

PARISH BULLETIN



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

3rd May 2026

The Fifth Sunday of Easter

Hymns/Music for Sunday

Processional

226 I am the bread of life

Offertory

511 Take our bread, we ask you

Communion music

Тебе поём (We hymn thee)

Post Communion

556 This is my body

Recessional

86 Christ the Lord is risen today (Vv1-

St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

Fifth 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 (John 14:15–21)*

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

Next weekend:

Saturday, 9th May, Vigil Mass, 6.00pm

Sunday, 10th May, 6th 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

3rd May, 5th Sunday of Easter: **Holy Mass, 4pm**

17th May, 7th Sunday of Easter: **Holy Mass, 4pm**

Psalm response

*May your merciful love be upon us,
as we hope in you, O Lord.*

Gospel acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the way, and the truth, and the life, says the Lord.

No one comes to the Father except through me.

Alleluia.

Communion Antiphon

I am the true vine and you are the branches, says the Lord.

Whoever remains in me, and I in him, bears fruit in plenty, alleluia.

Take Five

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

MONDAY: EASTER WEEKDAY

4 MAY 2026

Get into the Spirit

In the early church the Holy Spirit was known as the Paraclete, a biblical Greek word meaning an “advocate” or “comforter,” literally “one who is called to your side.” The Paraclete or Holy Spirit, third person of the Trinity, provides guidance, consolation, strength, and support to people. What a great job description for all believers! When you dedicate yourself to these important and worthy pursuits, providing guidance to those who are lost and consolation, strength, and support to those who suffer, you embody the spirit of the Holy Spirit!

Today’s readings: Acts 14:5-18; John 14:21-26. *“The Advocate, the Holy Spirit . . . will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you.”*

TUESDAY: EASTER WEEKDAY

5 MAY 2026

Tough day at the office?

We all have bad hair days, blue Mondays, and getting-out-on-the-wrong-side-of-bed days. But other days go badly after they begin. Perhaps none are so bad as the day Saint Paul faced a shower of rocks from an angry mob and was left for dead. After his friends found him, he got up and re-entered the city. It’s not recorded that a miracle took place, healing him and taking the pain away. Chances are Paul stood up, bruised and bloody and sore as heck – and went back to work. This sort of perseverance involves a single-hearted dedication to the love of Christ. Ask for it!

Today’s readings: Acts 14:19-28; John 14:27-31a. *“Then they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.”*

WEDNESDAY: EASTER WEEKDAY

6 MAY 2026

Best friends forever

“Abide” in Jesus, the gospel says. Abide – remain – is a verb of intimacy and suggests the level of indwelling Jesus seeks with his followers. Jesus doesn’t want to be some distant figure in the sky we occasionally acknowledge with a bow or a hurried prayer. He wishes and offers to be our closest confidant, the friend who sticks around through thick and thin long after other friends have moved on. In a highly mobile world, he promises a different kind of relationship, one that lasts, that endures, that abides. Take him up on that offer today.

Today’s readings: Acts 15:1-6; John 15:1-8. *“Abide in me as I abide in you.”*

THURSDAY: EASTER WEEKDAY

7 MAY 2026

The tie that binds

What comes to mind when you think of love? Maybe it’s the deep connection you have with a loved one. Jesus talked about love in this way: The close relationship he had to the Father was the one he had with his disciples. He also gave us an example of a love that respects others, is patient, and is willing to make sacrifices for the good of others. Love, then, is about both contemplation and action: entering the bond you have with Jesus and the Father and also responding to it. Christ said another thing about love: It makes you happy. There’s a unique joy in loving others. Find it today.

Today’s readings: Acts 15:7-21; John 15:9-11. *“I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.”*

FRIDAY: EASTER WEEKDAY

8 MAY 2026

Image conscious

The New Testament is filled with images of Jesus – from a good shepherd to a mother hen, from a royal king to a dear friend. Writers, theologians, mystics, and artists also have given us many images that can help us deepen our own experience of God and stretch us in new ways. While some images may surprise us, they can also spark a new way of thinking about how God is present in our everyday life. At different times one image might speak to us more than another. Which image of Jesus do you most relate to today? Which do you find challenges you and opens you to new ways of experiencing God?

