PARISH BULLETIN

St. Kieran's, the Catholic Church *in Campbeltown and Islay*

Ceann Loch Chille Chiarain

16th August 2026

Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

Week 20 of Ordinary Time

Tuesday: **Holy Mass, 6pm**

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

Discussion and Coffee Group, 10.30am

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

Hymns/Music for Sunday

Processional

sheet Hail holy Queen enthroned above

Offertory

468 Take our bread, we ask you

Communion music

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

Bogoroditse Devo – Hail, O Virgin, Birth-Giver of God

Post Communion

397 Our God loves us

Recessional

174 Hail Queen of Heaven, the Ocean Star

Next weekend:

Saturday, 22nd of August, Vigil Mass, 6.00pm

Sunday, 23rd of August, *21st 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

16th August: **Holy Mass, 4pm**

6th September, **Holy Mass, 4pm**

Psalm response

On your right stands the queen in gold of Ophir.

Gospel acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.
Mary has been taken up into heaven;
the host of angels rejoice.
Alleluia.

Communion Antiphon

All generations will call me blessed,
for he who is mighty has done great things for me.

Take Five

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

MONDAY OF WEEK 19

17 AUGUST 2026

An ice-lolly stick birdhouse and five winter coats

Here's a spiritual exercise that never fails to make you think: Consider how long it will take your survivors to clean out your closets, basement, attic, and garage. If you've done it for other people, you know human beings hang onto the darnedest things. Sometimes it's for sentimental reasons and other times for no reason at all. There can be misery in giving up stuff you own, but there's misery in holding on with both hands, too. Someone may be waiting to own those extra coats—but maybe not the birdhouse made of ice-lolly sticks.

Today's readings: Ezekiel 24:15-24; Matthew 19:16-22. *"When the young man heard this statement, he went away sad, for he had many possessions."*

TUESDAY OF WEEK 19

18 AUGUST 2026

Something not to be proud of

In the early centuries of the Church the great theologian and bishop Saint Augustine of Hippo dealt with one of the biggest human questions of all: where evil and sin came from. As a Christian he accepted the biblical story of Adam and Eve's disobeying of the one rule God gave them. But why, Augustine wondered, would they do such a thing? He zeroed in on a flaw in the human character: pride. Pride for Augustine meant you forgot you were created. You turned away from God and lived as if there were no God. He saw this sin to be the one from which all others flowed, and he was right: Sin directs you away from God and others and in on yourself. How can you go from being self-centred to other-centred?

Today's readings: Ezekiel 28:1-10; Matthew 19:23-30. *"Because you are haughty of heart, you say, 'A god am I!' "*

WEDNESDAY OF WEEK 19

19 AUGUST 2026

Where charity ends

"Charity begins at home." Few of us doubt the wisdom and the primary duty of taking care of our families, neighbourhoods, and communities. But for many, the obligation of charity can often appear to end at home as well. We may be reluctant to put our funds at the disposal of another needy parish, or to assist someone else's family with our limited resources. But what if we took seriously the human family as genuine sisters and brothers? When home and family are expansive notions, then charity at home goes a long, long way.

Today's readings: Ezekiel 34:1-11; Matthew 20:1-16. *"Woe to the shepherds of Israel who have been pasturing themselves! Should not shepherds, rather, pasture sheep?"*

THURSDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINT BERNARD, ABBOT, DOCTOR

20 AUGUST 2026

If you build it, generations will come

Many tourists who visit Europe end up sightseeing at one beautiful medieval monastery or another. It may be difficult for you to imagine a time when such tranquil locales were at the cutting edge of the modern world—places teeming with industrious activity, where a love for learning and reading were preserved and enhanced for the benefit of generations as yet unborn. Bernard of Clairvaux, medieval monastic reformer, was instrumental in founding almost 70 of those great centres. Give thanks today for those who built with an eye to the future. How will you do the same?

