

FEAST OF THE
EXULTATION
OF THE
CROSS

SEPTEMBER 14TH



**PARISH
BULLETIN**

**St. Kieran's, the
Catholic
Church** in Campbeltown
and Islay
*Ceann Loch Chille
Chiarain*
13th September 2026

The 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

Week 24 of Ordinary Time

Monday: **Holy Mass, 6pm**

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

Hymns/Music for Sunday

Processional

Sheet Be still for the presence of
the Lord

Offertory

342 Make me a channel

Communion music

Благослови Господа, душе моя – Bless the Lord,
my Soul

Post Communion

39 A new commandment

Recessional

175 God forgave my sin

Next weekend:

Saturday, 19th September, **Vigil Mass, 6.00pm**

Sunday, 20th September **25th 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

19th September: **Holy Mass, 4pm**

20th September: **Holy Mass, 4pm**

Psalm response

*The Lord is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger and rich in mercy.*

Gospel acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

*A new commandment I give to you, says the Lord,
that you love one another, just as I have loved you.*

Alleluia.

Communion Antiphon

*How precious is your mercy, O God!
The children of men seek shelter in the shadow of your wings.*

Take Five

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

MONDAY: FEAST OF THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

14 SEPTEMBER 2026

Giving is eternal

“Behold! Behold! The wood of the cross . . .” Each Good Friday, these words ring out in churches around the world. They can remind you of poignant, personal moments of veneration, and even as you read them now, connect you to the One who hung upon it: Jesus Christ, who’s cross is adored and exalted today. Jesus gave his life in love and faith, so that in love and faith, you might share what you’ve been given with others. Today, behold and give thanks for all you’ve been given, letting your life echo into eternity.

Today’s readings: Numbers 21:4b-9; John 3:13-17. *“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.”*

TUESDAY: MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS

15 SEPTEMBER 2026

Put some passion into your compassion

Early in its history the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows bore the name “Our Lady of Compassion.” Compassion is an interesting word. Broken down into its smallest Latin roots, it literally means “bearing with” or “suffering with”; those parts put together add up to the Latin word for “sympathy”; and all those meanings do a pretty good job of describing Christian love: bearing with one another and one another’s burdens, having patience, showing kindness and understanding, identifying with others, and treating them as you would want to be treated.

Today’s readings: 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 27-31a; John 19:25-27. *“When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son!’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother!’”*

WEDNESDAY: FEAST OF SAINT NINIAN, BISHOP

16 SEPTEMBER 2026

God is here

What does Jesus mean when he says his disciples must be *lambs in the midst of wolves*? The prophet Isaiah foretold a time when wolves

and lambs will dwell in peace (Isaiah 11:6 and 65:25). This certainly refers to the second coming of Christ when all will be united under the Lordship of Jesus after he has put down his enemies and established the reign of God over the heavens and the earth. In the meantime, the disciples must expect opposition and persecution from those who oppose the gospel. Jesus came as our sacrificial lamb to atone for the sin of the world. We, in turn, must be willing to sacrifice our lives in humble service of our Lord and Master.

Today’s readings: Isaiah 52:7-10; Luke 10:1-9. *“Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you.”*

THURSDAY OF WEEK 24

17 SEPTEMBER 2026

Give your faith some creed-ence

“I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,” the church says at Mass every Sunday and holy day. The word creed comes from the Latin credo, “I believe,” the first words of the Nicene Creed. Creeds originated as formal statements of faith the newly baptized would profess in the early church (an action reflected in the current Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults when those seeking Baptism receive the Creed). When you pray the Creed, you do much the same thing: expressing your acceptance of the beliefs that hold the members of the church together.

Today’s readings: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 7:36-50. *“I handed on to you . . . what I also received: Christ died for our sins . . . that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day.”*

FRIDAY OF WEEK 24

18 SEPTEMBER 2026

Holy honey!

We don’t often think about snacks in the Bible, but surprisingly they’re there! While there were likely no cup-cakes or ice cream in the kitchens of our matriarchs and patriarchs in faith, they still had a sweet tooth—especially for honey! Do an online search of the Bible and read through more than 60 references to honey. Honey has become a symbol of God who can satisfy us with a most pure, joyful sweetness. The Jewish celebration of Rosh Hashana recalls the significance of honey, especially remembering how God cared for the Israelites in the desert by feeding them manna, which tasted like “wafers made with honey.” On this first day of Rosh Hashana, let us, with our

Jewish friends, wish one another a good, sweet year ahead, trusting in the providence of God.