Today’s readings: Acts 15:22-31; John 15:12-17. *“I have called you friends.”*

SATURDAY: EASTER WEEKDAY

9 MAY 2026

The trouble with being Christian

No one goes looking for trouble, but Jesus’ words in John 15 suggest that trouble will find us. He does not mean the ordinary roller coaster of life, the joys and sorrows that come and go. When Jesus says that the world will hate us, his followers, he means trouble will come to us not because of our haloes but because we buck the tide of self-interest, materialism, and power-seeking. We can be easy targets for trouble when

we take the part of the poor and the excluded, when we do not yield to free-floating rage, when we can forgive enemies and deal honestly with all people. We stand out because of this . . . don't we?

Today's readings: Acts 16:1-10; John 15:18-21.
"You do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world."

Readings for the fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts of the Apostles 6:1-7

The diaconate has its roots in people bickering about church resources.

Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19

Those who keep their eyes on God will be preserved from need.

1 Peter 2:4-9

Jesus is the stone upon which we build – or stumble.

John 14:1-12

Jesus promises to take care of his friends, who doubt what they can't see.

Words on the Word

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He dwelt among us [Jesus Christ], full of grace and truth. He proclaimed and established the Kingdom of God, causing us to know the Father. He gave us a commandment that we should love one another; just as He loved us. He taught us the way of the evangelical beatitudes, according to which we are to be poor in spirit and meek, to endure sufferings patiently, to hunger for justice, to be merciful, pure of heart, peacemakers, to endure persecution for righteousness' sake. He was crucified under Pontius Pilate, He, the Lamb of God, taking upon Himself the sins of the world; He died for us nailed to the cross, bringing us salvation through the blood of redemption. Buried, He rose by His own power on the third day, elevating us by His resurrection to participate in the divine life, which is the life of grace. He ascended into heaven, from where He will come again to judge the living and the dead, each according to his merits; those who have responded to God's love and kindness will go to eternal life, and those who until death have rejected them will be condemned to the fire that never goes out. And His kingdom will have no end (the profession of faith of Pope Paul VI).

* *

The first community of newly converted Christians asked a question that still matters today: who is the Risen Lord?

Today's Gospel opens up many of the mysteries of Jesus Christ. He is God, who has brought about our salvation. He is one with the Father. In an effort to express this truth as faithfully as possible, the Holy Church prays in the Preface of the Holy Trinity: "For whatever we believe by Your revelation about Your glory, the same without any distinction we think also of Your Son and of the Holy Spirit. So that, confessing the true and eternal Divinity, we honour the distinction of Persons, the unity in essence, and equality in majesty."

Christ alone leads us into the mystery of eternity. To those who believe in Him, He offers a Christian outlook – Christian hope.

Human beings need a sense of direction. We need to know what we are living for. Without direction, without hope, life can begin to collapse. Professor Antoni Kępiński once observed cases of people dying without any serious illness. In his view, they had been defeated by a loss of hope – by a life emptied of meaning.

We all attach our hopes to something: our work, our responsibilities, the expectations of our children, family or friends. These things matter. But when failure comes, or when life suddenly turns tragic, we can find ourselves overwhelmed. And suffering is never far away. We see it in hospitals, where life is constantly fighting death. We see it across the world, where love battles hatred, and where truth struggles against lies, light against darkness. At times, the forces of falsehood and darkness seem to be winning.

But do they really? That is exactly why we need the Christian perspective – Christian hope. When everything else falls apart, we can still say: God is with us.

The Word became flesh so that no one would ever have to cry out alone, “My God, why have You forsaken me?” Those words were spoken too by our Saviour in His human suffering. So, in the hardest moments of life – in humiliation, pain or failure – do not say, “God has abandoned me.” He is walking beside you.

Christ has triumphed. He overcame His earthly enemies, defeated sin – and with it, its author, Satan. In doing so, He conquered death and opened the way to life for all who believe in Him.

And we believe. To look to Christ is to know that, through His death and Resurrection, He has saved us and given us something far greater than a passing solution: an eternal perspective. He sheds light on a future that cannot be measured and will never end.

