



PENTECOST
SUNDAY

PARISH
BULLETIN

**St Kieran's, the
Catholic
Church** in
Campbeltown and Islay
Ceann Loch Chille
Chiarain
24th May 2026

Pentecost Sunday

St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

Week 8 in Ordinary Time

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

Hymns/Music for Sunday

Processional

98 Come, Holy Ghost

Offertory

70 Breathe on me, Breath of
God

Communion music

Тебе појем (We hymn thee)

Post Communion

96 Come down, O Love divine

Recessional

239 I'll sing a hymn to Mary

Next weekend:

Saturday, 30th May, Vigil Mass, 6.00pm

**Sunday, 31st May, Solemnity of the Most Holy
Trinity, Holy Mass, 10.00am**

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

St. Columba Episcopal Church, Bridgend, Isle of Islay
7th June, **Corpus Christi: Holy Mass, 4pm**

Psalm response

Send forth your spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth.

Gospel acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

*Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful
and kindle in them the fire of your love.*

Alleluia.

Communion Antiphon

*They were all filled with the Holy Spirit
and spoke of the marvels of God, alleluia.*

Take Five

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

MONDAY: MARY, MOTHER OF THE CHURCH

25 MAY 2026

You will not be orphaned

Although the devotion to Mary as “Mother of the Church” is ancient, today’s memorial is relatively new – having been instituted in 2018 by Pope Francis when he decreed it will be celebrated annually on the Monday after Pentecost Sunday – to “encourage the growth of the maternal sense of the church.” Reflect on how you can “mother” the church – as well as your family and friends, your community and work place, and even yourself. You don’t have to be or have a mother in the traditional sense to know how to offer loving care. Standing beneath the cross, said Francis, Mary “welcomed all people in the person of the beloved disciple as sons and daughters” – that means you, too.

Today’s readings: Genesis 3:9-15, 20; John 19:25-34. *“He said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son.’”*

TUESDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINT PHILIP NERI, PRIEST

26 MAY 2026

Let your peer pressure come from saints

Saint Philip Neri (1515-1595) used go out at night to pray. One evening he felt a globe of light enter his heart, and he began to speak to others about God. There are stories of Saint Philip wearing ridiculous clothes and telling jokes, but that allowed him to relate to people and teach them the importance of humility and gratitude. He would say, “Be humble and obedient and the Holy Spirit will teach you.” Maybe you worry about what others think of you rather than what God thinks. Your fears and anxieties may stop you from trying new things in the service of God. Like Saint Philip, do something today that may make you look foolish but will show that you are a humble servant of God.

Today’s readings: 1 Peter 1:10-16; Mark 10:28-31. *“There is no one who has given up . . . lands for my sake and for the sake of the Gospel who will not receive a hundred times more”*

WEDNESDAY OF WEEK 8 IN ORDINARY TIME

27 MAY 2026

What do you see?

When the light is right, usually around dusk, the glass on a train acts as both a window and a mirror. Depending upon where you focus your eyes, you can see either the relatively motionless interior of the car or the scenery outside passing by in a blur. This “double vision” reflects the duality of time and your human experience. There is the unchanging, eternal now where God resides and the rush of encounters and experiences in which you usually live. Just as passengers on the train can choose which side of the window to observe, you also have that same choice in your daily life. Where will you focus your attention today?

Today’s readings: 1 Peter 1:18-25; Mark 10:32-45. *“The grass withers, and the flower wilts; but the word of the Lord remains forever.”*

THURSDAY: FEAST OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE ETERNAL HIGH PRIEST

28 MAY 2026

Good news

Jesus knows what is coming. He doesn’t run away. He doesn’t drown out fear with noise or activity. He stops. He prays. Can you do the same? Can you become quiet, enter into silence, and really listen to what God wants to say to you?

Jesus doesn’t pretend to be a hero. He is truly afraid. His heart trembles in the face of suffering, rejection, and loneliness.

How many times do you stand in your own Gethsemane – facing illness, misunderstanding, or a painful decision? How often do you want to cry out, “Father, let this pass me by”?

