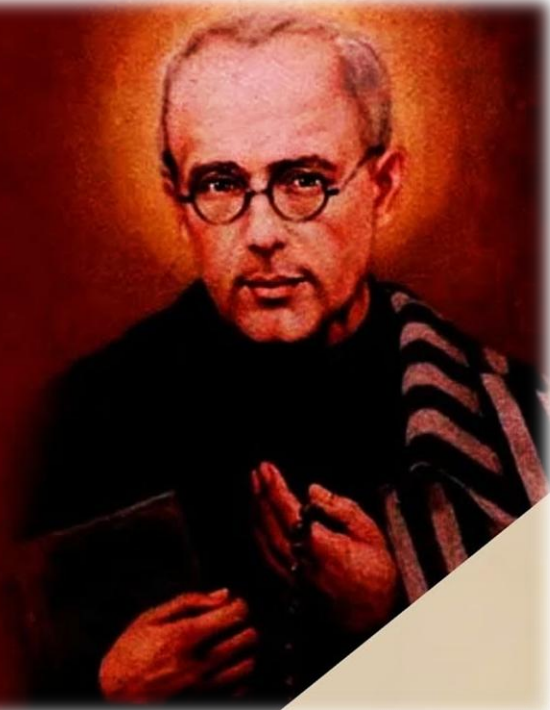


PARISH BULLETIN

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

14th August

*Memorial of Saint
Maximillian Kolbe,
Priest and Martyr*



9th August 2026

The 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

Week 19 of Ordinary Time

Tuesday: Holy Mass, 6pm

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

No Discussion Group

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

Hymns/Music for Sunday

Processional

582 Walk with me, O my Lord

Offertory

28 All that I am

Communion music

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

Post Communion

498 Soul of my Saviour

Recessional

128 Eternal Father, strong to save

Next weekend:

Saturday, 15th of August, Vigil Mass, 6.00pm

**Sunday, 16th of August, Solemnity of the
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 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

Psalm response

*Show us, O Lord, your mercy,
and grant us your salvation.*

Gospel acclamation

*Alleluia, alleluia.
I long for you, O Lord,
my soul longs for his word.
Alleluia.*

Communion Antiphon

*O Jerusalem, glorify the Lord,
who gives you your fill of finest wheat.*

Take Five

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

MONDAY: FEAST OF SAINT LAURENCE, DEACON, MARTYR

10 AUGUST 2026

What treasure do you have to offer?

Pancho Villa, the Mexican revolutionary, was assassinated in 1923. The legend arose that, while dying, he said: “Don’t let it end like this. Tell them I said something.” If legend is to be believed, Saint Lawrence of Rome also uttered some famous last words. As he was being roasted alive, he said to his executioners: “It is well done. Turn me over.” But it was a less colourful – and probably more authentic – remark that assured his death. Commanded by the imperial prefect in Rome to hand over the church’s treasure, Lawrence presented many lame, maimed, orphaned, and widowed persons and said: “Here is the treasure of the church.” We can’t plan our last words, but in the meantime we can learn to see all people as treasured by God and to speak and act in their defence.

Today’s readings: 2 Corinthians 9:6-10; John 12:24-26. *“He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.”*

TUESDAY: SAINT CLARE, VIRGIN

11 AUGUST 2026

When piety is strength

Women in consecrated religious life have a long tradition of standing their ground with a church hierarchy that has not on occasion treated them as equal members of the body of Christ. Clare of Assisi, deservedly remembered for her uncompromising piety, was not shy about defending the simple Franciscan ideals of her order of women against papal attempts to impose a different, softer way of life on the community. Remember that piety is not synonymous with timidity. Show the courage of your convictions through the strength of your devotion.

