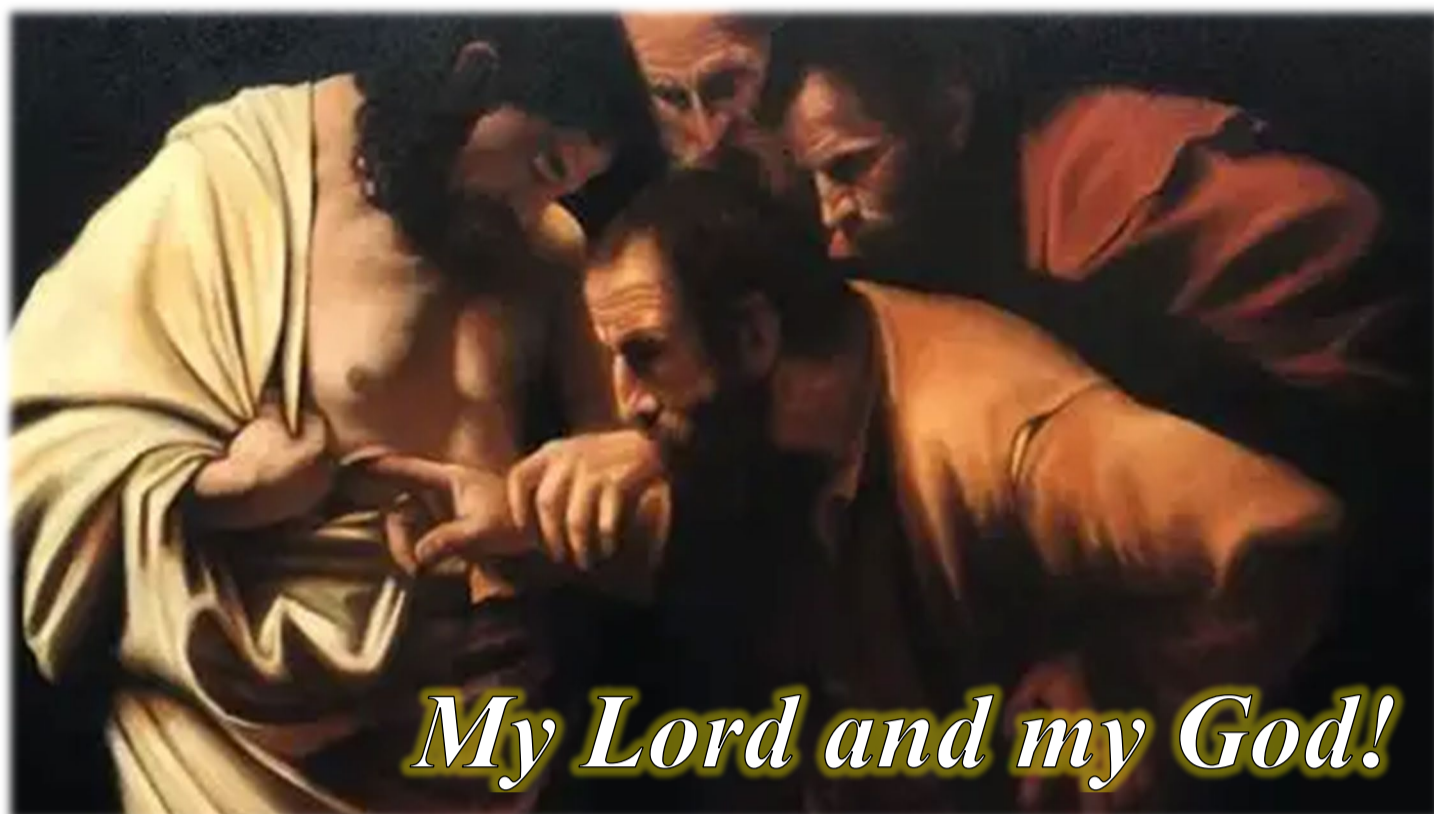


PARISH BULLETIN



My Lord and my God!

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

12th April 2026

Divine Mercy Sunday

Hymns/Music for Easter Sunday

Processional (Sunday only)

207 He is risen, tell the story (Mayhew)

Offertory

359 My God loves me (McLennan)

Communion music

God so loved the world (Instrumental; Fasoldt)

Post Communion

528 The king of love my shepherd is (Hamel)]

Recessional

547 The spirit lives to set us free (McLennan)

Voluntary: Alleluja radosne (Fundacja Dominikański)

St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

Second Week in Eastertide

Tuesday: **Holy Mass, 6pm**

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**

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

St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Bridgend, Islay

19th April – 3rd Sunday of Easter: **Holy Mass, 4pm**

Psalm response

Alleluia alleluia.

Sequence

Victimae Paschali Laudes

Christians, to the Paschal Victim
offer sacrifice and praise.

The sheep are ransomed by the Lamb;
and Christ, the undefiled,
hath sinners to his Father reconciled.

Death with life contended:
combat strangely ended!

Life's own Champion, slain,
yet lives to reign.

Tell us, Mary:
say what thou didst see
upon the way.

The tomb the Living did enclose;
I saw Christ's glory as he rose!

