



# PARISH BULLETIN

**St Kieran's, the  
Catholic  
Church** in  
*Campbeltown and Islay  
Ceann Loch Chille  
Chiarain*  
19<sup>th</sup> April 2026

## *The Third Sunday of Easter*

### Hymns/Music for Sunday

#### Processional

726 Let there be love (Vv 1 & 2)

#### Offertory

320 Lord, accept the gifts we offer  
(Mayhew)

#### Communion music

*Тебе појем (We hymn thee)*

#### Post Communion

498 Soul of my Saviour (Mayhew)

#### Recessional

14 Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks (Keys)

St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

### *Third Week in Eastertide*

Tuesday: **No Mass**

Wednesday: Adoration and Mid-morning Prayer,  
9.30am; **Holy Mass. 10am**

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

Friday: Mid-morning Prayer, 9.50am; **Holy Mass,  
10am**

Next weekend:

**Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> April, Vigil Mass, 6.00pm**

**Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> April, 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time, Holy Mass, 10.00am**

*Sacrament of Reconciliation: Saturday 17.30-17.50 or anytime on request.*

St. Columba Episcopal Church, Bridgend, Isle of Islay

3<sup>rd</sup> May, 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter: **Holy Mass, 4pm**

### **Psalm response**

*O Lord, you will show me the path of life.*

### **Gospel acclamation**

*Alleluia, alleluia.*

*Lord Jesus, open the Scriptures to us;  
make our hearts burn within us when you speak to us.*

*Alleluia.*

### **Communion Antiphon**

*The disciples recognized the Lord Jesus  
in the breaking of the bread, alleluia.*

# Take Five

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

## MONDAY: EASTER WEEKDAY

20 APRIL 2025

### Put on your angel face

Children often have that cherubic look—though they can be little devils sometimes! More rarely do we see that transcendent purity and beauty in the face of a grown-up. When we do glimpse it in the blazing appearance of a charismatic preacher, the gentle eyes of a wise elder, or even the loveliness of a stranger, it stirs in us a longing to learn more, to grow closer, perhaps even to follow. The angelic look isn't reserved for the seraphic among us. We cultivate a heavenly appearance by keeping our gaze on God's beautiful will—just as Saint Stephen did.

**Today's readings:** Acts 6:8-15; John 6:22-29.

*"And all who sat in the council looked intently at [Stephen], and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel."*

## TUESDAY: EASTER WEEKDAY

21 APRIL 2025

### Scout's honour

The Boy Scout Law contains 12 points, the first of which states that a scout is trustworthy. BoyScoutTrail.com describes the quality in this way: "Being 'Worthy of Trust' means a promise made is a promise fulfilled. It means a scout will do what he says he will do. It means the scout will see things through to the end." Not a bad character trait at all, is it? We are blessed to have a trustworthy God. Let's "be prepared" every day to follow suit.

**Today's readings:** Acts 7:51-8:1a; John 6:30-35.

*"I trust in the Lord" (Psalm 31:6).*

## WEDNESDAY: EASTER WEEKDAY

22 APRIL 2025

### Look at yourself: What do you see?

What images might you use to describe yourself? Some speak to relationships—mother, father, sibling, student, coach, coworker. Others are based on physical features—tall, short, brown-eyed, clean cut. But which ones might you use to describe the qualities of your Christian life? In Jesus you can find a rich source of images that describe what a Christian "looks like"—a good shepherd, a faithful friend, a healer, an advocate for the poor and vulnerable. Try a couple on and allow these images to inform your life of discipleship.

**Today's readings:** Acts 8:1b-8; John 6:35-40.

*"Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life.'"*

## THURSDAY: EASTER WEEKDAY

23 APRIL 2025

### Fill up on the bread

Pop quiz on biblical history: What is manna? Sorry, it's not the name of an ancient Middle Eastern band or a slang greeting among the Israelites. Manna was a sweet-tasting food that, according to accounts of the Exodus, came down from heaven as the morning dew evaporated and nourished the Jewish people during their long desert sojourn. What can manna do for us today? It provides a powerful symbol of the truth, then as now, that God provides. Jesus is the living bread that has come down from heaven and offers eternal life—a never-ending feast!