Today’s readings: Ezekiel 2:8-3:4; Matthew 18:1-5, 10, 12-14. *“I opened my mouth, and [the Lord God] gave me the scroll to eat.”*

WEDNESDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINT BLAAN, BISHOP

12 AUGUST 2026

Get engaged

One of the seven themes of Catholic social teaching – Call to Family, Community, and Participation – asserts that we have a right and a responsibility to participate in society and to seek the common good, taking special care of the poor and vulnerable. Since 1999, the United Nations has set aside August 12 as International Youth Day to celebrate and enhance the global efforts of youth to build a better world. This year’s theme is “Youth Engagement for Global Action,” and we’ve certainly seen evidence of that in recent street protests. What are you doing to engage youth? Offer young people you know a call to action – or better yet – respond to the call they offer you.

Today’s readings: Ezekiel 9:1-7; 10:18-22; Matthew 18:15-20. *“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.”*

THURSDAY: OPTIONAL MEMORIAL OF SAINTS PONTIAN, POPE, AND HIPPOLYTUS, PRIEST, MARTYRS

13 AUGUST 2026

Get smart

The stories of Saints Hippolytus and Pontian remind you starkly that divisions in the church (at the time only several hundred years old) are not new. Both of these men were caught up in battles over orthodoxy and heresy and were bitterly opposed to each other’s teaching. But it is important to remember that toward the end of their lives they were reconciled and are buried near one another and remembered together. An old proverb might apply to these men: “We grow too soon old, and too late smart.” Is there someone you need to be reconciled with, while you’re still “smart”?

Today’s readings: Ezekiel 12:1-12; Matthew 18:21-19:1. *“They have eyes to see but do not see, and ears to hear but do not hear.”*

**FRIDAY: MEMORIAL OF SAINT
MAXIMILIAN KOLBE, PRIEST,
MARTYR**

14 AUGUST 2026

Look to love

“Pray that I will love without any limits.” It is said that Saint Maximilian Kolbe wrote these words to his mother when he was a young man. He could never have known, of course, that years later he would make a radical choice to love by stepping up to take the place of a stranger, a fellow prisoner of war sentenced to torture and death. You may not know what will be asked of you in life, but you can give yourself to trying to love more deeply in even the smallest encounters in life.

Today’s readings: Ezekiel 16:1-15, 60, 63 or 16:59-63; Matthew 19:3-12. *“I will remember the covenant I made with you.”*

SATURDAY OF WEEK 19

15 AUGUST 2026

Children know

Do you seek to help others draw near to the Lord? The parents who brought their children to Jesus wanted Jesus to lay his hands upon them. They knew of the healing power, both physical and spiritual, which came from Jesus' touch. Jesus, in turn, rebuked his disciples for hindering the children from coming. No doubt the disciples wanted to shield Jesus from the nuisance of noisy children. But Jesus delighted in the children and demonstrated that God's love has ample room for everyone, including children. No one is unimportant to God. He comes to each person individually that he might touch them with his healing love and power. Do you show kindness to the youth you encounter in your neighbourhood, home, and church and do you pray for them that they may grow in the knowledge and wisdom of Jesus Christ?

Today’s readings: Ezekiel 18:1-10, 13b, 30-32; Matthew 19:13-15. *“Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”*

Readings for the 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a

God bypasses a show of might and power to communicate in a small still voice.

Psalms 85:9, 10, 11-12, 13-14

We do not worship a God of belligerence but kindness, truth, justice, and peace.

Romans 9:1-5

The glorious salvation history of Israel causes Paul anguish at the thought of its jeopardy.

Matthew 14:22-33

Saint Peter's faith is tested on the surface of the stormy sea.

Words on the Word

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

*

In 1933, Edith Stein entered the Carmel in Cologne. Her mother never came to terms with her daughter's decision. Edith, wishing to console her, explained that in Carmel there is a time of trial, which not everyone endures, to which her mother replied: "I know that when you undertake something as a trial, you always pass that trial." The trial was not easy, but her deepest desire for a life for God in a religious community was fulfilled. Earlier, in one of her letters, she had written about her search: "God is Truth. Whoever seeks the truth seeks God, even if he does not know it." After her perpetual

vows, she was instructed to continue her philosophical work. It was then that her greatest work, "Finite Being and Eternal Being," was written. She wrote: "What did not lie in my plans lay in God's plans. The more often something like this happens to me, the more vivid becomes within me the conviction flowing from faith that – when one looks from God's side – there are no coincidences..."

