

# PARISH BULLETIN

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



8<sup>th</sup> February 2026

## 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

### Hymns/Music for Sunday

#### Processional (Sunday only)

547 The Spirit lives

#### Offertory

510 Take my life

#### Post Communion

690 Eat this bread

#### Recessional

148 Forth in thy name

### 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**

**6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time: Holy Mass, 10.00am**

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

### St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Bridgend, Islay

Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> February: Holy Mass, 4pm

Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> March, Holy Mass, 4pm

### **Psalm response**

*A light rises in the darkness for the upright.*

### **Gospel acclamation**

*Alleluia, alleluia.*

*I am the light of the world, says the Lord;  
whoever follows me will have the light of life.*

*Alleluia.*

### **Communion Antiphon**

*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be consoled.  
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they shall have their fill.*

# Take Five

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

## MONDAY OF WEEK 5 IN ORDINARY TIME

9 FEBRUARY 2026

### Reach out and touch

Who gets healed in the gospels? Mostly it's those who make some small act of faith in Jesus. Today's gospel tells of all the people healed in body and spirit just by touching Jesus' cloak. The gospel points to two elements of spiritual healing: willingness and connection. Before God can do anything for us, we must break out of the paralysis of despair and be willing to reach out. If we make just the slightest move toward God, amazing changes are possible. As Pope Francis explained: "What type of faith is great? Great faith is that which brings its own story, marked even by wounds, and brings it to the Lord's feet asking Him to heal them, to give them meaning." We don't have to do it all, simply reach out and touch Jesus in some way – through prayer, the Eucharist, or service to those in need.

**Today's readings:** 1 Kings 8:1-7, 9-13; Mark 6:53-56. *"Wherever he went . . . they laid the sick in the marketplaces . . . and all who touched it were healed."*

## TUESDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINT SCHOLASTICA, VIRGIN

10 FEBRUARY 2026

### Ask and you will receive

Little is known of Saint Scholastica's life beyond the fact that she was the twin sister of Saint Benedict, the founder of Western monasticism. She and her brother were accustomed to meeting once a year to talk and pray. On what Scholastica sensed would be their last evening together, she asked Benedict to stay with her until morning. He refused, citing his rule that a monk may not be away from the monastery overnight. Scholastica then bowed her head in prayer and almost immediately a

severe thunderstorm broke out, making it impossible for Benedict to leave. God loves to be asked to help. Rather than stewing in resentment or worry, remember Scholastica and ask God to help you with God's wonderfully creative solutions to trouble and conflict.

**Today's readings:** 1 Kings 8:22-23, 27-30; Mark 7:1-13. *"This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."*

## WEDNESDAY: MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES

11 FEBRUARY 2026

### Everyday miracles

Today, we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, which also marks the World Day of Prayer for the Sick. This day reminds us of Jesus' remarkable role as a healer. Back in His time, the sick were often seen as having fallen out of God's favour, leading to their exclusion from society. Healing was indeed a rare gift.

In our modern world, while medicine has become a powerful tool to help many recover from illnesses, we shouldn't forget the profound impact of a caring, human touch. This gentle embrace can work wonders, sometimes even more than prescribed remedies.

Lourdes, in particular, stands out among Marian shrines for its deep connection to healing miracles. It's a place where faith and hope converge, offering solace and restoration to those seeking comfort. So today, let us pray for the sick, remembering that both divine grace and compassionate care can bring about true healing.

**Today's readings:** Kings 10:1-10; Mark 7:14-23. *"Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in you."*



## THURSDAY OF WEEK 5 IN ORDINARY TIME

12 FEBRUARY 2026

### What do you choose?

Being chosen by God seems attractive, but God's choice is less entitlement to special favours and more being selected for a commission – given a job to do. Further, we find that God does not usually choose as we might. We find God picking, for example, David, the runt of the litter; Mary, an unknown girl from Nazareth; the sinner over the holy man. Try to be aware of how you make choices: how you will treat a troublesome fellow-worker or that driver who is tailgating or how scrupulously honest you will be. Like God, who chose you to be one in Christ, make decisions based not on the obvious but on what is inside the other – and who dwells within you.

