world's standards. These are the people Jesus praises as blessed.

But here's the twist – being blessed isn't just for the down-and-out. God's blessings are for all of us. But Jesus warns us: if you've got success, talent or big wins in life, don't let it go to your head. Don't look down on others who haven't been so lucky. He's asking us to change how we see things: to celebrate our blessings but keep them in perspective. Don't idolise them. Success can be good, but it's not everything.

If you want to be a real student of Christ, you can't hurt people, dismiss them, or treat them unfairly. You can't make others cry or persecute them – because those are the people Jesus stands beside. Think about that: when you make someone feel less than they are, you're hurting someone *Christ* has His heart set on.

That said, respecting others doesn't mean letting yourself be a doormat. Don't let people demean you – speak up. Set boundaries. Even Jesus, when He was insulted, stood His ground: "If I've said something wrong, tell me what it is. If I've spoken truth, why do you hit me?" (John 18:23).

Jesus' Life Lessons – A Therapy for the Soul

Through the Beatitudes, Jesus offers our weary hearts a kind of therapy. These blessings are a roadmap to living a healthier, freer, more Christ-centred life.

- You're healthy when you've let go of the need to puff yourself up, when you can admit your wrongs, and let Christ take the lead in your life.
- You're healthy when you can grieve for what you've lost but still trust in God's unshakable love.
- You're healthy when you've ditched anger, violence, and power plays. When your heart beats, it beats for the weak.
- You're healthy when you hunger for the justice of Christ – not just giving people what they "deserve," but what they truly need.
- You're healthy when your heart overflows with mercy, seeing the good and the worth in every single soul.
- You're healthy when you've overcome pride and jealousy, when you refuse to let hatred or

bitterness take root in your heart.

- You're healthy when you've made peace with yourself and are sowing peace around you.

* * *

There is Someone who speaks for you when words are frail and few.

There is Someone who lifts you high when life would see you break and cry.

There is Someone who knows your pain when thoughts are tangled in your brain.

There is Someone who will not stray when every friend has walked away.

That Someone is our God above, who comes through others with His love –

in gentle hands and voices near, in tender presence, drawing near.

(A.W.)

In Christ's love,

Fr Anthony

CHRIST IN ICONS: 16. SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF THE MOTHER OF GOD



Theodoros Poulakis: *Hymn to the Virgin*, second half of the 17th century, Benaki Museum, Athens

The biblical accounts of the life of the Mother of God – the Blessed Virgin Mary – are undeniably sparse. The Scriptures provide only limited details about her parents, her birth, her childhood, her marriage to Saint Joseph, or even her passing from this world. We don't know what she looked like or precisely how old she was at various points in her life. Because of this, much of the iconography surrounding Our Lady draws upon apocryphal writings, foremost among them the *Protoevangelium of James* and *Pseudo-Matthew*, as well as various pious legends. Scenes from the life of Mary are deeply intertwined with the life of Christ, consistently highlighting her pivotal role in the work of salvation.

Icons portraying Mary's life typically include episodes such as her Nativity, her Presentation in the Temple, the Annunciation, the Dormition, and the Synaxis of the Mother of God. Interestingly, in the traditions of Eastern iconography, the motif of the Assumption does not appear. This is likely because the Orthodox Church does not formally recognise the dogma of the Assumption as defined by the Catholic Church.

Nevertheless, in some depictions of the Dormition,

elements can occasionally be found that hint at the very premises of this dogma – suggesting that the theological concept was not unknown in the East.

The veneration of the Mother of God in the Orthodox tradition is marked by an extraordinarily rich visual culture. This often emphasises motherhood and sacrificial love. As the mother of Christ, she is understood also as a mother to all humanity, which is why her intercessory role is

so prominent in Deësis compositions. Within the structure of the iconostasis, icons depicting scenes from the life of Mary are typically positioned above the Deësis row and directly beneath the images of Old Testament prophets, reflecting her unique role as the bridge between the Old Covenant and the New.

This interwoven relationship between theology, art, and tradition speaks to the deeply significant role of the Mother of God in Christian devotion, reminding us not only of her connection to Christ but also of her enduring care and intercession for the faithful.