The angels there attesting;
shroud with grave-clothes resting.

Christ, my hope, has risen:
he goes before you into Galilee.

That Christ is truly risen
from the dead we know.
Victorious king, thy mercy show!

Gospel acclamation

Alleluia! Alleluia!

*You believed, Thomas, because you have seen me, says the Lord.
Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*

Alleluia!

Communion Antiphon

*Bring your hand and feel the place of the nails,
and do not be unbelieving but believing, alleluia.*

Take Five

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

MONDAY: EASTER WEEKDAY

13 April 2024

Everyone deserves a hearing

Nicodemus was a Pharisee and member of the Sanhedrin, the supreme court of ancient Israel. At great political risk he came to Jesus under cover of night to seek a better understanding of his teachings. Nicodemus makes an excellent role model for our political leaders, so bitterly divided they seem unable at times even to communicate with each other, much less work together. Nicodemus had the strength to keep an open mind and seek the truth despite the wrath and ridicule of his peers. For this reason, he is honoured as a saint in the church. Do what you can to encourage those in the halls of government to give everyone—even their opponents—a fair hearing. It's the right thing to do.

Today's readings: Acts 4:23-31; John 3:1-8. *"He came to Jesus by night."*

TUESDAY: EASTER WEEKDAY

14 APRIL 2024

Be prepared to testify

In the Book of Acts, we are told that "with great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection." In fact, says Benedictine monk Columba Stewart in a recent article in National Geographic, "the apostles were the movement's cutting edge, spreading the message across the vast trade network of the ancient world and leaving small Christian communities in their paths." This missionary zeal is passed on to each new generation of Christians, but it takes different forms. Today although many Christians still travel to foreign lands to serve the poor and give witness to Christ, believers are also encouraged to evangelise — spread the Gospel — within their own homes, parishes, and local communities. How is your evangelization going? Hint: They should know you are Christian by your love.

Today's readings: Acts 4:32-37; John 3:7b-15. *"We*

speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen.”

WEDNESDAY: EASTER WEEKDAY

15 APRIL 2024

A sign worth broadcasting

If Americans can cite any scripture text, it might be John 3:16 (For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son . . .). A group in Alabama made a video of a bunch of guys noticing a sign with that Bible verse on it and looking it up on a smart phone to find out what it means. The video was rejected as a Super Bowl commercial because it promoted a particular religion, which may be true. But it would have been a good reminder. Sometimes we must hold up a sign, make a phone call, visit a sick friend, or forgive a spouse in order to help one another see what and who is already among us.

Today’s readings: Acts 5:17-26; John 3:16-21. *“Go, stand in the temple and tell the people the whole message about this life.”*

THURSDAY: FEAST OF SAINT MARK,

EVANGELIST

16 APRIL 2024

Let God be your guide

If it’s all up for grabs, why pay attention to what others teach or preach when everyone has their own relationship with God? After all the Bible says, “Obey God, not humans.” Well, yes—and no. Indeed, the buck does stop with God in that we are oriented by our nature to listen to God and respond to God’s call. But there’s a lot out there to compete with our natural inclinations—fear, vulnerability, peer pressure, misinformation, and more—all of which can provide compelling alternative messages. Fortunately, God graces us with not only our own lights but scripture and the church to give us a better sense of how to navigate. Think about the ways in your own life that God uses to connect with you.

Today’s readings: Acts 5:27-33; John 3:31-36. *“We*

must obey God rather than men.”

FRIDAY: EASTER WEEKDAY

17 APRIL 2024

It’s possible with God

It is human to question our capacity to accomplish great things. We tend to focus on what little we must work with, whether it’s time or money or ability—or all three! But God does not give us dreams we have no ability to realize. We have only to recall the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes to know that is true. One lesson of the story is that with God wonderful things are possible from even the most humble beginnings. This Easter season place your whole self—your gifts, talents, abilities, heart, and soul—into God’s hands with the sure knowledge that if the yearning comes from God, it is possible

Today’s readings: Acts 5:34-42; John 6:1-15. *“There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what good are these for so many?”*

SATURDAY: EASTER WEEKDAY

18 APRIL 2024

It is I

Jesus had sent the disciples on ahead of him in a boat. During the night the going got pretty rough. In the midst of their struggle—remember, they were rowing—Jesus came toward them on the water, a startling development even though it meant rescue. Jesus allayed their fears with three words: “It is I.” Actually, it’s only two, in Greek: “I am.” Sound familiar? They are the words God uses to identify himself at a number of places in scripture. So, Jesus isn’t merely saying, “Don’t worry, it’s me.” He’s declaring that he is God but also that God simply is—the foundation of everything. Next time you find yourself rowing against the waves of trouble, remember you’re always on solid ground, so to speak, with God.

Today’s readings: Acts 6:1-7; John 6:16-21. *“He said to them, ‘It is I. Do not be afraid.’ ”*

Readings for Divine Mercy Sunday

Acts of the Apostles 2:42-47

Early believers form a community bound by belief, lifestyle, and resources.

Psalms 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

God’s enduring love and mercy are two wonderful reasons to rejoice.

1 Peter 1:3-9

Without seeing Jesus, we love him, believe in him, and share his joy.

