

PARISH BULLETIN

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

ST. PETER
CHRYSOLOGUS

July 30th



26th July 2026

The 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

Week 17 of Ordinary Time

Tuesday: Holy Mass, 6pm

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

Coffee and Discussion Group: 10.30am

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

Hymns/Music for Sunday

ProceSSIONal

116 Dear Lord and Father of mankind

After Baptismal Rite

Sheet Spirit of God

Offertory

501 Spirit of the Living God (3 verses)

Communion music

Възвеличай, о, душа моя – Magnify, oh my Soul

Post Communion

Sheet The Lord's my shepherd
(Townsend)

RecessionaL

122 Do not be afraid

Next weekend:

Saturday, 1st of August, Vigil Mass, 6.00pm

**Sunday, 2nd of August, 18th 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

2nd August: Holy Mass, 4pm

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Sunday 15.30-15.45

16th August: Holy Mass, 4pm

Psalm response

O Lord, how I love your law!

Gospel acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

*I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
you have revealed the secrets of the kingdom to little children.
Alleluia.*

Communion Antiphon

*Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and never forget all his benefits.*

Take Five

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

MONDAY OF WEEK 17

27 JULY 2026

The bread you knead

If you “get your hands into” making bread, you know the mystery of leavening. It makes the dough rise, and as it bakes an irresistible fragrance fills the air. The yeast pervades the dough and turns it into bread. In some European villages on Saturday, the whole town would fill with the aroma of baking bread. No wonder Jesus used such a homely image for the kingdom of heaven. Once the Word of Christ has been incorporated, kneaded, into human experience, the whole rises. You come alive. Christ fills every space, every soul. Put on your apron. There’s work to do.

Today’s readings: Jeremiah 13:1-11; Matthew 13:31-35. *“The kingdom of heaven is like yeast.”*

TUESDAY OF WEEK 17

28 JULY 2026

Tune in to the word

Jesus never wastes words in the gospels, but we know he wants to make absolutely sure we are paying attention when he concludes his comments with “whoever has ears ought to hear.” Jesus knows that we humans have a tendency to tune in and out of our surroundings. Sometimes we are so captivated by our thoughts – last night’s conversation, a repeating song fragment, the stories we continually tell ourselves about the past and future – that although we believe we’re listening, and have every intention of listening, we aren’t really listening. Make the decision today to pay attention to your thoughts. Are you tuned in or out of your surroundings most of the time? “Listen in silence,” says Saint Teresa of Calcutta, “because if your heart is full of other things you cannot hear the voice of God.”

Today’s readings: Jeremiah 14:17-22; Matthew 13:36-43. *“The righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”*

WEDNESDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINTS MARTHA, MARY AND

LAZARUS

29 JULY 2026

Remarkable Martha

Martha, sister of Lazarus and Mary, is mainly remembered because she wanted Mary to help her prepare and serve a meal for their guest, Jesus. But scripture also describes Martha as a strong woman who repeatedly speaks her mind: She tells the Lord he should have come earlier to prevent the death of Lazarus; she tries to tell Jesus what to do when he summons Lazarus from the tomb; and, perhaps most amazingly, she is a woman who admits to the Lord that she knows he is the Messiah. She could be the patron of women and men who yearn to speak the truth that is borne of faith and to trust in God’s power to do all things.

Today’s readings: Jeremiah 15:10, 16-21; Luke 10:38-42. *“Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary”*

THURSDAY: OPTIONAL MEMORIAL OF SAINT PETER CHRYSOLOGUS, BISHOP, DOCTOR

30 JULY 2026

Not only golden words but golden deeds

After Mass, a tall, lanky parishioner with the drawl of the Southwest greeted the priest, who was anything but tall. Instead of the usual mumbled “nice sermon, Father,” the cowboy-like gent looked down and said, “You know Father, if you lived among Native Americans out West, they might give you a name: ‘Short-Man-Who-Talks-Long.’” Saint Peter “of the Golden Words” (Chrysologus) had the short homily down pat. People loved his preaching – not merely because he didn’t give long sermons but because he made sense, so much so that he became known as the Doctor of Homilies. Whether you are a preacher by trade or not, you carry messages of goodness, kindness, compassion, and holiness in how you live.

