

# PARISH BULLETIN

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



## *The Sixth Sunday of Easter*

### Hymns/Music for Sunday

#### Processional

61 Be thou my vision

#### Offertory

67 Blest are you, Lord

#### Communion music

*Тебе поём (We hymn thee)*

#### Post Communion

58 Be still and know that I am God

#### Recessional

14 Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to the Risen Lord

*St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre*

### *Sixth Week in Eastertide*

Tuesday: **Holy Mass, 6pm**

Wednesday: **The Ascension of the Lord, Vigil Mass, 6pm**

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

**Thursday: The Ascension of the Lord, Mass in the Day, 10am**

Friday: **No Mass**

### Next weekend:

**Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> May, Vigil Mass, 6.00pm**

**Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> May, 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Eastertide, Holy Mass, 10.00am**

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

*St. Columba Episcopal Church, Bridgend, Isle of Islay*

17<sup>th</sup> May, 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter: **Holy Mass, 4pm**

### **Psalm response**

*Cry out with joy to God, all the earth.*

### **Gospel acclamation**

*Alleluia, alleluia.*

*If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, says the Lord, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him.*

*Alleluia.*

### **Communion Antiphon**

*If you love me, keep my commandments, says the Lord, and I will ask the Father and he will send you another Paraclete, to abide with you for ever, alleluia.*

# Take Five

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

## MONDAY: EASTER WEEKDAY

11 MAY 2026

### Come stay at my house

God has bestowed so many gifts on creation. In fact, the world is here in the first place because God's love overflowed – God wanted to share the divine love. God even sent Jesus and became human so as to invite people more deeply into life in God. So shouldn't the response to all this generosity be a generous one in which we welcome God into our lives, are open and inviting with God in prayer, and honour and care for our world and its creatures? Start opening doors today.

**Today's readings:** Acts 16:11-15; John 15:26-16:4a. *"If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home."*

## TUESDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINTS NEREUS AND ACHILLEUS, MARTYRS

12 MAY 2026

### Strike a blow for peace

In the early years of the church it was a matter of debate whether Christians should belong to the Roman army, although many did. Two of the martyrs remembered today, Nereus and Achilles, were members of the elite Praetorian Guard, but after they became Christians they refused to serve and were eventually exiled and executed. At the end of the fourth century Pope Damasus had an inscription made in their honour, which read in part: "O miracle of faith! . . . they become converted . . . they throw away their shields, their armour, and their blood-stained javelins. Confessing the faith of Christ, they rejoice to bear testimony to its triumph." What bold and perhaps risky paths can you take to live out what you believe?

**Today's readings:** Acts 16:22-34; John 16:5-11. *"He brought them up into his house and provided a meal."*

## WEDNESDAY: OPTIONAL MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY OF FÁTIMA

13 MAY 2026

### The power of prayer

When the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to three children in Fatima, Portugal in 1917, many scoffed – and many still do. And what shocking, controversial disclosure did the

children make about Our Lady's words that inspired such disbelief? She said the same basic thing she always says when she appears: pray. For different things – for world peace or for sinners – but pray. In this instance she referred to herself as the "Lady of the Rosary" – even reminding Catholics of a tool with which to pray! When was the last time you obeyed her simple command?

**Today's readings:** Acts 17:15, 22-18:1; John 16:12-15. *"What therefore you unknowingly worship, I proclaim to you."*

## THURSDAY: THE SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

14 MAY 2026

### Rise to the occasion

When Christ was raised from the dead, it wasn't merely a matter of his soul going to heaven. He first appeared physically to his disciples. Then when he did ascend, he took his body with him. His return to the right hand of the Father made sense because Jesus was, after all, God. His body going with him, however, was just as necessary because God did not take on human form only to shed it as if it were a burden. That is the great calling the celebration of the Ascension reminds you of: to share in God's life and rise to God.

**Today's readings:** Acts 1:1-11; Ephesians 1:17-23; Matthew 28:16-20. *"He presented himself alive to them."*

## FRIDAY: FRIENDS

15 MAY 2026

### Can you see God and live to tell about it?

No one," God says in the Book of Exodus, "can see me and live" (33:20) – almost no one, that is. Moses, for example, used to speak with God "face to face, as a person speaks to a friend" (Exodus 33:11) without undergoing instant vaporization. Christian theology calls this experience the beatific vision: the total heavenly awareness of God that would overwhelm most mortals during their earthly lives. That doesn't mean you can't get a glimpse of the Divine every now and then. The worship and service you offer as a Christian opens a door to the holy and will carry you all the way to the fullness of complete communion

with God forever.