John 20:19-31

The story of Thomas is not so unique: All who do not see struggle to believe.

Words on the Word

*

Help me, Lord, that my eyes may be merciful, so that I never suspect or judge by outward appearances but look for what is beautiful in my neighbours' souls. Help me, Lord, that my hearing may be merciful, so that I may be attentive to my neighbours' needs, and that my ears may never be indifferent to their pain and their cries. My Jesus, transform me into Yourself, for You can do all things. Amen.” (Saint Teresa of Calcutta)

* *

Throughout the history of the Church, disputes have most often been doctrinal in nature. People argued about the meaning of one or another article of faith, about how Scripture should be interpreted, and about similar questions. Yet there is no sign of a dispute over this truth: that God is love, that He is a merciful Father towards human beings, and that He is the good Father waiting for the return of the prodigal son.

The mystery of divine mercy is perhaps the most important truth the Church and the world have been reminded of in the 20th century. It speaks of God's goodness at work in the world, made visible in devotion to the Sacred Heart. When the Catholic Church sought in the 17th century to respond to the ideas of the Jansenists, it began to emphasise the love of Jesus for humanity.

Two key figures associated with this devotion are *Saint* John Eudes and *Saint* Margaret Mary Alacoque. To her, Jesus reportedly said: “Behold this Heart which has so loved men and is so little loved in return. Through gratitude I receive from most of them only ingratitude, irreverence, and sacrilege, through the coldness and contempt they have for Me in this sacrament of love. What pains Me most is that hearts consecrated to Me treat Me thus. If they would only have a little love for Me, I would count as nothing all that I have done for them, and would desire, if possible, to do still more. But they respond to all My efforts to do them good only with coldness and rejection...”

He also promised, in the abundance of the mercy of His Heart, that those who received Communion on the first Friday of nine consecutive months would be granted the grace of final repentance, would not die in a state of mortal sin or without the sacraments, and that His Heart would be their safe refuge at the hour of death.

Yet one of the earlier pioneers of this devotion in Europe was the Polish Jesuit Kasper Druzbicki, who wrote the Latin treatise *Meta cordium cor Jesu*.

The revelations of Saint Faustina Kowalska, and their theological development by Pope John Paul II, continue to fascinate and inspire fresh theological reflection. One example is the series of catechises delivered in Vienna Cathedral by Cardinal Christoph Schönborn OP, published in the book *Mercy: The Impossible Becomes Possible*.

On the question of divine mercy, Cardinal Schönborn is a faithful student of the Bible, the Church Fathers, and the popes. Right from the beginning, he stresses that “mercy is not possible without justice.”

Love bears all things, yes — but it also asks much. For the sake of the common good, society

must have boundaries in place to prevent abuse. “When mercy is shown to some, is injustice done to others?” the cardinal asks rhetorically.

A few pages later, he gives a clear answer to those who suggest that the Church’s refusal to permit divorce is a lack of mercy. “The Church is often criticised for lacking mercy towards the divorced. But who speaks for the children? Who is merciful towards them? The Church today is the last institution defending marriage. For that it is seen as hopelessly backward. Yet shocking reports keep coming in from everywhere about the situation of children from broken marriages or from abnormal home situations. Who is showing mercy to the children?”

He also reminds readers that indulging sinners or deceiving them is not mercy at all. Quite the opposite. Mercy is always joined to truth. It is truth that allows us to recognise sin and, with genuine contrition, turn to the wellspring of mercy. If we do not stand in the truth, there can be no real reconciliation. And in the end, that can lead to damnation. Mercy without truth is, in fact, false mercy.

Mercy, then, is inseparable from truth and justice. It is not some sugary comfort handed out to make people feel better. But it does allow a sinful past to be closed off, and it offers hope of a beautiful reconciliation with God in the future.

* * *

And then there is the prayer of Saint Faustina:

“I desire to be transformed completely into Your mercy and to be Your living reflection, O Lord... Help me, Lord, that my eyes may be merciful, so that I never suspect or judge by outward appearances, but look for what is beautiful in the souls of my neighbours... that my tongue may be merciful, so that I never speak negatively of my neighbours, but have words of comfort and forgiveness for everyone... that my hands may be merciful and full of good deeds... that my feet may be merciful, so that I may always hurry to help my neighbours, overcoming my own weariness and fatigue.”

THE MOTHER OF GOD IN ICONS: 25. SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATIONS OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

Eastern iconography presents Mary in a richly layered theological vision, honouring her not only as the Mother of God but also as a powerful intercessor and protectress of the human family. Among the most cherished images expressing this truth are the Mother of God of the Burning Bush, the Mother of God of the Life-Giving Spring, the Mother of God Consoler of the Afflicted, and the Veil of the Mother of God. Each of these sacred images invites the faithful into a deeper contemplation of Mary's maternal role in the economy of salvation.

Particularly striking among these is the icon known as the Mother of God Consoler of the Afflicted. In this image, Our Lady is depicted within a mandorla of radiant light, encircled by stars — a visual language that Catholic eyes will recognise from the imagery of the Woman clothed with the sun in the Book of Revelation. In Western sacred art, a comparable portrayal of Our Lady in glory has traditionally been associated with the Assumption, a dogma solemnly defined by Pope Pius XII in 1950, and one which, it must be noted, has not been formally received within the Eastern Orthodox tradition. Yet the luminous beauty of this icon speaks across that divide, bearing witness to a shared instinct of faith: that Mary, above all creatures, dwells closest to the light of her Son.