Jesus knows that impulse. He’s been there. Yet He shows us that real trust is choosing a love stronger than fear. In the hour of trial, what matters most is not whether you feel strong, but whether you stay with Him.

Let’s ask for the grace we need:

God our Father,

- grant strengthening in faith and fraternal support for priests,
- conversion and the courage to make amends for the evil done by those who betray the priesthood,
- and courage for young people to follow your call.

Stay with Him. He has already chosen to stay with you.

Today's readings: Hebrews 10:4–10; Matthew 26:36-42. *“My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.”*

FRIDAY OF WEEK 8 IN ORDINARY TIME

29 MAY 2026

Difficult, Godlike – and necessary

Mark's Gospel does not include Jesus teaching the Lord's Prayer, as He does in the other Gospels. Like Matthew and Luke, however, Mark does show Jesus linking our own forgiveness to our willingness to forgive others. The Lord's Prayer asks that God forgive us as we forgive others; those who seek forgiveness must be “forgivers” themselves. In Mark, Jesus says: “Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.” Jesus characterizes his own mission as handing himself over “so that sins

may be forgiven.” We need forgiveness! How much we desire it! But at the same time we must be its vehicle to others, especially those who have hurt us.

Today's readings: 1 Peter 4:7-13; Mark 11:11-26. *“Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”*

SATURDAY OF WEEK 8 IN ORDINARY TIME

30 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. Bring some good cheer to everything you do and everyone you meet today!

Today's readings: Jude 17, 20b-25; Mark 11:27-33. *“To the only God, our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and for ever. Amen.”*

Readings for Pentecost Sunday

Acts of the Apostles 2:1-11

The anticipated Spirit arrives and transforms the disciples into apostles.

Psalm 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34

Without God's spirit we perish but with it the face of the Earth is renewed.

1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13

The Spirit is given to the church, to each member in accordance with his or her call.

John 20:19-23

No obstacle can keep us from the peace of Christ nor the forgiveness of sin.

Words on the Word

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The Spirit of God rested upon the Lord, “the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of God.” And the Lord gave this Spirit to the Church, sending the Comforter from heaven upon the whole earth, precisely there “where Satan – according to the Savior's words – fell from heaven like lightning.” This life-giving dew of God is necessary for us, lest we be burned up and

become useless; and since we have an accuser, we may also have an Advocate. The Lord entrusted to the Holy Spirit His own possession, that is, man, who had fallen into the hands of robbers. He Himself was moved with compassion for him, dressed his wounds, and gave two royal denarii for him. And we, who through the Holy Spirit have received the image and inscription of the Father and the Son, are to multiply the denarius given to us and return it, increased, to our Lord (St. Irenaeus, bishop, Against Heresies).

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In S. Schinger's novel *The White Bird*, the dream of a student is recounted:

"I am on an airplane flying to Persia. Through the windows I see a turquoise sky – not merely blue, but crystal-clear, luminous turquoise. Suddenly, outside the plane, beside my window, a great white bird appears. It is as large as a rain cloud, with great feathers that seem made to warm and shelter someone.

I call the stewardess and say: 'There is a great bird out there; I am afraid of it.'

She glances briefly out the window and replies indifferently: 'That is God. He always crosses our route when we take the five o'clock flight.'

'Where is He flying?' I ask.

'That has never interested me,' the stewardess responds.

'But it interests me!' I cry.

She hands me a glass of whisky. I hurl it at her feet.

'I must know where He is flying,' I shout. 'I want to speak with Him; I have many questions!'

She remains silent. The White Bird flies away."

For many, God has become merely a marginal subject – a distant memory from childhood, a vague being beyond this world. Yet if God truly exists, we must ask where He may be found, and how He may be encountered.

Christian faith insists that God is not an abstract idea but a living reality to be experienced. The first Christians did not rely on philosophical proofs of God's existence. They had personally encountered Jesus of Nazareth – His life, His words, His death and resurrection. This encounter radically transformed them, turning them into living witnesses of Christ in every place and circumstance. Under the power of the Holy Spirit, they formed one Church, one Christian community spread throughout the known world.

