

# PARISH BULLETIN



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

## *Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ*

St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

**Week 10 in Ordinary Time**

**Tuesday: Holy Mass, 6pm**

### **Hymns/Music for Sunday**

#### **Processional**

190 Guide me, O thou great redeemer

#### **Offertory**

243 In bread we bring you, Lord

#### **Communion music**

*Eucharistic Choral Prelude of Godhead Here in Hiding*

#### **Post Communion**

744 One bread, one body

#### **Recessional**

148 Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go

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

Discussion Group: no discussion group

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

### **Next weekend:**

**Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> of June, Vigil Mass, 6.00pm**

**Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> of June, 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday in 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

7<sup>th</sup> June, **Corpus Christi: Holy Mass, 4pm**

21<sup>st</sup> June: **Holy Mass, 4pm**

**Psalm response**  
*O Jerusalem, glorify the Lord!*

**Sequence**

Praise, O Sion, praise your Saviour,  
praise your captain and your pastor,  
with hymns and solemn songs.

Perform what pow'r affords indeed;  
his worth all praises far exceed,  
none can reach his dignity.

A special theme of praise is read,  
a living and life-giving bread,  
on this day exhibited.

Which in the supper of our Lord,  
to twelve disciples at his board  
no doubt was delivered.

Let our praise be loud and free,  
full of joy and decent glee,  
with minds' and voices' melody.

For now solemnise we that day,  
which with joy does to us display  
the prince of this mystery.

At this board of our new Ruler,  
of new law, new Paschal order  
abolishes the ancient rite.

Old decrees be new annulled,  
shadows are in truths fulfilled,  
day finishes darkness.

That at supper Christ performed,  
to be done he rightly charged  
for his eternal memory.

Guided by his sacred orders,  
bread and wine upon our altars  
to saving host we sanctify.

Christians are by faith assured  
that to flesh the bread is changed,  
the wine to blood most precious.

That no wit nor sense conceives,  
firm and grounded faith believes,  
in strange effects not curious.

**Lauda, Sion**

Under kinds two in appearance,  
two in show but one in substance,  
lie things beyond comparison.

Flesh is meat, blood drink most heav'nly,  
yet is Christ in each kind wholly,  
most free from all division.

None that consumes him does rend him,  
none that takes him does divide him:  
received, he whole perseveres.

Be there one or thousands hosted,  
one as much as all received,  
he by no eating perishes.

Both the good and bad receive him,  
but effects are diverse in them,  
true life or true destruction.

Life to the good, death to the wicked,  
mark how both alike received  
with far unlike conclusion.

Form of bread not Christ is broken,  
not of Christ, but of his token,  
is state or stature altered.

Angels' bread made pilgrims' feeding  
truly bread for children's eating,  
to dogs not to be offered.

Signed by Isaac on the altar,  
by the lamb and paschal supper,  
and in the manna figured.

Jesu, food and feeder of us,  
here with mercy feed and friend us,  
then grant in heaven felicity.

Lord of all, who here do feed us,  
heav'nly guests, heirs, fellows make us,  
in eternal company.

Amen. Alleluia.

St Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), translated by St Robert Southwell  
(c.1561-1595)

**Gospel acclamation**

*Alleluia, alleluia.*

*I am the living bread that came down from heaven, says the Lord.*

*If anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever.*

*Alleluia.*

**Communion Antiphon**

*Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood  
remains in me and I in him, says the Lord.*

# Take Five

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

## MONDAY: FEAST OF THE DEDICATION OF THE CATHEDRAL

8 JUNE 2026

### Flesh and blood?

At an opportune time Jesus tests His disciples with a crucial question: *Who do men say that I am and who do you say that I am?* He was widely recognized in Israel as a mighty man of God, even being compared with the greatest of the prophets, John the Baptist, Elijah, and Jeremiah. Peter, always quick to respond, exclaimed that he was *the Christ, the Son of the living God*. No mortal being could have revealed this to Peter; but only God. Jesus then confers on Peter authority to govern the church that Jesus would build, a church that no powers would overcome. Jesus plays on Peter's name which is the same word for "rock" in both Aramaic and Greek. To call someone a "rock" is one of the greatest of compliments. The ancient rabbis had a saying that when God saw Abraham, he exclaimed: "I have discovered a rock to found the world upon". Through Abraham God established a nation for himself. Through faith Peter grasped who Jesus truly was.

**Today's readings:** 2 Chronicles 5:6-10, 13-6:2; Matthew 16:13-19. ". . . and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven"

## TUESDAY: SOLEMNITY OF SAINT COLUMBA (COLUM CILLE), ABBOT

9 JUNE 2026

### What will you treasure

The Lord himself is the greatest treasure we can have. Giving up everything else to have the Lord as our treasure is not sorrowful, but the greatest joy. See Jesus'

parable about the treasure hidden in a field (Matthew 13:44). Selling all that we have could mean many different things--our friends, our job, our "style" of life, what we do with our free time. Jesus challenged the young man because his heart was possessive. He was afraid to give to others for fear that he would lose what he had gained. Those who are generous towards God and others find that they cannot outgive God in generosity. God blesses us with spiritual goods that far outweigh the fleeting joys of material goods. He alone can satisfy the deepest longing and desires of our heart. Are you willing to part with anything that might keep you from seeking true joy with Jesus?