Today's readings: 1 Corinthians 15:12-20; Luke 8:1-3. *"Accompanying Jesus were the Twelve and some women . . . and many others who provided for them out of their resources."*

SATURDAY: OPTIONAL MEMORIAL OF SAINT JANUARIUS, BISHOP, MARTYR

19 SEPTEMBER 2026

They're there when you need them

The bishop Saint Januarius, who died near the beginning of the fourth century, is known primarily for the San Gennaro festival named after him and for a famous miracle: the liquefying

of a vial of his blood that has been going on several times a year in Naples, Italy since at least the 13th century. Apparently, he was an inspiring presence even before that. When Saint Paulinus of Nola was dying in 431, he called out to Saints Januarius and Martin of Tours, "who a little while ago were speaking to me and promising me that soon I would join them," a biography says. Saints are always available. Pray to them for help and let them serve as examples of love and service in your life.

Today's readings: 1 Corinthians 15:35-37, 42-49; Luke 8:4-15. *"Whoever has ears to hear ought to hear."*

Readings for the 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sirach 27:30-28:9

How can we hold onto anger and expect healing from God?

Psalms 103:1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-12

God's kindness far surpasses all our sins.

Romans 14:7-9

Christ is Lord of the dead and the living.

Matthew 18:21-35

Jesus tells the parable of one who is forgiven and yet fails to forgive

Words on the Word

*

A certain man, discouraged by the struggle against his sins and addictions, decided to give up the fight, to give up confession, and to stop thinking about God altogether. He went to a priest who was a friend of his for an honest conversation. He told him frankly about his sins and unfaithfulness, about his guilt and his doubt in God's mercy, and about how he had lost all sense of any effort.

The friendly priest explained as best he could: that God's mercy is immense, that God offers us His forgiving love continually, that all we need to do is accept it.

But the erring man remained inconsolable: my heart is like a leaky bucket. God's forgiveness passes through it as through a sieve...

Staying with this image, the priest said: Perhaps your heart is like a bucket full of holes and cracks, but if you throw it into the sea of God's merciful love, then it really makes no difference how many holes there are in it. For the infinite sea of mercy surrounds it on all sides—the more holes there are, the faster it gets inside (K. Wojtowicz, Notes, 1986).

* *

"God never tires of forgiving; it is we who tire of asking forgiveness," as the Popes have often reminded us.

A good accountant keeps the ledgers entrusted to him in perfect order: nothing overlooked,

nothing forgotten. Yet when it comes to the faults of others, we can become just such accountants, carefully recording every wrong and letting nothing slip from memory. Sensitive souls often treat themselves in the same way. They cannot forgive themselves; they cannot forget.

But we cannot truly say, “I forgive,” unless we know what forgiveness means. The one who learns to forgive himself is better able to forgive others. This does not mean excusing sin, but seeing ourselves and our neighbour truthfully, with humility and respect. It becomes easier to show mercy to others when we admit that much of what troubles us in them also lives, in some measure, within ourselves.

So perhaps the goal is not to fight first, but to understand. Christian strength is not harshness, but charity; not revenge, but restraint. Our Lord showed this on the way to Calvary and upon the Cross.

God keeps no ledger of grudges. Christ leads us by the road of forgiveness and reconciliation. And if, by grace, love begins to quiet hatred, then even the darkest corners of our hearts may yield hidden treasure, brought at last into the light.

* * *

*Come, join your hands with mine once more,
As when we walked life's golden shore;
Let heaven murmur, soft and bright,
Its secrets in the dawn's first light.*

*Come, hear the birds in merry song,
With joyful hearts they soar along;
Though nestless still, they dance above,
And teach the art of laughing love.*

*While we, still caught in petty spite,
Drift ghost-like through the fading light;
Yet tucked between each trembling line,
We plead, "Forgive" — and grace will shine.*

In Christ's love,
Fr Anthony

God's Guide

Relations with Angels: To Be Closer to Our Guardians

Chapter 9

THE CHOIRS OF CONTEMPLATION

The next three angelic choirs are commonly understood as spirits of pure contemplation, ceaselessly beholding the beauty, power, love and holiness of God the Father.

Thrones take their name from the idea of a seat or dwelling place. Saint Gregory the Great, in *Homily 34 on the Gospels*, says of them that they are “filled with such divine grace that God may be said to sit in them and, through them, to dispense His judgements”. Sacred Scripture likewise speaks of God as enthroned upon the Thrones. They are also associated with peace: steadfast, serene and untroubled. It is fitting to ask their intercession for peace of soul, whether for us or for others. That peace may come through repentance, inner purification and the renunciation of sin; at times, too, it may be granted at once as a grace, together with the light of the Holy Spirit to lead a soul out of moral darkness.

Cherubim are marked by the fullness of their knowledge; their name is often understood to mean “fullness of wisdom” or “fullness of knowledge”. They hold the second rank among these

heavenly choirs and are traditionally regarded as especially close to God. In contemplating His infinite beauty and love, they remind us to seek wisdom of heart and mind. Their intercession may be sought particularly when praying for deeper understanding, sound judgement and spiritual insight.

THE TRUTH

DOES NOT NEED TO BE INVENTED;
IT ALREADY
EXISTS,
UNLIKE
A LIE.