Today's readings: Ezekiel 36:23-28; Matthew 22:1-14. *"I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you."*

FRIDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINT PIUS X, POPE

21 AUGUST 2026

Commune more often

Because he was the first pope to live in the modern age of technology, we know more about Pope Saint Pius X than many others. His life and ministry make a fascinating story, but today remember him as a leader who stressed simplicity and poverty. "I was born poor, I lived poor, and I shall die poor." He is likewise remembered as the pope who encouraged frequent Communion rather than once or twice a year as was common. His change in practice also encouraged frequent celebration of the sacrament of Penance in preparation for

receiving the Eucharist. Participate in these sacraments together soon.
Today's readings: Ezekiel 37:1-14; Matthew 22:34-40. *"You shall love your neighbour as yourself."*

SATURDAY: MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY, MOTHER AND QUEEN

22 AUGUST 2026

Queen for a day?
Power is fleeting. Worldly rulers are on top one day, ousted the next. But the Queenship of Mary endures. A traditional prayer declares: "We need a Mother and a Mother's Heart. You are for us the luminous dawn which dissipates our darkness and points out the way to life. Grant that all hearts, homes, and nations may recognize your rights as Mother and as Queen." Traditionally Mary was "enthroned" in homes on this day by displaying her image and presenting her with flowers. When you need a Mother's heart to take you in, Mary always has room for one more.
Today's readings: Ezekiel 43:1-7b; Matthew 23:1-12. *"The greatest among you must be your servant."*

Readings for the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab

A woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet.

Ps 45(44):10. 11. 12. 1

The king appreciates beauty and deserves homage.

1 Corinthians 15:20-27

Christ the first fruits, then those who belong to Christ.

Luke 1:39-56

He who is mighty has done great things for me; he has exalted those of humble estate.

Words on the Word

The Book of Revelation gives us a vivid picture: the dragon waits for the woman to give birth so that he can destroy her child. But the child is taken up to God, and the woman is kept safe in the place God has prepared for her (cf. Rev 11:19a; 12:1, 3–6a, 10ab).

It does not take much to see that Christians today live in the middle of a serious spiritual battle. Every day we see evil pushing back against God in many ways: lies, neglect of what is right, the desire to use others, acts of destruction, and even the madness of wiping life out altogether. At times, Christians can feel weak and isolated. Many people pretend this battle is not happening, while others play with danger without thinking. Even faithful Christians can become tired, drained and discouraged by the pressure.

But the final outcome does not rest on us. God is the one who fights against evil, and in Christ the victory over sin and death has already been won. Our part is not to control the result, but to remain steady and faithful on God's side, trusting in the strength of His love. He will lead us, and the whole world, to the place He has prepared.

"Listen, O daughter; pay heed and give ear: forget your own people and your father's house. So will the king desire your beauty. He is your lord, pay homage to him" (cf. Ps 45).

God seeks out each person and wants to draw us near. Scripture uses many images for this: father, mother and spouse. Each one shows something of the depth and tenderness of His love.

There is a beauty in every human person that God Himself delights in, and He is committed to saving and protecting it.

Still, many of us find that hard to believe. We ask ourselves: what could possibly be beautiful in me? What in me could be worthy of love or delight? Yet even when we cannot see it, God can. That is why it matters to let ourselves be drawn by His love: to look, to listen, to give thanks, and to let Him tell us who we truly are in His sight.

"For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order" (cf. 1 Cor 15:20–26).

Saint Paul places Adam and Christ side by side and shows us two completely different ways of responding to God. Both were given everything. Adam answered with distrust, and the result was ruin: death, confusion, disorder, spiritual emptiness and the grip of powers set against humanity. Christ, however, answers with complete trust and total surrender to the Father. That obedience leads to the Resurrection, and in the Resurrection everything is turned around.

This is not just a lesson about the past. It is something that runs through every human heart. In each of us there is a struggle between the way of Adam and the way of Christ. We often feel torn between the two. Perhaps that is because we have not yet fully accepted the life of the Resurrection that Christ freely offers us: a new life, a new order, restored in Him according to God's plan from the beginning.

"And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.' And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour." (cf. Lk 1:39–56).

In Mary's meeting with her cousin Elizabeth, we see the beginning of her journey with Christ. Even at this early moment, Elizabeth's greeting helps Mary see more clearly what God has done in her. Someone else recognises the greatness of God's work in her life, and that helps her rejoice in it more deeply.

In a sense, the Gospel begins with a blessing spoken over Mary and the Child she carries. The Solemnity of the Assumption shows that blessing brought to its full glory: Mary is taken up into heaven, body and soul, because she gave herself completely to Jesus and opened herself fully to God's grace. Yet in the Magnificat, which the Church continues to pray, Mary also points beyond herself. Her song is not only about her own joy. It is also a gentle prophecy of the salvation God promises. It points to the resurrection of body and soul promised to all who allow themselves to be taken up by God's grace and who long to belong entirely to Christ.