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 9

The temple of the body

John 13-15

When rebuilding the Second Temple in Jerusalem, King Herod employed gigantic stone blocks – some measuring over ten metres in length and weighing up to six hundred tons. Today, only the ruin of the western wall remains.

Many people view themselves as exceptional, believing they possess a kind of indestructibility akin to a monument. Some try to immortalise their pride through buildings or statues, convinced that while death may come for others, they will somehow escape it. But why do we so foolishly turn a blind eye to the inevitability of earthly ruin?

Similarly, many are deluded by the belief in endless prosperity, nurturing the illusion that life should be nothing but continuous gratification. They aspire to indulge in perpetual pleasure, imagining an extravagant lifestyle filled with daily delicacies: pasta al pesto washed down with Carlo Rossi wine, or Mexican enchiladas paired with red bean salad, fava beans, chilli, tomatoes, and fries smothered in cream sauce, all doused liberally with tequila – hopeful that they can escape the consequences with a healthy liver! They dream of constant romantic success, basking in admiration to the point of being idolised by others, and being as healthy as a vigorous mountaineer while puffing countless Cuban cigars without worrying about throat cancer. Even into retirement, they hope to maintain their beauty, perhaps with pampered spa treatments involving swarms of “doctor fish” in fashionable Japanese sanatoriums. They seek to ward off sadness with Prozac, Ritalin, or even Ecstasy, chasing satisfaction beyond their wildest expectations. Playing without end, dressing in luxurious sea silk from Versace or royal purple ensembles from Dolce&Gabbana. Forever wise, perpetually right, like the American lawyers who specialise in damages trials.

But the truth remains: one day, no matter how vehemently they resist the thought of their life's collapse, their carefully constructed world will crumble. Everything will falter and fall – body and thoughts, feelings and knowledge – like a wall of cinderblocks crashing to the ground, reminiscent of Pina Bausch's theatrical spectacle *Palermo Palermo*. The physical structure of the body, the spiritual edifice of the mind, and the architecture of our desires – all will face ruin.



Yet Jesus speaks of the rebuilding of His Body. Saint Augustine, in one of his homilies, interpreted the “46 years” mentioned by the Jews as the hidden word “ADAM,” since in Greek gematria, the letters of the word “Adam” add up to a total of 46. The demolition of the old Adam – the man corrupted by sin – is certain; but is Adam’s resurrection equally inevitable? Will humanity once again rise whole, with its 46 chromosomes? Will human DNA’s spiral, resembling the rose window of Chartres Cathedral, continue its wondrous design?

Our body is indeed a temple. The medieval architects understood this deeply, embedding references to salvation in the smallest details of their Gothic cathedrals, which often mirrored the human form. Consider the cathedral at Troyes: “It has been noted that the keystone of the vault in the presbytery is positioned at a height which, calculated properly, measures 88 feet and 8 inches – symbolising 888, the number corresponding to the name Jesus as written in Greek. Moreover, the Slain Lamb and Christ in Majesty are depicted on the keystone of that same vault, positioned at 88.8 feet – a few fathoms away from the stained-glass window where Saint John records his prophecy. In this sense, 888 represents the sum of the six Greek letters in the name IHSOUS: I (10) H (8) S (200) O (70) U (400) S (200).” (Jean Hani)

Indeed, the body may be a temple, consecrated to God, but it can also become an idol. In the Book of Exodus, where instructions for building the Lord’s Tabernacle are provided, there is also the chilling account of the orgy around the golden calf. This invites a pressing question: will we dedicate our body as a temple for God’s worship, or will we transform it into a false god, losing sight of its true purpose?

Fr Anthony

Difficulties in Prayer

“Feeling tired when you pray? That might mean you’ve lost step with Jesus and drifted



away from His rhythm. When this happens, don't panic. Just turn to Him calmly, with faith and trust." As He told Fr. Gaston Courtois, "the inner melody will return." Fr. Gaston (1897–1970) heard these words directly from Jesus and wrote them down. His notes, later published in the book *When the Lord Speaks to the Heart*, are packed with practical advice for dealing with struggles in prayer and deepening your relationship with God. So, if prayer has ever left you feeling stuck, you're not alone. Let's break down some common struggles and what Jesus said about them.