What they experienced is not confined to the past. Today, the principal place where God manifests Himself is still the Christian community: men and women who seek to live under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Christ Himself promised this Spirit to His disciples:

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you." (Jn 14:15–17).

With the death and resurrection of Christ, the definitive era of the Holy Spirit began. Through the sending of the Spirit, the Risen Lord remains truly present among His followers in a new and more interior way. The action of the Holy Spirit within the community of Jesus' disciples is precisely the new mode of Christ's presence in His Church.

Where, then, do we encounter God? We know Him concretely through the life and activity of

the community of believers. If this community does not authentically live from God, it cannot credibly witness to His presence in the world. Yet the world itself remains the stage of God's self-revelation, and our own lives are the privileged place where we learn to recognize His action.

Here the Spirit of God is most powerfully at work:

- where a mother keeps vigil beside her sick child;
- where children accompany their dying parents;
- where someone bears the daily burden of providing for the family;
- where spouses seek reconciliation, make sacrifices, and strive for unity;
- where hearts renounce vengeance and choose forgiveness instead.

The Holy Spirit acts wherever people refuse to remain passive before injustice, wherever despair does not have the final word, wherever – despite repeated failures – men and women rise again to struggle for the good.

We rightly implore the Holy Spirit for strength to build peace and justice, for the grace of reconciliation among Christians, and for the end of wars. His work is not confined strictly within visible ecclesial boundaries. While the Church is the principal sacramental instrument of His action, the Spirit also moves in the hearts of all people of good will, drawing all creation toward its true good in Christ.

To charge that the Holy Spirit was absent from the death camps or is absent from today's battlefields is, in truth, to indict ourselves. The Spirit is excluded wherever human freedom deliberately rejects God. It is not God who authors evil. Moral evil results from the choices of sinful human beings – persons whose deeds are such that, in the Lord's own severe words, "it would have been better for that man if he had not been born" (cf. Mt 26:24).

God remains faithfully present. The decisive question is whether we will allow His Spirit to act in us and through us in the concrete circumstances of our daily lives.

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The world does not need closed people, but people filled with the Holy Spirit. Being closed to the Holy Spirit is not only a lack of freedom, but also a sin. There are many ways of closing oneself to the Holy Spirit: in the selfishness of one's own gain; in harsh legalism, like the attitude of the scholars of the Law whom Jesus called hypocrites; in forgetfulness of what Jesus taught; in living the Christian life not as service, but as personal interest; and so on. The world needs the courage, hope, faith, and perseverance of Christ's disciples. The world needs the fruits of the Holy Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal 5:22). The gift of the Holy Spirit has been abundantly given to the Church and to each of us, so that we may live with true faith working through love, so that we may sow seeds of reconciliation and peace. Strengthened by the Spirit and His manifold gifts, we become capable of an uncompromising struggle against sin and corruption, in order to devote ourselves with patient perseverance to works of justice and peace... (Pope Francis, 24 May 2015).

In Christ's love,
Fr Anthony

ICONS OF EVANGELISTS, APOSTLES, AND SAINTS: 28 THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



The Russian School: *The Descent of the Holy Ghost*. C. 1497, Cyril-Belozersky Monastery of the Dormition of the Mother of God in Kirillov

of the Holy Spirit. At the bottom appears a dark mandorla containing an elderly crowned figure, traditionally interpreted as “Cosmos,” representing the temporal world awaiting evangelization. His crown denotes earthly power; his age, the transience of worldly realities. The scrolls he holds bear Gospel texts in various languages, indicating the universal mission of the Church.

According to the account in the Acts of the Apostles, fifty days after the Resurrection the apostles were gathered in the Upper Room when the Holy Spirit descended upon them. Through this divine outpouring they received spiritual gifts and the miraculous ability to speak in various languages. The Church commemorates this event in the feast of Pentecost, celebrated as the fulfillment of Christ’s promise to send the Paraclete and as the “birthday” of the Church.

Early iconography of Pentecost closely follows the scriptural narrative, stressing the “tongues as of fire” (Acts 2:3), the visible sign of the Holy Spirit resting upon each apostle. In these early images, the Mother of God is often included among the apostles as the personification of the Church gathered in prayer.