**Today's readings:** 1 Kings 11:4-13; Mark 7:24-30. *"A woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet."*

## FRIDAY OF WEEK 5 IN ORDINARY TIME

13 FEBRUARY 2026

### Embody mercy

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory in psychology that proposes that human beings must have their basic physical and emotional needs met before they can realize their fullest potential. Catholics are expected to help others satisfy those needs through the corporal

and spiritual works of mercy, which include feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, and visiting the sick as well as teaching those who lack education, forgiving offenses willingly, and comforting the afflicted. Through works of mercy the world gets closer to reaching its fullest potential. Let's all get to work!

**Today's readings:** 1 Kings 11:29-32; 12:19; Mark 7:31-37. *"He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."*

## SATURDAY: FEAST OF SAINTS CYRIL, MONK, AND METHODIUS, BISHOP – PATRONS OF EUROPE

14 FEBRUARY 2026

### Courting faith

Today may be the feast day of Saint Valentine, but Saints Cyril and Methodius get higher billing by the Church with a feast today. These brothers who were missionaries shared the love of Christ, not by penning endearing notes to loved ones, but by translating the Bible into a local language. In fact, they invented an alphabet so they could do it! The best way to reach people is to meet them where they are. If someone is in a different place on their spiritual journey, do you insist they "catch up" to you? Or do you run up to greet them and speak of God's love in terms they understand? Maybe you'll end up walking arm in arm in the same direction.

**Today's readings:** Acts 13:46-49; Luke 10:1-9. *"Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves."*

## *Readings for the Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

Isaiah 58:7-10

The community of Israel becomes a people-covenant, a light to the nations.

Psalms 112:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

Just as light guides you through darkness, justice steers you through the world's evil.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Saint Paul boils down his message from a Pharisee's careful argument to the simplicity of the cross.

### Matthew 5:13-16

The covenant with God remains a covenant of flesh and blood.

## Words on Word

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*In the summer of 1999, right in the lively pedestrian zone in Stuttgart, an artist stacked up a massive mound of salt. It was supposed to bring to life the Church Days' theme: "You are the salt of the earth." Most passers-by, though, didn't really see the point of this peculiar display. And in a way, they had a point – salt on its own isn't especially useful. You've got to carry it into the kitchen or place it on the dining table to make any difference. A huge heap of it doesn't matter; all you really need is just a pinch.*

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It's a bit like that in the Church. It's not about numbers but about each unique person who's chosen, empowered, and sealed with God's grace.

### Chosen – destined – marked by power

In recent Sundays, we've been hearing about who is "blessed" and "chosen." Our world often celebrates people who succeed in politics, careers, or simply get rich or famous. In the process, anyone with fewer gifts or less obvious success gets overlooked. Yet these are precisely the men and women – perhaps seemingly "ordinary" to everyone else – who quietly handle their loneliness or lack of worldly achievements but stay faithful to God. And these are the people Jesus calls "the salt of the earth."

He comforts us and lifts our spirits by reminding us that, even if only a few of us are genuinely wise, learned, or well-known, we've been given a great gift: faith and a calling. We've been drawn into the communion of the sanctified, the community of the chosen. That's why he says we're both the light of the world and the salt of the earth (cf. Mt 5:13–14).

### Our lives, even if they look modest, prove that we belong to his eternal kingdom

Now, "You are the salt of the earth and the light of the world" isn't just a reassuring statement – it's also a call to action. As in the time of the prophet Jeremiah, our job is simple: to do good in God's name. The prophet Isaiah tells us: "If you remove the yoke from among you, stop accusing others and speaking maliciously, and share your bread with those who are hungry, helping the afflicted, then your light will shine in the darkness and your gloom will be like midday" (cf. Is 58:9–10).