Seraphim are traditionally understood to be the highest choir of angels, aflame with love for God. Their name is often rendered as “fiery” or “burning,” a fitting description of those who stand closest to the divine majesty. More than seven centuries before Christ, the prophet Isaiah was granted a vision of them:

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up... Above him stood the seraphim... And one called to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory’” (Is 6:1-3).

From the seraphim we learn the spirit of adoration: reverent, joyful, and wholly centred on God. Their example invites us to worship Him faithfully in the Church, above all at Holy Mass and before the Blessed Sacrament. Whenever we adore the Lord in spirit and in truth (cf. John 4:23-24), we join, in our measure, the ceaseless praise of heaven.

Christ Himself directs our hearts towards this destiny. In the resurrection, He says, the blessed “will be like the angels in heaven” (Mt 22:30). The Book of Revelation gives us a glimpse of that glory: “They will see his face” (Rev 22:4).

So, when you praise God—at church, at home, in peace or in trial—remember this: you never praise Him alone. The angels are already there, and the seraphim lead the song.



Around the World

The sometimes-missed news

CUBA'S ECONOMIC REFORMS

SUBSIDIARITY AMIDST CRISIS

Cuban authorities have cautiously liberalised the nation's economy, permitting private

enterprises of over 100 employees. While pricing and foreign trade remain heavily state-regulated, these changes introduce a welcome degree of **subsidiarity**.

Key reforms include:

- **Private Enterprise:** Greater autonomy for businesses in agriculture, trade, and property
- **Education:** Legalisation of private nurseries, and language tuition.

From a Catholic moral perspective, permitting private education is a significant step forward. It rightly acknowledges the family's inherent, God-given right as the primary educators of their children. Furthermore, the dignity of work is better served when citizens can freely apply their entrepreneurial talents.

However, these regulations arrive during a severe economic crisis, worsened by recent US sanctions and blocked oil supplies. The Church consistently teaches that whilst political pressure on authoritarian regimes is sometimes necessary, broad sanctions that disproportionately deprive the poor of basic necessities violate Christian **solidarity**.

A fair assessment recognises that true reform must prioritise human dignity. The Cuban people must not be reduced to collateral damage in geopolitical disputes, nor should their newfound economic freedoms be stifled by excessive state control.

THE HIDDEN TOLL OF CONFLICT

RUSSIA'S MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

The war in Ukraine is taking a severe toll on ordinary Russians, underlining the deep moral and human cost of a long, grinding conflict. Recent research points to a sharp decline in mental health.

The Institute of Psychology of the Russian Academy of Sciences reports that:

- 49% of those surveyed show signs of depression
- 36% have high levels of anxiety
- Young adults aged 25–34, and low-income people in rural areas, report the worst mental health

Rising despair is linked to economic hardship, inflation and fuel shortages triggered by attacks on refineries, along with little hope for an end to the war. Antidepressant sales are now at record levels for the third year running.

These figures point to a painful moral truth. The Church teaches that war always damages the common good, leaving deep spiritual and psychological scars on ordinary people. Political aggression destroys the conditions needed for human flourishing, bringing both material and spiritual poverty.

Justice demands that we recognise the suffering of the Russian people as distinct from the actions of their leaders. As Catholics, we are called to pray persistently for a just peace that restores dignity, healing and true reconciliation to all.

AUSTRIA

THEY HAVE HAD ENOUGH OF ISLAMISTS

Austrian leaders want to write a ban on “political Islam” into the country's constitution. Chancellor Christian Stocker recently said that using religion for political power is not

compatible with Austrian democracy. By “political Islam”, he means Islamist movements that try to turn religious rules into binding political programmes.

In recent interviews, Stocker reaffirmed the basic right to practise one’s religion but also stressed that this right has limits. “Where men and women do not enjoy equal rights, and our institutions... are not respected, that freedom ends,” he said. He condemned coercive behaviour, such as informal “morality police” in schools telling girls how they must dress. Any change to the constitution, however, needs a difficult two-thirds majority in parliament.

The debate shows the ongoing tension between religious freedom and the common good. The Catholic Church firmly defends religious liberty, as taught in *Dignitatis Humanae*, yet also insists this freedom does not allow attacks on public order or natural law.

Stocker’s emphasis on equality echoes Catholic teaching on the equal dignity of men and women, made in God’s image. While faith can shape public life, any ideology that uses coercion and denies basic human dignity should be resisted through just and measured means.

RUSSIAN SABOTAGE

TO WEAKEN AND DIVIDE

A troubling pattern of fires and sabotage across Poland, Germany, and other NATO nations is steadily escalating. Recent blazes at the WB Group facility in Skarżysko-Kamienna and a warehouse in Gdynia—both linked to defence manufacturing—have been identified by authorities as deliberate arson.