Later Byzantine and Russian tradition develops this imagery. In Russian icons the apostles sit in a semicircle, symbolizing unity and harmony in the Church. They gesture and turn their faces upward toward rays issuing from a heavenly arc, signifying the unseen presence

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 24

The Blood of the Lamb

John 12:24-25

“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” Christ’s words, followed by the stark warning that whoever clings to his life will lose it, set the key for understanding both His Passion and the Eucharist. The apostles tried to stop His death, unable to grasp that the divine Healer would give more by dying than by curing: access to eternal life. Like a father who must surrender his own heart to save his child, the Son allows His body, the grain, to die so that the tree of the Cross may take root and bear fruit.

The seed’s shell must be pierced for life to emerge. So too our guarded hearts must be broken open. Indifference before this mystery is not a neutral stance; it is deadly. A film I saw in

Poland, *"The Gathering,"* imagines twelve spectators of the Crucifixion condemned to witness every execution until they finally show mercy. Their distance mirrors the cold gaze with which many today look upon the altar.

Judas went further than indifference: he turned wounded expectation into revolt. He left the first Mass and stepped into the night. The other apostles fled too, but the Eucharist held them back from despair. What shielded them from the **"angel of death"** that seized Judas was not their courage, but the strength received in Communion.

The Old Testament Passover throws this drama into sharp relief. Israel was commanded to choose a lamb, live with it for four days, grow attached, and only then kill it, hands pressed on its head, while its blood marked their doors. Rashi calls anyone who stayed outside or kept emotional distance ROCHAQ – "far," indifferent, untouched by loss. Such a person did not truly "fulfil the Passover."

The full meaning appears only at Calvary. Christ, the true Lamb, sheds His Blood to lead humanity out of slavery to Satan. To watch His sacrifice without heart is to stand ROCHAQ and risk meeting the **angel of death** unprotected. The Eucharist is our Passover. Here it is decided, in the concrete movements of our soul, whether we welcome the Holy Spirit or yield to the evil one. **Around this banquet, the Church teaches, a wall of angels stands guard.**

The apostles themselves may have failed the emotional demands of this Passover. They scattered. Yet none, apart from Judas, perished in despair. Why? The Blood they had received worked like a hidden vaccine against spiritual annihilation. Their love was poor, their courage fragile, but the sacrament held them through the long night until the Resurrection.

This sheds light on a demanding paradox: in the Old Covenant, Israel was forbidden to drink blood. At the Last Supper, Jesus commands His disciples to do precisely that, under the signs of bread and wine. He crosses the boundary to draw them into an unheard-of intimacy, making them, in a real sense, His kin. Saint Peter later writes that we are ransomed "not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious Blood of Christ."

If the blood of a lamb on wooden doorposts could ward off the destroyer in Egypt, the Blood of the Lamb of God, received in Holy Communion, marks not wood but human hearts. It is meant to run, mystically, in our veins, defending us from the "second death" of which Scripture speaks. Christ instituted this sacrament at the last possible moment, like a commander deploying his decisive weapon on the eve of the final battle.

The stakes are high, and the danger of indifference is not theoretical. Padre Pio reported a vision of Christ surrounded by priests treating the Mass with cold routine. The Lord, disfigured by sorrow, uttered a single indictment: **"BUTCHERS!"** The word cuts sharply across centuries of pious language. It exposes a chilling possibility: that one may "celebrate" the Eucharist, or attend it regularly, while emotionally and spiritually killing the One who offers Himself there.

The image of the butcher returns in a rabbinic tale cited by Emmanuel Levinas. A great rabbi humbly goes to seek reconciliation from a stubborn butcher on the eve of Yom Kippur. The butcher refuses with contempt and dies moments later, pierced by a splinter of bone. The story underlines a hard truth: mercy rejected in hardened pride can turn lethal. Applied to the altar, it confronts every believer with an uncomfortable question: how do I respond when Christ comes toward me, again and again, in the Eucharist?