Today’s readings: Jeremiah 18:1-6; Matthew 13:47-53. *“Whenever the object of clay which he was making turned out badly in his hand,*

he tried again.”

FRIDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINT IGNATIUS LOYOLA, PRIEST

31 JULY 2026

Find the sense in suffering

Studies suggest that human beings can tolerate a great deal of pain and suffering as long as they can find meaning in it. A young Spanish warrior hit by a cannonball in 1521 and confronted by a long, painful convalescence was forced to search for that meaning. The result was the Society of Jesus, one of the largest and most influential religious orders in history. The meaning Saint Ignatius of Loyola found on his sickbed gives hope to those who face disabling injury or illness, as nearly all of us will at one time or another. All things can work for good, “for the greater glory of God,” as the Jesuits say.

Today’s readings: Jeremiah 26:1-9; Matthew 13:54-58. *“Whatever I command you, tell them, and omit nothing.”*

SATURDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINT ALPHONSUS MARY DE’ LIGUORI, BISHOP, DOCTOR

1 AUGUST 2026

Good things can come in small packages

Saint Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787) went looking to cultivate the faith in out-of-the-way places. In Naples he organised little “chapels” of folks who met in places like the back rooms of barbershops or corners of public squares to pray, sing hymns, and receive basic religious education. These groups were the uneducated, street-sellers, longshoremen, ex-soldiers, and others. For them Alphonsus wrote a cheaply reproduced, pocket-sized book of devotions called *Maxims of Eternity* that they could carry with them and read throughout the day. Find some short moments every day for prayer and learning.

Today’s readings: Jeremiah 26:11-16, 24; Matthew 14:1-12. *“Now therefore, reform your ways and your deeds.”*

Readings for the 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Kings 3:5, 7-12

The wise pray for what they need, and God supplies it.

Psalms 119:57, 72, 76-77, 127-128, 129-130

The way of the Lord is more valuable than worldly riches.

Romans 8:28-30

Every circumstance can lead to good for those directed toward God.

Matthew 13:44-52 or 13:44-46

The treasure may be hidden, but the diligent will seek and possess it.

Words on the Word

The Treasure of Today: Embracing the Kingdom of God Here and Now

*

A devoted husband once said to his wife, "Darling, I must go abroad and work tirelessly, but one day, we shall be rich because of it." With gentle wisdom, she replied, "My dearest, we are already rich because we have each other. Perhaps – as things unfold – we shall one day also possess a little money."

* *

This profound truth beautifully mirrors the spiritual wealth we are offered in Christ.

In the Gospels, Christ presents three captivating images of immense fortune:

- A farmer unearthing a hidden treasure in a field.

- A merchant discovering a pearl of unparalleled price.
- Fishermen hauling in a miraculous, abundant catch.

Notice their shared response! They do not hesitate or delay. Filled with radiant joy, they spring into immediate action, willingly sacrificing all they have to secure their prize. Their commitment is total, and their reward is beyond measure.

In our modern world, the media constantly bombards us with fleeting offers and limited-time discounts, relying on a masterful psychological strategy: act now, or lose out forever. Yet, how much more urgent and glorious is the invitation of our Lord? Jesus Christ places the ultimate emphasis on "now." The Kingdom of God is not merely a distant promise relegated to the future; it is already unfolding in our midst. It is worth every sacrifice, even the surrender of our most cherished earthly attachments. When we empty our hands of worldly things, God fills them with the ultimate treasure.

Why, then, do we sometimes hesitate to give our all for the Kingdom?