Mother Teresa put that into practice by looking after people who had nowhere to go: the dying, the homeless, and newborns who'd otherwise be left on the streets. Even if she could only offer them a few hours or days of dignity, it mattered. Her example lives on through the sisters of her congregation, who now serve all over the world. And the secular world took notice – she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for living out Christ's message boldly and compassionately.

"You are the light of the world." Jesus doesn't say "Try to become the light" – he states it as a fact. It's our identity through baptism, confirmation, and the other sacraments. Through prayer



and by simply being there for others, we bring a bit of light into everyday life. Still, just like salt, light can go overboard. Too much salt ruins a dish; too bright a light blinds you. The real trick is to let our goodness shine gently, in the right measure, so it brightens the world without overwhelming it. Let's remember: people need salt and light – and they also need that quiet goodness that flows from following Christ. Our small, compassionate gestures might seem unremarkable, but they can bring hope and warmth to those who need it most.

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*To make the world human,*

*To remain oneself a human being.*

*To protect from corruption, not to succumb to corruption oneself,*

*To forget oneself*

*And give oneself like light for others*

*Like God.*

In Christ's love,

*Fr Anthony*

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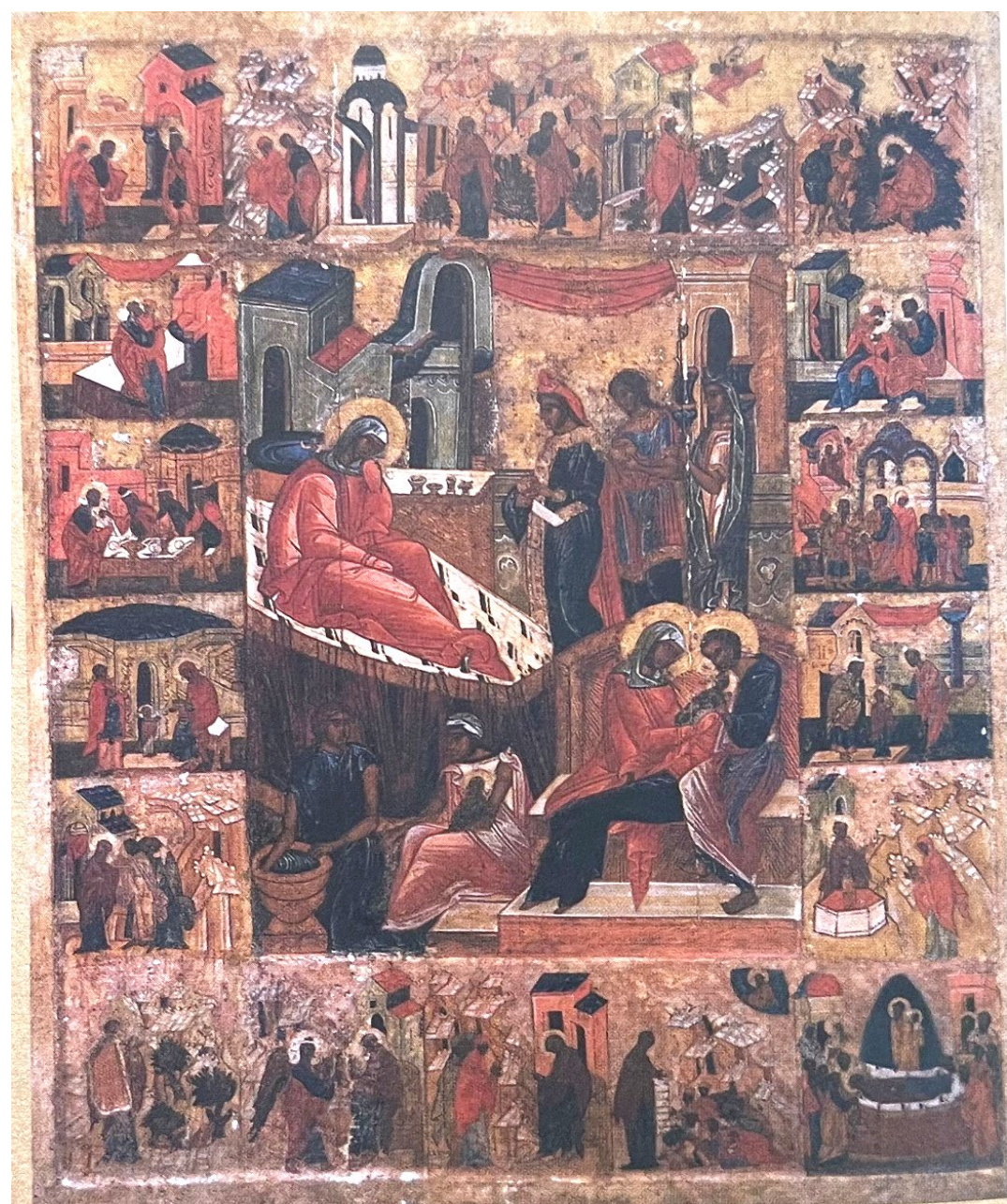
## THE MOTHER OF GOD IN ICONS: 16. THE NATIVITY OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