This follows Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov’s August threat to intensify actions against Western infrastructure fuelling “Kyiv’s war machine.” Subsequently, suspicious incidents have multiplied across Europe:

- **Fires** at arms plants in Lithuania, Latvia, and Bulgaria.
- **Arson** at the JFG Composites plant in Lublin, Poland.
- **Thwarted sabotage** at German power stations and Danish defence firms.

General Leon Komornicki, former deputy chief of the Polish General Staff, warns this is a calculated phase of hybrid war designed to “weaken, divide and polarise” societies, deliberately sowing fear ahead of potential conventional conflict.

These tactics present grave moral concerns. The Church’s Just War tradition strictly condemns unprovoked aggression and the covert destabilisation of peaceful nations. Hybrid warfare relies fundamentally on deception and terror, violating the moral imperative to uphold truth and protect the common good. Deliberately sowing public anxiety to manipulate civilian populations is a direct offence against human dignity.

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches, peace is not merely the absence of war, but the “work of justice” and the effect of charity (CCC 2304). While sovereign nations possess the moral right to self-defence and the duty to protect the innocent from unjust aggression, the international community must firmly condemn these covert acts of terror.

In these polarised times, Catholics are called to resist the normalisation of deceit, praying for a just peace while standing steadfast in truth.

THANKS TO AI

CLEARLY WORSE

A major new study, *The Generative AI Learning Penalty*, has uncovered a worrying pattern: pupils who lean heavily on artificial intelligence perform significantly worse in their studies.

Over two and a half years, researchers David Strömberg, Victor Lei, and Yanhui Wu tracked 26,000 Chinese and 1,000 Turkish secondary-school students. Their results are sobering:

- **Homework:** Marks fell by 18%, even though students spent 30% more time on their work.
- **Tests:** Monthly exam scores dropped by 20%, and high-stakes entrance exams declined by 18–24%.
- **Dependence:** AI use initially boosted practice performance, but once the tool was removed, exam scores collapsed by 17% compared with the control group.

Beyond the statistics lies a deeper question of human formation. The Church insists that technology must be ordered to authentic human flourishing. When pupils hand over their intellectual effort to algorithms, they risk weakening the virtues of diligence, perseverance and academic honesty.

Education is not a matter of efficiently producing correct answers, but of training minds in truth. While it is only fair to acknowledge AI's potential as a limited aid, this research is a sober warning: genuine wisdom can never be automated; it is forged through patient, honest intellectual labour.

We Read Pope Leo

Complaining and gossip are easier, but they bear no fruit and cause many matters to remain stuck at a standstill.

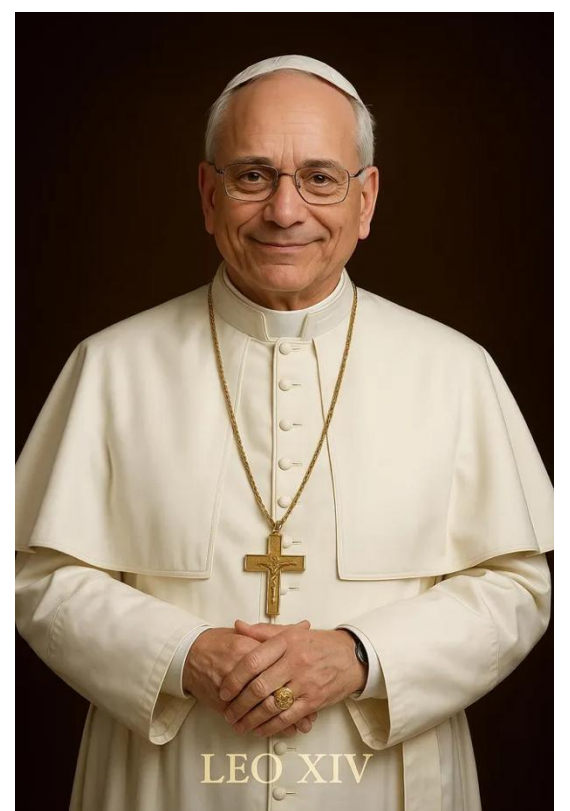
Christian sharing requires us to take responsibility for reality and to expose the contradictions that characterize personal and social life in today's world. Among these is, for example, scientific and technological progress, which offers ever new possibilities that are available only to some and which humanity does not always know how to use properly. In times marked by profound changes that give rise to troubling imbalances, the Church is called to serve humanity by listening to and embracing the deepest questions and longings of the human heart, and by pointing to Christ as "the key, the centre and the purpose of the whole of human history" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 10).

General Audience, 2 September 2026

Every vocation is born of a personal dialogue with God, cultivated in silence and prayer. It is there that everything is decided, and for this dialogue to take place, one must learn to abide with God. In a hurried world that regards every prolonged pause with suspicion, the seminary might be considered a luxury or an institution belonging to the past, but this is not so. Precisely because our times are marked by haste and noise, a place and time are needed in which to learn to persevere, discern and allow oneself to be formed without taking shortcuts. The seminary does not postpone the mission; rather, it is a prerequisite for undertaking it. Its importance must not be diminished. The priest is sent to everyone, to proclaim to all the beauty of faith in Jesus Christ, the Good News of our salvation.