He alone is the gate to that eternity. He leads believers into the Father’s house. We have to choose to follow Him, even if that is hard, because selfishness and self-love are always tugging at us. But that is the journey faith asks of us: to walk with Christ, and to trust that in Him, life does not end – it is fulfilled.

* * *

We believe then in God, who for all eternity begets the Son; we believe in the Son, the Word of God, who is begotten eternally; we believe in the Holy Spirit, an uncreated Person, who proceeds from the Father and the Son as their mutual, eternal love. In the three Divine Persons, who are co-eternal and equal, life and happiness of God, the absolutely One who is, and was not created, appear in the greatest fullness and perfection, with the greatest elevation and glory belonging to Him alone. Therefore, unity in the Trinity, and the Trinity in unity, ought to be revered! (Pope Paul VI's Profession of Faith).

In Christ’s love,
Fr Anthony

ANGELS IN ICONS: 26 ARCHANGELS

Tradition has never been fully agreed on the number of archangels. Most often, seven names are given: Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Jehudiel, Selatiel, Uriel and Barachiel. In Catholic devotion, however, special attention is usually given to Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, while Uriel appears in some traditions but not in official Catholic devotion.



Saint Michael the Archangel

Michael is regarded as the chief of the archangels, the commander of the heavenly hosts and the great defender against evil. In Christian art, he appears in several forms. As the apocalyptic rider, he is the angel who announces the Last Judgement. In scenes of divine judgement, he is shown weighing the good and evil deeds of souls. As a warrior trampling a dragon, he represents the victory of good over evil and, in older Christian imagery, the triumph of Christianity over paganism. Michael, the foremost of the archangels, is often shown at Christ's right hand. He is usually depicted in soldier's armour, often with a tunic.

Gabriel is the messenger of God. In the Annunciation, he brings the message to the Blessed Virgin Mary that she will conceive Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. In iconography and liturgy, he is often shown as a youthful figure in imperial robes. As the second-ranking archangel, he is commonly placed at Christ's left hand.

Raphael is most often identified by the cross and the staff, and he appears especially in scenes from the Book of Tobit, where he accompanies and protects Tobias on his journey.

Depictions of Uriel are much less common. He is not mentioned in the Old or New Testament, though references to him do appear in some apocryphal writings. In the Western Church, devotion to Uriel was condemned as early as the eighth century. In Orthodox tradition, he is sometimes described as an angel of punishment and repentance, with flame as his attribute.



Rublev: Saint Gabriel the Archangel

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 21

The Love of God

John 10:27-30

Whenever I read the words that no force, event, person or even sin can snatch me from Christ's hand, I feel a deep sense of security. A truth rises to the surface of my mind, fresh every time, and yet somehow still astonishing: God loves me, and He does not want to lose me for anything. No one has ever cared for me so completely, and no one ever will. That much is obvious.

Human love, even at its best, can become overwhelming. It can turn from life-giving to

exhausting, even destructive. Its heat can consume everything in an instant. And yet we are told that no one will snatch us from Christ's hand. Still, we must remember the other side of the truth: "It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31). In Exodus, Moses, longing to see God, is told: "You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live" (Exodus 33:20). If Moses would die from such an encounter, it becomes clear why I do not see God every day in the fullness of His presence: I would not survive it.

God is love, but His love is not small, safe or manageable. It is infinite, purifying and all-consuming. Only the Son, in the fullness of the Holy Spirit, can receive and answer the Father's love in its totality, with infinite love in return. So, what happens when that same burning love is offered to us ordinary creatures – sinners, weak, limited, burdened with failures, old wounds, pride and shame? Can such spotless, infinite love become a fire that overwhelms us? Can the love of God, drawing near in communion and filling us with His presence, leave us unmade? Could this ocean of love burn through the fragile clay of the human person?

Isaiah saw the seraphim veil their faces before God's glory. Even they could not bear the brightness. So, what of us? Is a journey to the sun possible? Of course not. We would burn before reaching it. And yet even the sun is nothing beside the fire of God's love.