**Today's readings:** Isaiah 42:1-12; Colossians 1:24-29; Mark 10:17-30. *"With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God."*

## WEDNESDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINT EPHRAEM, DEACON, DOCTOR

10 JUNE 2026

### Music makes the man

Does theology have to be boring? Not according to Saint Ephrem, who composed his teaching in poetry and song. He's been called the Dante of the fourth century and the Harp of the Spirit – and is credited with making the hymn an integral part of Christian worship. Though the melodies are lost, the text for 400 of Ephrem's hymns still exist. His sympathies have been identified in modern terms as ecological, feminist, and healing. You can still hear his legacy in our best hymn writers today. Listen to Bernadette Farrell, Christopher Walker, Jesse Manibusan – or your own favourite religious recording artist.

**Today's readings:** 1 Kings 18:20-39; Matthew 5:17-19. *"Do not think that I have*

*come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfil.”*

## **THURSDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINT BARNABAS, APOSTLE**

**11 JUNE 2026**

### **Make history**

What was it like during the times of the apostle Barnabas, whose memorial is today? Thousands of people at a time were becoming Christians with no real formality or infrastructure yet in the church. There was the “grace of God” and “firmness of heart” at work, today’s first reading tells us, but persecution and internal conflict too. Every era has its challenges and opportunities. How are you building the Body of Christ during your moment in history?

**Today’s readings:** Acts 11:21b-26; 13:1-3; Matthew 5:20-26. “*‘To love your neighbour as yourself’ is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.*”

## **FRIDAY: SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

**12 JUNE 2026**

### **Follow a heartwarming devotion**

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus emphasizes the long-suffering love and compassion of Christ toward all humanity. Compassion is the sum of wisdom and grace. If we choose to embrace it as our guiding principle, it can point the way to a generous and virtuous life. A litany to the Sacred Heart includes the following lines – perhaps you will want to make them your

own today: “Heart of Jesus, house of God and gate of heaven. / Heart of Jesus, glowing furnace of charity. / Heart of Jesus, vessel of justice and love. / Heart of Jesus, full of goodness and love. / . . . . / Heart of Jesus, most worthy of all praise.”

**Today’s readings:** Deuteronomy 7:6-11; 1 John 4:7-16; Matthew 11:25-30. “*Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest.*”

## **SATURDAY: MEMORIAL OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY**

**13 JUNE 2026**

### **Clean up your act**

The word *immaculate* means “clean” – more specifically “without flaw.” The church calls the heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary immaculate because she was the mother of Jesus, who was without sin, the major human flaw. That’s the theological reason. But how can we imitate such perfection? Humanity is anything but immaculate. Our limitations frequently point to our distance from divine perfection. What Mary had, though, is purity of heart: She always sought to understand, open herself to, and follow God’s will for her. Her intention was to listen for God’s intentions. While we may not be able to achieve Mary’s perfection in responding to the promptings of God, we can imitate her willingness to seek God’s desires for ourselves.

**Today’s readings:** 1 Kings 19:19-21; Luke 2:41-51. “*And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart..*”

## ***Readings for the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ***

### **Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14b-16a**

In his final discourse Moses reminds the people of God’s sustaining word.

### **Psalms 147:12-13, 14-15, 19-20**

The divine word and law have been entrusted to Israel as a blessing.

### **1 Corinthians 10:16-17**

Our mystical communion with Christ gives us a share in his blessing and brokenness.

## John 6:51-58

Just as Jesus shares in the life of his Father, he also lives in us who eat and drink here.

### Words on the Word

#### **Christ Our Bread**

##### *The Story Behind the Solemnity*

Every year, on the Feast of Corpus Christi, Catholics take to the streets. We process with the Blessed Sacrament held high in a monstrance, singing hymns and publicly proclaiming a core truth of our faith: that Jesus Christ is truly present – Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity – in the Eucharist. But where did this beautiful tradition come from? The story is a powerful reminder that God often works through the humble and the doubtful to make His presence known.

##### *A Feast Born from a Miracle*

The origins of this solemnity trace back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, a time of intense theological debate. While scholars argued about the nature of the Eucharist, and many people were losing their faith, Christ took matters into His own hands.

He appeared to a humble Belgian nun, Saint Juliana of Liège, with a unique request: He wanted a special feast day established to *honour* His presence in the Blessed Sacrament. The idea slowly gained traction. The local bishop, Robert of Liège, established the feast for his diocese in 1247. In a turn of events only God could orchestrate, Juliana's friend and confessor, Jacques Pantaleon, was later elected Pope Urban IV.