The psalmist gives Jesus' inner voice: "It is not an enemy who taunts me... but you, my companion, my familiar friend." When the priest or the faithful pray and act without love, their words, "softer than oil," can become like "drawn swords" to the Heart they address. The greatest pain is not inflicted by declared enemies, but by friends who betray with practiced gestures and polished phrases.

The consequences do not remain locked in the sanctuary. Our stance toward God spills over into our relationships. A heart that does not fear offending God often either fears people excessively or treats them with brutal coldness. Lack of genuine feeling appears as harsh

detachment, cutting replies, or, on the other side, obsequious flattery. In both cases, the person remains closed, unwilling to let even a sliver of Heaven pass through his own wounds to others.

The Eucharist stands precisely at this fault line. In the seminary chapel, a plaster relief of Pilate washing his hands before the condemned Christ hangs near the lavabo where the priest rinses his fingers before the consecration. The juxtaposition is uncomfortable. The gesture meant to recall interior purification can all too easily resemble Pilate's attempt to shift responsibility. The priest, like every communicant, must confront the X-ray of his own soul and ask: am I standing inside the Passover, marked by the Lamb's Blood, or outside, ROCHAQ, watching?

Only a small, honest stirring of the heart is needed to begin reparation: a sincere act of contrition, a quiet plea for mercy, an awakening of gratitude that Christ, the Judge, allowed Himself to be judged. Yet even this minimal response cannot be produced by technique. It is grace received in the very sacrament we so easily handle. The Eucharist is not a safe ritual backdrop to ordinary life; it is, as one might say without exaggeration, Armageddon in sacramental form – the decisive clash between light and darkness, played out on the field of each human heart.

Fr Anthony



Around the World

The sometimes missed news

POLAND

WILL THE GATES OF THE HOMO-REVOLUTION PREVAIL?

Deputy PM Krzysztof Gawkowski's regulation altering marriage certificate templates to accommodate same-sex unions contracted abroad represents a profound shift in Polish civil law. By facilitating the transcription of foreign same-sex certificates into national registries, the state effectively validates these unions by proxy, granting them equal civil benefits.

From an orthodox Catholic perspective, this administrative manoeuvre raises grave moral and ethical concerns. Article 18 of the Polish Constitution affirms marriage exclusively as a union between one man and one woman – a legal reality reflecting natural law and the divine design for human flourishing. Bypassing this foundational law under pressure from European Union courts undermines both democratic integrity and the state's ethical duty to protect the family. Furthermore, Prime Minister Donald Tusk's push to fast-track this regulation contrasts sharply with his recent Vatican visit, where he claimed shared perspectives with the Holy Father. True fairness requires a society to uphold the authentic, life-giving definition of marriage. Redefining this sacred institution through administrative loopholes not only subverts the national Constitution but compromises the moral foundation of the family, which remains the fundamental building block of society. True justice cannot be achieved by circumventing the moral truth of human relationships.

THE GAZA STRIP

SET BACK BY 77 YEARS

The catastrophic two-year armed conflict in the Gaza Strip has yielded tragic consequences that

demand urgent moral reflection. According to the Human Development Index (HDI), Gaza has been set back by 77 years. Factoring in life expectancy, education, and income, the HDI has plummeted to an unprecedented 0.339 – surpassing the historic lows of Somalia and South Sudan.

From an orthodox Catholic perspective, these statistics represent a profound crisis of human dignity. The UN, World Bank, and EU estimate damages between October 2023 and October 2025 at over \$129 billion, that is more than £96 billion. Yet, the true cost is measured in human lives. Although a ceasefire has ostensibly been in force since last October, the humanitarian crisis deepens. Continued shelling has claimed the lives of approximately 800 Palestinians during this period.

The moral tradition strictly demands the protection of non-combatants and a preferential option for the vulnerable. Tragically, basic medicines are depleted, over half of Gaza's medical facilities are non-functional, and the evacuation of critically ill patients is frequently blocked by Israel.

Gaza is now arguably the world's most harrowing place to live. Genuine justice requires unimpeded humanitarian aid, adherence to the sanctity of life, and a lasting peace respecting the God-given dignity of all Israelis and Palestinians.