Of equal theological richness is the Veil of the Mother of God, known in the Slavic tradition as the *Pokrov* — a word carrying the warm sense of covering, shelter, and protection. This icon is deeply rooted in the spiritual heritage of Rus and draws upon ancient Byzantine texts which speak of Mary spreading her maphorion, her sacred veil, over those who seek her aid. By the eleventh century, the Feast of the Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God had become widely celebrated throughout Rus, and it continues to be observed on the fourteenth of October — a date that invites all Christians to reflect upon the enduring tenderness of Our Lady's intercession.



The *Pokrov* is traditionally rendered in two distinct iconographic forms: the Novgorodian and the Muscovite. In the Novgorodian version, Mary herself

extends the veil directly over the gathered faithful, an image of immediate and personal maternal care. In the Muscovite version, angels present the veil on her behalf, while the maphorion takes the form of an omophorion — the liturgical vestment worn by bishops as a sign of pastoral responsibility and the carrying of the lost sheep. Both forms, in their own way, proclaim the same consoling truth: that under the mantle of Mary, no soul is abandoned, and no cry of the human heart goes unheard.

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 18

The Shepherd

John 10:11–18

The image of the shepherd is not merely pastoral and picturesque. When Jesus compares Himself to a shepherd, He is not talking about some barefoot boy with a willow flute, idly playing to his flock. He speaks of the one who lays down his life for his sheep. Which shepherd in the highlands would ever give his life for a flock of sheep and rams? To save means to rescue another's life by sacrificing one's own. Christ gave His life — He did not simply die. To die is only to come to the end of one's own life. To give one's life is something entirely different: it can only be done for someone else.

God is eternal life itself, and by sharing that life He has continually opened for us the door to eternity. The text says quite plainly that Jesus lays down, or places, His life for those He knows — that is, for those who allow themselves to be known by Him, and who in turn choose to know Him ever more deeply, without end.

We may think here of Joseph of Arimathea, who placed the dead body of Christ in his own

tomb. He laid it there, and in doing so gave us a key to Jesus' words: "I lay down my life." Joseph of Arimathea, in a sense, became the living explanation of the man in the parable who built his house on the rock. That man dug deep and set his foundation in the depths, so that when the storm came — with rain and wind — the house could not be shaken.

To have the death of the Son of God, who rose from the dead, as the foundation of one's life is to have hope in one's own resurrection. But have I truly laid the death of Christ at the base of my own existence? And if so, what does that even mean in practice?

Peter speaks before the rulers of the people about Christ as the cornerstone, in whom alone there is salvation. Building one's life on the death of Christ is far more than simply admiring His example. When God places happiness within our lives, it creates an expansion we call suffering. Suffering is often the result of happiness stretching to make room for more.

The death of Christ, though it appears so tragic, becomes the deepening of our joy. The deeper He went into the darkness of a miserable death, the more we were drawn into the joy of His eternal life. I know of no shepherd who, on finding a dry pasture, would water it with his own blood so that the grass might live again and feed his flock. Yet that is precisely what Christ has done for us.

So how does one live by the death of the Immortal One? The Eucharist and Scripture are the pastures that nourish eternal life. In these two forms of feeding, we see God's care for our salvation. The Eucharist gives us life drawn from the death of Christ; Scripture feeds us with words that may seem to have died long ago in the distant past. The Bible and the Eucharist are like two breasts of a mother, nourishing her children with her own milk.

Saint John Chrysostom puts it well: as a mother, moved by natural love for her child, hurries to nourish it with her own milk and blood, so Christ gives the drink of His Blood to those He has reborn.

Jesus did not come from a family of shepherds, and yet He compared Himself to a shepherd. The Hebrew word RAAH means shepherd and grazing, but it also means watching over, protecting, and even accompanying someone as a friend. It is used, for example, in Isaiah 11:7, where the messianic signs are described: "The cow and the bear shall graze together" — in other words, they shall live in friendship, despite their natural differences.

The ancient shepherd, if he was not a hired hand, spent all his time with the flock. He became marked by its smell, slept beside it, lying on the ground among the animals, and led them to the best pastures. The sheep knew his voice: the familiar sounds by which he called them to move on, to rest, or to keep watch. The shepherd is always different from his flock, and yet by dwelling among them he lowers himself to their level. It is hard not to see here an image of the Son of God lowering Himself to the level of humanity — and, among human beings, to those placed lowest of all: tax collectors, sinners, and adulteresses.

One of our fathers once told me, after returning from Ukraine, an interesting detail about Kamianets-Podilskyi. The city has around 100,000 inhabitants, but the old town, set apart from the newer districts, is home to only a few hundred people and still retains a distinctly rural feel. The square is green and leafy, and nobody is surprised to see cows, sheep, or goats passing by alongside cars.