**Today's readings:** Acts 18:9-18; John 16:20-23. *"I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice."*

## **SATURDAY: EASTER WEEKDAY**

**16 MAY 2026**

### **What a joy!**

Joy ought to be celebrated more often for the virtue it is. The great 13th-century Catholic theologian Saint Thomas Aquinas believed humanity literally "could not live" without joy. He argued that felicity or blessed happiness is the ultimate end or purpose of human existence

and leads to the vision of God's essence.

Although life's obstacles and setbacks make it difficult for us to feel joyful all the time, we can remember the words of the late opera singer Beverly Sills, who said we may not always feel happy but we can always be cheerful. In this joyful Easter season, bring some good cheer to everything you do and everyone you meet today!

**Today's readings:** Acts 18:23-28; John 16:23b-28. *"Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete."*

## *Readings for the Sixth Sunday of Easter*

### **Acts of the Apostles 8:5-8, 14-17**

Philip brings the liberating gospel, while Peter and John follow up with the Spirit.

### **Psalms 66:1-3, 4-5, 6-7, 16, 20**

Joy is the natural response for those who've seen the tremendous deeds of God.

### **1 Peter 3:15-18**

Be ready to explain your faith but not to argue the matter with ungracious force.

### **John 14:15-21**

Jesus does not abandon his friends but sends them an Advocate to remain close.

## *Words on the Word*

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*The Messiah has truly come, yet now we ought to await Him again, more than ever before – and not merely a small group of the chosen, but all people. The Lord will be slow to come if we do not earnestly await Him. It is precisely this accumulation of desires that is meant to bring about the Parousia (P. Teilhard de Chardin).*

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### **Feel the Mockery That Hurts Our Hearts! )-:**

Can you feel it? The sharp mockery that has lasted through history and hurts our hearts? "They believe the body will rise again!" the Greeks laughed coldly. "They worship that liar, Christ, as Saviour!" the Jews shouted in anger. Today, our world still mocks us: "Heaven? Hell? Devils? Angels? What silly stories!"

Every week, TVs and newspapers talk about us – Catholics, the true believers. Sometimes, their words feel like a warm hug: nice articles praising our strong morals, holy traditions, and solid faith. Shows that share truth, saying faith is the vital fire – the deep comfort and sure safety every heart wants badly. But it hurts when mockery comes! Even our own Church leaders and believers mess up defending us, giving ammo to the haters. It hurts a lot, right?

Can a non-believer really speak for us? No – they just watch from far away, like outsiders drawing shadows. They study our history coldly, treat our rituals like old museum items, our holy art as just pretty pictures, our sacred books as old junk. Libraries are full of their

breakdowns of "religious feelings" – cut apart, tagged, and stored. But deep in our hearts, we know it's empty. They miss the real, beating heart of faith!

### ***The Truth That Lives in Us!***

Our Christian life, our close tie to Jesus, grows in the heart's secret garden – the soul's holy fire. It's personal, shining different in each of us, but linking us in His Body, the Church. We give in to His Word. Faith – alive with hope, trust, love – drives our steps, powers the Church's endless work. Together in our differences, tied by this holy fire, we are One – strong, unbreakable!

### ***Listen to St. Peter's Loving Call – Let It Touch You!***

"With gentleness and respect, keep a clear conscience, so that those who speak evil against your good life in Christ may be ashamed of their lies. It is better, if God wills it, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil" (1 Peter 3:16-17). It touches me deeply! Live it – follow God's rules with all you have. This bright example, this good Christian life, pulls lost people back. Arguments do not convert – the Holy Spirit does through you do, by shining!

Even in big science fights – from quantum physics, biology wonders, to space mysteries – reason says: Faith isn't dumb; atheists don't own logic. "God exists" or "God doesn't" can't be proven by thought alone. No talk makes belief; words aren't enough.

