

PARISH BULLETIN



Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary

7th October

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

4th October 2026

The 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

Week 27 of Ordinary Time

Tuesday: Holy Mass, 6pm

Wednesday: Adoration and the Glorious Mysteries of the Holy Rosary, 9.30am; Holy Mass, 10am

Coffee and discussion in the Chapel House, 10.30am

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

Hymns/Music for Sunday

Processional

122 Do not be afraid

Offertory

28 All that I am

Communion music

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

Post Communion

134 Father we adore you

Recessional

242 Immortal, invisible

Next weekend:

Saturday, 10th October, Vigil Mass, 6.00pm

**Sunday, 11th October 28th 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

18th October: Holy Mass, 4pm

1st November – All Saints: Holy Mass, 4pm

Psalm response

The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel.

Gospel acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

*I chose you out of the world, says the Lord,
that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide.
Alleluia.*

Communion Antiphon

*The Lord is good to those who hope in him,
to the soul that seeks him.*

Take Five

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

MONDAY OF WEEK 27

5 OCTOBER 2026

Refugees in search of Samaritans

We live in the midst of a terrible migrant crisis. Refugees are fleeing war and oppression, migrants flee drought, famine, drug gang violence, and terrorism. Yet, nearly half of Christians recently polled expressed fear about the idea of refugees coming into their countries. One only needs to tune into discussions about refugees and illegal migrants to understand the confusion. But for the true refugee our faith tradition is clear on the mandate to help the stranger, the foreigner, to remember that we too were once “strangers in a strange land.” Don’t just admire the Good Samaritan who stopped to help someone he had been taught was the “enemy.” Be that good Samaritan!

Today’s readings: Galatians 1:6-12; Luke 10:25-37. *“Because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbour?’”*

TUESDAY OF WEEK 27

6 OCTOBER 2026

The better part?

There’s probably no other gospel story that infuriates women quite as much as the one we read today about Martha and her sister Mary. Invariably, the argument goes something like this: If everyone—including Jesus—would have helped out in the kitchen, both Mary and Martha could have sat and listened to what Jesus had to say. Still, no matter how much we might like to rewrite the story, for 2,000 years Martha has cooked and served while her sister sits at Jesus’ feet. What can we learn from this maddening story? How about acceptance? Of tension. Of the unsolvable. Of all that is unresolved in our lives. It’s worth contemplating.

Today’s readings: Galatians 1:13-24; Luke 10:38-42. *“A woman whose name was Martha welcomed him. She had a sister named Mary who sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak.”*

WEDNESDAY: MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY

7 OCTOBER 2026

Wait and seek

Five centuries ago, the rosary swept across Europe and became the most popular form of meditation in the Christian world. It uses elements common to contemplation: engaging the divine Presence and then waiting or seeking by the repetition of a holy name or title. As the

Dominican order promoted the practice widely, the origin of the rosary was gradually credited to Saint Dominic. Known as the family prayer for its accessibility to all ages, each decade focuses us on personal or universal needs. Do you have beads?

Today’s readings: Galatians 2:1-2, 7-14; Luke 11:1-4. *“Jesus was praying in a certain place.”*

THURSDAY OF WEEK 27

8 OCTOBER SEPTEMBER 2026

Persistence pays off

Prayer is not like a cash-dispenser whereby requests are entered and dispensed. Ultimately our model is Jesus. Christ’s persistence in prayer united him with God but did not erase his suffering. He sweated blood, he was crucified. When we do not receive the answer, we are hoping for from our prayer request, we may suffer too, but, like Jesus, we can open ourselves to deeper union with God. Take time today to offer God your needs, trusting that God’s strength and presence always suffices.

Today’s readings: Galatians 3:1-5; Luke 11:5-13. *“If you . . . give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?”*

FRIDAY OF WEEK 27

9 OCTOBER 2026

God casts out evil

Although Hollywood has popularized exorcism with such movies as *The Exorcist* (1973) and more recently *The Conjuring* series, exorcism is a legitimate rite in the church. An exorcism is actually a form of prayer. It is used in situations where the faithful experience a force of evil or the “powers of darkness,” which we call the devil or demons. Recognizing the place of exorcism in the prayers of the church is important because it reminds us that God has already freed us from the snare of evil. As you encounter various “demons” in your life, remember to pray: Call upon God to be with you and to separate you from all that is evil and to surround you with God’s love.

Today’s readings: Galatians 3:7-14; Luke 11:15-26. *“But if it is by the finger of God that [I] drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”*

SATURDAY OF WEEK 27

10 OCTOBER 2026

Ours were the wounds he bore

People throw parties when it’s time to celebrate. But grief and loss are private places we often go

alone. How comforting to know that Mary our Mother went all of those places ahead of us and is waiting there to enfold us in mercy and consolation! On this second Saturday of Rosary Month, pray the Sorrowful Mysteries for those who are suffering alone and unseen: in places of

humiliation and condemnation, in sickness and disability, in mourning and loneliness, and especially at the hour of death.