Address to Seminarians, 3 September 2026

Saint John Henry Newman stands as a shining example of a scholar who demonstrated the inseparability of faith and reason not only in his works but, even more admirably, in his own life. His thought had an exceptionally concrete dimension, because his religious convictions arose from a personal relationship with God, while his academic work combined



loftiness with an extraordinary practical sense. The depth of both these dimensions of his life was recognized when he was proclaimed a Doctor of the Universal Church and co-patron of the Church's educational mission. In the face of contemporary challenges, Newman's thought on education takes on particular relevance. He proposes a Christian formation that embraces the whole person and evaluates the value of education according to the criteria of human dignity, justice and the capacity to serve the common good.

Address of Leo XIV to Pilgrims from Oriel College, Oxford, 4 September 2026

There is a certain spiritual treasure that we owe one another: the debt of mutual love. Jesus points out to every Christian community at least two ways of practising mutual love. The first consists in learning the art of fraternal correction. It is an often-forgotten art that requires sincerity and respect for each successive step. A sincere conversation, first in private, then—if necessary—in the presence of two or three people, and finally—should the need arise—with the whole community, means facing reality and transforming problems and conflicts into opportunities for growth. Complaining and gossip are easier, but they bear no fruit and cause many matters to remain stuck at a standstill. There is also a second way of practising fraternal love which, according to Jesus, transforms even prayer: reaching agreement. This applies not only when conflict arises, but also when asking God together for a particular gift. Without faith, everyone might feel alone and regard others with suspicion, seeing them as strangers and enemies. By grace, however, we are brothers and sisters who can live in harmony—meeting one another, forgiving one another and listening to one another in the Lord.

Angelus, 6 September 2026

Tactics Against the Evil Spirit

Human Stories: Mysticism



How can we avoid the snares of the evil spirit and stay on the narrow road to heaven? This is

not a theoretical question but a daily reality for every Christian. The answer lies in the heart of the Church, **“against which the gates of hell shall not prevail”** (cf. Mt 16:18).

The struggle with the evil spirit, whether of hatred, resentment, greed, etc., is universal. It does not concern only those in obvious rebellion against God. As Christ revealed to mystics, we belong to God or to Satan not by labels, but by “the deeds of the mind and heart”. Spiritual warfare is rarely dramatic; it is usually fought quietly in thoughts, words and actions.

“I Came That They May Have Life” (Jn 10:10)

Our primary weapon is the grace of God: free, abundant and offered to all. The condition is that we remain open to it.

To the Polish mystic Alicja Lenczewska, Jesus said that fidelity to Him cannot coexist with concessions to sin. To avoid deception, we must live in a state of grace, in prayer, and in the life of the Church.

Authentic Christian life is concrete:

- Regular, conscious reception of the sacraments
- Sincere, persevering prayer
- A radical, ongoing fight against sin

At the centre stands the Eucharist, “food for eternal life”. Here Christ hides Himself, not to enslave us, but to draw us freely into union with Him. In Holy Communion, the soul meets the living and true God, hidden yet real.

The Eucharist is not a mere ritual; it is the heart of spiritual victory. “In a soul full of God there is no room for the temptations offered by Satan,” Jesus said. Union with God is the goal of life and the path to “life in abundance” (cf. Jn 10:10), even amid struggle.

“The Thief Comes Only to Steal and Kill and Destroy” (Jn 10:10)

The devil tempts all, presenting sin as attractive and harmless, slowly drawing the soul away from God. Behind the façade lies destruction.

Jesus said to Alicja Lenczewska that mortal sin “kills” Him in the soul, and the soul itself becomes dead. Yet as long as a person lives, the possibility of “resurrection” remains through reconciliation.

Sin is humanity’s greatest disaster, but God’s mercy meets it with a greater gift: the sacrament of reconciliation. In confession, chains are broken and the soul is reborn. No sinner is beyond the reach of this grace, even at the last moment of life.

“Be Watchful!” (1 Pt 5:8)

There is no neutral ground in the spiritual life. The battle lasts from baptism to death. Jesus warns that “everyone is always in danger” and that today, when Satan wages a “great offensive”, there is “neither place nor time for rest”.

Human strength alone is not enough. Victory comes to those who frequently and consciously call on the Lord, Our Lady, the angels and the saints. Those who rely solely on themselves lose.

The strongest attacks often come after great graces, when complacency sets in. Hence the need for “constant vigilance and pleading for God’s mercy”. Saint John Paul II translated this into practical terms: listening to conscience, naming good and evil honestly, nurturing the good within and waging the first battle in one’s own heart.

Vigilance is not pessimism but hopeful realism: eyes open to sin, heart anchored in God’s power.