** **

The Lord Jesus Himself prepares this scene. He wants to teach something both to His disciples from centuries ago and to us present here. It is evening; He sends the disciples onto the lake alone, while He Himself goes to pray. A storm tosses the boat. The disciples are terrified, helpless, put to the test. Suddenly Jesus appears, walking on the waves toward the disciples; He brings them deliverance and calms the storm.

Johann Wolfgang Goethe, the great German poet, commenting on the Gospel passage we have just heard, stated: "It is one of the most beautiful stories, one that I like very much. It expresses the teaching that through faith and courage man can prevail in difficult undertakings. One must go further and see that this is not about the courage of Saint Peter, but about the saving power of God. It is not a parable about the courage of Saint Peter, but about his faith in the saving power of Jesus."

In a situation of trial, Saint Peter shows us the way out of mortal danger: "Lord, save me; without Your help I am lost!"

The sinking Saint Peter cries out to Jesus and acknowledges his own helplessness. In order to experience the power of God, one must experience one's own powerlessness.

We must look at Jesus, not at the dangers

As long as Saint Peter kept his eyes fixed on Jesus and walked toward Him, the waters of the lake bore him up. As soon as he stopped looking at his Saviour, the high waves frightened him; he trembled, and as a result he began to sink.

This Gospel scene is an exact description of the situation of the Church in the contemporary world: we notice difficulties; we develop programs to avert dangers; we prepare the necessary means; we convene conferences, congresses, and so on. We are ready – or so it only seems to us.

It is the Lord Jesus who, when we rely on Him, allows us to walk "on water." When we turn away from Him and seek help from sources other than Him, we will sink. In every situation, and especially in the situation of our difficult life experiences, He is our only rescue. We must remember this not only when we are in a safe harbour, but especially amid the bad waves on the stormy waters of the world.

Jesus brings salvation. He leaves us this instruction: whoever takes refuge in Him will be saved.

** * **

*In the trembling quiet of this wounded heart,
where sorrow's tide still pulls and tears run free,
I lay these verses newly rhymed before Thee, Lord –
orthodox, unbroken, true to Holy Church,
a mustard-seed confession, aching, raw, yet full of hope.*

*Faith so tiny, like a mustard seed,
Is hard, my Lord, and easy to fall indeed.
Though life keeps wounding, dragging me through mire,
Faith lets me walk upon the water higher.*

*And if I should fall and begin to sink,
You, Lord, lift me up from the fearful brink,
That I may believe again, from bitterness freed;
Give me faith as small as a mustard seed.*

(A. W.)

In Christ's love,
Fr Anthony

38 MASTERS OF THE GOLDEN AGE OF ICONS: THEOPHANES THE GREEK

Byzantine Master Who Transformed Sacred Art in Rus'

Theophanes the Greek (c. 1340 – 1405) stands as one of the pre-eminent painters of frescoes, miniatures and icons in the late medieval Christian East. Born in Byzantium, he had already executed major commissions in Constantinople, Kaffa and the cities of Novgorod and Nizhny Novgorod before settling in Rus' around 1370. His surviving frescoes in the Church of the Holy Saviour on Ilyina Street, Novgorod (1378), remain among the finest witnesses to his genius.

Moscow Commissions and Collaboration

In Moscow, Theophanes joined forces with Simeon the Black to decorate the Church of the Nativity of the Mother of God (c. 1395) and the Cathedral of the Archangel (1399). In 1405 he collaborated with Prokhor of Gorodets and the young Andrei Rublev on the Cathedral of the Annunciation. Scholars confidently attribute to him the great Deesis tier, Christ in Majesty, the Mother of God, Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Basil the Great, the Apostle Paul, the Transfiguration of 1408, and the revered Our Lady of the Don (1392), whose reverse bears the Dormition of the Mother of God.