We must remember that the Kingdom of God is not solely the Heaven that awaits us after our earthly pilgrimage. It is a present reality, and we are actively called to participate in its building. When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we boldly ask our Heavenly Father: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

Jesus does not merely console us with a future hope; through the mystery of His Incarnation, He unites Heaven and earth. The new law of this Kingdom – perfectly expressed in the Sermon on the Mount – is meant to transform the temporal order of our world. Whenever we, as faithful Catholics, foster true justice, steadfast solidarity, and peace, the Kingdom of Heaven draws near.

Called to Be Saints Today

The breathtaking beauty of this Kingdom is that it blossoms among us and through us. Look to the saints! They did not float aimlessly in the clouds; they stood firmly on the ground, bearing heroic witness to God's love in the reality of daily life. We, too, are called to this noble endeavour.

* * *

*My life is a shadow, my life is a moment,
That constantly flees and fades away...
To love You, O Lord, I have only this moment,
This one day of today alone!...
(St. Thérèse of Lisieux)*

In Christ's love,
Fr Anthony

37 DEESIS

In Eastern Christian iconography, the Deesis is one of the clearest visual expressions of intercessory prayer. At the centre of this three-part composition is Christ enthroned, holding an open book and most often depicted as Pantocrator, the ruler and judge of all. At His right stands the Mother of God; at His left, Saint John the Baptist. Both turn toward Christ in attitudes of supplication, pleading for mercy on behalf of humanity.

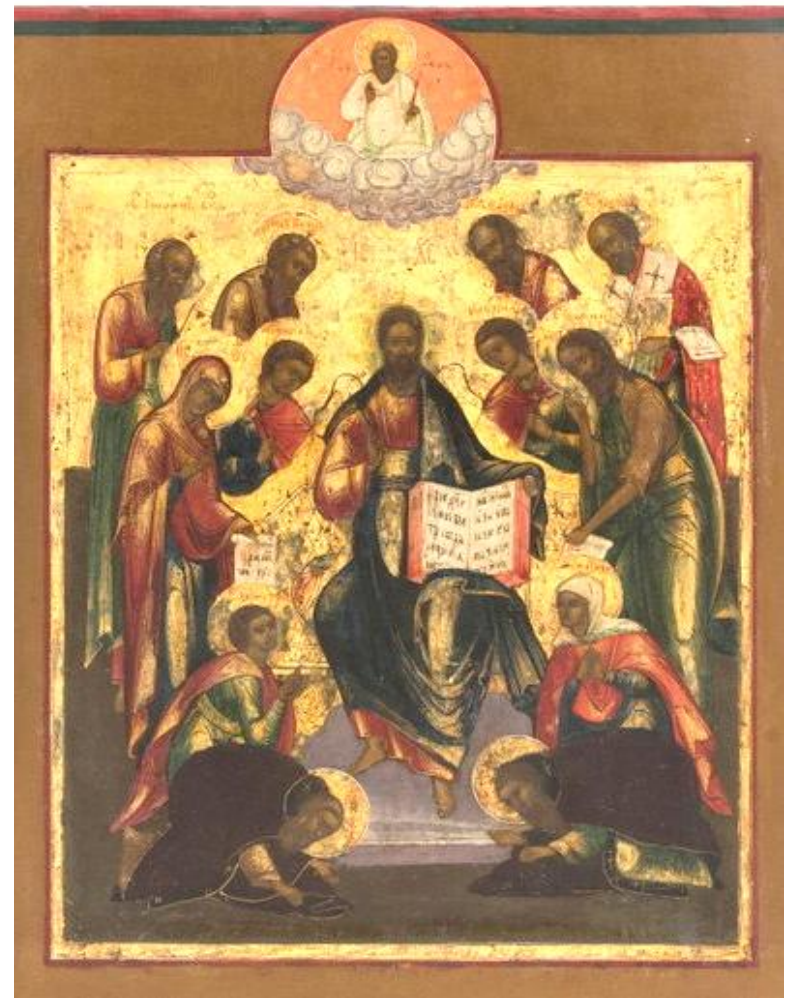
The earliest known images of the Deesis in the Eastern tradition date to the late 6th and early 7th centuries. Its popularity expanded significantly in the 9th and 10th centuries, and by the 10th

century the type had also appeared in Rus’.