In Christ's love,
Fr Anthony

38 MASTERS OF THE GOLDEN AGE OF ICONS: ANDREI RUBLEV (C. 1360/1370 – C. 1427/1430)

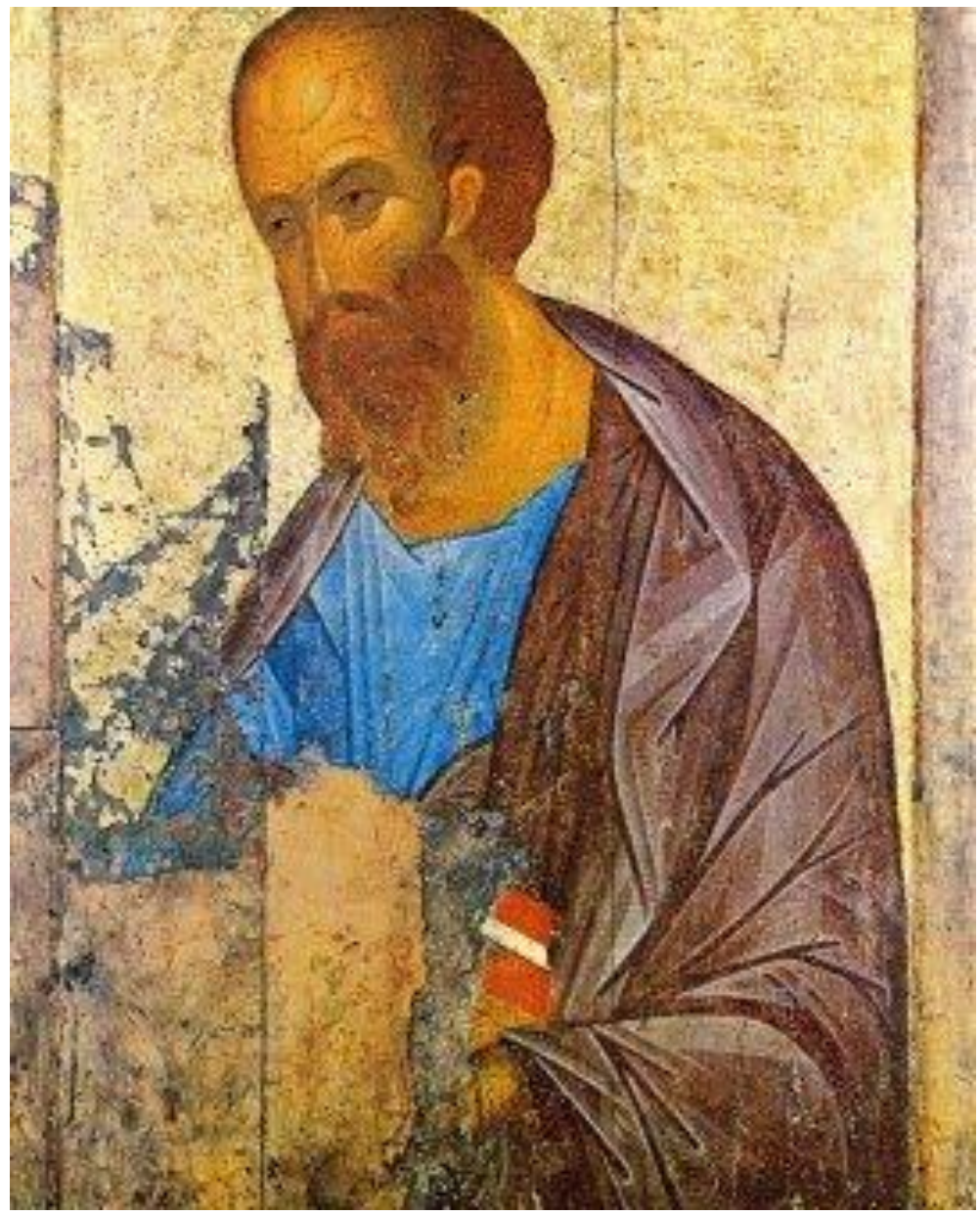
The Life and Art of Saint Andrei Rublev

Little is known about the life of Andrei Rublev, the greatest master of the Moscow school of icon painting. In his youth, he entered monastic life and remained deeply influenced by the spiritual vision of Saint Sergius of Radonezh.