It was during Pope Urban's reign that a dramatic event solidified the feast for the universal Church. A German priest, Peter of Prague, was on pilgrimage to Rome. Like many of us, he was struggling with doubts about the Real Presence. As he celebrated Mass in the town of Bolsena, his doubts reached a crisis point.

Just as he spoke the words of consecration, the Eucharist began to bleed.

Blood dripped from the consecrated Host onto his hands and onto the corporal, the small white cloth on the altar. Stunned, the priest tried to hide what was happening, but several drops fell to the marble floor. The congregation saw it all.

Word quickly reached Pope Urban IV, who was staying nearby in Orvieto. He sent investigators, who confirmed the miracle. To this day, you can visit the Cathedral of Orvieto in Italy and venerate the very corporal stained with the Precious Blood of Christ. Convinced by this powerful sign, Pope Urban IV extended the Feast of Corpus Christi to the entire Church in 1264.

##### *The Ultimate Source: Christ's Own Words*

While a miraculous story is compelling, our faith is ultimately founded on the public Revelation of Jesus Christ found in Scripture. Private revelations, like Saint Juliana's, simply point us back to the truth that was always there.

And what is that truth? It's the astounding promise Jesus makes in the Gospel of John:

*"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."* (John 6:51)

It sounds almost like a contradiction, doesn't it? The God who created the entire universe becoming a simple piece of bread. The Lord of all things becoming food for His people. Why bread? He could have chosen to be present in the air we breathe or the water we drink.

Perhaps God chose bread because it is a unique collaboration between God and humanity. Air and water are purely God's creation. But bread is the "fruit of the earth and work of human hands." We plant the seed, tend the crop, harvest the grain, and bake the loaf. God provides the growth, the sun, and the rain. In the Eucharist, God takes our humble offering – the work of our hands – and does what is humanly impossible: He transforms it into His very self.

### *Our Daily Bread: More Than a Metaphor*

This brings us to the prayer Jesus taught us: "Give us this day our daily bread." We are, of course, asking for the food we need to survive. In our modern world, it's easy to feel we are masters of our own destiny. Yet a sudden illness, a job loss, or a natural disaster quickly reminds us that we are not in control. We are stewards, not masters, and we depend on God's blessing for everything.

But this prayer goes deeper. When we pray for "our" bread, we acknowledge that we are a community. As Saint Paul writes:

*"Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf."*  
(1 Corinthians 10:17)

The bread on our table is meant to be shared with those who have less. The Bread of Life, the Eucharist, is meant to unite us into one family, the Church. No one is an island; we are responsible for one another.

### *A Final Thought from a Pope*

In his book *Jesus of Nazareth*, Pope Benedict XVI reflects on this very idea. He points out that for the early Church Fathers, the "our bread" in the Lord's Prayer pointed directly to the Eucharist. He writes:

*"We, who are permitted to receive the Eucharist as our bread, must nevertheless always pray also that no one be cut off, separated from the Body of Christ... Therefore, we also pray daily for 'our' bread, that is, Christ, so that we who abide and live in Him may not break away from His sanctification and His abiding."*

This is our task. In asking for our daily bread, we are asking for the grace to remain united with Christ in the Eucharist. We are entrusting our lives, our doubts, and our "impossible" problems to the God who makes the impossible possible every day on our altars. He gives Himself to us completely, so that we can give ourselves completely to Him.

In Christ's love,  
*Fr Anthony*

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## ICONS OF EVANGELISTS, APOSTLES, AND SAINTS: 30 SAINTS BORIS AND GLEB

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### The Princes Who Chose the Crown of Martyrdom

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Every nation has its heroes, but for a Christian people, the most profound heroes are its saints. These are the men and women whose faith helped shape a nation's soul. We see this across the Christian world, where certain saints become spiritual anchors for their people.

Think about it:

- ❖ In Bulgaria, they honour Tsar Boris, who brought his country into the fold of Eastern Christianity.
- ❖ In Serbia, it's Stefan Nemanja, the great unifier of the medieval Serbian lands.
- ❖ In Macedonia, devotion centres on Saints Cyril and Methodius, the "Apostles to the

Slavs" themselves.

- ❖ And in the lands of the Rus, a special place is held for figures like Saint Olga of Kyiv and Saint Alexander Nevsky.

But the very first native saints to be glorified in Rus were two brothers, Boris and Gleb. Their story is a raw, powerful lesson in choosing the path of Christ over the path of worldly power.



Moscow School: *Saints Boris and Gleb surrounded by scenes from their lives*. End of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg.

### ***A Story of Brotherhood and Betrayal***

The legend of Boris and Gleb is a brutal tale straight out of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. They were the young sons of the great Saint Vladimir, the ruler who baptized the Kievan Rus'. After Vladimir's death in 1015, a vicious power struggle erupted. Their ambitious older half-brother, Sviatopolk (later known as "the Accursed"), seized the throne in Kyiv.