Over time, the Deesis developed into several iconographic forms. In Rus’, it became a central feature of the iconostasis, where Christ and the accompanying figures were often painted on separate panels. In some cases, Saint John the Baptist was replaced by Saint Nicholas or by Old Testament prophets.

Another variation, sometimes called the Angelic Deesis, presents Christ Emmanuel flanked by the archangels Michael and Gabriel, evoking themes associated with the Holy Trinity. The basic three-figure arrangement could also be expanded to include apostles, martyrs, angels, and prophets. This fuller form, known as the Great Deesis, is closely linked to the Last Judgement and to the Christian conviction that the saints intercede before Christ for the salvation of the world.

Among the finest examples is the Deesis from Zvenigorod by Andrei Rublev. Here, Rublev departs from the severe image of Christ Pantocrator, presenting instead a figure marked by stillness, compassion, and spiritual depth. The result is an image of judgement tempered by mercy.



God's Guide

Relations with Angels: To Be Closer to Our Guardians

Chapter 3

THE CROSS and THE VICTORY

The cross remains the world's clearest and most powerful sign of love. Not a sentimental image, not a heart pierced by an arrow, but the CROSS of Christ. No greater sign of love has ever been given to humanity, and none ever will be.

In the early days of the Church, the apostles carried this message with fearless faith. They lifted up the cross before the world and, in one form or another, placed a question before every heart: CAN YOU LOVE AS HE LOVES? That question still stands today.

So, look at the cross, my friend, and ask yourself exactly that. Take a moment of silence. Kneel, if you can. DO NOT BE AFRAID. TRUST. IN CHRIST, THE VICTORY HAS ALREADY BEEN WON.

Too many people live as though they are still condemned – defeated, numb, and without hope. But the Gospel says otherwise. Jesus has already conquered the enemy. He has defeated Satan and every power that rebelled against Love. And He did it publicly, decisively, and for you.

Saint Paul says it plainly:

“He forgave us all our trespasses, cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them” (Col 2:13–15).

That is not religious poetry. That is Christian reality. At the cross, Christ broke the claim of evil. He exposed its lies, stripped it of its false authority, and opened the way to mercy and freedom.

And that was not the end of the story. In the obedience and humility of Jesus – “even death on a cross” – the Father revealed the full triumph of the Son. As Saint Paul writes:

“Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:8–11).

This is the heart of Christian hope: evil does not have the final word. Jesus does.

And Christ Himself confirmed it after the Resurrection:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Mt 28:18).

That matters for the world, and it matters personally. If you belong to Him, then you are not abandoned. You are not forgotten. You are not made for despair. You are His.

So, praise God. Stay close to the cross. Let your heart be reminded that divine love is stronger than sin, stronger than fear, and stronger than death.

LIVE, MY FRIEND. DO NOT GIVE UP. GOD LOVES YOU. Heaven is not indifferent to your struggle. In Christ, hope is real, mercy is open, and victory is already at work. Amen.

DURING MEDITATION
KISS THE BLOODY
FEET
OF JESUS ON THE CROSS
AND THE TEMPTATION OF SIN
WILL DEPART

STAND NEXT TO MARY
AND SAY,
“I’M NOT ALONE HERE,
MOTHER”.

**ANGELS ARE BEAUTIFUL LIKE PRECIOUS STONES – DEMONS
NO LONGER ARE**

Catholic tradition teaches that God, who is pure Spirit, created many spiritual beings and endowed them with free will. Some of these beings, made in His image, were joined for a time to material bodies and called human beings. Through the trials of earthly life, men and women are invited to grow in holiness and draw closer to God.