**Today's readings:** Acts 8:26-40; John 6:44-51.

*"Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness."*

## FRIDAY: EASTER WEEKDAY

24 APRIL 2025

### Lord, hear our praise!

Well into Easter time, consider the humble word that is Easter: Alleluia! Like Hosanna it's remained in our worship virtually unchanged from the Hebrew. It's so closely associated with Easter that—did you notice?—during Lent it was not spoken or sung? In fact in some communities, the "A word" was ritually buried until the Easter Vigil when it is sung, lavishly, before the gospel. Use Alleluia as a mantra for Easter meditation. Listen to Handel's famous "Hallelujah" from The Messiah, as exuberant with joy as it is ageless. What does it mean? "Praise the Lord." Indeed!

**Today's readings:** Acts 9:1-20; John 6:52-59.

*"This man is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before Gentiles, kings, and children of Israel."*

## SATURDAY: FEAST OF SAINT MARK, EVANGELIST

25 APRIL 2025

### On your Marks

While it's unlikely the "Mark" of the gospel of that name is the same as the "Mark" mentioned in several other places in the New Testament, the latter followed the same path the gospel describes. He worked with Saint Paul but later "deserted" Paul on one of the apostle's mission journeys, provoking a sharp disagreement and a parting of the ways. Yet he clearly played a role as a fellow-worker of Paul (Philemon 24). The Gospel of Mark asks believers to follow Jesus' example of servant love whatever the misunderstanding or conflict it may cost, because Christ will be with you

the whole way.

**Today's readings:** 1 Peter 5:5b-14; Mark 16:15-

20. "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature."

## *Readings for the third Sunday of Easter*

### **Acts of the Apostles 2:14, 22-33**

David himself gives testimony about the Messiah from beyond the grave.

### **Psalm 16:1-2, 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11**

God's faithful ones will never undergo the corruption of death.

### **1 Peter 1:17-21**

Our salvation is bought not with perishable gold but the blood of the Lamb.

### **Luke 24:13-35**

The disciples of Emmaus give the now-familiar testimony to an unusual stranger.

## *Words on the Word*

### ***An Invitation to Embrace the Joy of Easter***

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*We constantly nurture hope — and in all matters it is better to have hope than to lose it*  
(J. W. Goethe).

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Dear Friends in Christ,

The disciples on the road to Emmaus remain reliable guides for our own journey through life, because their experience is not so different from ours. They had welcomed a great hope into their lives, almost as if it were a dream too beautiful to last. Before them had opened the promise of a new way of living, and Christ Himself had captivated them. His teaching had seized their hearts: love of God, love of neighbour, forgiveness, and the healing of soul and body. They had glimpsed another world, and they longed to live in it with Him.

No one had ever taught as He did in the Sermon on the Mount. Above all, the word "blessed" — which also means "happy" — became central to the life of Christ's disciples. It was a message that turned the world upside down. What had once been accepted as white was no longer merely grey or dark, but plainly black. That was enough for them, because Jesus had said it, and they believed Him. They also believed He would establish a kingdom here on earth, a society where this law would hold sway. To that cause they had given themselves. And then they watched Him being arrested and crucified. Their beautiful hopes seemed to collapse in an instant.

But true life is not just about work, consumption, schedules, and daily routines. There is a deeper question that touches every human being: the question of meaning. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry once described it as the need to explain the meaning of one's own existence. We must give our lives meaning and hope.

That is exactly what Christ had given to His disciples — and yet, at first, He seemed to be gone. To those walking the road, the cross looked like the end. It seemed as though He had fallen silent for ever.

And then He came near to them as they walked, leading their thoughts down a completely new path. Did they not see that the Messiah and Redeemer had to suffer for the people and had to die? Did they not understand that the Lord God, who had already shown such power in the life

of the Chosen People, would not leave His Son under the grip of death? The cross does not mark the failure of God's power; it marks the end of human self-confidence. Human cleverness, pride, and the illusion that we know everything all come to nothing there. Sin and death are defeated.

In this way, the traveller they met explained what had been said about Him in the Law and the Prophets. Perhaps nowhere is this clearer than in Isaiah: He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Yet it was our griefs He bore, our sorrows He carried. He was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray. The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth (cf. Is 53:3–7).

Jesus our Saviour had to walk that road — because that is how fully He would show us the Father's love.

And so, in those times when our joy fades and hope grows thin, when disappointment and bitterness crowd in, perhaps we too should hear Christ walking beside us and saying: be strong, and keep hoping. Did I not also have to walk the same road you are on now?