Fearing any rivals, Sviatopolk decided to eliminate his popular younger brothers. He sent assassins to murder Boris first. According to the chronicles, Boris knew they were coming. His soldiers urged him to fight, to claim the throne that was rightfully his. But Boris refused to raise a hand against his own brother, choosing instead to pray and accept his death as a "passion-bearer," imitating Christ's own willing sacrifice. He was martyred while praying.

His younger brother, Gleb, was then lured to his death by Sviatopolk, and he met a similar fate, dying with a prayer on his lips.

### ***The First Saints of Their Land***

This act of non-violent, Christ-like acceptance of death in the face of injustice shocked the conscience of the Rus' people. The brothers' sacrifice became a rallying

point, a spiritual cornerstone for the fledgling Christian nation. Devotion to them spread like wildfire.

In 1072, less than 60 years after their deaths, Boris and Gleb were officially canonized, becoming the first native saints of their land. Their story helped to forge a new Christian identity, showing that sainthood wasn't just for distant apostles or foreign bishops – it could be achieved by their own princes on their own soil.

### ***How We See Them Today***

In iconography, you almost always see Boris and Gleb together, a testament to their shared story.

- ❖ Princely Garb: They are depicted in rich garments and princely hats, reminding us of their noble birth.
- ❖ The Martyr's Sword: They hold swords, but not as a sign of aggression. Here, the sword symbolizes their status as warriors for Christ and is an attribute of their martyrdom – the very instrument of their sacrifice.
- ❖ Shared Witness: They are often shown side-by-side, sometimes on horseback, forever united in their witness to the Gospel.

The icons that survive, some dating back centuries, aren't just historical artifacts. They are a window into a foundational moment of faith – a story that teaches us that the ultimate victory isn't found in a throne or a crown, but in faithfulness to Christ, even unto death.

# 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 26

### The Bride's Gaze

John 15:9–17

#### The Gaze That Captivates God

In the spiritual marketplace of the modern world, it's easy to get overwhelmed. Faiths and philosophies are presented like products on a supermarket shelf – Buddha, Krishna, the "Energy of the Cosmos." They all seem to promise peace and fulfilment, and when faced with so many options that seem to satisfy the same need, our consumer instincts kick in: we look for the easiest or cheapest one.

But what if we've got it all backward? What if faith isn't about us choosing a product, but about realizing we have already been chosen by the Creator? Jesus put it plainly to his apostles: "*You did not choose me, but I chose you*" (John 15:16). This single line flips the entire script. We aren't spiritual shoppers browsing for a deal; we are the beloved, sought after by the living God.

#### ***A Postcard of the Ocean***

It's tempting to dabble in the fashionable spiritualities of the day, blending a little of this and a little of that, and perhaps setting aside the demands of Catholicism. But after a while, the soul knows. It's the difference between standing on the shore, feeling the spray of the real sea, and staring at a cheap postcard of ocean waves. One is a living reality; the other is a flat, lifeless imitation.

The spiritual life isn't a self-help program we build; it's a gift we receive. It's the Holy Spirit, the very love of God, flooding the human heart. We see this raw power in the Acts of the Apostles when the Spirit descends upon Cornelius and his household. Peter hadn't even finished his sermon! He was still wrapping his own mind around preaching the Gospel to a non-Jew. But the Spirit didn't wait. God's love is a deluge, just waiting to break through.

#### ***Just One Crack in the Dam***

So, what does God need from us to unleash this flood of grace? Almost nothing. He just needs a crack, a tiny opening in the dam of our hearts.

- ❖ For *Cornelius*, a Roman centurion, the crack was his simple sympathy for the God of the Jews, which he expressed through prayer and giving alms.
- ❖ For *Saul*, the persecutor, it was the first pang of guilt he felt after approving the murder of Saint Stephen.

That's all it takes. One good impulse, one noble thought, one movement of the heart toward God, and His love breaks in with unstoppable force. It's a love that bridges impossible gulfs – like the one between a pagan Roman soldier and a Jewish fisherman.

#### ***The Staggering Trust of God***

When you stop and think about it, the nature of this love is staggering. God gives Himself to us

completely, holding nothing back. He trusts us with His very heart, even when we can't yet trust ourselves. Jesus told His disciples:

*"I have made known to you EVERYTHING I have heard from my Father."* (John 15:15)

Everything. He concealed no mystery, hid no part of Himself. This is a love that is totally vulnerable and completely revealed. And this incredible gift, once received, can't be kept to ourselves. It demands to be poured out, even on those who seem distant or foreign to us, just as Cornelius was to Peter.

### ***The Power of a Single Glance***

But what have we done to deserve such a total, all-in love? That's the beautiful secret. God so desperately desires to love us that He will seize upon the smallest reason to do so.