### ***But Your Life? It Pulls, Wins, Saves!***

Keep doing great good – not for show, but for love of Him. This saves you, shows the world the Church's power. Rise, faithful ones – let your lives shine Christ's light! Mockery falls, hearts wake, eternity calls. You can. You must. He trusts you. Live it now – feel the win in your blood!

### ***The Truth That Weeps and Sings Within Us!***

Our Christianity, our intimate bond with Jesus Christ, blooms in the hidden garden of the heart – the soul's sacred fire. It's personal, shimmering uniquely in every believer, yet weaving us all into His Mystical Body, the Holy Church. We surrender to His Word, and faith – that living pulse of hope, trust, and love – propels our every step, fuels the Church's eternal mission. United in our differences, bound by this divine flame, we become One – invincible, unbreakable!

### ***Hear Saint Peter's Tender, Urgent Plea – Let It Pierce Your Heart!***

"Having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil." (1 Peter 3:16-17). Oh, how it moves me! Live it – breathe God's commandments with every fibre of your being. This radiant witness, this good Christian life, is the magnet that draws wandering souls home. It's not arguments that convert; it's the Holy Spirit shining in you!

Even in the fiercest intellectual storms – from the whispers of quantum realms, through biology's miracles, to cosmology's vast mysteries – logic itself cries out: Faith is no folly; atheism holds no monopoly on reason. "God exists" and "God does not" stand equally unproven by pure thought. No debate forces belief; words alone fall short.

### ***But Your Life? It Compels, It Conquers, It Saves!***

Persevere in heroic goodness – not for show, but for love of Him. This is your path to salvation, the Church's soaring witness to the world. Rise, dear faithful – let your lives blaze with Christ's light! In this emotional fire of faith, mockery crumbles, hearts awaken, and eternity calls. You can do this. You must. He believes in you. Live it now – feel the victory surging in your veins!

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*Life must be healed of hatred, which is the sowing of Satan and stands in complete*

*opposition to Christian teaching. In private and social life, hatred is a disruptive and destructive force, of which a Catholic must not avail himself. In ideological disputes as in political contests alike, hatred must be regarded as a forbidden weapon, one which we unconditionally condemn. The supreme law of Christ is mutual love, which harms neither any person nor any cause, but rather draws together people of differing views and leads them toward concord. To the slogans of hatred and vengeance we must oppose the teaching of justice and love of neighbour (Cardinal A. Hlond, 1948).*

In Christ's love,  
Fr Anthony

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## ANGELS IN ICONS: 26 VISIONS OF FAITH: ICONS OF EVANGELISTS, APOSTLES, AND SAINTS

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In the radiant heart of the Orthodox Church, as in its sister tradition of Catholicism, the veneration of saints ignites the soul like stars piercing the night sky. These luminous figures – mediators and intercessors – stand as bridges between humanity and the Divine, patrons who whisper our pleas to the heavens, and living testaments whose holy lives beckon us to rise toward moral greatness. Emulate them, and your spirit soars!



Michael Damaskinos: *The four military saints*. 16<sup>th</sup> century  
Benaki Museum, Athens

Though ancient canons guide this sacred devotion, the Orthodox world blooms with vibrant local expressions, a tapestry of grace woven across nations. Each land claims its national patron, a miracle-worker whose deeds echo through eternity, drawing the faithful on pilgrimages to hallowed burial sites and relic shrines. Here, weary hearts find renewal, steps quicken with hope, and souls touch the eternal!

Ascetics and hermits, those towering pillars of endurance like Symeon the Stylite and Anthony the Hermit, command awe-inspiring reverence. Their unyielding quests for God inspire us to conquer our own inner wildernesses. Icons of these saints grace not only the majestic iconostases but also the intimate corners of daily life – calendar icons marking time with holiness, travel icons as faithful companions on life's journey, shielding and uplifting wherever we roam.

From the dawn of Christianity, the timeless narratives of the Old Testament have kindled artistic fire, reminding us of God's unwavering covenant. While icons of individual prophets are rare jewels, the mighty Elijah blazes as a beacon of prophetic zeal. Cherished scenes – the Sacrifice of Abraham, a profound surrender of faith; the Bosom of Abraham, an embrace of divine welcome – call us to trust, to hope, and to live as heirs of these sacred promises.