In those moments, let us answer Him with confidence: Risen Lord, stay with us, for the day is ending and night is near — yet You still bring light and hope.

\* \* \*

*Our roads still lead, each day, to Emmaus —  
and still it is too hard to know You,  
too hard to believe that You are ever  
the lame man, the aged one,  
the beggar at the gate —  
insistent, troubling, and grievously poor.*

*Our roads still lead, each day, to Emmaus —  
we speak of You with learning and with tenderness;  
You hear us, and then — unless we take up  
the cross-borne hope of Your own Cross —  
You ask but for the kindness of Simon  
and fall into silence.*

*Our roads still lead, each day, to Emmaus —  
we enter the temple to adore You in the Host,  
and yet we fail to recognise You  
in the neighbour who passes by,  
so that we may purchase release  
from love's hard sacrifice.*

In Christ's love,  
Fr Anthony

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## ANGELS IN ICONS: 25.

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Byzantine theologians understood angels as incorporeal spiritual beings, immortal and created by God before the making of the world. In this tradition, angels served as divine messengers and agents of God's will. The idea of angels praising the eternal glory of God also appears in the Byzantine liturgy.

Although angels are mentioned frequently in the Old Testament and the Book of Revelation, Christian iconography drew heavily on apocryphal writings and texts of a Kabbalistic character,

which offered far more detail about angelic nature and rank.

A major influence on the development of angelic imagery was the work of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, a theologian active at the turn of the fifth and sixth centuries. In his treatise *On the Celestial Hierarchy*, he set out an influential theory of angelology that later became central to the cult of angels.



It is often assumed that the image of the angel in Christian art was borrowed from antiquity, particularly from Nike, the Greek goddess of victory, and her Roman equivalent, Victoria. These classical models helped shape the visual language later used in Christian art.

In Eastern tradition, angels were usually shown as young men with balanced, harmonious features and abundant golden curls. Their appearance suggested grace, gentleness and quiet dignity.

In Orthodox iconography, angels are marked by symbols of authority and heavenly power: the sceptre, the staff and the orb, which represents the celestial spheres. Unlike in Western art, angels in the East are never shown as children or putti.



*The Archangel Gabriel – known as The Angel with Golden Hair*

12<sup>th</sup> century; The Museum of Russia in St. Petersburg

## 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 17**

**The Narrow Gate; part 2**

John 10:1-10

*Since Jesus says He is the shepherd, His primary concern is to lead, to bring out from the devastated pastures of CONDEMNATION and POWERLESSNESS, and to guide toward the inexhaustible pastures of HEALING and SALVATION. This is visible in two readings:*

### The Earthly Aim of Salvation

**ACTS 4:8-12**

Standing before the Sanhedrin, Peter speaks with courage and clarity. He says that the lame beggar, unable to walk on his own, was set on his feet by him and John through the power of the name of Jesus. And this happened by the Beautiful Gate, the entrance to the Temple.

What does it mean to set a person on their feet at the Beautiful Gate? In a very real sense, every human being in this world is like that beggar: unable to stand securely on their own.

The earthly aim of salvation is the healing of human nature and the restoration of our ability to pray and to praise God. That is the gate leading to the beautiful life. It means release from sin

and from the consequences of sin, which so often have a devastating effect even on the body. It is worth remembering that when Jesus sent out His disciples, He did not only tell them to preach or to forgive sins, but also to heal. Each of these tasks was part of the mission. Healing was a sign of the Kingdom of God and of its nearness.

Salvation is not just a concept for the intellect, nor simply a doctrine. It is an experience. It is the work of putting a person back on their feet, especially when that person has no strength left, not even physically.

The Greek word used for the cripple's condition, *ASTHENEIA*, points to weakness in the fullest sense: physical, psychological, moral and spiritual. Healing in all these dimensions is the first sign that a person is beginning to enter the space of the Kingdom of God.

And the truth is, this world can twist even good things. Even falling in love can become a source of pain. Even our desire for good can wound us. Like that beggar, we often have no strength to stand. We look for a sign, for help, for support, but we do not see it, because we are looking in the wrong place. We expect God to help us where we think help should come from, not where He actually chooses to act.

That is why people often feel that God is silent, uninterested, that He says nothing and listens to no one. But the deeper question is: who is supposed to listen to whom? Are we listening to Him, or do we expect Him to listen only to us?