John had a glimpse of the risen Christ on Patmos and fell at His feet in fear. Jesus' eyes were like blazing fire, His feet like bronze glowing in a furnace. That is the real answer: the Incarnation. In Christ, God comes close without destroying us. And on the other side of the Incarnation is our divinisation: our being drawn into His life.

The more we enter into communion with Christ – gazing at His face in icons, adoring Him in the Blessed Sacrament, receiving Him in the Eucharist, listening to Scripture and meditating on it – the more that union deepens. It does not erase who we are. Rather, it prepares us for the day when His glory is revealed. And that moment will not be one of self-condemnation, but of awe that takes our breath away.

So Christian life cannot be about pretending. It is not about looking devout in front of other people. That will count for nothing in heaven. What matters is the real thing: being closely united to Christ in the hidden places, behind closed doors, where no one else sees. In time, God will bring everything into the light. He will reveal what has been hidden, because that is what truly matters. It is not the shop windows that decide the story, but the vaults and safes.

Fr Anthony



Around the World

The sometimes-missed news

ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

THE WAR IS VISIBLE FROM SPACE

Satellite images have revealed severe side effects of the war in the Middle East: extensive oil spills – a result of attacks on energy installations and ships in the Persian Gulf. These are consequences of military actions by Iran and U.S.-Israeli forces. The images were released by the European Space Agency. The spill is serious; the pollution could impact both the natural environment and the people living along the coast, for whom the sea is a basic source of livelihood. The photos show an oil slick extending over more than 8 square kilometres in the Strait of Hormuz region, near Iran's Kish Island. The spill occurred after damage to the ship *Shahid Bagheri*. Other images show spilled fuel by Lavan Island, where oil facilities were struck. The oil has begun to spread further and is reaching Shidvar Island – a protected area and habitat for many species, including rare seabirds and turtles. Water contamination threatens fish, which are a staple food source for thousands of residents in this region. The problem may also affect desalination plants that provide drinking water access to nearly 100 million people.

BIGGER EU

NOW MONTENEGRO

In the complex tapestry of European geopolitics, another thread is being carefully woven. Montenegro, the small Adriatic nation forged in the crucible of the Balkan conflicts, has taken a significant, if tentative, step on its long pilgrimage towards the European Union. The decision by EU member states to give the green light for work on the country's accession treaty is more than a bureaucratic milestone; it is a moment of renewed hope for a region still healing from the deep wounds of the 20th century.

The announcement was met with measured optimism. European Commissioner for Enlargement, Marta Kos, rightly described it as "an important step," acknowledging the substantial progress Podgorica has made since its independence in 2006. Her call for accelerated reforms, particularly in upholding the rule of law, is a necessary dose of prudence. Indeed, the EU itself, she noted, must learn from previous enlargements, embedding stronger safeguards to protect what it calls the "bloc's fundamental values."

It is precisely on this point of "values" that a deeper reflection is required. For any nation, but especially one with a rich and distinct cultural heritage, the path to accession is fraught with both promise and peril. The promise is one of peace, stability, and economic solidarity – the very ideals that inspired the EU's founding fathers, men like Schuman, Adenauer, and De Gasperi, who were themselves guided by profound Christian principles. The European project, at its best, is an expression of the principle of solidarity, a community of nations working for the common good.

The peril, however, lies in the potential erosion of national identity and moral sovereignty. The "fundamental values" promoted by Brussels today are often unmoored from the Christian roots that once nourished Europe. A nation like Montenegro must ask difficult questions: will joining the bloc require it to adopt secularist ideologies on life, family, and faith that are alien to its people? The principle of subsidiarity – a cornerstone of Catholic social teaching – demands that a larger community should not interfere with the internal life of a smaller one but support it and help to coordinate its activities with the rest of society, always with a view to the common

good. One must pray that this principle will be honoured.

Montenegro's authorities remain committed to an ambitious 2028 target for full membership. As this nation of just over 600,000 people seeks to anchor its future in the European family, its journey is a microcosm of a wider European struggle: the struggle to build a unity that respects diversity, to foster a prosperity that serves human dignity, and to reclaim a soul that seems increasingly lost. One hopes, and prays, that its leaders will navigate this path with the wisdom and fortitude necessary to secure a future of both prosperity and principle for their people.