Let these holy images stir your heart: gaze upon them, and let their light awaken the saint within you!

# 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 22

### Lazarus

John 11:3-7, 20-27, 33b-45

*Lazarus lay in the cold, unyielding grip of the tomb. In the spiritual life, sin is that very death. We may not know the specific path Lazarus walked, but the image of his broken body, entombed within a rocky cave, is a hauntingly exact portrait of a soul in bondage. It is the condition of one who has spent years silencing the whispers of conscience until that silence becomes a prison – a burial of the spirit while the body still draws breath.*

When Jesus stands before that cave and cries out, Lazarus emerges. But look at him! He is bound hand and foot; his face is shrouded in a burial cloth, as if his very identity had been erased by the darkness. He is helpless. He cannot move, he cannot free himself, he cannot even dare to dream of liberty. Though the thunderous voice of Jesus reached into the stale, rotting air of the grave to call him back to life, Lazarus still desperately needed the hands of others to be truly free.

Jesus turns to the community and commands: *"Unbind him!"*

Lazarus already carried the stench of decay. His situation was humanly hopeless, a decomposing tragedy. Had it not been for the voice of Jesus, moved by a love that weeps, and had it not been for the hands of the community who dared to touch his bandages, Lazarus would have remained a prisoner of the dark. His "stinking situation" would have only worsened, attracting the worms of despair to feed on his rot.

How often do we do this to ourselves? We weave our own shrouds through years of sin, entangling ourselves in fetters we cannot break alone. Jesus provides the divine inspiration to leave the tomb – He calls us to the light of the Confessional – but the Church is called to undo the lingering effects of our burial.

The Church is not an anonymous institution; she is a mother, a family of brothers and sisters. She is the community that listens to the Word and breaks the Eucharistic Bread with us. And what are these "bandages" that remain even after we are forgiven? They are the scars of fear, the heaviness of sadness, the cold walls of isolation, the burning of anger, and the paralyzing tremors of doubt.

I truly believe that the people we encounter in the forty-eight hours following a sincere Confession are sent by God. They are the ones meant to help us unwrap the cloth from our eyes. In the early Church, the core community was small – about one hundred and twenty souls. This was not just a symbolic number; it was a human one. It was a community where people were "transparent" to one another. Everyone knew Lazarus. Everyone knew his name, his struggle, and his scent.

In our modern, neo-pagan world, we have lost this. We live in "massive" communities where

we are merely statistics – a count of Communion distributed or a number in a pew. In these vast, anonymous spaces, no one knows Lazarus is missing. No one notices the stench of a brother's despair. We offer a "sign of peace" to strangers while our neighbours rot in loneliness. But those gathered at the tomb of Lazarus knew him. They loved him. And because they loved him, they helped unbind him.

Note the divine order of this miracle, as Saint Gregory the Great observed: First, the Lord calls the soul out of the tomb; only then does He tell the community to unbind him. If the disciples had tried to unbind him while he was still dead in the grave, the stench would have been unbearable. The lesson is profound: the way out is the Confession of sins; the unbinding is the return to the warmth of the community. There is no true life in the Church for those who refuse to come out of the tomb, who prefer to stay hidden and spread the odour of death.

Remember the guest at the wedding feast who had no garment? He remained silent when the King questioned him. He would not admit his need; he would not speak his truth. And the sentence was terrifying: *"Bind his hands and feet and cast him into the darkness."* If we remain silent about our sins, if we refuse the wedding garment of repentance, even the Eucharist cannot save us from the darkness we choose.

This power to "bind and loose" is the greatest gift given to the Apostles and their successors. When Jesus gave Peter the keys, He gave him the authority to shatter the chains of Satan. In the Book of Revelation, we see the Dragon bound and cast into the abyss. This is the authority of the Church: to bind the Enemy and unbind the child of God.

But when a person clings to their silence, when they reject the inspiration to be reconciled, those chains of pride, lust, and envy begin to harden. Over months and years, they turn into fetters of terror and shame. They paralyze the heart until it feels like no one – not even God – can help.