Other spiritual creatures rebelled against Him. Through pride, and under Satan’s influence, some angels fell and became demons. Still others were sent by God as His messengers to humanity; these are the angels.

The tradition of the Church speaks of nine choirs of angels: angels, archangels, principalities, powers, virtues, dominions, thrones, cherubim, and seraphim. Christian writers, including Saint Isidore, reflected on this heavenly order, and some linked it to the prophetic visions found in Scripture, especially in Ezekiel. In the passage describing the fall of the king of Tyre – long read by many Christian commentators as also echoing Satan’s rebellion – the prophet uses the imagery of precious stones to convey lost splendour and beauty:

“You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering...” (Ez 28:13–14)

The language is symbolic and striking. Ezekiel seems to reach for jewels because ordinary words fall short when describing the glory of spiritual beings and the tragedy of their fall.

What emerges clearly from both Scripture and tradition is that there is order among spiritual creatures. Heaven is not chaos. The angels serve God in harmony, and the fallen angels, too, appear to retain distinctions of power and rank even in rebellion. Beyond that, caution is wise. Much that is said about demonic hierarchies rests more on speculation than on the clear Word of God.

Still, the basic point stands: not all spiritual beings possess the same power or mission. Just as human society has different responsibilities and levels of authority, so too the spiritual world reflects a kind of order. Catholic tradition has long spoken of Guardian Angels assigned to individuals, and Scripture hints at angelic guardianship even over nations. In the Book of Daniel, for example, an angel refers to spiritual conflict involving the “prince of the kingdom of Persia” and speaks of Michael as “your prince” (Dn 10:13, 21).

That same order seems to apply, in a distorted way, among the fallen angels. Evil is not creative; it corrupts what God made good. Demons exploit human weakness with grim persistence. Over centuries of spiritual reflection, Christians have often spoken of demons associated with particular temptations – pride, impurity, anger, blasphemy, drunkenness, and other vices. Whether one takes such descriptions literally or pastorally, the point is familiar enough: sin is not random, and temptation often follows recognizable patterns.

The Gospels warn that spiritual emptiness is dangerous. Jesus Himself says:

“When an unclean spirit has gone out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest... Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself... and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.” (Mt 12:43–45)

In plain terms, grace cannot be treated as a revolving door. Confession is not just about being emptied of sin; it is about being filled again with the life of God. If a person turns back to old habits and knowingly makes room for evil, the spiritual struggle can grow worse.

But this is not a message of fear. It is a call to hope – and to responsibility. Christians are not doomed to remain trapped forever in the same sins. That discouraging claim sounds more like the voice of defeat than the Gospel of Christ. Scripture speaks differently. Saint Peter writes:

“Be sober... do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance... but as He who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct.” (1 Pet 1:13–16)

That is the Christian claim in full: holiness is possible. Not easy, certainly. Not automatic. But possible through grace.

So, the spiritual world, as the Church understands it, is real, ordered, and active. Angels are not decorative figures in religious art, and demons are not medieval superstition. Both belong to the serious Christian understanding of creation, freedom, rebellion, and redemption. Yet the believer’s focus should never become an unhealthy fascination with evil spirits. The centre is always God – His holiness, His grace, and His power to save.

In the end, the Christian life is not about obsessing over darkness, but about living so fully in the light of Christ that darkness finds no welcome.

Fr Anthony



Around the World

The sometimes-missed news

EUTHANASIA THE FRENCH WAY

THEY WILL HELP PEOPLE DIE

The Catholic Church in France has voiced grave concern over the National Assembly's adoption of a law permitting "assistance in dying." The measure allows terminally ill persons in suffering to request a lethal substance and, if they cannot administer it themselves, permits a doctor or nurse to do so.

This represents not compassion but a failure of solidarity. Human life remains sacred from conception until natural death, and no circumstance can make the intentional taking of innocent life morally acceptable. True care seeks to relieve pain, accompany the sick, and uphold their dignity, especially when they are weak, elderly, disabled, or afraid.