Animals, it is said, can have selective hearing. A cat may ignore a gunshot but instantly react to the faintest rustle between the furniture, because it might mean a small rodent nearby — something edible. It hears only what it wants to hear, and it wants to hear only what can be consumed.

We can be just like that. We convince ourselves that God is not making any sound, because we are only tuned in to whatever might lead to some kind of consumption — emotional, sensual, intellectual, or material. Meanwhile, He is sending us the full force of His Word. But because our minds are set by disordered material desires, nothing gets through. Then we conclude that He is doing nothing for us.

So healing is also about reorientation. It means learning to listen to Him rather than to ourselves; to pay attention to what He wants to say, instead of waiting only for that faint little rustle that might promise earthly fulfilment. On that level, God has not got all that much to say. Our unhealthy desires make us weak, like the lame beggar who sat by the Beautiful Gate and never went in, because he was waiting for money.

## The Ultimate Goal

### 1 JOHN 3:1–2

The ultimate purpose of Christ the Shepherd's guidance is simple, yet staggering: that we should come to see — and so contemplate — the greatness of the love God has given us. We already call ourselves **His children**, but even that is not the full story. What we shall become has not yet been fully revealed. But this much is certain: *we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is* (cf. 1 Jn 3:2).

That is the heart of Christian hope. Likeness to God will be the fruit of seeing God Himself. The hidden God will no longer remain hidden. He will unveil Himself in the full splendour of His divine life. This is what we call heaven.

As Saint Paul says in his First Letter to the Corinthians, “*God will be all in all*” (1 Cor 15:28). Heaven is the radiance of His generosity, the unending nearness of His presence, the joy that no earthly language can properly describe (cf. Mt 25:21). It is a reality we enter, not merely observe from a distance — a depth without limit, a mystery into which we are drawn ever more deeply, and where the divine life opens up ever **new beauty**.

God does not simply wish to be admired. He desires to give Himself. But to see God in the life to come is not to gaze at Him from the outside, as if He were merely an object of wonder. To see Him is to share in His life. His self-disclosure transforms us. We shall see Him as He is, and therefore we shall become like Him.

That is why the Christian life must be one of transparency before God. If we live openly before Him now — hiding nothing, resisting nothing — then the vision of God will not be alien to us. Heaven is the place where God grants full access to Himself, in every mystery, and that communion makes us like Him in a way words can barely reach.

An imperfect comparison may help. Imagine you come to know someone who, after a time, tells you everything: their whole story, their hidden wounds, their joys, their secrets. That kind of knowledge changes you. Their interior world becomes part of yours. You no longer know them from the outside; you carry something of them within you. Of course, the comparison falls short — but it hints at the truth that communion changes the one who knows.

Hell, by contrast, is the total refusal of transparency. It is complete opacity — everyone closed in on themselves, closed to others, and closed to God. Nothing is shared, nothing is revealed, nothing connects. Some spiritual writers have called this the REGIO DISSIMILITUDINIS, the kingdom of unlikeness: a place of misunderstanding, isolation and spiritual blindness. There, no one truly knows themselves, because no one allows themselves to be known. The result is not identity but its collapse.

That is why the word “**like**” in 1 John 3:2 matters so much. We shall be like Him — not identical to God, of course, but truly conformed to Him through communion with Him. Knowing Him, and being known by Him, we shall be filled with His life and finally become most fully ourselves. From that perspective, can anything else in this world really be more important?

## What Does the Church Teach?

The Catechism is very clear on this point. It teaches that the Son is of *one substance with the Father*, that is, *homoousios* with Him. The Son was not made from nothing, nor from any other substance, but is begotten from the Father’s own being.

And this same Son of God became the Son of Man. The Word became flesh so that we might become “*partakers of the divine nature*” (2 Pet 1:4). As the Catechism puts it:

“The Son of God became man so that we might become God” (CCC 460). This does not mean we cease to be human. It means our humanity is raised, healed and fulfilled in communion with Christ. His coming among us opened the way for us into His own life. The gate of human flesh, crossed by the Son of God, becomes the open gate into divine life.

The Catechism also teaches that:

- those who die in God’s grace and friendship, and are perfectly purified, live for ever with Christ and “*see him as he is*” face to face (CCC 1023);
- this perfect life with the Holy Trinity, with the Virgin Mary, the angels and all the blessed, is called *heaven* — our final happiness and fulfilment (CCC 1024);
- this communion with God is beyond ordinary human understanding and description, so Scripture speaks of it in images: light, peace, wedding feast, the Father’s house, the heavenly Jerusalem, paradise (CCC 1027);
- and the Church calls the contemplation of God in heavenly glory the *beatific vision* (CCC 1028).