In the Song of Songs, the great love poem of the Bible, the Bridegroom declares to his Bride:

*"You have captivated my heart, my sister, my bride; you have captivated my heart with one glance of your eyes, with one bead of your necklace."* (Song of Songs 4:9)

Think about that. The King is enchanted by **one glance**. The Hebrew word for that "one bead" is ANAK. It means a tiny piece of jewellery, something small. But fascinatingly, ANAK can also mean "giant."

Could it be that our smallest, most sincere act of love – a simple prayer, a moment of compassion, a glance toward heaven – is seen by God as something gigantic? That one tiny, pure-as-gold gesture has the power to make a colossal impression on Him, becoming all the reason He needs to open the floodgates of His love.

God is not a reluctant giver. He is a lover, actively searching for a reason to be enchanted by us. As the rabbi Jechiel Heller wrote, God says, "You can enchant me even with one righteous person; you draw me to yourself when you keep even one commandment."

One righteous man, Jesus Christ, was enough for God to be enchanted with all of humanity. And for us, keeping the one commandment of love is enough for the heavenly deluge to pour out over every dry region of our lives. All He asks is for that one glance.

*Fr Anthony*

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# **Grace: The Unseen Current of Our Spiritual Lives**

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## **Stop Rowing, Start Sailing**

***Why our 'try harder' approach to faith is missing the point.***

Let's be honest. Most days, life feels like a grind. We're juggling work, family, finances, and the endless buzz of notifications on our phones. We try to be good people. We try to do the right thing, to pray, to get to Mass on Sunday. But if we're *really* honest with ourselves, much of the time we feel like we're running on empty, trying to power through on sheer willpower.

We tell ourselves, "If I just try a little harder, I can be a better Catholic, a better spouse, a better parent." It's the gospel of self-reliance, the "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" mentality that our culture preaches relentlessly.

But it's not the Catholic way. The secret, the unseen engine of the entire Christian life, is

something else entirely: GRACE.

It's a word we hear all the time in homilies and prayers, but what does it actually *mean*? It can sound abstract, like some kind of theological pixie dust. In reality, grace is the most powerful and tangible force in the universe.

### ***The Unseen Engine of Faith***

In the simplest terms, grace is a participation in the very **life of God**. The Catechism puts it beautifully:

*Grace is a participation in the life of God. It introduces us into the intimacy of Trinitarian life: by Baptism the Christian participates in the grace of Christ, the Head of his Body. As an "adopted son" he can henceforth call God "Father," in union with the only Son. He receives the life of the Spirit who breathes charity into him and who forms the Church. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1997)*

Think of it less as a divine "bravo!" for good behaviour and more as a divine energy transfusion. It is God's own life dwelling within us, healing our broken nature, and elevating us to a level we could never reach on our own.

The most crucial thing to remember is that grace is a **free and unmerited gift**. You can't earn it. You can't buy it. You can't hustle your way into deserving it. God gives it to us simply because He loves us. Our job isn't to earn it, but to accept it and cooperate with it.

### ***Two Flavors of Grace***

To help us understand this gift, the Church traditionally speaks of grace in two main ways: **Sanctifying Grace** and **Actual Grace**. A helpful analogy is to think of the operating system on your computer versus the pop-up notifications you receive.

<i>Type of Grace</i>	<i>Analogy</i>	<i>What It Does</i>
Sanctifying Grace	The Soul's "Operating System"	A stable, indwelling gift that makes us holy and adopted children of God. It's the state of being in friendship with Him.
Actual Grace	A "Divine Nudge" or Pop-Up	A temporary intervention from God that helps us to do good and avoid evil in specific, everyday moments.

**Sanctifying grace** is the game-changer. It's the state of being "right" with God. We first receive this incredible gift at Baptism, where it transforms our souls from the inside out and makes us temples of the Holy Spirit. While we can tragically lose this grace through mortal sin, the incredible mercy of God allows us to have it fully restored through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It's the steady, life-giving current that connects our soul to God.

Actual graces are the day-to-day sparks. They are God's little interventions, His moment-by-moment help to keep us on the right path. It's that moment when you:

- ❖ Feel a sudden urge to call a friend who is struggling.
- ❖ Bite your tongue instead of firing back with a harsh word in an argument.
- ❖ Suddenly understand a passage of Scripture in a new way during Mass.
- ❖ Find the strength to get out of bed for Adoration when you're feeling tired and lazy.

These are divine nudges, guiding us, strengthening us, and always pointing us back to Him.

### ***How to Tap into Grace***

If grace is a gift, how do we open the package? God, in His wisdom, didn't leave us guessing. He gave us tangible, guaranteed channels to receive His life: **the Sacraments**.