Today's readings: Galatians 3:22-29; Luke 11:27-28. *"Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you!"*

Readings for the 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 5:1-7

Sadness ensues when a failed yield replaces the prospect of a fruitful harvest.

Psalms 80:9, 12, 13-14, 15-16, 19-20

Hasten to help, Lord! Your vineyard is in danger.

Philippians 4:6-9

Paul urges us to fasten our thoughts to everything beautiful and true.

Matthew 21:33-43

The vineyard tragedy results from a gross misunderstanding of what it means to *possess*.

Words on the Word

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One of the greatest English poetesses, Elizabeth Barrett-Browning (1806–1861), married the famous poet Robert Browning against the will of her parents. Her parents disinherited her. She settled far from home, in Florence. She loved her mother and father and did everything she could to be reconciled with them. Several times a month she wrote them letters full of love. After ten years of silence, her parents sent her a package. Inside she found all the letters she had written to them — they were unopened. Today these letters are considered among the most beautiful in all of English literature. Her parents never read them. They did not accept this beautiful gift from their daughter; they rejected it. Their own plans were more important to them than their child's love (J. Rosenkranz, "Dichtkunst, du mein Leben").

* *

Through Jesus Christ, God the Father makes a breathtaking move towards reconciliation with us. Yet how many people, even the baptised, still do not grasp that the world they inhabit is a sheer gift from God – and that they themselves are a gift as well.

God is the Lord of the vineyard. We honour Him not only with words, but by allowing His gifts in us to grow and bear fruit, and by handing those gifts on to others. Some of these gifts may seem small, even ordinary, yet they are powerful and rare:

- Gratitude – a simple "thank you", spoken to God, to parents, to a spouse, a child, a sibling, a neighbour, or a colleague. This humble word never diminishes a person; it always reveals their true nobility.
- Forgiveness – releasing resentment so that goodness can flow again, bringing deep joy first of all to the one who forgives.
- A consoling word – a few sincere words that can restore to someone the courage and joy of living.
- A gentle, non-judgmental presence – simply being there, without accusation, beside a spouse, a child, or someone struck by misfortune, quietly assuring them they are not alone.
- Prayer for others – especially for those who would never imagine you are praying for them. How astonished they will be in the Father's Kingdom.

In the end we stand in awe: in Jesus Christ, God has done all this for us – and far more. Through His death and resurrection, He has reconciled us to the Father and washed away the stain of sin.

What more could He have done for us? So, let's keep going, starting again and again, learning to walk in His footsteps.

* * *

*Do not fret at what heaven may be,
God Himself tends that bright mystery;
Therefore its glory will ever exceed
All that we picture, imagine, or need.*

*Turn, then, to the souls whom He sets at your side,
Serve them in silence, with love as your guide;
Reach out to help them before they implore,
Be Christ to your neighbour at heart's hidden door.*

*Do not shower them with what you merely spare,
But give from a heart that has learned how to care;
Thus, grace will enlarge every offering you make,
And day after day, your love will awake.*

In Christ's love,
Fr Anthony

God's Guide

Relations with Angels: To Be Closer to Our Guardians

Chapter 12

ANGELS AS MESSENGERS CARRYING THE CONTENT OF GOD'S WILL

It is truly worthwhile to turn to God and ask Him, in all simplicity and faith, to send you specific angels from a particular choir, if this would be for your good. He may well choose to do so for your spiritual benefit. You can also ask your Guardian Angel to “arrange” this, since your Guardian Angel constantly watches over you and intercedes for you before the throne of God.

Through the Holy Spirit, you can lovingly address a particular angelic choir, asking that, with the consent of Christ the King, an angel be sent to assist you in your need. Sacred Scripture itself gives us beautiful images of such heavenly help. One of the most striking passages in the Book of Isaiah speaks of a seraph sent to purify the prophet:

“And I said: ‘Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!’ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal which he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth, and said: ‘Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven’” (Is 6:5–6).

Alleluia! What a powerful sign of God's mercy, carried to us through the ministry of an angel.

The Letter to the Hebrews, traditionally attributed to Saint Paul, reminds us of who the angels truly are for us:

“Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation?” (Heb 1:14).

Yes, they are! They are our best friends in the invisible world—faithful servants of God yet deeply concerned for our salvation.

The Lord Jesus Himself reveals something of the angels' hearts. He tells us that they rejoice when even one sinner returns to God:

“Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbours, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Lk 15:8–10).

And again:

“I tell you, just so, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance” (Lk 15:7).