A Style Rooted in Tradition Yet Boldly Expressive

Drawing upon the Palaiologan Renaissance, Theophanes revolutionised painting in Rus'. He favoured monumental scale and a rigorous synthesis of form, working in broad, dynamic planes. His almost monochromatic palette – restricted to austere browns and reds, gently relieved by yellow ochre – conveys both severity and spiritual radiance. Strictly obedient to the Church's iconographic canons, he nevertheless individualised every figure through incisive detail and a restless, expressive movement that draws the viewer into contemplation of the divine mysteries.

In an age when sacred images served as theology in colour, Theophanes the Greek upheld the



Dormition of the Mother of God, 1405, Tretyakov Gallery

unbroken tradition of the undivided Church, offering the faithful windows onto eternity executed with unmatched authority and power.

God's Guide

Relations with Angels: To Be Closer to Our Guardians

Chapter 5

PEOPLE AND ANGELS UNITED IN THE CHURCH

Together with the angels and all the saints in heaven, we form one family in Christ. At the heart of this communion is our beloved Mother Mary, and above all Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church.

The Church can be understood according to the state of her members: in heaven, she is the Church Triumphant; in purgatory, the Church Suffering; and on earth, the Church Militant. Though we are in different places and undergoing different stages of purification or glory, we remain united as one Church – the one Body of Christ.

Our loving God watches over us all. In Him we live, and by His grace we are sustained. Through faith, He continually heals and strengthens us in soul and body. Is this not a beautiful truth? The saints and angels already behold God in heaven, while we are still journeying towards them. And Jesus Himself leads us along the way.

As Saint Paul declares:

“For in Him we live and move and have our being”; as even some of your own poets have said, “For we too are His offspring” (Acts 17:28).

In Christ, angels and human beings are united under one Head. We are called to live in communion with God and with one another, sharing in the friendship and love that come from Him.

Sacred Scripture speaks magnificently of the supremacy of Christ:

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether Thrones or Dominions or Principalities or Powers – all things were created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is the Head of the Body, the Church. He is the Beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything He might be pre-eminent. For in Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross” (Col 1:15–20).

Jesus Christ, therefore, has first place in everything. He is the King of kings, and all creation is subject to Him. The Letter to the Hebrews makes clear that the Son is infinitely greater than the angels:

“For to which of the angels did He ever say, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You’? And again, ‘I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son’? And again, when He brings the firstborn into the world, He says, ‘Let all God’s angels worship Him.’ Of the angels He says, ‘He makes His angels winds, and His servants flames of fire.’ But of the Son He says, ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness beyond Your companions.’

“And: ‘You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of Your hands; they will perish, but You remain; they will all grow old like a garment, like a

mantle You will roll them up, and like a garment they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will never end.'

"And to which of the angels has He ever said, 'Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet'? Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?" (Heb 1:5–14).

Unlike Satan, who rebelled against God through pride, Jesus humbled Himself completely. He accepted the condition of a servant and became obedient even to death on a cross. Because of this perfect humility and obedience, the Father exalted Him above all creation.

The devil, by contrast, was cast down through his rebellion. Sacred Scripture portrays him as the serpent; a crawling creature associated with deception and the fall of humanity. Christ's humility, however, overcame the pride of Satan and opened the way to our salvation.

Saint Paul expresses the mystery of Christ's humility and exaltation in these words:

"Though He was in the form of God, He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death – even death on a cross. 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 bow, 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 2:6–11).

Everything, therefore, finds its unity and purpose in Jesus Christ. The angels serve Him, the saints adore Him, and the Church on earth follows Him in faith. We are not alone on our journey. We belong to a great communion that reaches from earth to heaven, and Christ, our Lord and Head, is leading us towards the fullness of life with God.

**I ASKED
THE LORD JESUS THIS
WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT
REASON,
FOR ME TO ASK FOR WISDOM,
AND I HEARD:**

**"SO THAT YOU KNOW
WHAT TO ASK FOR".**



Around the World

The sometimes-missed news

WARNING, ISLAM!