USA – CUBA

WITHOUT A SINGLE SHOT

U.S. President Donald Trump recently described Cuba as a "failed state," announcing that Havana has requested assistance amid a crippling energy crisis. Exacerbated by the ongoing U.S. blockade, severe blackouts have left the Cuban populace in dire straits. From a Catholic moral perspective, while addressing systemic political oppression is necessary, economic sanctions must never disproportionately punish the vulnerable or violate their God-given human dignity. Although Trump previously did not rule out using military force, the current pivot toward diplomacy aligns with the Church's enduring call for peaceful conflict resolution. Secretary of State Marco Rubio is reportedly leading talks with Raúl Guillermo Rodríguez Castro to negotiate a transition of power. True justice demands that any regime change prioritizes the Cuban people's common good over mere geopolitical victory.

Encouragingly, Trump recently permitted Russian tankers to deliver crude oil to the island for humanitarian reasons. This fair-minded decision rightly recognizes that basic human survival supersedes political blockades, echoing Christ's mandate to care for the least among us. As these delicate negotiations unfold, the faithful must pray for a peaceful resolution – achieved "without a single shot" – that ultimately restores freedom, faith, and human flourishing to the Cuban people.

RUSSIAN AGGRESSION

FOR THE RETURN OF CHILDREN

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has rightly declared that the return of all Ukrainian children taken by Russia is essential. Addressing the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children – now comprising nearly 50 nations – she emphasized that restoring these youths must be central to any future peace agreement.

The family is the foundational cell of society. The forced separation of children from their parents is not merely a breach of international law; it is a grave offense against human dignity and the natural order. EU estimates indicate Russia has abducted 20,500 children since the 2022 invasion, with only 2,000 returned. This systematic uprooting, forced assimilation, and unlawful adoption severs sacred familial bonds.

The EU recently added 16 individuals and seven entities linked to these deportations to its sanctions list. In fairness, while this diplomatic action acknowledges the crisis, it remains a disproportionately weak response to such a profound moral injustice.

True peace – what Saint Augustine called the tranquillity of order – cannot be built upon the fractured lives of the innocent. The international community must exercise greater moral fortitude, moving beyond modest sanctions to ensure every abducted child is restored to the sanctuary of their rightful family.

We Read Pope Leo

In the age of artificial intelligence, I encourage everyone to commit themselves to promoting forms of communication that always respect the truth about the human person, toward which every technological innovation must be directed.

Mary is the perfect model of what the whole Church is meant to be: a creature of the Word of the Lord and the mother of the children of God, who are born through obedient submission to the action of the Holy Spirit. As a believer in the fullest sense of the word – the One in whom the



perfect form of unconditional openness to the mystery of God is shown to us within the communion of the holy People of God – Mary is the most perfect member of the ecclesial community. Finally, as the One who gives birth to children in the Son – beloved in the eternally Beloved, who came among us – Mary is the Mother of the whole Church; to her the Church may turn with childlike trust, certain that it will be heard, cared for, and loved.

All these qualities of the Blessed Virgin Mary could be expressed by speaking of her as the Woman – icon of the Mystery. The term “Woman” shows the place occupied in history by this young Daughter of Israel, to whom was granted the extraordinary experience of becoming the Mother of the Messiah. The expression icon indicates, in turn, that in her a twofold movement is realized: descent and ascent. In Mary there shines forth both the gratuitous election on God’s part and the free consent of faith expressed in Him. Mary is therefore the Woman – icon of the Mystery, that is, of God’s plan of salvation, once hidden and fully revealed in Jesus Christ.

General Audience, May 13, 2026

The image of Jesus, who (...) having been lifted up from the earth, ascends into heaven, may cause us to perceive this Mystery as a distant event. In reality, this is not so. For we are united with Jesus like members with the Head in one Body, and His ascension into heaven also draws us with Him into full communion with the Father. Saint Augustine said in this regard: “The fact that the Head goes before is hope for the members” (Sermo 265, 1. 2). The whole life of Christ is a movement of ascent which – through His humanity – embraces and involves the whole reality of the world, lifting up and redeeming man from his state of sin, bringing light, forgiveness, and hope where darkness, injustice, and despair had reigned, in order to lead to the definitive victory of Easter, in which the Son of God “by dying destroyed our death, and by rising restored our life” (Preface I of Easter). (...)