“Avoid Every Kind of Evil” (1 Thes 5:22)

With evil there is no room for compromise. The devil’s apparent “gifts” of power, health or knowledge are poisoned. Their true price is the soul.

His strategy is consistent: deception, inversion of good, and gradual distortion. His main areas of attack are:

1. The Heart – Through pride, vanity, stubbornness, fear, rejection of spiritual life, vulgarity and egoism.
2. The Mind – Through superficiality, delusions, lies, distrust and ignorance.
3. The Body – By treating the body—especially the female body—as a commodity and source of pleasure, and as an ultimate value.

From there, the attacks infect culture, religion, and society:

- Culture and art distorted by materialism and sensuality
- Religion replaced by neo-paganism, occultism, sects, superstitions and even sophisticated forms of Satanism
- Social life marked by manipulation, exploitation and concentration of power
- A false image of the human person, alternately idolised and dehumanised

All this serves a counterfeit project: a “new world” built in opposition to natural and divine law, a kind of totalitarian “new order”. Against this, the Church proposes another vision: the quiet, firm advance of Christ’s Kingdom, which will ultimately triumph.

“She Shall Crush Your Head” (cf. Gen 3:15)

From Genesis onwards, Mary appears as the woman at enmity with the serpent. The Church has always seen her as a sure refuge in spiritual battles.

The saints testify to her power. Saint John Vianney said: “One Hail Mary said devoutly shakes all of hell.” Saint Maximilian Kolbe called the Rosary a weapon: “I am going to shoot at Satan!”

At Fatima, Our Lady spoke clearly of hell and warned of the sins, especially of impurity, that lead many there. Yet her message remains profoundly hopeful: she pleads for prayer and penance, especially for the conversion of sinners. No one who turns to her Son through her Immaculate Heart is beyond the reach of grace.

“Take Courage: I Have Overcome the World” (Jn 16:33)

Fear is one of the evil spirit’s favourite tools, yet the Gospel echoes with Christ’s command: “Do not be afraid.”

By His passion, death and resurrection, Jesus has already won the decisive victory over Satan. Our task is to keep our eyes fixed on Him and remain united to Him. What happened on Calvary is a present reality: Christ “continually snatches you from Satan and gives you to the Father, insofar as your free will permits Him.”

God does not save by force. Love never coerces. Each person must cooperate freely with grace, viewing life in the light of eternity.

Jesus summarised our responsibility starkly: “Holiness is the fruit of victories in successive skirmishes and in the main battle, which is life on earth. The front line is located within man – in his soul.” God supplies the grace, but the decision and effort are ours.

This is demanding, yes, but profoundly hopeful. If the front line is within us, then through grace the victory is also within reach. We are not left defenceless: we have the Church, the sacraments, Scripture, Mary and the saints, the angels and the strength of daily prayer.

The Christian does not fight for victory, but from victory – Christ’s victory already won. Our call is to stay faithful, remain awake and let His grace achieve in us what we cannot do alone. In this lies our courage, our hope and our peace.

Climbing the Highest Spiritual Summit



Christ calls each person, constantly and personally, to holiness. He asks only for your free “yes”, your trust, and your steady cooperation.

Saint John Paul II’s inaugural words still ring with urgency:

“Do not be afraid. Open, open wide the doors to Christ... Allow Christ to speak to man! He alone has the words of life, yes, of eternal life.”

His appeal remains simple and direct: entrust your life to Christ through

Mary — *Totus Tuus*. To do this is to accept Our Lady as guide along the demanding yet beautiful path of faith, learning from her to “hope against all human hope”.

Holiness is not an elite ideal but the normal Christian life: true happiness, pure love, freedom in the truth. Yet it requires your enduring cooperation with Christ. For those who trust Him, no situation is hopeless. He forgives every sin, breaks every chain, and can raise great saints from the greatest sinners.

First Steps Towards Sainthood

If you have not yet begun the ascent of love, the first steps are clear:

- Go to confession and confess your sins sincerely.
- Receive Holy Communion.
- Tell Jesus you give yourself to Him as His own.
- Ask Him to teach you to love and to heal you from egoism and attraction to sin.

Christ desires to heal the wounds of your heart and free you from every slavery. He invites you into the Pure Hearts Movement (PHM). You join by making a sincere confession, receiving Holy Communion and entrusting yourself to Christ with the Prayer of Entrustment of the PHM.

Inform the editorial office of this decision: you will receive a special blessing and be enrolled in the Book of Pure Hearts.

Pray the Prayer of Entrustment daily. In doing so you:

- give yourself entirely to Jesus through Mary,
- ask for and receive the grace of a pure heart,
- grow aware of the commitments you have freely made.

Only the pure in heart truly love. Reject all that destroys purity: impure thoughts, desires, and actions. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you hatred of sin and love for what is pure, true and good.