## Marginal Notes

Both stages of salvation can be reached if we learn **detachment** from the “*damaged pasture*” that this world so often is — from sickness of heart, helplessness, self-pity and condemnation,

moving instead towards healing through mercy; and from orphanhood and a fractured sense of identity towards likeness to God through love.

The Shepherd keeps leading His flock away from ruined ground and into new pasture. He **detaches** us by His call, by His Word. It is a movement from earth to heaven.

Very often, this **detachment** comes through **solitude**, so that true **presence** can be discovered. At times it is dramatic — a kind of **tearing apart** that is really ordered to union with God. The parable of the lost sheep says a great deal here. It is as though the tragedies of being lost sometimes happen precisely so that we may leave the place where such losses keep occurring. You may lose everything. You may fail to gain what you hoped for. But everything in this world can become a burden if it keeps us from eternity. So, God sometimes tears us away from what belongs to this world. Physical death is unavoidable; death to this world is necessary.

Solitude is often the price of likeness. Grains of sand lie too close together; they cling. The stars of heaven are set far apart, and still they are beautiful. That image says something important: holiness does not always mean crowding. Sometimes it means space.

Saint Paul's words are striking here:

*“Whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ... I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ”* (Phil 3:7–8).

His point is not bitterness, but wonder. There is a holy contempt here — not for creation itself, but for anything that pretends to rival Christ. This is detachment born of fascination with God.

And yet the goal is not loneliness. The Church is a community, a **flock** — but not a pack.

Maturity in community often passes through a time of detachment from the crowd. Jacob, before he became the father of a great household, had first to be set apart and to meet God at Luz. In the same way, growth into communion often begins with personal fascination with the Shepherd, with consenting to be found and held in His arms.

The parable of the lost sheep comes back here too. It is a picture of deep, almost mystical clinging to the Shepherd. Only then can we build truly beautiful relationships with others — because we have first received love alone with Him.

Every human love can become idolised until the God of love is found. God is love — but that does not mean love is a god.

*Fr Anthony*



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# Around the World

The sometimes missed news

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## BELARUS

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### CATHOLIC PRIEST DETAINED IN BELARUS AS TENSIONS WITH AUTHORITIES DEEPEN

A Catholic priest in Belarus has been detained in what appears to be another troubling case of pressure on the Church under President Alexander Lukashenko's regime.

Fr Anatol Parakhnievich, parish priest in Olkovichi in the Vileika district, was arrested just before Easter. As yet, no official charges have been made public, and his exact whereabouts remain unclear. Faithful in the parish fear he may be being held in a KGB detention facility, where accusations involving crimes against the state are sometimes brought.

It is believed Fr Parakhnievich may have come to the attention of the authorities after attending a reception at the Polish Embassy in Minsk on 3 May, held to mark Constitution Day. In Belarus, contacts with Polish institutions have previously been used as grounds for intimidation or repression.

The 65-year-old priest has served in Olkovichi since 2007 and is well known locally not only for his pastoral work but also for his care for cultural heritage. Next to the church, he established a small museum containing a number of historic items, including 18th-century vestments, Belarusian folk towels and old books.

Following his detention and a search of the parish premises, the church in Olkovichi was temporarily closed. At present, ministry there is being carried out by a priest from another parish.

From a Catholic point of view, the case is deeply concerning. The Church has always defended the freedom of her clergy to serve their people without political intimidation, and the right of believers to worship openly and without fear. If a priest is being targeted simply for maintaining lawful contacts or for preserving local religious and cultural life, that would raise serious moral questions about fairness, human dignity and religious liberty.

For Catholics, the detention also recalls the long history of the Church's witness under hostile regimes, where priests and lay people alike have often suffered for remaining faithful.

Whatever the circumstances, the faithful will be praying for Fr Parakhnievich's safety, for clarity about the allegations, and for justice to be done in a way that respects both truth and the dignity of the person.

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## **THE PROGRESS OF PROGRESS!**

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### **SPAIN: GOVERNMENT MOVES TO EMBED ABORTION RIGHTS IN CONSTITUTION**

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Spain's socialist government, led by Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, has announced plans to seek constitutional protection for abortion, following a similar move in France. If approved, the proposal would give legal backing to the right to end unborn life, a development that has drawn sharp criticism from Church leaders and pro-life campaigners.