THE PROGRESS OF PROGRESS?

INSTEAD OF FATHER AND MOTHER

A revealing glimpse into the ideological currents shaping European bureaucracy has emerged from the Netherlands, where the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has drafted internal guidelines aimed at engineering a new, supposedly 'inclusive' public language. The document, leaked by journalists at [GeenStijl.nl](https://www.geenstijl.nl), is less a style guide and more a blueprint for dismantling the foundational concepts of family, history, and even biological reality.

The directives, intended for civil servants, begin with the now-familiar linguistic policing of common courtesy, advising against the use of traditional salutations such as "ladies and gentlemen". They also take aim at Dutch history, recommending that the 17th century no longer be referred to as the nation's "Golden Age" due to its association with colonialism and slavery. While a sober and honest reflection on the sins of the past is a Christian duty, this approach smacks more of historical airbrushing than genuine reconciliation.

Most troubling, however, is the guide's direct assault on the family. The document critiques fundamental, universal terms like "father" and "mother" as potentially exclusionary. Rooted in the fluid and abstract tenets of gender theory, this advice seeks to erase the natural family from public discourse. The guidance suggests that even cherished celebrations should be neutered of their meaning; Mother's Day and Father's Day, it proposes, could be rebranded as the vacuous "Your Day" to accommodate what it calls "diverse lifestyles".

This is not merely a matter of semantics; it is a direct challenge to the created order. Catholic teaching holds that the family, founded on the marriage of a man and a woman, is the fundamental and essential building block of any healthy society. The roles of mother and father are not arbitrary social constructs to be discarded for ideological convenience. They are beautiful, distinct, and complementary vocations, rooted in the truth of the human person as created male and female.

To suggest these words are exclusionary is to perform a profound act of exclusion itself – sidelining the overwhelming majority of human experience and the divinely ordained structure of the family.

While the Ministry has stressed these were internal instructions not intended for public release, their publication has ignited a necessary controversy. What we see here is the logical endpoint of an ideology that detaches language from reality. It begins by banning "ladies and gentlemen" and ends by declaring the words "mother" and "father" problematic. In the name of a sterile and abstract inclusivity, the very ties that bind us – to each other, to our past, and to the truth – are being systematically dismantled.

USA

AMONG THE FRONTRUNNERS

A leaked report from Politico, citing well-placed sources, has revealed the creation of a White House list categorising NATO member states as either "friendly" or "unfriendly" towards the United States. This internal assessment, reportedly dubbed the "good" and "bad" list, is said to detail allies' contributions to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and aims to signal President Donald Trump's intentions to penalise nations perceived as unsupportive, particularly concerning actions related to Iran or perceived failures to meet collective defence commitments.

The report indicates a clear division among allies. While Spain, the United Kingdom, and France are noted for withholding assistance to the U.S. on certain matters, countries like Romania and others reportedly granted access to their air bases for American operations. Bulgaria, too, is mentioned as having quietly facilitated American logistics in the Middle East.

The implications of such a classification for NATO's future cohesion and the potential consequences for nations on either side of this divide are significant. One speculated outcome involves the potential relocation of U.S. military assets. Politico suggests that Poland and Romania could emerge as significant beneficiaries, given President Trump's reported favourable disposition towards them and their willingness to host additional American troops.

From a moral perspective, the principle of solidarity, a cornerstone of Catholic social teaching, underscores the importance of mutual support and shared responsibility within alliances. While nations rightly discern their own national interests, the concept of collective defence, as embodied by NATO, calls for a spirit of genuine fraternity and a commitment to the common good of all members. The potential for punitive measures based on perceived slights or differing strategic assessments raises questions about the long-term health of such partnerships, which are built not only on strategic alignment but also on trust and a shared understanding of mutual obligation. The pursuit of justice and peace within the international community necessitates a balanced approach, where national interests are pursued with a keen awareness of their impact on the wider family of nations.

AN OLD NEW CULT

BLOODY FELIX RETURNS

In a move that chills the soul and signals a profound spiritual sickness at the heart of the Russian state, President Vladimir Putin has officially restored the name of Felix Dzerzhinsky to the Federal Security Service (FSB) Academy. This is no mere administrative change; it is the deliberate embrace of a man whose name is synonymous with state-sponsored murder and the persecution of the Church.