Rublev is first mentioned in 1405, when he worked alongside Theophanes the Greek and Prokhor of Gorodets on the frescoes of the Cathedral of the Annunciation in the Moscow Kremlin. He appears again in the historical record in 1408, when his collaboration with Daniil Chorny on the frescoes of the Cathedral of the Dormition in Vladimir-on-the-Klyazma was noted. Between 1410 and 1420, Rublev worked in Zvenigorod. It was during this period that some of his most celebrated icons were created, including the *Holy Trinity* and the *Deesis*.

In the 1420s, Rublev contributed frescoes to the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, although only the oldest surviving iconostasis remains today. His final known work was the fresco decoration of the Cathedral of the Saviour at the Andronikov Monastery in Moscow. In 1988, he was canonised by the Orthodox Church.

Rublev's style brings together the finest achievements of late Byzantine art: balanced composition, harmonious proportions, and an elegant linear treatment of form, combined with a remarkable sensitivity to colour and light. His use of bright, clear tones, subtle chiaroscuro, and deep attention to the inner life of his figures gives his work a distinctive atmosphere of stillness, ascetic beauty, dignity, and mysticism.



Saint Paul the Apostle, fragment of the Zvenigorod Deesis group. Circa 1414, Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

God's Guide

Relations with Angels: To Be Closer to Our Guardians

Chapter 6

TO WHICH ANGELS TO TURN AND WITH WHAT REQUEST

Catholic tradition speaks of **nine choirs of angels**: Angels, Archangels, Principalities, Powers, Virtues, Dominions, Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim. Their splendour is hinted at throughout Scripture, sometimes in images of fire, light, jewels and heavenly worship. Ezekiel reaches for the language of precious stones; Daniel sees "a stream of fire" flowing before the throne of God, where "a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him" (Dan 7:10).

In other words: heaven is not empty.

The Book of Job asks, "Is there any number to his armies?" (Job 25:3). The psalmist sings, "The chariots of God are twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands" (Ps 68:17). Scripture gives us no tidy census of the angelic world, but it does make one thing clear: God's heavenly servants are beyond counting.

The Church's tradition, drawing especially on Scripture and the writings of the saints, sees the angels as pure spirits, created by God, endowed with intelligence and will. They are not vague forces, symbols, or decorative figures for Christmas cards. They are real persons, mighty in

holiness, entirely ordered towards God and His will.

The nine choirs are often understood as sharing in different forms of service and contemplation. The highest choirs — the **Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones** — are especially associated with adoration, divine wisdom and the majesty of God. The middle choirs — **Dominions, Virtues and Powers** — are linked with the governance of creation and the restraint of evil. The lower choirs — **Principalities, Archangels and Angels** — are most often connected with God's care for the world and His dealings with human beings.

That last point matters to us personally.

Because among the angels, Catholic faith also teaches the beautiful truth of the **Guardian Angel**. Strictly speaking, "Guardian Angel" is not a separate choir, but a mission entrusted by God to an angel. Each of us is given a heavenly guardian, not because we are important in worldly terms, but because we are loved by God.

That is a staggering thought.

From childhood we may have learnt the simple prayer, "Angel of God, my guardian dear…" Perhaps we said it at bedtime without fully understanding what we were saying. Yet hidden inside that little prayer is a profound truth: God has placed beside each soul a faithful companion, protector and guide.

Padre Pio, who had a lively devotion to the angels, encouraged people to remember this invisible friend. He reminded one of his spiritual daughters that from birth until death we are accompanied by a guardian from heaven, one who prays for us, protects us, consoles us and guides us towards God. For Padre Pio, this was not sentimental piety. It was practical Catholic life.

And it is practical.

When temptation comes, ask your Guardian Angel for help.

When you are anxious, ask him to steady you.

When prayer feels dry, ask him to pray with you.

When you need to speak difficult words with charity, ask him to guide your tongue.

When you are going to Mass, ask him to help you adore.