Yet, there is hope. We are in the season of Easter – the great season of the "Calling Forth." From the break of dawn until the deepest watch of the night, the voice of the Saviour is echoing through the canyons of our hearts, crying with tears and divine authority: ***"Lazarus, come out!"***

Do not stay in the dark. Come to the light, let your brothers and sisters see your face, and let the Church unbind you so that you may truly walk again.

*Fr Anthony*



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# Around the World

The sometimes missed news

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## THE POCZOBUT CASE

A GAME FOR FREEDOM

The release of journalist Andrzej Poczobut after 1,860 days in a high-security prison stands as a profound victory for the dignity of the human person. For over five years, Poczobut served as a witness to truth, enduring a captivity that tested the limits of the human spirit. His freedom, secured through the persistent diplomatic efforts of U.S. and Polish authorities, exemplifies the Gospel mandate to "proclaim liberty to captives" (Luke 4:18).

Ethically, this outcome underscores the moral obligation of political leaders to protect the oppressed. The intervention of President Trump's team, working in coordination with Polish officials, demonstrates the fruit of steadfastness in international solidarity. As diplomat John Coale observed, "it worked," proving that patient negotiation rooted in justice can overcome systemic darkness.

From a Catholic perspective, Poczobut's return reminds us that no individual is ever forgotten. It reinforces the principle that truth and justice, though often delayed by worldly powers, are never defeated when met with charity and prayer. This event serves as a call to the faithful to remain tireless in the pursuit of the common good, trusting that light will ultimately prevail over the shadows of injustice.

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## DRONES FROM UKRAINE

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### THEY WANT TO LEARN

Poland and Ukraine have announced a strategic collaboration to develop a "drone armada," a move highlighting the intersection of modern technology and the Catholic tradition of legitimate defence. Deputy Prime Minister Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz noted that this partnership merges Polish resources with Ukrainian resilience, forged through the trials of ongoing conflict.

From the perspective of orthodox Catholic teaching, "legitimate defence can be not only a right but a grave duty for one who is responsible for the lives of others" (CCC 2265). This joint effort reflects the virtue of solidarity – recognizing a neighbour's struggle as our own. By establishing the Podkarpackie Competence Centre, these nations exercise the prudence required to safeguard human dignity against unjust aggression.

While the Church unceasingly prays for "blessed peacemakers," it also recognizes that a just peace often necessitates the strength to deter harm. This commitment to innovation serves the common good by utilizing reconnaissance and defensive technology to protect personnel and the vulnerable. In a fair assessment of current geopolitical realities, this spirit of brotherhood seeks to provide a shield for the innocent, serving as a necessary stepping stone toward a lasting and tranquil order.

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## FORECAST

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### IRELAND THE RICHEST?

The IMF just dropped its 2030 projections, and if you're looking at the numbers, Ireland, Luxembourg, and Norway are "crushing it" in GDP per capita. But as we flip through these spreadsheets, let's remember: a high GDP doesn't automatically mean a high-quality soul.

Economic growth is a gift from the Creator, but it's meant to build what the Church calls a "civilization of love." Whether a nation sits at number 12, like Germany, or is climbing to 20, like Poland, the moral mandate is identical: wealth must serve the dignity of the human person, not the other way around.

Ireland's top spot is technically complex due to corporate structures, but it's a perfect reminder

that "authentic development" isn't about stock buybacks – it's about whether a family can thrive and if the vulnerable are protected.

Let's be encouraged! These riches are tools for solidarity. As Europe's economies evolve, let's pray these resources are used to champion the sanctity of life and social justice. Our real hope isn't in a bank account; it's in turning temporal wealth into instruments of God's grace. Let's build a future where everyone flourishes – body and soul.

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## *We Read Pope Leo*

**Faith frees our hearts from the anxiety of possessing and acquiring, from the illusion of chasing a prestigious place in order to matter.**

Vocation is not a static goal, but a dynamic process of maturation, supported by intimacy with the Lord: being with Jesus, allowing the Holy Spirit to act in hearts and in life situations, and rereading everything in the light of the gift received – this is what it means to grow in one's vocation. Just as the vine and the branches (cf. Jn 15:1-8), so our whole existence must rest upon a strong and necessary bond with the Lord, so that it may become an ever fuller response



to His call – through trials and necessary “prunings.” The “places” in which God's will is most clearly revealed and His infinite love is experienced are often the authentic and fraternal bonds that we are able to establish in the course of our lives. How precious it is to have a good spiritual guide who accompanies us in discovering and developing our vocation! (...) Vocation, therefore, is not something acquired immediately, something “given” once and for all: rather, it is a path that develops analogously to human life, in which the gift received (...) must be nourished by a daily relationship with God, so that it may grow and bear fruit.