Dzerzhinsky, the founder of the Cheka secret police and the chief organiser of the Red Terror, was the architect of a system that waged war not only on political opponents but on the very dignity of the human person. His name once adorned this same institution, the former Higher School of the KGB where a young Putin himself trained, until it was removed in 1992 amidst the hopes for a post-Soviet future. Mr Putin has previously lamented that removal, and now, he has resurrected this ghost from Russia's unrepentant past.

The symbolism is as deliberate as it is grotesque. The cult of "Iron Felix" is being methodically

rebuilt. A statue of Dzerzhinsky is slated to return to Lubyansky Square, the historic site of the Cheka and KGB headquarters. In the perverse moral calculus of the modern Kremlin, this monument to a mass murderer may replace the Solovetsky Stone, a humble memorial erected to honour the countless victims of that very terror. One idol of state power will be raised by tearing down a tribute to its victims. Another statue of Dzerzhinsky already stands, unveiled without fanfare, before the headquarters of the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR).

This is not an isolated act of historical revisionism but part of a wider, systematic effort to erase the memory of the state's crimes and sanctify its perpetrators. In February, Moscow authorities permanently closed the GULAG History Museum, the only major state institution in Russia dedicated to truthfully confronting the horrors of Stalinist repression. In its place, a new museum will be built, ostensibly to commemorate Nazi crimes during the Second World War. Yet, within this narrative, Stalin, the tyrant responsible for the deaths of millions of his own people – including innumerable priests, religious, and faithful laity – will be cast as a national hero.

For Catholics, and indeed for all people of conscience, these actions represent more than just a political shift. They are an offence against truth, memory, and justice. The Soviet regime, which Dzerzhinsky helped forge in blood, was a godless ideology that sought to extinguish the light of Christ from Russia. It created a vast archipelago of concentration camps and filled mass graves with New Martyrs whose only crime was their faith.

To restore the name of Dzerzhinsky is to spit on those graves. To close a museum dedicated to the Gulag's victims is to silence their testimony. It is a state-enforced command to forget, to deny the reality of evil, and to venerate the executioners rather than honour the martyrs. A nation that cannot confront its own sins but instead chooses to glorify the instruments of its darkest chapters, is a nation walking willingly into a moral abyss. This is not the foundation of a strong and confident country, but the desperate idolatry of a regime built on a lie.

We Read Pope Leo

We do not agree to a formal blessing of homosexual couples or of couples in irregular situations...

The journey must be understood above all as an expression of the will to proclaim the Gospel, to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ. It is therefore a way of drawing close to people in their joy, in the depth of their faith, but also in their suffering. Yes, there one often needs to comment on something or try to encourage people themselves to take responsibility for their lives. (...)

We must promote a new approach, a culture of peace. Very often, when we evaluate certain situations, the response immediately arises: one must intervene using violence – going to war, attacking. In what we have seen, many innocent people have died. I have just read a letter (...) from the families of children who died on the first day of the attack. They talk about losing their sons, daughters – children who died. And I say: it is not about whether it is a regime change or not... It is about how to promote the values in which we believe without the death of so many innocent people. The question of Iran is, of course, very complex. Even the negotiations being attempted: one day Iran says “yes”, the United States says “no”, and vice versa, and we do not know where this is heading. This chaotic situation has arisen, critical for the global economy. But there is also an entire population of innocent people in Iran who suffer because of this war. Whether it is a regime change or not... It is not clear what regime currently prevails, after the

early days of Israel's and the United States' attacks on Iran. First of all I would like to encourage continuing dialogue for peace: that the parties engage in it, that they seek solutions, that they make every effort to promote peace. (...)