- ❖ **Baptism:** Where it all begins. We are washed clean of sin and filled with sanctifying grace for the very first time.
- ❖ **Reconciliation (Confession):** The spiritual "reset button." It restores sanctifying grace when it has been lost and floods us with actual graces to fight future temptation.
- ❖ **The Eucharist:** The source and summit of our faith! Here we don't just receive grace; we receive the very Author of grace, Jesus Christ himself. It's spiritual super-food for the soul.
- ❖ **Confirmation, Matrimony, Holy Orders, Anointing of the Sick:** Each of these provides a specific, powerful grace for a particular state in life or moment of profound need.

Beyond the sacraments, we open ourselves to grace through prayer, reading Scripture, acts of charity, and simply striving to live a virtuous life.

### ***The Sailboat and the Rowboat***

Think of the spiritual life as a journey across a vast ocean to a distant shore (Heaven).

The self-reliant person gets in a rowboat. He pulls on the oars with all his might – his own willpower, his own plans, his own efforts. He might make some progress, but eventually, he'll grow exhausted, frustrated, and find himself going in circles.

The person living a life of grace gets in a sailboat. Effort is still required – you have to hoist the sail, hold the rudder, and steer. That's our cooperation. But the real power, the force that actually moves the boat across the water, is the wind.

*That wind is the grace of God.* It's a power infinitely greater than our own. Our job is simply to position our sail to catch it.

So, the next time you feel overwhelmed, burned out, and like you're running on fumes, stop rowing so hard. Take a deep breath. Go to Confession. Receive the Eucharist. Spend five quiet minutes in prayer.

Hoist your sail, and let the unseen, life-giving wind of God's grace carry you home.



# Around the World

The sometimes missed news

## CHINA

### **BIG BROTHER'S NEW AI EYES**

It sounds like dystopian fiction, but it's today's reality. Beijing is supercharging its massive surveillance network with advanced AI. We're talking about new cameras and software designed to analyse behaviour, predict unrest, and even flag potential suicides, all with minimal human oversight. The state's goal is simple: greater control.

As Catholics, this should give us pause. This isn't just a political issue; it's a profoundly moral one. When a government seeks to monitor, predict, and ultimately control human behaviour on this scale, it fundamentally attacks our God-given dignity. We are not simply data points in an algorithm or cogs in a statemachine. We are souls endowed with free will.

This drive for technological perfection creates a society built on fear, not faith. It's a chilling attempt to engineer a world without error, but in doing so, it risks engineering out our very humanity. True order comes from virtue and grace, not the cold gaze of an all-seeing camera. This is a stark reminder that any technology that diminishes human freedom and dignity ultimately works against the common good.

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## ARMENIA

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### TRUTH UNDER SIEGE IN ARMENIA

It's a familiar, ugly playbook we're seeing unfold in Armenia ahead of its parliamentary elections. Russia is employing a campaign of disinformation and political threats to undermine the pro-European government of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. Leaked documents reveal a concerted effort to sow distrust through social media and to threaten Armenians with war and economic pain – like higher gas prices – if they don't vote Moscow's way.

Looking at this through a catholic lens, this is more than just geopolitics; it's a profound moral issue. This campaign is a direct assault on truth, a cornerstone of a just society. The use of fear and coercion violates the dignity and sovereignty of the Armenian people, denying them the God-given freedom to determine their own future. Threatening a nation with the same fate as Ukraine for seeking closer ties with Europe is a form of political blackmail that offends against justice.

Our faith calls us to stand in solidarity with the oppressed and to pray for a world where national sovereignty is respected and political discourse is founded on truth, not manipulation.

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## MEXICO

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### A WORLD CUP FOR THE FEW?

The 2026 World Cup, meant to be a global celebration, is sparking more frustration than joy in Mexico. While co-hosting with the US and Canada, many Mexicans feel the slogan "A World Cup for all" rings hollow, pointing to a spectacle designed for wealthy tourists, not for them.

This situation presents a clear moral challenge. The complaints are not just about logistics; they are about justice. Locals face impossibly high ticket prices and see their cities receive cosmetic makeovers – new murals and road touch-ups – while urgent infrastructure repairs are ignored. This "touristification" prioritizes profit for a few entrepreneurs over the well-being of the community.

This approach contradicts the principle of the common good and the preferential option for the poor. An event that deepens social divides, excludes the local populace through cost, and uses a community as a mere backdrop for commercial gain fails a fundamental ethical test. Restrictive visa policies for the US and Canada only reinforce this exclusion.

Ultimately, we must ask: does this event serve human dignity, or does it simply serve the market? A truly successful celebration should lift everyone up, not just the privileged few.

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## THE DIGITAL ASSAULT ON CHILDHOOD INNOCENCE

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## 300% INCREASE

It's a chilling statistic: a 300% spike in AI-generated child abuse material in just one year, according to a recent report from an internet monitoring platform. This terrifying trend is fuelled by easily accessible "nudifying" apps that digitally strip clothing from photos.

The most heartbreaking part? The source material is often innocent photos of children posted by proud parents and family on social media.