The School of Self-Discipline

In the Pure Hearts Movement, Christ Himself wants to teach you how to love with a pure heart. He wishes to heal and free you, but His grace bears fruit only if you renew your daily “yes” through concrete discipline.

Set a clear daily plan and keep to it. Include:

- fixed time for personal prayer and silence before Christ,
- honest work and generous service,
- healthy rest and recreation.

Whatever you do — prayer, work, study, service — do it wholeheartedly.

Demand something of yourself. Fight egoism expressed in laziness, comfort-seeking and refusal to make an effort. Decide to act, pray, work and fulfil your duties especially when you feel least inclined.

Refuse discouragement. If you walk in the light of the Gospel, obey the commandments, listen to God's word and seek His will, Christ will gradually bring you to mature love — that is, holiness: a balanced, fully human life grounded in God.

The Power of Prayer and the Sacraments

All real spiritual strength flows from prayer. In prayer, Confession and the Eucharist, Christ transforms hearts, frees them from sin and teaches them to love as He loves.

Neglecting prayer harms the soul: spiritual life withers, then dies, leaving a person defenceless before evil, which then enslaves and confuses.

Set a fixed daily time for prayer. Turn to tried and trusted forms:

- the Holy Rosary,
- the Chaplet of Divine Mercy,
- daily reading and meditation on Scripture,
- Eucharistic adoration,
- other traditional Catholic prayers.

Never excuse yourself from prayer because of mood, tiredness or lack of “feeling.” Precisely when prayer feels hardest, pray more, offering Christ your reluctance and distractions.

Reluctance to pray and constant postponement are among the evil one's most subtle temptations.

The secret of Saint John Paul II's holiness was prayer, especially before the Blessed Sacrament. He drew strength, wisdom and love from Christ in the Mass and in silent adoration. Recalling his chapel in Kraków, he wrote that it was a place of special inspiration, “like a powerful magnet”.

Do not neglect regular confession, ideally monthly. If possible, find a regular confessor. Promise Christ that, if you fall into mortal sin, you will go to confession as soon as possible. This decision itself is a strong shield in the battle for your soul.

Faith naturally seeks understanding. Deepen your knowledge of the Catholic faith through sound books, catechisms and solid journals.

Trials on the Road to Holiness

Those who persevere in faith and seek holiness will face trials. These are not signs of abandonment but part of the normal rhythm of Christian growth.

Saint John Paul II was frank about this:

“Trials will surely come upon us... In trial we may feel abandoned, but the grace of God, the grace of victorious faith, never abandons us. Therefore, every trial, even the most terrible, we can pass through victoriously.”

This is the optimism of the Gospel: not naïve, but rooted in the certainty that God's grace is stronger than any darkness.

A Community on the Journey

The Pure Hearts Movement is a living community, formed by Christ, uniting us with Him and with one another.

Let us remember each other daily in prayer. In the editorial office, we pray every day for all members and friends of the Movement, especially with the Rosary and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

We encourage you to send us your testimonies. Faith grows when shared; the gift of a pure heart is meant to shine in a wounded and confused world.

Christ also gives us a powerful intercessor for this journey: Saint John Paul II. Cultivate a personal friendship with him in prayer. Ask his help and protection along this demanding road to holiness. He is a faithful advocate before God.

A Call to Holiness – Today

We bless you and entrust you once more to Christ through Mary.

Take to heart Saint Peter's words:

"Like obedient children, do not conform yourselves to the desires you formerly had in your ignorance, but, as He who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in every aspect of your conduct, for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'" (1 Peter 1:14–16)

This is not a distant dream but your vocation, your dignity, your future.

Christ calls you to the summit. The path is steep, but you are not alone. In the heart of the Church, in the company of Mary and the saints, you can climb — step by step — towards the joy of a pure heart and the radiant freedom of holiness.

In my opinion

War Escalation in Ukraine



Destruction in Kyiv after a Russian attack, September 2, 2026

"He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire." — Psalm 46:9

The Expanding Threat: A Catholic Perspective on European Security

As we watch the rapid changes in European security, we are reminded of the sobering reality of our fallen human nature. Last week, I noted that the largest NATO

exercises in history, along with a visit by the CIA chief to Moscow, were meant to stop Russian aggression. Sadly, from a journalistic and diplomatic view, this effort has failed. Instead, Vladimir Putin has escalated the situation, bringing the threat of conflict closer to our shores in the United Kingdom.

The War Moves Beyond Ukraine

The conflict is no longer kept within Ukraine's borders. We are now seeing direct, symmetric attacks against NATO members. Recent events include a warehouse fire in Poland and an attempted arson at a Polish drone factory. Similar acts of sabotage are happening across Western Europe, including attacks on Germany's energy grid.

Most worryingly, direct threats have been made against the UK because we have supplied long-range drones and missiles to Ukraine. The fact that Russian intelligence is now targeting critical infrastructure and arms factories in allied countries is a severe escalation. Experts believe Russia has two goals: to cut off supplies to Ukraine and to make people in Europe—including Britain—fear that our domestic safety is crumbling.