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The Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary is one of those moments in the Church's life that just overflows with hope and joy. According to ancient tradition – from the apocryphal writings about Saints Joachim and Anne – it took a long time (and plenty of earnest prayer) before this devoted couple were blessed with a child. But in God's perfect timing, their faith was rewarded with the birth of Mary, who would become the Mother of Our Lord.

Celebrated on 8 September since around the ninth century, the feast of Mary's Nativity invites us to reflect on the precious gift of life and the incredible paths God prepares for us. If you ever come across an icon depicting this scene, you'll see Saint Anne resting after giving birth, wrapped in a rich red garment. Caring midwives gather around her, offering food and preparing a bath – every detail evoking a warm, homely atmosphere. Often, you can spot Saint Joachim too, sometimes quietly peeking through a doorway or seated in thought, marvelling at this miracle.

In some icons, you'll notice more than just the birth scene. Little glimpses of Mary's future appear around the edges: her Presentation in the Temple, her Betrothal to Joseph, the



Ruthenia: *The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary*  
Beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century



Annunciation, the Nativity of Christ, and even the Dormition (her peaceful passing). It's like an illustrated timeline of her life, reminding us that her story isn't just about one miraculous birth, but about her constant "yes" to God's plan.

When we celebrate Our Lady's birth, we're joyfully reminded that the Lord can bring blessings in His own perfect way and time. Just as Saint Anne and Saint Joachim discovered, there's a divine purpose patiently waiting to unfold in each of us. Mary's birth is a beacon of that promise, lighting the way for our own journey of faith. And it all starts here, in a humble birth chamber, where hope was born into the world.

## 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 10

### Lifted Up

John 3:13–17

Sometimes it can be hard to wrap our heads around the idea that God – who, in his Son, let himself be unfairly judged by humanity – would turn around and declare the guilty innocent. It almost feels like we should ask, "Really, how is that even possible?" Yet, as Hans Urs von Balthasar once noted so beautifully, God no longer sees our sins in us, but in his beloved Son, who took them upon himself. Through this incredible act of suffering love, God watches us through the "lens" of his Son's sacrifice, cherishing us in our weakness and pain.

Von Balthasar also reminds us that it's not just a kind of "official pardon" we're dealing with here, like an entry in a legal record. Rather, it's a mystery rooted in God's boundless love. Thanks to that love, when God looks at us, he does so in the same way he looks at Christ: with complete tenderness and mercy. This is how humanity – fallen though it may be – can be lifted from the depths of sin toward the heights of heaven. And on the Cross, Jesus was already taking the first step upwards, drawing everyone into that heavenly ascent. After all, he spoke often of "exalting" (in Greek, *hypsóō*): "Whoever humbles himself will be exalted, and whoever exalts himself will be humbled." Even Mary (whom we can also call Miriam) celebrated this theme in her Magnificat, praising God for exalting the lowly and bringing down the proud.