The angels are not distant, cold spirits. They burn with joy when we turn back to God. They rejoice over every confession, every sincere act of contrition, every hidden “yes” to grace.

At times they also remind us, with a holy seriousness born of love, of the reality of judgement and the urgency of conversion. Like a heavenly Jonah, they cry out to a world that has grown drowsy and distracted. The Book of Revelation gives us a sobering yet hope-filled vision of this:

“Then I saw another angel flying in midheaven, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; and he said with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgement has come; and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of water.’

Another angel, a second, followed, saying, ‘Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of her impure passion.’

And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, ‘If anyone worships the beast and its image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also shall drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of his anger, and he shall be tormented with fire and sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up for ever and ever; and they have no rest, day or night, these worshippers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.’

Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, ‘Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth.’ ‘Blessed indeed,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labours, for their deeds follow them!’” (Rev 14:6–13).

This is not meant to crush us with fear, but to awaken us. The angels remind us that our choices matter eternally. At the same time, they hold before us the promise of blessed rest for those who “die in the Lord” and persevere in keeping God’s commandments and the faith of Jesus.

So don’t be shy about turning to the angels. Ask the Lord to send you the help you need—from your Guardian Angel and, if He wills, from the different choirs of angels. They are already at work for your salvation, interceding, protecting, enlightening, and rejoicing over every step you take towards God.

And above all, remember they lead you not to themselves, but to Christ, the King of angels, whose mercy purifies, whose grace strengthens, and whose love will one day bring you home.

**LOOK ON THE
CROSS
AND SAY:
“I AM
YOURS
JESUS
CHRIST”.**

(DO THIS TODAY MANY TIMES)

God sends us His angels to make His will known to us – a will that always leads us towards true victory. They come to us in the big moments of life – in crises, dilemmas, and at the crossroads where we don’t know which way to turn – but also in the small, hidden, deeply personal

moments that no one else sees.

Like a loving parent with a tiny infant, God cares for us through His angels. Imagine it: He changes your soiled “nappies”, He feeds you with milk suited to your weakness, He holds you close to His heart, and He gently takes you by the hand so you can take your next step. This is not sentimental imagery; it is a real sign of how tender and concrete His care is.

We see this throughout Scripture.

It was an angel who announced God’s will to Our Lady at the Annunciation, and an angel who reassured St Joseph in his fears and doubts. An angel sought out Hagar, the slave of Abraham, who had borne him a son and fled into the wilderness in her distress. There, in the desert, the angel told her to return and brought her a promise: that from her son a great nation would arise.

An angel also came to Elijah in the desert. Exhausted, broken, convinced he was a failure and worse than others – this, after he had slain hundreds of the false prophets of Baal and Asherah – Elijah sat down and wanted to give up. At that moment, an angel appeared, gave him food and drink, and told him to get up and continue on his way. God’s love had not abandoned him; there was still work prepared for him, still a mission waiting.

Angels also revealed God’s judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah, and they warned Lot of what was coming. They urged him to flee with his daughters and those dearest to him. Yet the sons-in-law laughed it off. They treated the warning with contempt, stayed where they were, and perished. The angelic message was clear, but it was not forced on them.

And these are only a few examples. The history of salvation – both in Scripture and in the lives of the saints – is full of moments where God chooses to speak and act through His angels. One could easily fill a whole book just recounting those stories.

But here is the key point: God speaks to us through angels, yet He never violates our freedom. He proposes; He does not impose. He invites; He does not coerce. As St Paul reminds us: “Everything is permissible for me, but not everything is beneficial” (1 Cor 6:12).

God’s angels are still at work today. They are closer than you think – guiding, warning, consoling, nudging you towards what is truly good. The question is not whether God sends them, but whether we are willing to listen.

The Lady of the Rosary



Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, “Our Lady of the Rosary”

Disciple of Christ. Our Teacher. Mary teaches us how to live with Jesus.

Mary teaches us how to live with Jesus. That’s the simple, lovely truth at the heart of October.

When the Church turns to the Rosary this month, it isn't just ticking boxes on a prayer card. October becomes a school of Christian life — and the most beautiful model in that school is Mary herself. It's worth making real use of these days: to sit in Mary's school and learn, gently and steadily, how to live with her Son.

To pray the Rosary means more than rattling through Our Fathers and Hail Marys. It means meditating on the mysteries of the life of Jesus and Mary. That asks something of us: inward recollection, stillness of heart, and the gaze of the soul fixed on the Person of Jesus. In His mystery we come to know Mary, His Mother. There's no need to hurry. This is a prayer for people who are willing not to be in a rush — a prayer that slows us down so grace can catch up with us.

Victorious

In the month of the Rosary, on 7 October, the Church celebrates the liturgical memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary. The feast has a story worth telling.