The French Bishops' Conference warned that the law will reshape society's view of vulnerability: "Our approach to weakness, old age, disability, or illness will change." By legalizing euthanasia and assisted suicide, lawmakers have introduced into French law the possibility of causing death, breaking with the medical vocation to heal, comfort, and never abandon.

The bishops rightly call this a serious turning point. A humane society must expand palliative care, spiritual support, and loving presence – not offer death as a solution to suffering.

MIDDLE EAST

THEY WILL BUILD A PORT

In a move set to reshape maritime trade, Dubai-based DP World intends to construct a major port and container terminal on the coast of Fujairah, along the Gulf of Oman. This development would allow vessels to avoid the Strait of Hormuz, a waterway long fraught with geopolitical tension between the United States and Iran.

The project reflects the United Arab Emirates' wider strategy of investing in infrastructure to strengthen economic resilience. Until now, the company's principal hub has been Jebel Ali in Dubai, a vital link in the movement of goods between Asia and Africa. By creating an alternative route, the new facility could ease congestion, reduce risks to shipping, and support more stable global supply chains.

From a Catholic perspective, such initiatives invite reflection on the pursuit of the common good. Secure and efficient trade can foster human development and reduce the threat of

conflict, yet economic progress must remain ordered towards justice and peace. As the Church teaches, commerce ought to serve the dignity of persons rather than merely profit or strategic advantage. Responsible stewardship of resources and infrastructure may thus contribute to conditions in which all nations can flourish in greater security.

SWEDEN

BETWEEN US COUSINS

The authorities have introduced an unconditional ban on marriages between cousins. From now on, neither close relatives, nor half-siblings, nor adopted siblings have the right to marry. The issue would never have received attention if refugees from countries including Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan did not live here, and if Sweden were not governed by a centre-right coalition. The country, once widely opening its doors to immigrants, is now tightening its regulations. The outlawing of cousin marriages is intended to counter oppression related to family honour, violence, and other forms of coercion that occur before couples stand at the wedding altar in immigrant communities. Cousin marriages often appear in investigations connected with honour-based violence and repression, as well as in crime based on family ties. Cousin marriages contracted abroad, in countries where this is legal, will not be recognised – those contracted before the ban came into force, that is, before July 1, will nevertheless remain valid.

We Read Pope Leo



We are called to embrace the evangelical style: without arrogant judgments, without imposing ourselves through power and force.

Sometimes we expect something spectacular, we desire a God who intervenes from on high and immediately uproots the weed of evil. We imagine a strong and powerful God, and unfortunately, we also adapt our way of being

Christians and Church to this image. Yet the kingdom of God also expands amid the weeds and demands of us a gaze capable of discerning the good sprouting even amid the darkness of evil, without hastily judging everything; it comes like the smallest of all seeds, and therefore requires patience capable of accompanying processes, discerning this kingdom in the smallness of everyday life and in the simplicity of ordinary existence; it grows invisibly like yeast in flour, and thus frees us from discouragement and calls us to trust even when it seems to us that God is absent. In reality, in fact, He always accompanies us, and His love is ceaselessly at work for our good.

This divine style should also become the way in which – both as individual believers and as Church – we live in the reality surrounding us. We are called to embrace the evangelical style: without hastily opposing others through arrogant judgments, without imposing ourselves through power and force, and without losing trust in God's work. It is a matter of – as then-Cardinal Ratzinger used to say – submitting to the logic of the seed, which is not the logic of success and greatness, but calls us to become small and to serve the life of people.

Angelus, 19 July 2026.

It is not always easy to be light in the world (cf. Mt 5:13). (...) you are called to radiate this light in a situation marked by war and instability. The Lord has shown you great trust by entrusting you with this mission, and I too place great trust in all of you. You must be the light of Christ amid a darkness that can sometimes seem overwhelming. Do not be afraid! And do not think that you are alone in this task. I am with you, the Church is with you. Place your trust in Jesus, listen to Him in prayer and through the guidance of others, and let Him lead you.