It's clear Jesus wasn't being casual when he talked about being lifted high – it was a prophecy that included the throne of the Cross and the empty tomb. You can't really talk about the Cross without also talking about the Resurrection. Good Friday shapes Easter Sunday, but the glory of the Resurrection defines the Cross, too. In other words, Christianity doesn't dwell mostly on the sorrow of Good Friday, but on the joy of what many call the "Great Night," when Christ rose again. Peter highlighted this in his Pentecost speech, where he used the term *hypsóō* to describe Jesus being raised. He used it again just three chapters later in Acts, while boldly preaching to the point that he and the other apostles were flogged. The Greek word *parrhesia* – this straightforward, fearless witness – cost the early Christians dearly, but they couldn't help but share the good news.

Paul, in Pisidian Antioch, links that idea of God leading his people from slavery in Egypt to Christ's rescue of humanity from sin. He uses this stirring image of God's "uplifted hand," drawing everyone out of spiritual bondage. In a real sense, the whole world was trapped in sin, or "Egypt," and we're the Chosen People he's bringing to freedom through our new Moses, Jesus. Other passages encourage us to remain humble under God's strong hand, trusting him to raise us up. James says something similar in his Letter (Chapter 4), and Peter again in his First Letter – both promising that, at the right time (kairos), God's people will be honoured before his radiant Face. Our troubles, which can feel endless at times, are simply temporary when we hold on to God's hand; genuine glory is always eternal, while suffering has an end.

I remember seeing a touching example of this on a rainy city pavement. A dad was walking with his little boy right after a heavy downpour. The child, like many kids, wanted to stomp in a muddy puddle. But the second he tried, his dad yanked him up by the hand, so he almost hovered in the air for a moment! Sure, it probably stung a bit, but that small jolt saved the boy from splattering mud all over himself (and everyone around). It's such a neat reflection of how God, in his grace, can yank us out of our own mess before we do more harm to ourselves or others.

God, meanwhile, doesn't just want us gazing at him from afar – whether that's in worship or in doubt. He's more interested in pulling us up and offering new life. When Jesus said, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw everyone to myself," he was talking about rescuing us from the "muddy puddle" of death. As Bishop Gerhard Huyghe put it, God doesn't actually want anyone's death, neither as punishment nor a price to pay. It was our sin that morphed into death, not God's design. Jesus died because we were trapped in death, like people stuck at the bottom of a dark well. His rising again was that triumphant moment of lifting us up into his freedom. Yes, it was hard for him – he admitted, "Now is my soul troubled." He saw how deep we'd gone and trembled for our sake. But he climbed down to meet us there so he could lead us out. And that incredible rescue – that hand pulling us free – makes all our momentary struggles feel smaller when compared to the greatness of his glory.

*Fr Anthony*

# Marriage: God's Idea

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## **Intimacy in marriage often starts with feelings, but maintaining that bond requires a deeper understanding. When emotions wane, where do couples find their strength?**

Discussions surrounding marriage are becoming increasingly complex in today's society. The word itself carries personal stories, family traditions, and rising divorce rates that often cloud expectations. For some, marriage is a fortress of stability; for others, it conjures fears of dependency and repeating family mistakes. While many view marriage as a mere formality, crucial events—like crises, friends' weddings, or conversations with children—often prompt the urgent question: Is marriage truly a divine design or just a relic of a past that no longer matches our modern lives?

World Marriage Day, celebrated on February 8 and supported by Pope John Paul II, is an opportunity to reflect on God's intention for marriage. Church teaching highlights marriage as a sacred contract, yet the complexities of everyday life often challenge these ideals. Marriage is more than legal agreements or wedding ceremonies; it is lived out daily in the small details—cooking together, feeling exhausted after work, sharing intimate conversations, or avoiding tough topics altogether.

Increasingly, it's individuals' everyday experiences that shed light on the true meaning of marriage. If marriage is indeed God's plan, how can this be realised in the real world? Does it only apply to couples who never argue? Is it only for those who seem ideal? Or is it especially for those wrestling with fear, trauma, and uncertainty?