The issue was discussed at a recent meeting of Sánchez's cabinet. However, the proposal faces a significant hurdle in parliament. Without the backing of the opposition Popular Party, it is likely to fail to secure the support needed for a constitutional reform.

Sánchez is reportedly prepared to push the agenda by other means if parliament blocks the move, with his government seeking to guarantee access to abortion in hospitals and clinics across the country.

The debate comes at a time when Spain is facing a serious demographic decline, with birth rates falling sharply and the population ageing. Critics argue that, in such a context, the state should be encouraging family life and supporting mothers, rather than further entrenching abortion in law.

The President of the Spanish Bishops' Conference, Archbishop Luis Argüello, described the proposal as deeply contradictory. He pointed out that Spain is seeing fewer and fewer children born each year, yet the government is moving to secure what he called the legal killing of unborn children. He stressed that abortion can never be a right and warned that the plan amounts to a promotion of death.

From a Catholic perspective, the moral issue is clear: human life is sacred from conception to natural death. Any attempt to present abortion as a constitutional right clashes directly with the Church's teaching on the dignity of the unborn. Rather than expanding access to abortion, Catholics would argue that the real public good lies in supporting expectant mothers, strengthening family policy, and building a culture that protects life at every stage.

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## THIS IS THE WAY

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### GREECE TO BLOCK SOCIAL MEDIA ACCESS FOR UNDER-15S FROM NEW YEAR

Greece is set to block access to social media platforms for anyone under the age of 15 from the start of the new year.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said children who spend long hours online are increasingly exposed to pressure from constant comparisons and comments on social media. He also said he had spoken to many parents who reported that excessive phone use was linked to sleep problems and anxiety in their children.

The move has broad public support in Greece. The Mitsotakis government has already banned mobile phones in schools and introduced parental control tools designed to help limit the amount of time teenagers spend on screens.

If introduced as planned, Greece would become one of the first countries to bring in such a measure. In 2025, Australia restricted social media access for under-16s. Meanwhile, a number of European countries, including France and Spain, are also considering similar bans.

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### *We Read Pope Leo*

**Stop! The time for peace has come! Sit at the tables of dialogue and mediation, not at the tables where armaments are planned and decisions of death are made!**

War divides, hope unites. Violence tramples, love lifts up. Idolatry blinds, the living God illuminates. It takes only a little faith, a crumb of faith, dearest ones, to together (...) face this dramatic hour of history. For prayer is not a shelter to evade responsibility; it is not an anaesthetic that allows one to avoid the pain caused by so many injustices. Rather, it is the most selfless, universal and stirring response to death (...). In each of us, in every human being, the inner Teacher teaches peace, urges encounter, stirs up supplication. Let us therefore lift our eyes! Let us rise from the ruins! Nothing can lock us into a fate supposedly already sealed, even in this world where it seems there are no longer enough graves, because life is crucified and annihilated anew — without law and without mercy.

Saint John Paul II, the tireless witness of peace, said with emotion during the Iraqi crisis in 2003: I belong to that generation which lived through World War II and survived it. I have a duty to say to all young people, younger than myself, who have not had that experience: 'Never again war!', using the words spoken by Paul VI during his first visit to the United Nations. We must do everything in our power! We know well that peace does not exist at any price. But we all know how great this responsibility is (Angelus, 16 March 2003). This evening I make his appeal my own — an appeal so very timely.



Prayer educates us for action. Limited human possibilities are joined in prayer with the infinite possibilities of God. Then thoughts, words and deeds shatter the demonic chain of evil and place themselves at the service of the Kingdom of God: a kingdom in which there is neither sword, nor drone, nor revenge, nor the trivialisation of evil, nor unjust gain, but only dignity, understanding and forgiveness. Herein lies the dam against that madness of omnipotence which around us is becoming ever more unpredictable and aggressive. The balance within the human family has been gravely disturbed. Even the holy Name of God — the God of life — is drawn into the language of death. (...)

Dear brothers and sisters, there are of course inalienable duties of those who govern nations. To them we cry out: stop! The time for peace has come! Sit at the tables of dialogue and mediation, not at the tables where armaments are planned and decisions of death are made!