Too Busy to Pray

Life is hectic, isn't it? Most of us feel like we're running around all day and can't spare even a quiet moment for prayer. It's easy to think you're being more productive by focusing on tasks instead of taking time to sit with God. But here's what Jesus had to say to Fr. Gaston about that: "The time you spend in adoration, letting yourself soak in My presence, is far more valuable than all the rushing about you do without Me." He didn't stop there: "Simply look at Me, speak to Me, and listen with love. Even ten minutes with Me can give you more light and clarity than the wisest books."

So, carve out time—even just a little—and let Jesus into your busy day. Trust me, He's worth it!

No Desire to Pray

Ever feel like you just don't *want* to pray? You're not alone. Prayer can feel dull and pointless, especially when it hasn't been a habit or when your connection with God feels distant. But Jesus gave Fr. Gaston this advice:

"Throughout your day, pause for quick, silent moments of adoration. Ask Me to increase your desire for Me, to renew your joy in being with Me. I love answering prayers like that. But stay patient; don't rush My grace."

If boredom with prayer is tripping you up, try this: switch things up! Jesus said, "Don't let love become monotonous. Find new ways to express it. Even just saying 'Come, Lord Jesus!' with sincerity calls Me closer to you."

No Clue How to Pray

Once you've made time for prayer and regained the desire, the next question—what do you actually *do* when you pray? Should you talk, listen, sit in silence, or something else entirely?

Jesus reassured Fr. Gaston that every soul is different and prays in its own unique way. "Simply come to Me and keep Me company. Look at Me. Let our eyes meet. Share what's on your heart, and trust that I'll hear you."

No need to overthink it. Jesus also said, "If you have questions, don't hesitate to ask Me. I might not answer right away, but trust that I'll respond—whether it's through the Holy Spirit, life events, or a quiet nudge in your heart." Just relax into His presence, let go of control, and open yourself to what He has for you.

Feeling Like God Doesn't Answer

Ever feel like your prayers are being ignored? Like you're pouring your heart out only to hear... nothing? It can be so discouraging, but Jesus had this to say:

"You may not immediately understand everything I say or do, but what matters is that My thoughts slowly soak into yours and transform you." So, even when nothing seems to be happening, trust that God is working within you.

And here's the kicker: "Stop clinging to your own ideas of how your prayers should be

answered. Open yourself to My will, and you'll start to see new horizons in your life." So, keep showing up, keep praying, and let Jesus work in His time, not yours.



"Come to Me and see.
Read and draw from my
gaze. Dive in
and take from my Heart"

Not Feeling Anything

Sometimes we expect prayer to feel amazing—like we should be swept up in some emotional, spiritual high. But Jesus reminds us that true prayer doesn't rely on feelings. Here's what He told Fr. Gaston: "What matters isn't the flashiness or excitement but the steady, faithful connection with Me. Even when things feel dry, your

faithfulness means everything to Me."

Rather than chasing emotions, focus on simply being present with God. Unite yourself to His love, His sacrifice, and His desires for you. That quiet, steady bond is what truly counts.

Constant Distractions

Let's be real: distractions in prayer are so common. Our minds wander, life's worries creep in, and sometimes it just feels impossible to stay focused. But Jesus encourages us to seek interior calm:

"You can't hear Me when your mind is chaotic. You need silence—a small desert within where you can rest with Me. Let go of unnecessary worries, impatient thoughts, and harsh self-criticism. Be gentle with yourself and trust Me to guide your mind back to My voice."

If distractions happen—and they will—don't beat yourself up. Just turn back to Jesus and keep going.

Losing Momentum

Maybe you've had an awesome prayer life before but somewhere along the way, you lost steam. It's easy to quit when prayer doesn't feel as exciting or fruitful as it once did. But Jesus gently reminds us:

"You'll always need to renew your connection with Me. Nothing on earth is ever won or gained once for all. But each time you return, it's like being born anew—your love grows deeper."

Need motivation to start praying again? Call on the Holy Spirit! Jesus says, "The Holy Spirit can refresh, inspire, and set you ablaze with love for Me. Even if you're tempted to give up, keep coming back to Me, and I'll breathe new life into your soul."