A friend of mine witnessed a scene there that stayed with him. A flock of goats had stopped in the square, accompanied by an old shepherdess, who seemed almost to carry the smell of the animals with her. She leaned on a bark-stripped staff and sat down on a stone while the goats

grazed on the grass and leaves for over an hour. Once they had stripped bare everything within reach, the shepherdess stood up, gave the animals no further attention, turned her back on them, and slowly made her way out of the square towards the outskirts, where the pastures lay. As she walked, she began to murmur something under her breath.

Her sounds were hardly what we would call human speech, but the animals understood them. They knew it was a signal that better food was ahead. At once, the goats lifted their heads and listened intently. She went on without even looking back, and the animals followed, running after her as if drawn by a kind of spell. They were full of joy, sensing that a reward awaited them — as though a gate to beauty had suddenly opened before them.

When Jesus says that He is the shepherd, this is surely part of what He means: He leads us out of the barren pastures of condemnation and helplessness, and into the rich pastures of healing and salvation.

Wounded Light

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Chapter 18

The Shepherd

John 10:11–18

The image of the shepherd is not merely a charming rural scene. When Jesus compares Himself to a shepherd, He is not speaking of some barefoot boy with a willow flute, carelessly playing sweet tunes to a flock. He is speaking of one who lays down his life for his sheep.

What shepherd from the highlands, or anywhere else for that matter, would die for a flock of sheep and rams? To save is to rescue another's life at the cost of one's own. Christ did not simply die; He gave His life. That distinction matters. To die is merely to end one's life. To give one's life is something else entirely: it is an act performed for another.

God is eternal life itself, and in sharing that life with us, He has opened the door to eternity. The text says quite deliberately that Jesus lays down, or places, His life for those He knows — that is, for those who have allowed Him to know them, and who in turn have chosen to know Him ever more deeply, into infinity.

Think of Joseph of Arimathea, who laid the dead body of Christ in his own tomb. He placed it there, and in doing so he helps us understand Jesus' words: "I lay down my life." Joseph's act becomes a kind of living commentary on the parable of the man who built his house on rock. That man dug deep and set his foundation on stone. Storms, rain, and wind could not bring it down.

To have the death of the Son of God, who rose from the dead, as the foundation of one's life is to have hope in one's own resurrection. But have I really placed Christ's death at the foundation of my own existence? And if so, what does that actually look like?

Peter speaks to the rulers of the people about Christ as the cornerstone and says that salvation

is found in no one else. Building a life on the death of Christ is far more than admiring His example. When God places happiness within us, that happiness expands, and we experience what we call suffering.

In that sense, suffering is what happens when happiness stretches us beyond our current limits. Christ's death, outwardly so dreadful, became the deepening of our joy. The further He descended into the darkness of death, the more we were drawn into the joy of His eternal life.

I know of no shepherd who, finding a pasture dry and barren, would water it with his own blood so that the grass might live again and become food for his flock. Yet that is exactly what Christ has done for us. So how do we live by the death of the Immortal One?

The Eucharistic table, and the pastures of Scripture, both nourish us with eternal life. In these two gifts, we see the care of God for our salvation. The Eucharist feeds us with life drawn from the death of Christ; Scripture feeds us with words that may seem to belong to a distant past but are still alive with divine power.

The Bible and the Eucharist are like two breasts of a mother nursing her children with her own milk. Saint John Chrysostom puts it beautifully: as a mother, moved by natural love for her child, hastens to nourish it with her own milk and blood, so Christ gives the Blood from which those reborn in Him are fed.

Jesus did not come from a family of shepherds, and yet He calls Himself one. The Hebrew word RA'AH means shepherd, but it also carries ideas of tending, watching over, protecting, even companionship. In Isaiah, for instance, we hear messianic language in which the cow and the bear graze together — in other words, they live in friendship, despite being naturally opposed.

The old-style shepherd, unlike the hired hand, spent his whole life with the flock. He absorbed their smell, slept near them, and led them to the best pasture. The sheep knew his voice — the sounds by which he called them out, told them to rest, or warned them of danger.

The shepherd is different from the flock, of course. But by living among them, he lowers himself to their level. That is surely an image of the Son of God lowering Himself to humanity — and among human beings, to those lowest in society: tax collectors, sinners, and adulteresses.

A friend of ours once told me, after returning from Ukraine, about a striking scene in Kamianets-Podilskyi. The city has around 100,000 inhabitants, but the old town, set apart from the new, still has only a few hundred residents and retains a distinctly rural feel. The square is full of greenery, and it is nothing unusual to see cars passing by cows, sheep or goats wandering freely.

He saw a flock of goats stop in the square, accompanied by an old shepherdess, her clothes carrying the unmistakable smell of the animals, leaning on a bark-stripped staff. She sat on a stone while the goats spent over an hour grazing on leaves and grass. When they had stripped everything within reach, she stood up and, without even looking back, turned towards the edge of town, where the pastures lay. As she walked, she began to mutter something under her breath.

They were sounds that hardly counted as human speech, yet the animals knew them well. It was a signal: better food was ahead. The goats immediately rose and listened with complete attention. Without a backwards glance, she moved on, and the animals followed, drawn by those sounds as if by some kind of spell. They ran after her gladly, sensing a reward, as though a **gate of beauty** had suddenly opened before them.