SECURITY AND THE COMMON GOOD: GERMANY'S EXTREMISM THREAT

Recent data from Germany's Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution reveals a sobering reality: approximately 28,650 individuals with Islamist views reside in the country, with over 9,100 prepared to use violence. In Berlin alone, 980 of the 2,600 identified Islamists are classified as violence-oriented, primarily linked to Salafism, Hamas, and Hezbollah. Additionally, federal police monitor 446 high-risk ideological threats.

These figures raise profound ethical questions regarding the state's duty to protect its citizens. Catholic doctrine teaches that political authority has a legitimate mandate to defend the common good and safeguard innocent life from terror (CCC 2265). Surveillance and preventative measures, when proportionate and respectful of human dignity, are morally justified to preserve peace.

However, justice demands a fair distinction between violent extremists and peaceful citizens. True peace cannot be built on suspicion, but on truth. As Germany navigates these security challenges, the ethical imperative remains upholding public safety while avoiding the sin of rash judgement, ensuring that vigilance always serves genuine justice.

USA – UKRAINE

SYMPATHY FOR ZELENSKY

Reports suggest US President Donald Trump's attitude towards Volodymyr Zelensky has warmed, driven by Ukraine's battlefield resilience and domestic drone innovation. Once sceptical of Kyiv's prospects, Trump's shift reflects a pragmatic admiration for "winners".

While Ukraine's right to self-defence against unjust aggression aligns with Catholic Just War principles, this geopolitical shift raises profound moral questions.

From an orthodox Catholic perspective, reducing the tragedy of war to a secular metric of "winning" risks obscuring the immense human cost. True justice cannot be measured solely by technological prowess or the efficiency of drone warfare. While the proposed licensing of Patriot interceptor missiles represents a licit means of air defence to protect innocent civilian lives, any expansion of military-industrial cooperation must be ordered towards a just and lasting peace, rather than the perpetuation of conflict.

As the Holy See consistently teaches, the ultimate goal of statecraft must be the restoration of a stable peace founded on justice, not merely the glorification of military might. Leaders must ensure that strategic alliances serve the common good and the preservation of sacred human life, rather than geopolitical expediency.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ON THE MOVE

THEY ARE RECLAIMING WHAT IS THEIRS

The Pamunkey Indian Tribe has purchased historic territory in King William County, Virginia, for \$1.9 million. This acquisition of Windsor Shades – once the ancestral seat of Kupkipcock – reflects a growing movement of Native American nations reclaiming lands lost through broken treaties and forced removal. Similar restorations have recently occurred with the Rappahannock and Mattaponi tribes.

These acquisitions transcend commerce; they touch upon the fundamental virtue of justice. Catholic social teaching firmly upholds the principle of restitution (CCC 2412), which requires the repair of historical injustices.

While these tribes are buying back what was unjustly taken, this trend represents a peaceful, lawful path toward rectifying past sins of dispossession. It aligns with the Christian duty to respect the innate dignity of indigenous peoples and their providential role as stewards of creation. True justice requires recognising historical grievances, and these transactions offer a hopeful, peaceful model of reconciliation and respect for the moral order.

ALARMING REPORT

HIV RESURGENCE

Recent UNAIDS data reveals a sobering resurgence of the HIV epidemic, with 1.2 million new infections and 570,000 deaths recorded globally in 2025. Alarmingly, international funding plummeted by 18% last year. This retreat in aid represents a grave failure of global solidarity. Nine million of the 41 million people living with HIV currently lack access to life-saving antiretroviral therapy – a stark reminder of our moral duty to defend the dignity of the sick and vulnerable.

The crisis is also intensifying in Europe. A sharp increase in cases, influenced by pandemic-era testing gaps and migration from war-torn countries.

While these demographic shifts require a compassionate, Christ-like healthcare response that rejects the stigmatisation of migrants, the broader resurgence demands a deeper ethical reflection on prevention.