Of course, devotion to the angels must always remain rightly ordered. We do not worship angels. We do not treat them as magical beings, spiritual pets, or private sources of secret knowledge. Worship belongs to God alone: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The angels themselves would insist on that. Their whole joy is to lead us to the Lord.

That is why devotion to one's Guardian Angel is so wholesome. It does not distract us from Christ; it helps us stay close to Him. A good angel never draws attention to himself. Like a faithful messenger, he carries us towards God.

So yes, the angelic world is vast, glorious and mysterious. There are choirs upon choirs, armies upon armies, spirits burning with love before the throne of God.

But among them is one angel given to you.

After Our Lord, and under the maternal care of Our Lady, he is one of your closest friends. Quiet, faithful, strong and unseen, he has walked with you from the beginning. And, please God, when your earthly journey ends, he will be there too — not as a stranger, but as the friend who never left your side.

YOU WILL DROWN
IF
YOU LOVE
JESUS,
YOU WILL DROWN
IN HIS
MERCY.

Around the World

The sometimes-missed news

ESTONIA

A Tunnel Beneath the Baltic

It seems the ambitious plan for a tunnel connecting Estonia and Finland is back on the cards. Diplomats are rightly highlighting its strategic value, especially in light of recent geopolitical shifts. Creating a secure transport corridor that links the Baltic states with the rest of Europe is a sensible move for both security and economic prosperity.

Fostering such connections between nations is a powerful expression of solidarity, strengthening the common good of the entire region. Uniting people and facilitating cooperation is always a worthy goal.

However, we must also pose the moral questions. A 60-mile undersea tunnel is a colossal undertaking. As stewards of God's creation, we have a profound duty to ask about the environmental cost. While the project promises to enhance human flourishing through trade and security, this progress must not come at the disproportional expense of our common home. Let us pray that any such project proceeds with a deep respect for the delicate ecological balance of the Gulf of Finland, truly serving both humanity and the beautiful world God has entrusted to us.

BULGARIA

The Danube Reveals a Bridge

It's a fascinating bit of news from Bulgaria. A severe drought has lowered the Danube, revealing the foundations of a bridge built by none other than Constantine the Great himself in 328 A.D. Archaeologists are rightly thrilled, calling it a marvel of Roman engineering. At over two

kilometres long, it was a colossal structure, yet it stood for less than 40 years before being destroyed.

While we celebrate this glimpse into our Christian heritage, there's a moral dimension we mustn't ignore. The discovery is a direct result of a worrying drought, likely linked to wider environmental issues. It’s a bittersweet gift, a sobering reminder of our solemn duty to be stewards of God’s creation. Nature is revealing history to us, but perhaps also warning us about our future.

The mighty stone bridge of a great Christian emperor crumbled to dust. It serves as a powerful metaphor: the works of man are fleeting, but the bridge of Faith, which Constantine helped secure for the world, is built on the rock of Christ and endures forever.

ALERT NATO

Fighter Jets Scrambled

It’s alarming to read that NATO fighter jet launches on its eastern flank have shot up by 250%. The Alliance points to Russian military aircraft flying 'dark'—without flight plans or transponders—as the cause. This behaviour isn't just a military provocation; it's a moral failure, recklessly endangering civilian lives in the skies above.

While we must acknowledge a nation's right to defend its airspace, we should be deeply troubled by this escalation. Each "Alpha Scramble" is a step on a ladder of tension, a dance on a knife's edge where one miscalculation could be catastrophic.

This constant state of high alert drains immense resources that could serve the poor. The Catechism warns against the arms race, and what we are witnessing is its chilling reality. Let us pray for prudence and for our leaders to seek the courageous path of dialogue, not the easy path of provocation, to ensure a just and lasting peace.

RUSSIAN AGGRESSION

The Decisive Phase

The news from the front lines in Ukraine is grim. Many analysts believe the war is entering a decisive, and potentially devastating, new phase. The core issue is a critical shortage of interceptor missiles, leaving Ukrainian cities and civilians dangerously exposed.

As Adam Eberhardt of the Centre for Eastern Studies warns, this creates a "growing helplessness of Ukraine in the face of Russian attacks." He predicts a potential "humanitarian catastrophe" this winter, especially if Russia once again targets the energy infrastructure essential for civilian survival.