***Message for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, April 26, 2026.***

You will be prophets in your ministry if you are people of peace and unity, weaving with threads of grace and mercy the vast and densely populated spaces of this diocese, harmonizing differences, welcoming, listening, and forgiving. Do not allow yourselves to be sought out – allow yourselves to be found. And strive so that priests, deacons, religious sisters and brothers, and lay people engaged in the apostolate may never feel alone. Help them to rekindle hope in their various ministries and to feel that they are participants in one mission. Always know how to encourage people and communities tirelessly, simply reminding them of the beauty of the Gospel.

***Holy Mass with the Rite of Episcopal Ordination, May 2, 2026.***

In the old world, in which we are still pilgrims, attention is drawn to exclusive places, experiences available only to a few, or the privilege of entering where no one else has access. In the new world, however, toward which the Risen One leads us, what has the greatest value is accessible to all. Yet it does not lose its attractiveness because of this. On the contrary, what is open to all now brings joy: gratitude takes the place of rivalry; hospitality removes exclusion; abundance no longer entails inequality. Above all, no one is mistaken for someone else, no one

is lost. Death threatens to erase name and memory, but in God each person is at last truly himself or herself. In reality, this is the place we seek throughout our lives, sometimes ready to do anything just to obtain a little attention and recognition.

“Believe,” Jesus says to us. This is the secret! “You believe in God; believe also in Me” (Jn 14:1). It is precisely this faith that frees our hearts from the anxiety of possessing and acquiring, from the illusion of chasing a prestigious place in order to matter. Each person already has infinite value in the mystery of God, who is true reality. By loving one another as Jesus has loved us, we pass on this awareness to one another. This is the new commandment: in this way we anticipate heaven on earth, showing everyone that fraternity and peace are our destiny. For in love, amid the multitude of brothers and sisters, each person discovers that he or she is unique and unrepeatable.

***Regina Caeli prayer, May 3, 2026.***

## The First Year of Leo XIV

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### Living Well in Turbulent Times: The Wisdom of Saint Augustine and Pope Leo XIV



In a world often marked by uncertainty, the timeless words of Saint Augustine resonate with profound clarity: “Let us live well, and the times will be good.” This powerful insight, echoed by Pope Leo XIV, reminds us that we hold the power to shape our era through our actions and faith. As Leo XIV adds in his book *The Power of the Gospel: The Christian Faith in 10 Words*, “We can give meaning to our times through our witness and prayer to the Holy Spirit, that He may make us men and women who infect others with peace and spread the fragrance of His love and mercy.”

Saint Augustine, the revered Bishop of Hippo, offered a unique perspective on time that challenges conventional thinking. He argued that past, present, and future are not distinct but exist simultaneously in our consciousness: memory represents the presence of things past, perception the presence of things present, and expectation the presence of things future. This philosophy underscores the importance of living fully in each moment, a theme that Leo XIV, a spiritual successor to Augustine, has embraced and expanded upon.

Since his election, Pope Leo XIV has emerged as a steady hand guiding the Church through turbulent waters. The expectations were high for a pontiff who could balance tradition with openness, appealing to both progressive and traditionalist factions within the Church. One year

into his papacy, Leo XIV appears to have found that delicate equilibrium. His leadership reflects the dogmatic continuity of John Paul II and Benedict XVI, evident in his catecheses on the Second Vatican Council, while his pastoral approach mirrors Pope Francis, particularly in his emphasis on synodality and the bond between faith and the poor, as articulated in his first apostolic exhortation, *Dilexi te*.

Leo XIV's style is marked by precision and clarity, though he remains a reserved figure compared to the more demonstrative gestures of John Paul II or Francis. Yet, his emotional depth was evident during his first meeting with the faithful after his election. His choice of name, inspired by the socially reformist Leo XIII, signals an intent to confront modern challenges, including the rise of artificial intelligence. His forthcoming encyclical, tentatively titled *Magnificent Humanity*, is eagerly awaited, especially after his thought-provoking statement that "technological innovations can be a form of participation in the divine act of creation," balanced by cautions about AI's potential risks.