That is what Jesus means when He calls Himself the shepherd. He leads. He leads us out of the barren pastures of CONDEMNATION AND HELPLESSNESS into the rich, life-giving pastures of HEALING AND SALVATION.



Around the World

DISINFORMATION

[AI in War: A Crisis of Truth and Conscience](#)

The ongoing conflict between the United States, Israel, and Iran — now entering its fifth week — has become not only a theatre of military confrontation but also a profound moral battleground in the digital realm. According to a preliminary assessment by the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO), this war has generated the most significant wave of AI-driven disinformation ever recorded in Europe, surpassing even the torrent of falsehoods that accompanied Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

EDMO analysts have documented a deeply troubling proliferation of artificially generated false content spreading across social media platforms. Disinformation has been identified on pro-Iranian, pro-Israeli, and pro-American accounts alike — a sobering reminder that the manipulation of truth is not the exclusive sin of any single party. Here we must pause and reflect: when all sides engage in the weaponisation of falsehood, it is the innocent civilian — the ordinary person seeking truth — who becomes the ultimate casualty.

Particularly grave is the situation facing the Iranian people themselves, who have been subjected to an internet blockade restricting access to as much as 97% of online content since the conflict began. While disinformation originating from pro-Iranian sources is directed outward toward foreign audiences, the Iranian population remains largely sealed off from the wider flow of information. This raises a serious ethical question: does the deliberate isolation of an entire people from the truth not constitute a grave violation of their fundamental human dignity?

The Catholic tradition has long upheld the *Eighth Commandment* — *thou shalt not bear false witness* — as a cornerstone of moral life. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that truth-telling is not merely a social convention, but a sacred obligation rooted in our nature as beings made in the image of God, who is Himself Truth. The deployment of artificial intelligence to manufacture and disseminate falsehoods on an industrial scale is therefore not simply a political or technological problem; it is a profound moral disorder.

We are witnessing, for the first time in history, the use of AI to corrupt the very fabric of public discourse at a scale and speed no human propagandist could achieve alone. Every fabricated image, every false report, every algorithmically generated lie concerning the fighting deepens confusion, inflames hatred, and obstructs the path to peace. Those who commission, create, or

knowingly spread such content bear a serious moral responsibility before God and before their fellow human beings.

As people of faith, we are called to be, in the words of Our Lord, "*children of light*" (John 12:36). In an age when artificial intelligence can so easily be turned into an instrument of darkness, which calling demands of us a renewed commitment to discernment, to honest inquiry, and to the courageous defence of truth — even when truth is inconvenient, and even when the machinery of war makes lies seem expedient.

A STUDY

[They Leave Because of the Boss](#)

A lack of respect for employees and the practice of favouritism toward selected individuals are the most deeply troubling traits of poor managers among Polish workers — according to a study of workplace conditions conducted by the research platform Business Growth Review. The study, carried out among employees, contractors, and those engaged under B2B arrangements, gives sobering confirmation to the well-worn saying: an employee comes to a company, but leaves because of a boss. Every third respondent admitted to having changed jobs on account of a bad manager, while a further 28% had seriously considered doing so. In total, six out of ten employees were moved to seek new employment by the conduct or attitude of their superiors.

The most frustrating failing identified by respondents — cited by half of those surveyed — was a lack of basic respect toward subordinates. This manifested in behaviours such as ignoring the requests and ideas of staff or simply disregarding previously made agreements. We must name this plainly: to dismiss another person's voice, to treat their contributions as worthless, is not merely poor management practice — it is a failure of human dignity. Every worker, regardless of their position in a hierarchy, bears an inherent worth that no employer has the right to diminish.

Other deeply troubling traits included favouritism toward selected employees and a lack of communication skills, each cited by 37% of respondents, as well as excessive micromanagement and the breaking of promises, noted by 35%. Favouritism in the workplace is a particularly corrosive moral failing. It breeds injustice, erodes trust, and poisons the common good of an organisation. The Catholic social tradition, rooted in the principle of the dignity of labour, teaches that every worker deserves to be treated with fairness and equity. When a manager elevates some at the arbitrary expense of others, they not only damage morale — they commit an act of injustice.

The breaking of promises deserves particular moral attention. Scripture reminds us that we are called to let our "yes" mean yes (Matthew 5:37). A leader who routinely fails to honour their word does not merely inconvenience their team — they undermine the very foundation of trust upon which all healthy human relationships, including professional ones, must be built.

These findings invite us to reflect seriously on what kind of workplaces we are building and what kind of leaders we are forming. Authority in any sphere of life is not a licence for self-serving behaviour; it is a responsibility and, in the deepest sense, a form of service. A manager who forgets this has not only failed their employees — they have failed in their fundamental human vocation to care for those entrusted to them.

STATISTICS

The number of Catholics is growing.