Unity or divisions in the Church should not revolve around sexual matters. We have a tendency to think that when the Church speaks about morality, the only moral question is sexuality. I believe that in reality there are much larger, more important issues, such as justice, equality, freedom of men and women, freedom of religion – all of them would take precedence over that specific issue. (...) The Apostolic See has clearly stated that we do not agree to a formal blessing of couples – including homosexual couples – or couples in irregular situations – going beyond that which, if one might say so, Pope Francis has specifically permitted, saying that all people receive a blessing. When a priest gives a blessing at the end of Mass, when the Pope gives a blessing at the end of a great celebration (...), these are blessings for all people. Pope Francis's well-known expression "Tutti, tutti, tutti" [all, all, all] is an expression of the Church's conviction that all are welcome; all are invited; all are invited to follow Jesus and all are invited to seek conversion in their lives. Going further, I believe that this topic today can cause more divisions than unity, and that we should seek ways of building our unity on Jesus Christ and on what Jesus Christ teaches (...) I condemn all actions that are unjust. I condemn the taking of human life.

I condemn the death penalty. I believe that human life should be respected and that the lives of all people – from conception to natural death – should be respected and protected.

Press conference during the flight to Rome, April 23, 2026.

In my opinion

A Humpback – yes, a child – no

A recent review of abortion law commissioned by the Scottish Government has proposed a radical shift in the nation's ethical and legal landscape. The recommendations suggest scrapping the current 24-week time limit, potentially allowing abortions on social grounds – including sex-selective purposes – up until the moment of birth. This proposal means that a healthy, viable child could be denied the right to life just as they are prepared to enter the world.

As we process these recommendations, we must ask a fundamental question: what social crisis is so insurmountable that it can only be resolved by the termination of another human being?

The cultural divide on this issue was recently highlighted in a social media exchange I had with a 19-year-old student. His position was blunt: "Abortion should be available on demand until birth." He dismissed the Catholic perspective as an attempt to "control women," arguing that because pregnancy places a nine-month physical burden on the woman while providing only a "moment of pleasure" for the man, the father should have no significant say in the matter. For him, the solution lies in compulsory sexual education and more effective contraception.

While one can acknowledge the student's concern for women's autonomy, his worldview reveals a startlingly narrow vision of human relationships. By reducing the act of conceiving life to a mere "moment of pleasure" and a subsequent "burden," the concepts of shared responsibility, sacrificial love, and the protective role of the father are entirely erased. It is a perspective that prioritizes "scheming afterward" over foresight and communal support. Furthermore, the notion that only Catholics defend the sanctity of the womb is a fallacy; one does not need a religious creed to recognize the inherent dignity of a human life. One only needs to be a humanist.

The inconsistency of our modern "sensitivity" is perhaps most visible in our treatment of the natural world versus our own offspring. As I write this, a massive effort is underway to save a humpback whale – affectionately named "Timmy" – who became stranded on a sandbar in the Baltic Sea. Resources are being mobilized and large sums of money are being raised to pull this creature back to safety. This display of compassion for a suffering animal is noble and right. Yet, one must wonder why this same sensitivity fails so miserably when applied to the unborn members of our own species.

If society continues down this path, future generations may well look back on the 21st century not as an era of enlightenment, but as a period of profound moral darkness.

The push for these legislative changes often relies on a broad interpretation of "mental health." Under current practices, it requires little effort to convince two medical practitioners that a pregnancy poses a risk to a woman's mental well-being or of any existing children. However, this "social" justification lacks a rigorous clinical foundation. Professor Pawel Mierzejewski of the Institute of Psychiatry and Neurology has noted that no credible studies indicate that abortion improves a patient's mental state. On the contrary, research suggests it can pose significant long-term dangers to psychological health. Abortion does not solve a psychological crisis; it frequently deepens it.

As Scotland stands at this crossroads, we must decide what kind of society we wish to be. Will we be a people who mobilize for a whale but remain indifferent to a child? There is currently a [petition](#)¹ circulating to resist these changes and reduce the abortion time limit. It is a necessary response to a proposal that threatens to untether our laws from the basic dictates of conscience.

May we find the grace to protect the most vulnerable among us, and may Scotland be spared from a future where "enlightenment" is measured by the loss of our most basic human instincts.

Fr Anthony

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 Brendan Claffey and all those who have recently died and 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!



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¹ https://righttolife.org.uk/abortiontimelimit?utm_source=righttolife.org.uk&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=abortiontimelimit&utm_content=dear_reader&dear_reader=true&dear_reader=true