Light is necessary for life in many ways. I would like to point out three of them. First, light is necessary in order to see, and this reminds us of the gift of faith. Faith in God is not merely a mechanism for coping with life's difficulties. Rather, it is a recognition of reality and a living in truth, learning to look at the world, at others, and at ourselves as God looks. It requires passing through life with heart and eyes turned toward our true homeland, in the awareness that God is with us, even though we cannot see Him. (...) The second characteristic of light is that it gives warmth, which symbolizes love. In order to be light for the world, we must first share in the very light and life of Christ. In order to participate in the mission, we must first discover a living relationship with God. We must learn to know Him. By opening ourselves to His transforming love, we receive the grace necessary to follow Jesus and to embrace the life to which He calls us.

That is why it is so important to devote time each day to prayer and to draw near to God through the sacraments, especially confession and the Eucharist. (...) light is necessary for growth and new life and represents an image of hope. Rooted in love, you are called in a special way to be peacemakers, to unite those around you, and to instill in others hope for a future marked by lasting peace. You may not be able to control your situation or the challenges you will have to face, but you can always allow your hearts to be governed by the peace of Christ. (...) Dear young people, never doubt God's goodness, and do not be afraid of the plan the Lord has for each of your lives.

Video message on the occasion of the Ankawa Youth Meeting, 8 July 2026.

In my opinion

How Long Can Russia Hold Out?

Attacks on Russian refineries, fuel depots, oil ports, and tankers have become Ukraine's new strategy in this grinding war. What is unfolding within the raw-materials empire is nothing short of a gigantic fuel crisis – one that bears an unsettling resemblance to the economic collapse that hastened the end of the USSR.

Russia is not short of crude oil. What it lacks is the capacity to refine that oil into aviation fuel, petrol for cars, and the diesel that keeps transport and agriculture running. Analysts now estimate that the country has lost more than 40% of its refining capacity, with additional refineries going up in flames on a near-daily basis. According to the interactive map gdebenz.ru, which tracks fuel availability across the country, roughly 90% of Russian filling stations are currently without fuel. "Russia's deepening problems connected with Ukrainian attacks on critical infrastructure mean that, at both the economic and political levels, pressure is growing from some Russian elites to 'flip the table' and take some radical action," observes Marek Menkiszak, a Russia expert at the Centre for Eastern Studies.

In occupied Crimea, petrol has been unavailable for more than a month, with no sign of relief on the horizon. On the mainland, ordinary Russians describe waiting in line for a dozen hours or

more merely to purchase their allotted 15–30 litres. Those in the logistics sector are especially alarmed: along the route from China to Moscow, lorry queues now stretch for dozens of kilometres. Rising fuel procurement costs, combined with longer working hours for drivers, have forced logistics companies to raise freight prices by 30%.

At Russian filling stations where prices remain regulated, cheap fuel is simply not to be found, while private stations often charge the equivalent of £2-3 per litre of petrol. The tourism sector has collapsed outright, and prices for public transport and logistics continue to climb.

Agriculture, too, is suffering, particularly as the harvest season struggles under these constraints. Analysts project that this year's harvest will fall 15–20% short, a shortfall that will inevitably drive up the cost of basic food products. "Because of the fuel crisis, at the beginning of July the area being harvested was three times smaller than in the previous year. Meanwhile, fuel deliveries for agricultural machinery are still delayed, and their costs have risen by one-third, making the harvesting of grain from fields a genuine challenge," Dmitry Rylko, director general of the Institute for Agricultural Market Studies, told Kommersant.