From a Catholic perspective, this raises profound moral questions. The principles of a Just War demand that any military action must discriminate between combatants and non-combatants. Deliberately targeting civilian infrastructure, with the foreseeable outcome of causing immense suffering to ordinary people through cold and darkness, is a grave moral evil. It is a direct assault on the God-given dignity of the human person.

The conflict has become a brutal "war of attrition." We've seen Ukrainian attacks on Russian refineries, followed by heavy Russian air raids on Ukrainian cities. While a nation has an undeniable right to defend its sovereignty, this cycle of retaliation blurs the lines and risks a grave escalation of evil.

President Zelensky is now pushing his diplomats to acquire weaponry, their effectiveness judged by the missiles they secure. It is an act of sheer desperation. While we acknowledge the right to self-defence, we must also pray for a peace that transcends the logic of arms. Let us pray for the leaders on all sides, that a path to a just and lasting peace may be found before more innocent lives are shattered.

We Read Pope Leo

In every situation Jesus does not abandon us if we humbly welcome Him into the boat of our life – through prayer, the sacraments, and listening to His word.

The Liturgy of the Hours, linked to the Eucharist and extending its light, sanctifies the time of our daily life: in the morning we begin the day with faith and gratitude; at midday we ask for the strength of fidelity amid hardships; in the evening, after work is done, Vespers accompanies the moment of sunset; at night we fall asleep, entrusting ourselves to the peace of God. Each of these Hours is an act of hope: during our earthly pilgrimage we keep watch, awaiting with the whole Church the glorious return of the Lord.

General Audience, August 5, 2026

Dear young people, today Europe and the whole world are seeking new saints among you. Have the courage to believe the word of the Gospel; become fully human through the freedom of Jesus Christ (...). The title of your meeting – "Go!" – is a mission, a sending forth onto roads for which we do not yet have maps, because they open up when we listen to the heart, obey the Holy Spirit, and follow the Risen One wherever He has chosen to go before us. Go! Go forth! Or better still: let us go! Let's go! Let us go to the peripheries, where the injustice and violence of a few rob many of their dignity and dreams.

Holy Mass with the young participants of "Go! Franciscan Youth Meeting 2026," Assisi, August 6, 2026

After the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fish, the Teacher urges His disciples to get into the boat and set out on the lake, while He Himself goes up the mountain to pray. Far from the shore, however, the disciples are left at the mercy of the wind and make progress only with difficulty. After the experience of success, when they had shared in a miraculous sign, they now stand helpless and frightened before the threat of the waves and the contrary wind. Toward the end of the night, Jesus comes to them on the stormy water, and they, terrified, take Him for a ghost. But He says to them: "Take courage! It is I; do not be afraid!" The presence of the Lord changes

everything: Peter is even able to take a few steps over the waves toward Him; then, however, fear overtakes him, he begins to sink, and Jesus saves him. And when the Teacher gets into the boat, the storm ceases, and from the hearts of the disciples there spontaneously arises the profession of faith: “Truly You are the Son of God!” (...). This miracle teaches us something important: above all, that we must not exalt ourselves because of our successes and must never overestimate our own strength, and at the same time, that we must not fall into despair even in moments of darkness, when we feel helpless before our problems and, despite our efforts, it seems to us that instead of moving forward, we are going backward. In every situation Jesus does not abandon us if we humbly welcome Him into the boat of our life — through prayer, the sacraments, and listening to His word — in Him we will find peace, we will find light and strength for our journey.

Angelus, August 9, 2026

In my opinion

A Catholic in Number 10: Cause for Hope or Concern?

Will Andy Burnham in practice move beyond vaguely defined “cultural Catholicism”? Britain’s new prime minister is sending rather mixed signals when it comes to religious convictions.

When Andy Burnham became Prime Minister on 20th July, a quiet hope stirred among many British Catholics. For the first time in the modern era, a politician raised and educated in the Catholic faith holds the highest office in an officially Protestant country. The hope is that his upbringing will shape his governance, bringing a deeper understanding of Christian values to public life. Yet, this hope is tempered by a predictable anxiety: that Mr Burnham will face immense pressure to set aside his Catholic roots and embrace the secular, liberal consensus of Britain’s political class.

Setting the Tone

Mr Burnham, the former Mayor of Greater Manchester, wasted no time in making a symbolic gesture. After winning the by-election in his Makerfield constituency, he insisted on taking his parliamentary oath on the Holy Bible. This act set the stage for a premiership he defines by "aspirational socialism"—a term with positive connotations in Britain, focusing on a strong social safety net.