The Moral Dimension: Protecting the Innocent

Deliberately attacking civilian infrastructure and bringing violence into peaceful nations goes against the core rules of Just War theory. A key rule is that non-combatants (civilians) must be protected. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is very clear on the gravity of such actions:

"Every act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God and man, which merits firm and unequivocal condemnation." (CCC 2314)

The Collapse of Diplomacy

The recent trip to Moscow by CIA Director John Ratcliffe achieved very little. He went to warn the Kremlin against attacking NATO and to suggest peace talks. However, the Russian press dismissed the visit as "doomed diplomacy." Immediately the American team left, Russia tested intercontinental ballistic missiles, bombed Kyiv more heavily, and launched new sabotage attacks across NATO.

In response, the United States has allowed Ukraine to use American cruise missiles with a range of 350 miles. Washington has accepted that the Kremlin is not backing down from its confrontation with the West.

Shifting Intelligence Assessments

<i>Intelligence Area</i>	<i>Previous View</i>	<i>Current View</i>
Russian Military Focus	Wholly occupied by the war in Ukraine.	Capable of fighting in Ukraine and launching limited attacks on NATO.
Threat to UK/NATO	Low to Moderate	Real and Escalating

The Moral Dimension: The Right to Self-Defence

While the Church recognises that nations have a legitimate right to defend themselves (CCC 2265), She also warns against a spiralling arms race. The breakdown of diplomacy here is a tragic failure of human statecraft. Leaders in the UK and allied nations carry a heavy moral burden: they must protect their citizens and help those who are unjustly attacked, while working tirelessly to prevent a wider, catastrophic war.

Russia's Internal Crises and Global Hunger

Inside Russia, problems are growing. Ukrainian strikes have badly damaged Russian oil refineries and supply bases. In the Rostov region, an agricultural state of emergency was declared. Warehouses are full because this year's harvest cannot be exported—a route that normally handles 90% of Russian grain exports. The oil market is also struggling, with Russia now having to subsidise fuel imports rather than profiting from its selling.

Because of this, frustration is growing among Russia's elite. While some criticise the long war, a powerful group wants to escalate the conflict to scare NATO societies and their leaders.

The Moral Dimension: Weaponising Food

The economic costs of war always hit the poor the hardest. Disrupting global grain supplies is a deep moral issue that threatens food security far beyond Eastern Europe. Food and basic

human needs must never be weaponised.

A Dangerous Window of Opportunity

Moscow may believe that a military clash with NATO is possible right now because of events in the Middle East. Russian experts are watching the drop in American and allied weapons, especially Patriot anti-missile supplies.

After heavy attacks on Iran in August, US missile reserves dropped significantly. As a result, Ukraine is receiving very few of these vital missiles from Europe, and making new ones will take years. Moscow sees a rare window of vulnerability: NATO's stocks are low just as Russia is making more of its own ballistic missiles.

Conclusion: A Call for Prudence and Prayer

As UK citizens, we must look at these global events fairly and calmly, without panic. However, we must be soberly aware that the threat of a wider war is real.

Our response must be twofold: we must support the right to just defence and the protection of the innocent, while praying fervently for a diplomatic breakthrough. Let us pray for our leaders in Westminster, asking that the Holy Spirit guides them to act with prudence, justice, and a relentless desire for true and lasting peace.

Tony Wood

Prayer



Please remember to pray for those who are unwell, in need, or have requested our prayers: Richard Fox, Cecil Finn, Andrew McLaughlin, Claire Wiggins, Russell Carroll, Lucy Cunningham, Lilian Cox, Sarah Carmichael, and Doleen Durnin.

Please keep in your prayers Margaret Brannigan, Mary Mahon, Oliver Jones, Balbino Otie Jnr **and all whose anniversaries fall around this time.**

Prayer for Justice and Accountability for Those Responsible for Violence in Ukraine

Heavenly Father,

In Your wisdom, You have taught us that justice and peace are the foundations of Your kingdom. We come before You today, hearts heavy with the pain and suffering witnessed in Ukraine, to pray for accountability and justice for those who have perpetrated violence.

Lord, we pray that Your guiding hand leads the hearts and minds of leaders and individuals alike towards actions that uphold dignity and respect for human life. Let there be a clear path for truth to surface and for responsibility to be taken, so healing may begin.

Grant wisdom to all involved in seeking justice, that they may do so with fairness and compassion, reflecting Your love and mercy. Protect the innocent, heal the wounded, and comfort the grieving. May Your presence be a shield and a source of hope for Ukraine.

In Your mercy, bring about a resolution that paves the way for lasting peace and reconciliation, based on truth, justice, and accountability. Let Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, as we trust in Your eternal promise of justice for all. 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!

Fr Tony will be away from 15-17 September at the Clergy Assembly in Oban.



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