Let God Speak

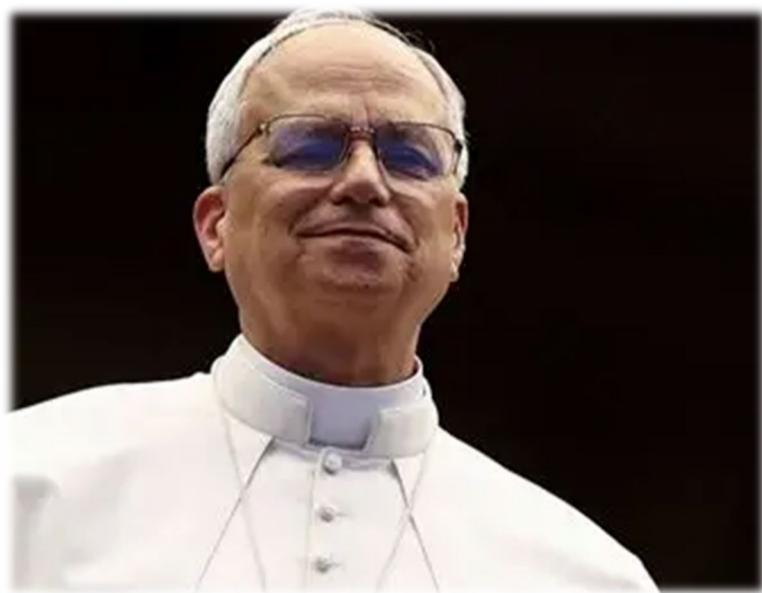
Prayer is a lifelong journey—there's no "one-size-fits-all" approach, and you'll always be learning. But the most important thing is simply to remain open. Here's how Jesus put it:

“To hear My voice, you need to create space for Me. Open your soul sincerely—no walls, no reservations—and be ready to listen. Brush aside unnecessary worries. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you stir the fire of love in your heart and to sharpen your ability to hear Me. Then, just adore Me in silence and let Me speak.”

Sometimes, it’s as simple as sitting quietly at Jesus’ feet. Let Him call you by name.

So, there you have it—a little encouragement to keep going, keep praying, and keep trusting that Jesus is with you every step of the way. Even when it feels like a struggle, He’s never far.

We Read Pope Leo



We must safeguard the gift of communication as the deepest truth of the human person, toward which every technological innovation should be directed.

Charisms must always serve the Kingdom of God and the one Church of Christ, in which no gift of God is more important than others – except love, which perfects and harmonizes them all – and no ministry can become a reason for feeling superior to the brethren and excluding those who think differently. Therefore I also encourage you who

have encountered the Lord and who live following Him on the Neocatechumenal Way to be witnesses of such unity. Your mission is particular, but it is not exclusive; your charism is specific, but it bears fruit in communion with other gifts that are present in the life of the Church (...). I encourage you (...), to live your spirituality, never separating yourselves from the rest of the body of the Church, as a living part of ordinary parish pastoral care and its various realities, in full communion with the brethren, and especially with priests and bishops. Go forward with joy and humility, without closing yourselves off, as builders and witnesses of communion.

Address to those responsible for the Neocatechumenal Way, 19 January 2026.

For a long time there has been much evidence that algorithms designed to maximize engagement on social media – which is profitable for the platforms – reward quick emotions while at the same time penalizing more time-consuming expressions of human activity, such as the effort of understanding and reflection. By enclosing groups of people in bubbles of easy consensus and easy outrage, these algorithms weaken the capacity for listening and critical thinking and increase social polarization. To this has been added a naive, uncritical trust in artificial intelligence as an all-knowing “friend,” the source of all knowledge, the archive of all memories, an “oracle” dispensing every kind of advice. All this can further weaken our ability for analytical and creative thinking, for grasping meanings, for distinguishing between syntax and semantics.

Although artificial intelligence can provide support and assistance in managing communication tasks, avoiding the effort of thinking for ourselves and being satisfied with artificial statistics can, in the long run, weaken our cognitive, emotional, and communicative abilities. (...) Technology that exploits our need for relationship can not only have painful consequences for the fate of individuals, but can also harm the social, cultural, and political fabric of societies. This happens when we replace relationships with others with relationships with artificial intelligence, which has been trained to catalogue our thoughts and then to build around us a

world of mirrors, in which everything is fashioned “in our image and likeness.” In this way we allow ourselves to be robbed of the possibility of meeting another human being, who is always different from us and with whom we can and must learn to engage. (...) We must safeguard the gift of communication as the deepest truth of the human person, toward which every technological innovation should be directed.