Contemporary marriages reflect the diverse backgrounds and struggles of the individuals involved. Some couples thrive even without a strong support network, while others, despite a bright beginning, face the harsh realities of life together. There are marriages that overcome infidelity and long silences, while some may appear perfect from the outside yet conceal deep issues. A central question remains: What, at its core, is marriage? Is it simply living together, or is it something much deeper? Is it a fleeting emotion that fades when satisfaction wanes, or a steadfast commitment that endures through turmoil?

### **A Journey of Resilience**

Take Anna and Mark, for example. They reminisce about their early years—university life, new careers, marriage, and starting a family. They expected adulthood to be straightforward but were quickly challenged by the demands of daily life: job pressures, fatigue, and household chores. Days blurred into weeks filled with task lists, and their conversations often devolved into logistical discussions, lacking emotional depth. Mark recalls, “We drifted apart, lulled into a false sense of normalcy.”

Anna reflects that the subtle lack of conflict turned out to be the most misleading aspect of their relationship. “We were superficially content, but fatigue overwhelmed us, leading us to question what real intimacy meant.” Both agree that a marriage requires effort to thrive. Their journey was not marked by grand gestures but by consistent, small choices: opting to engage rather than pull away, prioritising communication over silence, and making a real effort to listen. Their experience highlights a vital truth: marriage becomes meaningful when it evolves beyond a mere contract, fostering resilience in tough times.

### **Building Resilience on Solid Foundations**

Similarly, Catherine and Peter often hear praise about their strong marriage. As committed believers, they thought inviting God into their relationship would protect them from difficulties. Yet, reality quickly demonstrated otherwise, presenting a gradual buildup of tension and misunderstandings rather than single incidents. They found that their prayer life had dwindled



and conversations often turned into arguments. The once unifying faith became a source of avoidance from confronting their growing divide.

Catherine admits, “I found myself praying for God to change Peter, feeling he didn’t see my struggles.” The shadow of separation loomed larger, particularly during exhausting times. Peter reflects on their marital vows and questions, “Would I truly abandon what I promised to God and my partner?” Today, they recognise that while their vows did not save them, they provided a stabilising foundation during uncertain moments. Seeking help and therapy became critical, as their community’s support alone could not bridge the gaps. “A vow doesn’t promise an easy life,” Peter concludes, “but it does show a commitment to hold firm.”

### **Unfolding Life’s Journey with Faith**

Joanna and Christopher approached their relationship with the belief that time was on their side. They focused on their careers while maintaining the hope of parenthood. Initially optimistic about conceiving, disappointment weighed heavily as attempts led to frustration. Joanna acknowledges, “Everything revolved around one singular focus, and talking about anything else became difficult.” Meanwhile, Christopher buried himself in work, isolating himself further. As silence grew, they faced feelings of envy, fatigue, and helplessness.

Recognising the toll this was taking on both their aspirations of parenthood and their marriage, they bravely chose to seek support. Speaking with other couples in similar situations allowed for honesty and mutual understanding that deepened their connection. Their faith transformed from a background aspect into a source of strength, enabling them to embrace uncertainty rather than see it as a trigger for frustration. “We prayed more than before, but not solely for a child,” Joanna recalls. “We focused on nurturing our bond.” Their journey remains ongoing, but they now engage with each other more healthily and with genuine compassion.

### **The Enduring Foundation of Faith**

Eve and Andrew, married for nearly forty years, look back on their lives not through moments of drama but the steady pace of daily existence: work, family, and responsibilities. They realised that their union was built on faith in God. Yet they also acknowledge that without turning to God, the everyday challenges of life would have felt overwhelming. Eve states, “Sometimes, staying together through conflict is more important than resolving every issue.” Their marriage has always been about choice, rather than mere feelings. They learned that daily rituals—such as shared meals and quiet conversations—were vital in protecting their bond.

### **Reassessing the Proposition of Marriage**

As divorce rates continue to climb—approximately 40% in Scotland and as high as 50% in other parts of the West—the relevance of marriage as a sacred institution faces increasing scrutiny. More people appear hesitant to commit to marriage, opting instead for cohabitation. While these statistics suggest a broader relational crisis, they do not inherently mean marriage as an ideal is failing.