These vast shortages cannot simply be offset through seaborne imports from India, since Ukrainian forces continue to strike oil ports and maritime targets with effectiveness. Nor can Russia rely on importing large quantities of petrol from China, given the logistical bottleneck plaguing eastern Russia. Kazakhstan, for its part, has imposed controls to prevent Russians from siphoning fuel out of the country in bulk. Compounding matters further, Russia can no longer generate revenue from crude oil and fuel exports – income that might otherwise help offset its largest budget deficit in decades. Instead, the Kremlin now finds itself spending additional funds simply to purchase petrol from Belarus, India, and China. Moscow will likely resort to printing money, sliding into what economists term an "economy of permanent shortage," reminiscent of the late Soviet period. The result will be a system that functions only on paper, while ordinary citizens face the grim reality of petrol ration cards, inflation, and rapidly climbing prices.

Russians still remember the crisis of the 1990s, when the collapse of the USSR brought fuel shortages of its own, as the entire apparatus of oil extraction, processing, and distribution broke down. After the prolonged turmoil of that decade, Vladimir Putin offered Russians a measure of economic stability, followed later by what became his crown jewel: the tourist paradise of occupied Crimea. Recently, in the Sea of Azov, drone strikes destroyed nearly a hundred Russian ferries and tankers, further deepening the already dire situation on the peninsula. Since June, Crimea has been left without fuel, electricity, water, and – perhaps most tellingly – tourists. The fuel and economic crisis now engulfing all of Russia represents a genuine storm, one in which every unresolved problem of post-imperial Moscow converges at once. How many such crises the Russian regime can withstand remains an open question.

As Catholics, we are called to look beyond geopolitical calculations and see the human faces behind the headlines. The suffering of the Ukrainian people, who endure the daily reality of invasion and bombardment, remains the primary injustice of this war. Yet, we must also recognise that the Russian people are themselves victims – of a regime that has chosen aggression and of the inevitable economic and social decay that follows such a choice.

This crisis is a powerful illustration that peace is not merely the absence of fighting, but the presence of justice, stability, and the conditions for human flourishing. When a nation unleashes the scourge of war, it is a poison that inevitably seeps back across its own borders, sickening the very society it claims to be defending. The ultimate question is not simply how long the Russian state can hold out, but how long any society can withstand the immense moral and material weight of a war that corrodes its foundations from within. We must continue to pray unceasingly

for a just and lasting peace, for the conversion of hearts, and for an end to the suffering of all God's children caught in this devastating conflict.

Tony Wood

Prayer



Please remember to pray for those who are unwell, in need, or have requested our prayers: Gerry Smith, Richard Fox, Charlie McAuley, Cecil Finn, Andrew McLaughlin, 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 Fr Charles Merrill, and William Dunne (1967) **and all 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!

Freydis Uys: we welcome you into the family of the Father and pray for your parents and godparent.

COFFEE MORNING: is being planned for SATURDAY 15TH AUGUST. Anyone able to help in any way contact Cathy or Fiona Fox, or Fr Tony.



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www.stkieranscampbeltown.org



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A message from the editor

"The Glory of God is Man Alive, But the Life of Man is the Vision of God."

These profound words from Saint Irenaeus, a venerable 2nd-century Church Father, encapsulate the entirety of the human journey. In our contemporary era, Catholics find themselves navigating a landscape fraught with confusion, hardship, and even fear for the Church. It is a reality we cannot, and should not, deny.

Our institutions, at times, appear vulnerable, our spiritual leaders falter, and division, anger, and even violence seem to permeate our surroundings. Uncertainty can paralyse us, casting a shadow over the future. Such periods often give rise to charismatic figures and movements that offer solace and hope. While difficult times can forge courageous souls, they also, regrettably, sow the seeds of false prophets.

Yet, as Catholics, we are uniquely endowed with the rich treasury of Holy Mother Church's teachings and sacraments. These are not mere relics of the past, but vital tools for navigating this modern confusion and sustaining our hope. They equip us to discern the siren songs of deceptive ideologies and to unmask those who would lead us astray. The Church, in her enduring wisdom, provides all that is necessary for us to become what God intends: truly "man alive," vibrant and flourishing in His divine vision.