In his first speeches, he laid out a vision that champions state-funded services in health, education, and housing, while opposing foreign military interventions, though he remains a firm supporter of NATO. He has promised a national renewal through reindustrialisation and a greater role for the public sector, all part of "restoring the balance of power." At the heart of his message is a pledge to "restore hope" by making "care for people" the cornerstone of his government.

Grounds for Hope?

For many, these early promises are a welcome sign. There is a palpable desire for a leader who can tackle the nation's deep-seated problems and cut through the apathy that has settled over our public life.

Leaders from both the Catholic and Anglican Churches—Archbishop Richard Moth and Archbishop Sarah Mullally—publicly offered their prayers and readiness to cooperate for the common good. This sentiment was echoed by faith-based organisations across the spectrum, from the ecumenical group *Christians on the Left* to the *Jesuit Refugee Service*.

While Boris Johnson was baptised a Catholic, he was raised an Anglican and was not a practising Christian. Andy Burnham's story is different. He was raised in the faith, served at Mass as a boy, and sent his own children to Catholic schools. He has spoken warmly of the Church, and many commentators see the influence of core Catholic social teachings—subsidiarity, solidarity, and the common good—in his political philosophy of "Manchesterism."

Last year, speaking at London's Theos Institute, he explicitly referenced Catholic social teaching and pledged to promote "trust, community, faith and belief." He described his 2023 meeting with Pope Francis as the greatest privilege of his life.

A Cause for Concern

Despite these positive signals, Mr Burnham's record sends deeply ambiguous messages. He has admitted that while Catholic social teaching is the "foundation" of his politics, he has "often come into conflict with the Catholic Church" and is "not a particularly religious person."

This conflict is most apparent on the crucial moral issues of our time. He has consistently adopted liberal positions on:

- Abortion
- Assisted suicide
- Sex education in schools
- Transgender rights

Most troubling for faithful Catholics, he once publicly called on Pope Francis to "bring the Church into the 21st century" by recognising same-sex unions as marriage. It is hardly surprising, then, that his premiership has been met with scepticism. Timothy Guile of the *Catholic History Association* voiced a common doubt, questioning whether Mr Burnham's faith will ever move beyond a form of "cultural Catholicism."

The Political Reality

As Prime Minister, Mr Burnham faces unique constitutional hurdles. As a Catholic, he will be excluded from any role in appointing bishops and senior officials in the established Church of England. He must navigate a political landscape where anti-Catholic prejudice, though often subtle, still lingers. We must not forget that it was only in the 19th century that Catholics in this country won the right to hold public office.

His cabinet, announced in late July, does include several prominent Christians, such as Defence Secretary Wes Streeting and Business Secretary Jonathan Reynolds. The new Prime Minister has also promised that faith communities will have their voices heard in government. Church organisations are already taking him at his word, sending appeals for him to apply Christian principles to policy on asylum, climate change, and poverty.

The Path Forward: Authenticity and Integrity

Bishop Brian McGee of the Diocese of Argyll and the Isles, vice president of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland, believes it would be a profound loss if a politician so shaped by a Catholic worldview were to surrender to the secularist assumptions of the political elite. He argues that the public, in Britain and across Europe, is tired of careerist politicians and yearns for leaders who can articulate their beliefs clearly and defend them with conviction.

Christianity is still the largest religion in Great Britain, and a serious politician cannot afford to ignore its teachings. Bishop McGee acknowledges the challenges ahead:
"Many people here are not sympathetic to the Church and do not want religion present in the public sphere, and all politicians face complex challenges and must make compromises. If, however, certain issues truly matter to them, they should be ready to stand by them. People respect those who show moral integrity, even if they disagree with them."

This, perhaps, is the standard by which we must judge our new Prime Minister. Will his Catholic formation be a source of moral courage and integrity in the corridors of power, or will it become a historical footnote in a career that conforms to the spirit of the age? Our prayers must be for the former.

Tony Wood

Prayer

Please remember to pray for those who are unwell, in need, or have requested our prayers: Gerry Smith, Richard Fox, 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 David Brodie recently deceased **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!

Much gratitude to all who contributed to a successful Coffee Morning. Funds raised TBA.

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