Studies consistently indicate that individuals in committed marriages enjoy greater emotional security and mental well-being. Marriage does not erase challenges; rather, it creates an environment for more effective management of them. For children, it represents emotional stability; for adults, it fosters a network of support and responsibility that endures through life’s ups and downs. The decline of marriages often results not from grand disasters but from accumulated tensions and poor communication over time. Many couples enter relationships unprepared for the long-term commitment required, mistakenly believing fleeting feelings can carry them through challenges. As emotional ties weaken, the lack of effective communication

often leads couples to view separation as their only option.

The effort to sustain a marriage is rarely marked by grand gestures. Instead, it typically involves returning to meaningful conversations, fostering personal growth, seeking support, and recognising that crises signal a need for renewed commitment rather than failure.

Understanding marriage as a divine structure does not promise a life free from hardships; rather, it provides a framework for a loyal commitment where fidelity informs daily choices.

The marital vow serves not just as a buffer against hardship but as a crucial anchor when emotional bonds feel strained. It keeps partners grounded, especially when the instinct to retreat is strongest. The experiences of couples demonstrate that the true essence of marriage often emerges through adversity, revealing it as a journey of growth rather than a static promise of happiness. It requires ongoing effort, open dialogue, and a willingness to adapt, offering a stability that surpasses the temporary nature of feelings.

Is this divine concept enduring? It thrives when marriage is viewed not as a guarantee of an easy life but as a commitment to responsibility, loyalty, and mutual growth. In our era of fleeting relationships, this represents a significant challenge, yet it is perhaps why, despite daunting statistics and struggles, there remains a strong commitment to embrace it fully.

## ***We Read Pope Leo***



**I hope that those (...) who hold power will on this occasion [the Winter Olympic Games] be able to make concrete gestures of easing tensions and fostering dialogue.**

Continuing our reading of the conciliar Constitution Dei Verbum on Divine Revelation, today we consider the relationship between Sacred Scripture and Tradition. (...) Ecclesial Tradition unfolds over the course of history through the Church, which safeguards the word of God, interprets it, and brings it to life. The Catechism of the Catholic

Church, on this point, refers to a maxim of the Fathers of the Church: “Sacred Scripture is written more on the heart of the Church than on parchment,” that is, in the holy text. (...) The Council states that “This Tradition which comes from the Apostles develops in the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit” (DV 8). This happens in fuller understanding, thanks to “the contemplation and study of believers,” through experience arising from “a deep grasp of the spiritual realities that are lived,” and above all through the teaching of the successors of the Apostles, who have received “the sure charism of truth.” In summary, “the Church, in her doctrine, life, and worship, perpetuates and hands on to every generation all that she herself is and all that she believes.” Well known in this context is the saying of Saint Gregory the Great: “Sacred Scripture grows with the one who reads it.” Already Saint Augustine stated that “there is one Word of God resounding throughout all Sacred Scripture. Remember that through the mouths of many saints one Word is proclaimed.” The word of God is therefore not a fossil, but a living and organic reality that develops and grows in Tradition. Tradition, for its part, thanks to the Holy Spirit, grasps the word of God in the richness of its truth and embodies it within the changing coordinates of history.

***General Audience, 28 January 2026.***



The Beatitudes become for us a touchstone of happiness, prompting us to ask whether we regard what happiness as a prize to be acquired or as a gift to be shared; whether we seek it in objects that wear out, or in relationships that accompany us. It is precisely “for Christ’s sake” and thanks to Him that the bitterness of trials is transformed into the joy of the redeemed: Jesus does not speak of a distant consolation, but of a steady grace that always sustains us, especially in the hour of affliction. The Beatitudes exalt the humble and scatter the proud in the designs of their hearts.