This is more than a technological problem; it's a profound moral crisis. Each fake image is a grave assault on the God-given dignity of a child, treating a person made in His image as an object for sinful gratification. As the technology improves, distinguishing these malicious fakes from reality will become nearly impossible, eroding our very sense of truth.

While proposed EU legislation like the AI Act, which would require labelling AI content, offers a glimmer of hope, it's only a partial solution. This is a battle for the soul. It demands our vigilance as a society and a renewed commitment from parents to prudently guard the images and innocence of their children in a world where digital darkness is just a click away.

## *We Read Pope Leo*

### Our Pope's Guide to Staying Human in the Age of AI

Let's be honest, the rapid rise of Artificial Intelligence can feel a bit overwhelming. It's exciting, a little scary, and it raises some huge questions about what it means to be human. Thankfully, we're not left to figure it out on our own. In his latest encyclical, "*Magnifica humanitas*," the Holy Father gives us a spiritual and practical roadmap for navigating this new digital continent with our faith and dignity intact.



Here are some of the key takeaways for living our faith in the world of tomorrow.

#### ***First Things First: What AI Isn't***

Before we can understand how to use AI, we have to understand what it is – and more importantly, what it isn't. The Pope draws a clear and crucial line in the sand between a machine and a person.

So-called artificial intelligence systems do not undergo experience, do not have bodies, do not feel joy and pain, do not mature in relationship, and do not know from within what love, work, friendship, and responsibility mean. Nor do they have a moral conscience: they do not judge good and evil (99).

This is a powerful reminder. No matter how smart a program seems, it lacks a soul, a conscience, and the lived experience that makes us human. It can process data, but it can't love. It can execute a command, but it can't show mercy.

#### ***A New Yardstick for a New Age***

In a world obsessed with technological power and efficiency, the encyclical calls us to measure our progress by a different standard: love.

The quality of a civilization is measured not by the power of its means, but by the care with which it is able to surround the human person, by its capacity to recognize the other as a face, not as a function (114).

Technology that promises to "liberate" us is a false idol if it ends up treating people like cogs in a machine or, worse, creates "new forms of global subjugation" (173). The ultimate test for any new technology isn't whether it's powerful, but whether it serves the immense dignity of every person.

### ***The Game Plan: A Call to Action for a Wounded World***

So, what's the game plan? The encyclical doesn't just diagnose the problem; it gives us our marching orders. It's a call to shake off our spiritual blindness and become what the Pope calls "prudent builders" of a better world.

## **1. RECLAIM OUR RESPONSIBILITY**

We can't just let technology and market forces run on autopilot. Politics and society have a moral duty to steer these powerful tools toward the common good.

In the age of AI and robotics, everything can no longer be entrusted to the "invisible hand" of the market alone: politics has the duty to give economic and technological processes a direction consistent with the common good, supporting dignified work, social integration, and a just distribution of the benefits flowing from innovation (163).

## **2. REFUSE TO BE NEUTRAL**

In an age of information overload, it's easy to become numb or to think that the world's problems are too big for us. The Holy Father warns us against this temptation.

There are conflicts in the face of which it is not right to remain neutral... When we are confronted with the bombing of civilian populations, attacks on hospitals, schools, and infrastructure necessary for life, and violence affecting children, we are faced with scandals that wound humanity itself (216).

Building a world at war is an evil that "must be called by its name" (210). Our primary tool against this evil is dialogue, which the Pope calls "the chief instrument of coexistence between persons and between nations" (219).

## **3. INVEST IN WHAT TRULY MATTERS**

The path forward isn't found in a new app or a better algorithm. It's found in nurturing the human soul and our relationships with one another. The Pope urges us to focus on three key areas:

- ❖ Education: We must teach our children – and ourselves! – to "recognize manipulation, defend their own dignity, and respect the dignity of others also in digital environments" (142). The digital world is a new mission field, a "new continent, calling for evangelization and in need of generous missionaries mature in faith" (238).
- ❖ Relationships: We have to actively cultivate real, physical presence. No amount of screen time can replace the grace of being together.
  - I encourage the cultivation of places and moments in which physical presence remains irreplaceable: the community gathered around the table, the assembled Christian community, a visit to those who are lonely, or service to the poor. These are signs of humanity (239).
- ❖ Justice and Peace: We are all called to be active participants in building a better world, "without resorting either to spiritualism or to our little worlds" (236). This means staying faithful to the truth and working for a world that is just and peaceful for all.

The message of "*Magnifica humanitas*" is ultimately one of profound hope. Technology is a tool, not a destiny. By rooting ourselves in the timeless truths of our faith, we can use these new tools to build a civilization of love, one that truly honours the magnificent humanity given to us by God.

## Communist Artificial Intelligence

### Don't Fear the Robot: A Catholic Look at the "Artificial Intelligence" Hype.

You can't scroll through the news or have a coffee with friends these days without someone bringing it up: Artificial Intelligence. We're surrounded by a whirlwind of hype, with some warning of a dystopian future and others marvelling at the incredible possibilities.