The Ascension speaks to us not of a distant promise, but of a living bond that also draws us toward heavenly glory (...). We know the path of this upward journey. We find it in Jesus, in the gift of His life, in His examples and His teaching, and we also see it traced out in the Virgin Mary and in the saints – both those whom the Church gives us as a universal model and those whom Pope Francis liked to call the saints “next door,” with whom we live our days: fathers, mothers, grandparents, people of every age and in every state of life, who with joy and commitment sincerely strive to live according to the Gospel.

Regina Caeli, May 17, 2026

In the age of artificial intelligence, I encourage everyone to commit themselves to promoting

forms of communication that always respect the truth about the human person, toward which every technological innovation must be directed.

After the Regina Caeli, May 17, 2026

In my opinion

Gnosis

Ever since the days when Madonna was “running wild” on television, it has become fashionable in celebrity culture to tie a red string on the wrist and talk about “the cosmos,” “nature,” and every other vague force imaginable – anything, it seems, except the living God.

What prompted this reflection was a recent outpouring from a popular singer who calls herself an “old soul” and claims that various beings – often clearly inhuman – surround and guide her. That sort of talk is now almost routine. But then I came across an old online conversation with writer Olga Tokarczuk, in which she openly promotes her own spiritual ideas and her fascination with Jacob Frank, proudly saying she “discovered” him for readers. One gets the impression that this was treated as her key achievement in receiving the Nobel Prize – a decision that looked more ideological than literary.

The things Tokarczuk says about Frank, a man who was morally corrupt by any honest historical standard, go far beyond what common sense can bear. Jacob Frank was a self-proclaimed “messiah” who led a loose, morally lax sect. They pretended to convert to Catholicism and slipped into Catholic circles, even noble families, while keeping secret networks mainly for conspiracy and self-interest.

Frank himself changed religion three times, treating each faith as a tool to gain money and influence. His “teaching” was a jumble of gnostic slogans, heavily inspired by Sabbatai Zevi of Smyrna. Zevi pushed a plunge into Kabbalistic speculation that was supposed to raise the “chosen” to a level equal to the Creator Himself. The road to this status was a series of “initiations” – in practice, moral decay and the deliberate breaking of moral and social taboos.

We could dissect all this for a long time, but the core issue is stark and painful: within the Church today we are seeing the fruits of inner movements marked by this same gnostic spirit. These influences draw both from Kabbalah-style gnosis and from old gnostic heresies that have reappeared in Christian history in ever-new forms – Paulicians, Patarenes, Bogomils, Cathars.

This is how one can read the strange rise of certain Christian Zionist currents in the United States and, closer to home, Catholic Zionists within the Church itself. Together they deepen the sense of confusion, the feeling that the world we knew – the world we had made our own in faith – is breaking apart before our eyes.

Yet this is not the first time. The early centuries of Christianity were already filled with gnostic sects – especially in the East – preaching the possibility of “becoming equal to God,” often with a Manichaean flavour. The Church has already faced these storms. It has been attacked, shaken, tested. And yet – as it stood then, it stands now.

So what is the simplest, clearest test against Gnosticism? Adoration of Jesus Christ Himself, love for the Mother of God, and reverence for the Cross.

Gnosis cannot bear these three:

- Jesus, the incarnate Truth, is rejected by those caught in the spell of secret “knowledge.”
- Toward the Mother of God they harbour a raw, almost physical hostility; the evil one hates Her.
- The Cross, for them, is only a sign of suffering to be escaped, never the sign of our redemption and our hope.

Studying Kabbalah may seem intellectually exciting, but we must name it honestly: it represents a way of thinking that pushes aside reverence for the Creator and tempts people onto a “path of knowledge” that claims to seize God’s mysteries from His hands. That stands in direct opposition to the heart of the Christian faith.

This gnostic mindset has always crept into Catholic spirituality like weeds into a garden, giving rise to countless projects and spiritual trends that lead souls off course. Religious mixing and pantheism are among these side-paths – alluring at first glance, but ultimately ruinous.