***Angelus, 1 February 2026.***

This coming Friday the Winter Olympic Games will begin in Milan-Cortina, to be followed by the Paralympic Games. I offer my good wishes to the organizers and to all the athletes. These great sporting events constitute a strong message of fraternity and rekindle hope for a world living in peace. Such is also the meaning of the “Olympic truce”—an ancient custom accompanying the course of the Games. I hope that those who care about peace among nations and who hold authority will on this occasion be able to take concrete steps to ease tensions and to engage in dialogue.

***After the Angelus, 1 February 2026.***

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## *In my opinion*

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### ***The Problem of "Good People".***

**Sometimes, doing what’s truly good means shaking things up a bit – even if it feels like you’re doing something “not good.”**

It’s all about that brave rebellion, the kind that disrupts the comfort of the crowd and highlights what genuine goodness really looks like. I get it; most folks I meet on the street see themselves as good people. It’s like a default setting for many of us. There’s this old saying in psychology: to get through life, we’ve got to think well of ourselves. If we don’t, well, we start to feel the weight of all those psychosomatic issues. So, we stroll among these “good people.”

But let’s take a moment to reflect. Bertolt Brecht, the clever chap, threw in a little dose of reality by noting, “Man tends more toward good than toward evil, but the conditions do not favour him.” This is the uncomfortable truth – some who were deemed “good” were perfectly positioned to let some of history’s most dreadful people operate freely. Take a second to think about it: Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin – they thrived in an environment filled with so-called “good” people, who were just getting on with their lives, doing their duty, while horrors unfolded around them.

I remember during the communist era in Poland, when good people urged me and my mother to be careful about what we said outside family and friends. They were more concerned about their own safety and peace-and-quiet than the truth! These same “good folks” participated in events that were far from noble, yet they later claimed they resisted the regime. Funny how that works, isn’t it? It seems like many of us would be all too happy to bask in the glory of goodness, as long as it doesn’t come at a personal cost.

Now, let’s be real: “good people” don’t have any special qualities that make them admirable. They’re often just a grey mass, bending with whatever force is strong enough to sway them. This tendency to confuse conformity with true goodness is one of the most significant ethical pitfalls of our time. Being a conformist often leads to a life of hypocrisy.

We need to remember that true goodness doesn’t come with compromises. It’s black and white – it either exists or it doesn’t. Goodness doesn’t beat around the bush; it speaks clearly. And

let's not forget: being good isn't a popularity contest. Sometimes, embracing goodness means swimming against the tide, standing up even when it's uncomfortable.

Mass charity events can be wholesome but can also serve to soothe our consciences while masking moral issues. We often hear those around us rallying to support causes, asking, "What? You're not joining in?" It's easy to get swept away by the crowd, but true goodness walks a different path. If you spot a "good" cause going off track, it's your duty to speak up, even if that's not what the masses want to hear. People can quickly turn into defensive aggressors when faced with uncomfortable truths.

"Good people" often prefer blissful ignorance. They tend to want goodness to be defined by majority rule. But, let's face it, that leads us down a slippery slope. Just because a crowd supports something doesn't mean it's right. If we follow that logic, then we'd have to say that terrible figures in history were justified simply because the masses backed them. That's not how it works!

It's crucial to understand that, like a reed swaying in the wind, good people can be easily influenced, bending to the strongest force around them. Yet, sometimes, real goodness requires us to act in ways that challenge those around us, to disrupt the comfort of conformity and to embrace true courage.

If reading this makes you a bit uncomfortable, good – that means it's done its job. I didn't find it easy to write either, but sometimes, we need to get a bit uncomfortable to spark real change. So, let's all strive for that genuine goodness, the kind that stands firm when the winds of popular opinion start to blow.

*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** Balbino Otie Snr **and all those whose anniversaries fall around this time.**

## 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 7/8<sup>th</sup> March.

**Ash Wednesday:** is the 18<sup>th</sup> of February. If you can please return last year's palms before then in order to make this year's ashes.



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[www.stkieranscampbeltown.org](http://www.stkieranscampbeltown.org)



<https://www.facebook.com/campbeltownrcchurch/>

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