Catholics make up 17.8% of the world's population. In 2024, there were 1.422 billion of them, which compared to the previous year represents a growth of 1.14%. The latest data comes from the Pontifical Yearbook 2026 and the Statistical Yearbook of the Church 2024, which present changes and trends regarding the presence of the baptized on five continents. Both yearbooks are prepared annually by the Central Statistical Office of the Church, which operates under the Vatican's Secretariat of State. Africa has strengthened its position in terms of the share of Catholics in the world population (an increase from 19.9 to 20.36%), while Europe recorded a decline (from 20.4 to 20.1%). In the case of the Americas, one can speak of a positive consolidation: 47.7% of Catholics worldwide come from this continent. The percentage of Catholics in Asia and Oceania remains stable: 11% and 0.9% of the world's population. An interesting item is "personnel." The Church is served by 4,464,622 people directly engaged in pastoral ministry. This includes bishops, priests, religious brothers, religious sisters, and members of secular institutes, as well as permanent deacons, lay missionaries and catechists. Proportionally, the most "professional pastors" are in Europe, and far fewer on other continents. This proportion, however, is not correlated with Christian dynamism, which is strongest in Africa. Europe is at the bottom.

The ecclesiastical geography is changing ever more visibly. The centre of gravity is increasingly shifting to the southern part of our globe. Christian dynamism manifests itself there in the growing number of Catholics.

THE CHURCH IN THE NETHERLANDS

Why is it "withering"?

An attempt to adapt the faith to cultural trends has led to the stripping away of religious practice and a weakening of Catholic identity.

Such a diagnosis of the Church in the Netherlands was made by Bishop Robertus Mutsaerts. He pointed out that the decline of the Church there is connected with a distortion of the reforms proposed by the Second Vatican Council and the imposition by bishops of their own vision of the Church. Currently, only 2% of Dutch Catholics attend Sunday Mass, whereas in some parts of the country this figure once stood at 96%. Bishop Mutsaerts notes that from being the "most obedient pupil," the Church in the Netherlands has become one of the most rebellious pupils, determined to carry out a deep reform of the Church. The result of the reforms was not renewal, but a rapid collapse: sacramental practice dropped drastically within just a few years. A rare, yet sincere opinion. The Church in the Netherlands, instead of evangelizing the new culture, was itself ideologically colonized by it. And we have what we have.

UEFA

A fine for the image of Jesus

A Serbian football club must pay over 95,000 euros in fines because its fans, during a match held under the auspices of UEFA, displayed a banner in the stands bearing the image of Jesus and the inscription: "Let our faith lead you to victory." According to the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), "the banner displayed content deemed inappropriate for a sporting event, undermining the reputation and integrity of football and UEFA." Unfortunately, the statement did not specify which body deemed the content of the banner inappropriate, and

the explanation that it undermines the "reputation and integrity" of the football association and the sport is altogether absurd.

THE CHURCH'S DAY FOR CHILDREN

Celebrations cancelled.

In connection with the letter of Pope Leo XIV concerning the World Day for Children (February 12, 2026), the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, "after careful consideration and in agreement with the Holy Father, deemed it appropriate to cancel the celebrations of the II World Day for Children, originally planned in Rome for September 25–27, 2026" — the Vatican announced.

"All initiatives concerning the pastoral care of children will be able to be carried out at the discretion of ordinaries, at the diocesan or parish level and with the participation of families, which are the natural place of human and spiritual development of every child" — we read in the statement published on the website of this Vatican institution. The Dicastery "continues its commitment to promoting family pastoral care in all its aspects" — it was assured.

In February, Leo XIV dissolved the Pontifical Committee for the World Day of Children. Its tasks were taken over by the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life. The Pope justified this by his desire to support "synergies and more effective work in the realization of this noble initiative."

From the Vatican statement, it follows that this year there will be no celebrations at the Vatican level. Work with children at the level of local Churches will, of course, continue. One should also draw attention to the emphasis that this work is to be carried out "with the participation of families."

We Read Pope Leo

Jesus, King of Peace, is a God who rejects war, whom no one can use to justify war.

Dear young people, do not be afraid to give everything – your time, your energy – to God and to your brothers and sisters, to devote yourselves entirely to the Lord and to others. Only in this way will you find in life an ever new taste and an ever deeper meaning. The world needs your witness to overcome the distortions of our times and to face its challenges, and above all to rediscover the good taste of the love of God and neighbour.

Meeting with young people and catechumens, Principality of Monaco, 28 March 2026

Let us look at Jesus, who presents Himself as the King of Peace, while preparations for war are taking place around Him. At Jesus, who remains unmoved in gentleness, at a time when others are raging in violence. Let us look at the One who offers Himself as a consolation for humanity, while others take up swords and clubs. At the One who is the light of the world, while darkness is soon to engulf the earth. (...)

As King of Peace, Jesus desires to reconcile the world in the embrace of the Father and to tear down all the walls that separate us from God and from our neighbour (...). As King of Peace, when He was burdened with our sufferings and pierced for our sins, He "did not even open His mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughter, like a sheep silent before its shearers" (Is 53:7). He did not take up arms, He did not defend Himself, He waged no war. He revealed the gentle face of God, who always rejects violence (...). This is our God: Jesus, King of Peace. He is a God who rejects war, whom no one can use to justify war, who does not hear the prayer of those who wage war and rejects it, saying: "Even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands

are full of blood" (Is 1:15). (...) Christ, King of Peace, still cries out from His cross: God is love! Have mercy! Lay down your weapons, remember that you are brothers!