True prevention cannot rely solely on secular, utilitarian strategies. The Church maintains that the most effective and dignified path to combatting transmission lies in promoting the integrity of human sexuality. By fostering moral responsibility, marital fidelity, and chastity, we address the root behavioural causes of the epidemic while respecting the God-given purpose of the human body and the family.

COOLCATION

LOOKING FOR COOL WEATHER

Heat waves and fires in southern Europe are changing the way vacations are planned. More and more tourists are choosing cooler destinations or moving their holidays outside the peak season. An analysis by Spain's CaixaBank shows that tourists who experienced exceptionally high temperatures during their vacation are less likely to return to the same country the following year. The phenomenon of "coolcation," meaning a vacation in a cooler climate, is slowly gaining popularity. According to a survey by Booking.com, nearly three quarters of respondents take weather conditions into account when planning their holidays, and 55% believe that some popular destinations have become too hot in the summer. The main beneficiaries of this trend are Scandinavian countries: Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark are seeing growing tourist interest, and northern Europe is increasingly being recommended as an alternative to traditional holidays by the Mediterranean Sea. The result: in some Scandinavian countries, the number of reservations has increased by as much as 44%. Scots do not have to look abroad for cool weather. They have it at home.

We Read Pope Leo

In the company of Jesus, even vacations can become a time of fraternal serenity...



Music has led us all into the experience of something new, something greater than what any one of us could create alone. It is an experience of beauty. It opens before us a new horizon and awakens in us the desire to go out to meet it. When we set out toward it, we discover not only something, but Someone. We encounter God, our Creator. Just as, by following a stream, we can reach its source, so the beauty of music invites us to an encounter with the One who is Beauty itself. In this spirit, continue to develop the gifts with which God has endowed you, and allow them

to lead you to Him. He is everything we seek in life; He alone can soothe our restless hearts.

Greeting of Leo XIV addressed to the Andrea Bocelli Foundation and the children's choirs from Uganda, the Holy Land, and Italy, Castel Gandolfo, July 29, 2026.

Christ truly satisfies humanity's hunger – our hunger for truth and life. His gesture also teaches us that nothing is wasted when we share it with others. Hoarding and discarding, by contrast, are two sides of the same evil: greed. This sickness of the soul robs a person of sense, because it intoxicates him with wealth to the point that he forgets those who weep from hunger and cry out with thirst. And so, in the face of the splendour of things that perish, there remain the outstretched hands of those who have nothing to eat, and the burned homes of those who know no peace.

In the desert of war and arrogance, let us see with what goodness the Lord “looked up to heaven,” “said the blessing,” “broke the loaves and gave them” to His disciples, so that they might distribute them to the crowds. In this miracle of love we recognize the characteristic gestures of Jesus, which reach their summit at the Last Supper. For there the Son of God gives us His own life as our brother in humanity. Tasting the grace of the Eucharist, let us strive to bear witness to its beauty through our daily gestures, beginning with the blessing of meals, when we share bread in the family and among friends. In the company of Jesus, even vacations can become a time of fraternal serenity, also embracing those near us who are in need.

Angelus, August 2, 2026.

Let us not cease praying for peace, so that wars may be brought to an end in the world and diplomatic solutions may be found especially for conflicts. Let us remember all the victims of warfare, especially the weakest and most defenceless: children, the elderly, and the sick. May the Lord console those who suffer and bless the work of those who bring help and comfort.

After the Angelus, August 2, 2026.

I encourage you to open your hearts wide and receive the gifts with which the Lord wishes to bless you in these days. And what you experience during this Day, do not keep only for yourselves. Let it not remain merely in photos on your phones or in videos posted on social media. Share it and reflect it in your lives, because many people today need the joyful and compelling witness that can be given by a young person in love with Christ. Do not be afraid to be instruments of God in order to rekindle hope in so many suffering hearts.

Video message of Leo XIV to the youth of Peru on the occasion of the National Youth Day, August 2, 2026.