Message for the 60th World Communications Day, 24 January 2026.

In my opinion

Life at the mercy. . . of words.

It seems that abortion and euthanasia weren’t controversial enough – now assisted suicide is being thrown into the mix, as if society hasn’t already grappled enough with these morally fraught issues.

Both the United Kingdom and France are currently debating bills that would pave the way for assisted suicide, dragging this contentious topic into the spotlight. Let’s not mince words here – it’s highly likely that the big guns of propaganda and emotional manipulation are being wielded to sway public opinion, and these tactics deserve close scrutiny, especially for other countries where such debates may surface.

So, what’s the story? In Britain, a new bill introduced by a Labour MP proposes that terminally ill patients could apply to receive medical assistance to exit this life. Enacted by the House of Commons in November 2024, this bill must hurry through the motions to pass by May 2025. But there’s a catch: the upper House of Lords is furiously debating more than 1,150 amendments – yes, you read that right – which has prompted proponents to accuse them of stalling. The real kicker? The bill’s champions are hinting at using extraordinary legal manoeuvres to force it through.

Cross the Channel to France, where legislation is brewing on a similar front. The French law aims to loosen restrictions from earlier regulations in 2005 and 2016, which already allow individuals at the end of life to refuse “futile medical care” and opt for continuous deep sedation. This newer, more liberal measure sailed through the French National Assembly in May 2025 and is now sitting in limbo after its final debate in the French Senate earlier this year.

Of course, not everyone’s on board. Churches, faith communities, professional organisations, disability advocacy groups, and humanitarian organisations have voiced their opposition, armed with crystal-clear medical and ethical arguments. Their resistance is admirable, but let’s face it: these bills aren’t steamrolling their way into law thanks to airtight reasoning. No, they’re gaining traction because proponents have mastered the art of tugging on heartstrings, twisting language, and selling their ideas cloaked in warm, fuzzy emotional appeals.

Case in point: French President Emmanuel Macron, with his sweet talk. He’s called the assisted suicide bill “a path to fraternity” and even had the audacity to include it in his New Year’s list of top legislative priorities. “I wish for us more kindness and more humanity,” he said, apparently blind to the irony. Macron went on to express sympathy for “those who are lonely, sick, suffering or deprived” with words that ring disturbingly hollow. Across the board, we keep hearing the same polished phrases – “love and compassion,” “dignity and autonomy,” “personal freedom and choice” – as if these sugar-coated slogans are enough to make the ethical complexities vanish into thin air.

Thank goodness for the French Catholic bishops, who wasted no time in calling out this dangerous “instrumentalization” of cherished principles like dignity and fraternity. In a hard-hitting statement, they warned against the misuse of emotionally charged language, which lulls consciences into complacency while obscuring the harsh truth of assisted suicide. “Fraternity doesn’t mean hastening death or turning caregivers into enablers of death,” they wrote. Instead, it’s about sticking by those who suffer and refusing to abandon them during life’s darkest moments.

The bishops' courage is refreshing – a rallying cry for clarity when many are drowning in the murky waters of propaganda and confusion. Pope Leo XIV struck a similar chord during his January address to diplomats at the Holy See, condemning the creeping tide of “Orwellian-style language” that’s reshaping public debates. The Pope urged governments to pursue policies rooted in genuine solidarity rather than peddling false compassion, calling out euthanasia by name. “Freedom of speech relies on clarity of language,” he said, “not on the ambiguities that muddle meaning and mislead consciences.”

Let’s hope his message doesn’t fall on deaf ears. Church leaders worldwide must rise to this moment and guide those who feel lost amidst the swirl of emotional rhetoric. It’s high time to call a spade a spade and stand firm for truth and ethics – even when the going gets tough. Assisted suicide may be wrapped in platitudes, but underneath lies a moral crisis that cannot be ignored.

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 all those whose anniversaries fall around this time.

News and Events

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

The bishop's visit: Bishop Brian will be making his parish visit to Campbeltown on 7/8th March.

Thank you: for donations for Artem and Oleksii. £300 has been sent to help them settle into their new home.

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



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www.stkieranscampbeltown.org



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