Before we get carried away, let's start with a simple but crucial fact: the tool we call "artificial intelligence" is neither artificial nor intelligent. Understanding this helps us cut through the noise and see what's really going on.

#### ***What is Real Intelligence?***

First, let's talk about "intelligence." We're told that these new programs are "intelligent" because they can process mountains of data at lightning speed, write an essay, or create a picture. But is that what intelligence truly is?

No. A calculator is faster at math than any human, but we don't call it intelligent. A machine that imitates a painter's style isn't an artist. True intelligence is so much more.

From a Catholic perspective, the answer is clear. Intelligence is a gift from the ultimate Super-Intelligent Being – God Himself. It is inextricably linked to things no machine can ever possess:

- ❖ Self-awareness: The knowledge that "I am."
- ❖ Free will: The capacity to choose between good and evil.
- ❖ A soul: The spiritual life force that connects us to our Creator.

Intelligence is the spark of the divine within us. It is born of a spiritual energy that man, for all his genius, can never create out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). No tool, no matter how sophisticated, can have a subjective experience, a moral conscience, or an inner life. It's just code and circuitry. To call it "intelligent" is to dramatically downgrade what it means to be human.

#### ***A Problem of Language***

The word "artificial" doesn't fit, either. The term implies a copy or an imitation of something real. But these tools aren't even imitating intelligence; they are simply running complex commands given to them by their human creators.

Calling a machine "intelligent" is a form of anthropomorphism – the same error we make when we say a storm is "angry" or our car "doesn't want to start." We are projecting human qualities onto a non-human object. It's a useful metaphor, perhaps, but a dangerous one if we start to believe it.

#### ***Sci-Fi Nightmares and Ancient Myths***

This is more than just a philosophical debate. Getting the definition right helps dispel the wild fears stoked by science fiction. For centuries, we've been fed stories of machines rebelling against their masters – a vision born from the error of treating tools like people.

This fear also taps into a much older, gnostic myth: the tale of the Golem. This is the ancient story of man trying to create life through secret knowledge, essentially trying to play God. It's a cautionary tale about the sin of Pride, the belief that our own genius can rival the Creator's. We see echoes of this delusion today in the writings of figures like Yuval Harari, who speculates about creating "demigod humans." This is not profound insight; it is the Golem myth dressed up in modern, technological language.

## ***The Real Danger: Who's Pouring the Jug?***

So, if we shouldn't fear a robot rebellion, what is the real danger? It lies in forgetting that AI is a tool – and like any tool, it is only as good or as bad as the person who wields it.

An old saying tells us that a jug smells of whatever was last poured into it. So it is with these AI tools. They reek of what they are filled with.

This is the critical point. These systems are programmed by human beings with their own biases, agendas, and worldviews. If the tool is programmed by secular, globalist-minded companies to promote "political correctness," then the answers it generates will reflect that ideology. The output will be a sophisticated blend of information and propaganda, making it difficult to distinguish truth from falsehood.

Instead of "Artificial Intelligence," it might be more accurate to call these tools "Mechanical Ideology Generators." They are incredibly powerful instruments for spreading a particular worldview on a massive scale. Falsehood has many faces. It can be the big, bold lie repeated a thousand times, or it can be the subtle "amalgam" of truth and falsehood skilfully mixed together to confuse and mislead.

Our task as Catholics is not to fear the machine, but to exercise discernment. We must question the information it gives us, understand the biases of its creators, and, above all, never mistake the echo of a human programmer for the voice of true, God-given intelligence.

*Tony Wood*

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## Prayer

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**Please remember to pray for those who are unwell, in need, or have requested our prayers:**



Cecil Finn, Andrew McLaughlin, Betty Barbour, Claire Wiggins, Russell Carroll, Lucy Cunningham, Tommy McGrory Senior, Lilian Cox, Sarah Carmichael, and Doleen Durnin.

**Please keep in your prayers** Please keep in your prayers Madge McWhirter, Sarah Theresa Cassidy (2016), John O'Neill **and all whose anniversaries fall around this time.**

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## News and Events

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

**Alex and Olga** and their three boys, wish to thank everyone they have met and been welcomed by and especially those who supplied many things especially for baby Mykola.

**Stella Maris (formerly called Apostleship of the Sea) is seeking one volunteer** from this parish please to help with Sea Sunday (which falls on 11/12 July this year) in this parish. This is the day when the Church comes together to pray for seafarers, fishers and their families, and takes a second collection to support the work of Stella Maris. The volunteer will read out the appeal (which Stella Maris will provide) at the end of Masses that weekend. If you can kindly do this, please contact [roland.hayes@stellamarismail.org](mailto:roland.hayes@stellamarismail.org)



[campbeltown@rcdai.org.uk](mailto:campbeltown@rcdai.org.uk)



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