The Absurdity of Life

In my adult education and work-life, I have often spoken with people who have dedicated their lives to achieving admirable, modern ambitions. They have built successful careers, pursued personal dreams, and sought freedom from what they see as the restrictive rules of tradition. These are individuals who were materially comfortable, influential in their communities, and were the very picture of success our culture promotes.

And yet, in our conversations, a deep sense of sadness and pessimism often came to the surface. For people with such dynamic lives, surrounded by all the glamour of modernity, what could possibly be missing?

The Crisis of Middle Age

This feeling of disillusionment frequently appears when people reach that point in middle age when the future no longer seems infinite – what some have called the "shadow line." One might expect them to be full of optimism, making bold new plans or sharing the secrets of their success as they once did. Instead, a profound weariness often takes over.

During OU Summer schools, many years ago, there were late-night conversations, which I can now say were like confessions; thoughts tended to arrive at the same, bleak conclusion. They came to see life through a philosophical lens that leads to one idea:

Life is an absurd freak of matter, which not only has no further consequences but does not even offer any solid meaning.

A Search for Answers Without God

Some try to find comfort in secular ethics, looking to thinkers like Immanuel Kant. His idea of the "categorical imperative" provides a framework for moral action, creating the sense of a stable system for living peacefully with others.

However, this intellectual comfort is often short-lived. When I gently remind the people I speak with that Kant's system was not, in fact, materialist – that he assumed the existence of God – their certainty begins to fade. Kant built a moral structure but chose not to ground it in the divine. This laid the groundwork for a minimalist morality, where one could be a "decent person" with honourable qualities.

Many admirable people are guided by such a system, yet it cannot provide a final answer to the toughest question of all:

Why should one be decent?

Why should we control our own desires and impulses if everything ends with the finality of death, and our memory eventually turns to dust?

"The world strips away your illusions," an intelligent friend once told me as he faced his own shadow line. "And at the end," he added with a shrug, "there is only the cemetery and final decay."

In these moments, I sometimes offer a favourite quote from Saint Augustine as a small comfort: "The dead are invisible, but they are not absent." This might bring a brief smile, but it is often followed by the same final thought: "Life is absurd." I can sense in them a growing resignation, a deep effort to avoid falling into complete despair.

The Christian Response

Some might say this line of thinking is predictable, leading to a simple conclusion: a life without God is sad and meaningless. I would not dispute this; in fact, I see nothing intellectually wrong with it. Futuristic ideas from thinkers like Yuval Harari about a god-like human future offer little real comfort against the biological certainty of death that awaits us all.

The fact that I can write these words in a sun filled room, in the middle of a beautiful summer's day, shows that I am not worried by my own mortality. I am not distressed that, with every passing moment, I am moving closer to my own end.

For the Christian, the knowledge that life is not a random series of events but a journey *towards* God removes the sting of mortality. This faith fills the passing of time with purpose, not fear. It is God who has removed the shadow of absurdity from my life. I know that, in the grand and unexplained order of the universe, my own story is part of a greater design, one that leads to the ultimate revelation of all mystery.

To stand before this great mystery and to live as if the answer is simply "absurdity" is a profoundly unreasonable choice. The sorrowful consequences of this worldview are, as I have seen, all too clear.

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 all whose anniversaries fall around this time.

Prayer for Ukraine

Loving God, we pray for the people of Ukraine, for all those suffering and afraid, that You will be close to them and protect them. We pray for world leaders, for compassion, strength and wisdom to guide their choices. We pray for the world that in this moment of crisis, we may reach out in solidarity to our brothers and sisters in need. May we walk in Your ways so that peace and justice become a reality for the people of Ukraine and for all the world. In Jesus's holy Name we pray. Amen

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!

COFFEE MORNING: is next **SATURDAY 15TH AUGUST**. Anyone able to help in any way contact Fiona Fox, or Fr Tony. One week to go!: promises of home baking, bottles, raffle prizes. Volunteers still needed for setting up (the Friday evening at 6.00pm); Bric-a-brac (1).



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