On the global stage, Leo XIV has navigated sensitive issues with tact. While avoiding direct condemnation of geopolitical aggressors, his statements subtly reveal his stance, ensuring his words cannot be misused by propaganda. His focus on peace, mercy, witness, and prayer – core themes of his pontificate – offers a roadmap for the faithful in uncertain times.

Perhaps one of the most striking contributions of Leo XIV is his poetic framing of dialogue as a "pilgrimage of the heart." This evocative phrase captures the essence of dialogue as a continuous journey of open minds and hearts, a concept that resonates deeply in an era hungry for connection and understanding.

Though his pontificate is still in its infancy, Pope Leo XIV has already left an indelible mark. His blend of philosophical depth, drawn from Augustine, and practical guidance for modern challenges positions him as a helmsman for our times. As we await his further teachings, one thing is clear: in living well, as Augustine urged, we can indeed make our times good – and Leo XIV stands ready to lead the way.

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### *In my opinion*

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## **The Epoch of Withering Books**

Times Radio has ignited a conversation about the importance of reading, especially among young people. A common view is that more people are writing than reading today. This idea gains weight when we look at the cost of books, which typically range from £10 to over £20. For many, particularly those struggling financially, choosing between buying a book and buying food is a tough decision. Those who are economically challenged, often with a strong desire for intellectual stimulation, are hit hardest by cutting back on cultural spending, highlighting the worsening economic situation.

Despite claims of government achievements, the fact remains that as people become poorer, their ability to read diminishes. It's also worth asking how many who say they can't afford books spend large amounts on streaming services like Netflix, which fill the market with increasingly biased content, turning art into just another form of mental entertainment. The rise of series with female leads, reworked classic stories, and historically inaccurate retellings – like a Black, gay King Arthur – shows a worrying trend of laziness in thinking and oversaturation with propaganda.

Reading, though, is a path to freedom. It lets people create and live in a world of their own making within their imagination, a deeply personal and enriching experience. Sadly, the publishing world is flooded with quickly made celebrity memoirs and empty guides, made more

for profit and fame than for adding anything meaningful to literature. These books, often full of clichés and lacking depth, replace the once-valued novels that tackled current issues.

Adding to this problem are the overly dramatic crime stories where plots are hard to follow, and former spies sell uninspired "spy thrillers," pushed as bestsellers even though they lack real excitement. Young women, too, put their sexual fantasies and mental preoccupations into overly sensational writing, further lowering the quality of what gets published.

In short, today's literature is in trouble. Without engaging stories, the core of cultural life is at risk, unable to survive on shallow imitations or propaganda disguised as great literature. British culture, once lively, now suffers from an overload of quickly promoted, award-winning works that push away the shrinking audience of readers. If we lose our ability to recognize true literary talent, the charm of culture will disappear, threatening our independence. We must support real literature and British authors, as their work is vital to our nation's well-being and identity.

*Tony Wood*

## Prayer



**Please remember to pray for those who are unwell, in need, or have requested our prayers:** Andrew McLaughlin, Claire Wiggins, Russell Carroll, Lucy Cunningham, Tommy McGrory Senior, Lilian Cox, Sarah Carmichael, and Doleen Durnin.

**Please keep in your prayers** Brendan Claffey (2026), John MacDonald (2026), Doreen Clark (2003), Valerie Charlotte Morton, Dolores Francisco (2007) **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!

**Communications Sunday:** Next weekend, the Church marks Communications Sunday, a day to reflect on how the Gospel is shared through media, digital platforms, broadcasting and communications.

From parish social media pages and livestreamed Masses to Catholic television, videos and news coverage, communications plays an important role in helping people stay connected to the life of the Church.

The **second collection** next weekend will support the work of the Office of Communications and Evangelisation of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland as it continues to share the Gospel through digital media, press, social media, broadcasting and evangelisation initiatives across the country.

Please pray for all those working in Catholic communications and for all who encounter Christ through digital media.

***Elaine Furmage***

Communications Manager



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



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

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