The dream of one single “total religion” that blends elements of all major faiths – a dream sometimes linked to the speculations of Maimonides and later thinkers – is, in the end, a falsification of the spiritual order. It clashes head-on with the Christian claim that truth is not an idea, but a Person: Jesus Christ.

The Church has always taught that the only sure path to salvation is the Christian faith. This does not mean contempt for others. On the contrary, it demands evangelization carried out with real love – including love for the Jewish people – so that no one is deprived of the chance of salvation in Christ.

In an age bewitched by “old souls,” cosmic energies, and ever-shifting spiritual fashions, the real line of division runs here: between the proud illusion of hidden knowledge and the humble, saving truth of the Gospel.

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 Aidan Wilson, and John Wareham (2010) whose anniversary falls 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!



Mykola says: I'm getting ready, bags packed. I've got Mum and Dad and my brothers organised. Looking forward to seeing you next Sunday off the 4.06pm bus.

Pilgrimage to Paris and Lisieux: St Andrew's Parish, Rothesay, are organizing a pilgrimage to Paris and Lisieux from Mon, 31 August to Fri, 4 September 2026. We'll visit Notre Dame, Sacré Coeur, the Miraculous Medal's Shrine, Sainte-Chapelle, St Vincent de Paul's church and in Lisieux, the home and shrine of the Little Flower. An initial £550 deposit and a completed form (attached) need to be sent by Tue, 26th May. The deposit can be paid in cash or cheque or by bank transfer to the Rothesay parish account (ACCOUNT No: 65628090; SORT CODE: 83-91-25), using Parish Pilgrimage as your reference. Please contact Father Jarek (07300489060) for details. The full cost of the pilgrimage will be approximately £1200 for flights, coaches, hotel etc. Bed and breakfast allows us free time to have dinner in a wide range of places. The balance of £650 will be due on or before Sat/Sun 13/14 June.



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www.stkieranscampbeltown.org



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A Parish of the R.C. Diocese of Argyll and the Isles; Charitable Trust, a registered Scottish Charity, SC002876
Parish Priest: Fr. A. Wood, St. Kieran's, Campbeltown; Tel. 01586 55216

The Golden Sequence**Sequentia Aurea*****Veni, sancte Spiritus***

*Holy Spirit, Lord of Light,
From the clear celestial height
Thy pure beaming radiance give.*

*Veni, Sancte Spiritus,
et emitte caelitus
lucis tuae radium.*

*Come, thou Father of the poor,
Come with treasures which endure;
Come, thou light of all that live!*

*Veni, pater pauperum,
veni, dator munerum,
veni, lumen cordium.*

*Thou, of all consolers best,
Thou, the soul's delightful guest,
Dost refreshing peace bestow.*

*Consolator optime,
dulcis hospes animae,
dulce refrigerium.*

*Thou in toil art comfort sweet;
Pleasant coolness in the heat;
Solace in the midst of woe.*

*In labore requies,
in aestu temperies,
in fletu solatium.*

*Light immortal, light divine,
Visit thou these hearts of thine,
And our inmost being fill:*

*O lux beatissima,
reple cordis intima
tuorum fidelium.*

*If thou take thy grace away,
Nothing pure in man will stay;
All his good is turned to ill.*

*Sine tuo numine,
nihil est in homine,
nihil est innoxium.*

*Heal our wounds, our strength renew;
On our dryness pour thy dew;
Wash the stains of guilt away:*

*Lava quod est sordidum,
riga quod est aridum,
sana quod est saucium.*

*Bend the stubborn heart and will;
Melt the frozen, warm the chill;
Guide the steps that go astray.*

*Flecte quod est rigidum,
fove quod est frigidum,
rege quod est devium.*

*Thou, on us who evermore
Thee confess and thee adore,
With thy sevenfold gifts descend:*

*Da tuis fidelibus,
in te confidentibus,
sacrum septenarium.*

*Give us comfort when we die,
Give us life with thee on high;
Give us joys that never end.*

*Da virtutis meritum,
da salutis exitum,
da perenne gaudium.*