***Meditation during the prayer vigil for peace, St. Peter's Basilica, 11 April 2026.***

Sunday Eucharist is indispensable for Christian life. (...) It is through Sunday celebration that our faith is nourished and grows. It is through it that our efforts, though limited, with the help of God's grace are joined as the actions of members of one body — the Body of Christ — in the realisation of one great plan of salvation, which embraces the whole human race. It is precisely through the Eucharist that our hands too become the hands of the Risen One, witnesses of His presence, His mercy, His peace, in the signs of work, sacrifice, illness, the passage of years, which are often inscribed upon them, as in a gesture of tenderness, embrace or love.

***Regina Coeli, 12 April 2026.***

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## *In my opinion*

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### **A Little for Life, a Little for Death**

Scottish parliamentarians have rejected a bill to legalise euthanasia and assisted dying for the third time, a result welcomed by Church leaders and pro-life campaigners who see it as a firm defence of the dignity of human life.

The vote in Edinburgh came just a day before a very different decision at Westminster, where peers backed a move that could decriminalise abortion up to the moment of birth. For many observers, the contrast between the two debates was striking: one chamber reaffirming a duty to protect the vulnerable, the other edging towards one of the most radical abortion laws in Europe.

The two votes, taken so close together, have once again exposed the moral confusion running through public life in Britain. In both cases, the language of personal choice and autonomy dominated the debate, while the deeper ethical questions — about the value of life, the duty of care, and society's obligations to the weakest — received far less attention.

For now, the assisted suicide bill has been stopped in Scotland, and a similar proposal at Westminster looks unlikely to pass in May after more than 1,150 amendments were tabled following objections from medical experts and disability groups. Supporters of assisted dying, however, are unlikely to give up, and campaigners warn that the issue is certain to return.

The situation on abortion is more worrying still. If the decriminalisation bill completes its passage through Parliament, the UK could end up with one of the most extreme abortion regimes in the world: a law that could, in effect, punish the killing of a baby after birth while offering no legal sanction for ending the life of that child the day before.

The proposal was attached to a broader crime bill by a Labour MP and was first approved last summer after just 46 minutes of debate, with no public consultation. Abortion is already legal in the UK up to 24 weeks of pregnancy, and abortion pills can be ordered by post. Official figures

show that 299,614 abortions were carried out in 2023 — a record high and an increase of 10 per cent on the previous year.

Even so, not everyone is prepared to accept this drift. A number of parliamentarians, including Catholics who once had little influence but now make up at least 10 per cent of both Houses of Parliament, are continuing to speak up for the unborn and for a more coherent moral vision in public life.

All the major Churches oppose assisted suicide, but on abortion the response is less united and, in some quarters, more resigned. That makes the intervention of religious voices in Parliament all the more important.

The newly installed Archbishop of Canterbury, Sarah Mullally, used her seat in the House of Lords to oppose the abortion move ahead of the vote, saying that the “infinite value of human life” is a basic Christian principle at the heart of British law. Even so, 15 of the 26 bishops in the Lords did not take part in the debate.

Among Catholic voices, some lawmakers say the struggle is far from over. Baroness Nuala O’Loan, the former police commissioner and marriage counsellor, said the rise of slogans like “my rights, my choice, my body” has made society more open to what she called manipulative language about compassion and care.

She also warned that Christians should not give up speaking plainly, even when their arguments are dismissed in public debate. “Although what we say as Catholics may be dismissed, our voice still carries within the legislative community,” she said. “It still reaches people who may not use the language of sanctity, but still believe that certain values ought to be protected.”

From a Catholic point of view, the issue is straightforward even if the politics are not: life is not ours to dispose of. Whether the question is euthanasia, assisted suicide or abortion, the Church’s teaching remains consistent — every human life has dignity from conception until natural death. That principle is not just a religious preference; it is a moral foundation that any just society should be able to recognise.

*Fr Anthony*

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## Prayer

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**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, Lilian Cox, Sarah Carmichael, and Doleen Durnin.

**Please keep in your prayers** Teresa Shaw (2018), William Brannigan (2022), Archie Wilson (1943), Frances Campbell (1995) **and all those whose anniversaries fall around this time.**

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## News and Events

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**Join us for tea and coffee** in the hall after Sunday Mass. We warmly welcome visitors and would be delighted to share our hospitality with you. We hope to see you there!

**The Repair Fund** came to a total of £765 and almost covered the full cost of hall wall and a couple of smaller jobs. Thank you for your contributions.



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