Homily, 29 March 2026

We constantly appeal for peace, but unfortunately many people want to spread hatred, violence and war. Let us pray for them, for the victims of war, let us pray that true, new peace may come – a renewed peace that can give new life to all. I was told that President Trump recently stated that he would like to end the war. Let us hope that he is looking for a "way out of the situation". Let us hope that he is seeking ways to reduce violence and bombardment, which would be a significant contribution to removing the hatred that arises and continually grows in the Middle East and elsewhere. (...) Let us seek solutions to problems, let us seek ways to reduce the violence we fuel, so that peace (...) may reign in our hearts.

Meeting with journalists, Castel Gandolfo, 31 March 2026

The broad field of the lay apostolate is not limited to the space of the Church, but extends to the whole world. For the Church is present wherever her children profess the Gospel and bear witness to it: in the workplace, in civil society and in all human relationships, where through their choices they show the beauty of Christian life, already heralding here and now the justice and peace that will reach their fullness in the Kingdom of God. The world needs to be "permeated by the Spirit of Christ and more effectively achieve its goal in justice, love and peace" (LG, 36). And this is possible only through the commitment, service and witness of the laity! This is an encouragement to be that "outgoing" Church of which Pope Francis spoke to us: a Church incarnate in history, always open to mission, in which we are all called to be missionary disciples, apostles of the Gospel, witnesses of the Kingdom of God, bearing the joy of Christ whom we have encountered!

General Audience, 1 April 2026

In my opinion

Scandal in Jerusalem

For the first time in centuries, the Patriarch of Jerusalem was unable to celebrate the Palm Sunday liturgy in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. After outrage from around the world and intervention from the White House, the scandal was resolved.

On Palm Sunday, Israeli police blocked Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa and the Custos of the Holy Land, Fr Francesco Ielpo, from entering the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, where they were due to celebrate the liturgy of the Lord's Passion.

"This is the first such case in centuries: a serious and irrational measure, a departure from the principles of freedom of worship and respect for the status quo. (...) The event constitutes a serious precedent and disregards the sensitivities of billions of people around the world who, during this week, are looking towards Jerusalem," the Cardinal said in a communiqué.



The incident, which came just a week before Easter, sparked anger across the Christian world. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni stepped in firmly in defence of religious freedom, as both Cardinal Pizzaballa and Fr Ielpo are Italian citizens. French President Emmanuel Macron also voiced solidarity with Christians in the Holy Land. Poland's President likewise commented, describing the police action as a sign of disrespect towards Christian tradition and culture.

Since Israel and the United States launched strikes against Iran, Jerusalem has also come under rocket and drone fire. A ban on public gatherings was introduced on security grounds, but many viewed the Jerusalem police's heavy-handed response as over the top — and it drew criticism even from some of Israel's closest allies.

The White House then weighed in with the Israeli authorities. "I spoke this morning with Secretary Rubio. We expressed to Israel our concern regarding the closure of these holy sites. We want the faithful to be able to access them. We understand that Israel is working on security measures to open these holy sites during Holy Week," White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said.

At first, both the police and the office of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu defended the ban on access to the basilica, saying it was a security measure linked to the war with Iran. But as international pressure mounted, the position appears to have shifted. "As soon as I learned of the incident involving the Cardinal, I instructed the authorities to allow the Patriarch to celebrate services as he wished," Netanyahu said.

The row also reached Israeli political circles. Knesset member Gilad Kariv said his committee had already noted "unprofessional conduct by the police" in relation to Jerusalem's churches over the past year. In his view, National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and his ally Bentzi Gopstein bear responsibility for the embarrassment on the international stage.

"If someone who called for the burning of churches in the State of Israel [Gopstein] regularly sits in the office of the minister responsible for the police, can one be surprised that the police struggle to manage the delicate and important relationship with the churches in Jerusalem?" Kariv said.

The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Custody of the Holy Land later said that the issue of religious services had been "discussed and resolved" following a meeting between representatives of the Christian denominations in Jerusalem, the Israeli police and other Israeli authorities.

All signs suggest the dispute, which threatened to cast a shadow over the commemoration of the Lord's Passion and Resurrection in the Holy Land, was settled after coordinated diplomatic pressure from much of the Western world.

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, Lilian Cox, Sarah Carmichael, and Doleen Durnin.

Please keep in your prayers Jackie Carlin (2016) and all those whose anniversaries fall around this time.

News and Events

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!

Joy and peace to everyone at this time of the Resurrection of Christ.



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CHAPLET OF DIVINE MERCY

Introductory Prayers

Our Father, who art in heaven, . . .

Hail Mary, full of grace, . . .

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; He descended into hell; on the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Prayed on large bead prior to each decade

Leader: Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your Dearly Beloved Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, . . .

All: . . . in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

Prayed on 10 small beads of each decade

Leader: For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, . . .

All: . . . have mercy on us and on the whole world.

Prayed after all 4 decades of the Chaplet are complete:

Leader: Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, . . .

All: . . . have mercy on us and on the whole world. (Repeat three times)

Jesus Christ is risen, alleluia! Truly, He is risen, alleluia!