As early as 1547, a rosary feast was kept in Spain on the third Sunday of April. What truly spread the celebration, though, were the dramatic events of the later sixteenth century — above all the famous Battle of Lepanto on 7 October 1571. For some time, Turkish forces had threatened not only Europe but the whole of Christendom. In defence of the faith stood the Christian armies, together with the rosary confraternities mobilised by Pope Saint Pius V. They organised special devotions, fasts and processions. On the day of the decisive naval battle, devotees of Our Lady held a solemn supplicatory procession in Rome.

Pius V attributed the victory of the Christian forces to Our Lady's intercession. In gratitude he instituted a thanksgiving feast: Our Lady of Victory. In 1573, Gregory XIII allowed churches with an altar in honour of the Holy Rosary to keep this feast on the first Sunday of October. After a further victory over the Turks in 1716, Pope Clement XI extended it to the whole Church. In time it settled on 7 October — the day we still honour Our Lady of the Rosary.

The way we pray the Rosary was already known in the thirteenth century. It has always enjoyed the warm support of the popes. Pope St John XXIII, that Pope of goodness, spoke of it with real wonder:

“O holy rosary! What joy it is to see thee in the hands of innocent children, of saintly priests, of pure souls, of the young and the old, of many who appreciate the meaning and effectiveness of prayer, recited by countless and devout crowds of the faithful, as a sign and banner proclaiming peace in hearts and peace for the whole human race!”

Peace in hearts. Peace for the human race. That is no small claim — and the Rosary has never stopped making it.

In the Mother's School

Saint John Paul II put it with luminous clarity: “to recite the Rosary is nothing other than to contemplate with Mary the face of Christ.” We enter Mary's school. From her — Mother and disciple of Christ — we learn how to live the Christian faith deeply and fully.

Mary is the finest Disciple of Christ, and at the same time our Teacher. We were admitted to her school when Jesus entrusted each of us to her in the Hour of the Cross. To be a child of Mary means listening attentively to her words and watching her example, so that faith can shape our lives. So, the questions land gently but firmly: Am I ready to walk this Marian path? Do I want to be a diligent pupil in the school of the Mother and Teacher?

Lesson One: Nazareth

The first lesson is in Nazareth. The Archangel Gabriel brings God's proposal: that Mary become the Mother of the Messiah, the Only-begotten Son of the Father. Mary teaches us dialogue with God — attentive listening to all He wishes to say, and a humble reply. Every true response is a sign of trust: the courageous entrusting of our life to God. To believe means saying to God, “Here I am.” Words of readiness. Words that mean we will seek His will always, in every circumstance.

Homework from Nazareth: cleanse the heart of even the smallest traces of self-reliance — that quiet conviction that we can manage life on our own. To believe is to rely solely on the power of God.

Lesson Two: The Visitation

Mary believed — and so she went in haste to Elizabeth. She did not go alone; she went with Jesus. Trust in God stirs an inward urgency to go out to others. We carry the treasure of faith, and treasure is for sharing. Only the one who truly believes wants to share that faith with a neighbour. The gift is not for us alone.

He who goes in haste is convinced that every person ought to hear the Good News.

Homework from the Visitation: open the door of the heart. Go out to meet the people on your path and tell them — by word, glance, smile, gesture, attitude or prayer — that God loves them.

Lesson Three: Cana

Mary's presence among people always had a motherly character. At the wedding at Cana, she noticed a lack that might have spoiled the joy of the newlyweds and their guests. She entrusted the problem to Jesus and stepped back. She trusted that her Son would do what was needed.

Living faith is sensitive to the needs of others — to whatever might threaten their happiness. That includes caring for their faithfulness to Christ, for only in Him do we find the happiness the world cannot give.

Homework from Cana: open your eyes every morning. Notice those in need.

Lesson Four: Golgotha

Mary underwent the hardest trial of faith at Golgotha. She believed amid darkness, against human reason. The hour of the cross is always a test of our faith. Mary teaches us, in such moments, to cling to the cross of Christ and embrace it with love.

Homework from Golgotha: the most difficult of all. In the hour of your own suffering, do not flee from the Golgotha of Jesus.

Lesson Five: The Upper Room

Mary cares for the disciples of her Son. She is with them in the Upper Room and prays with them. She is their witness to the life of Jesus and a model of living faith. We too belong to the community of the Church, and we are responsible for it. To be in the Church means taking up responsibility for others — for the growth of their faith — especially those in our family, among our friends, acquaintances and neighbours.

Be witnesses of living faith. Support those who struggle. Pray for your loved ones — perseveringly, fervently. Do not grow discouraged if someone has drifted from God or neglected Christian duties. Cry out all the more for the grace of conversion and the renewal of faith. Be apostles. Proclaim the Good News of the merciful God.

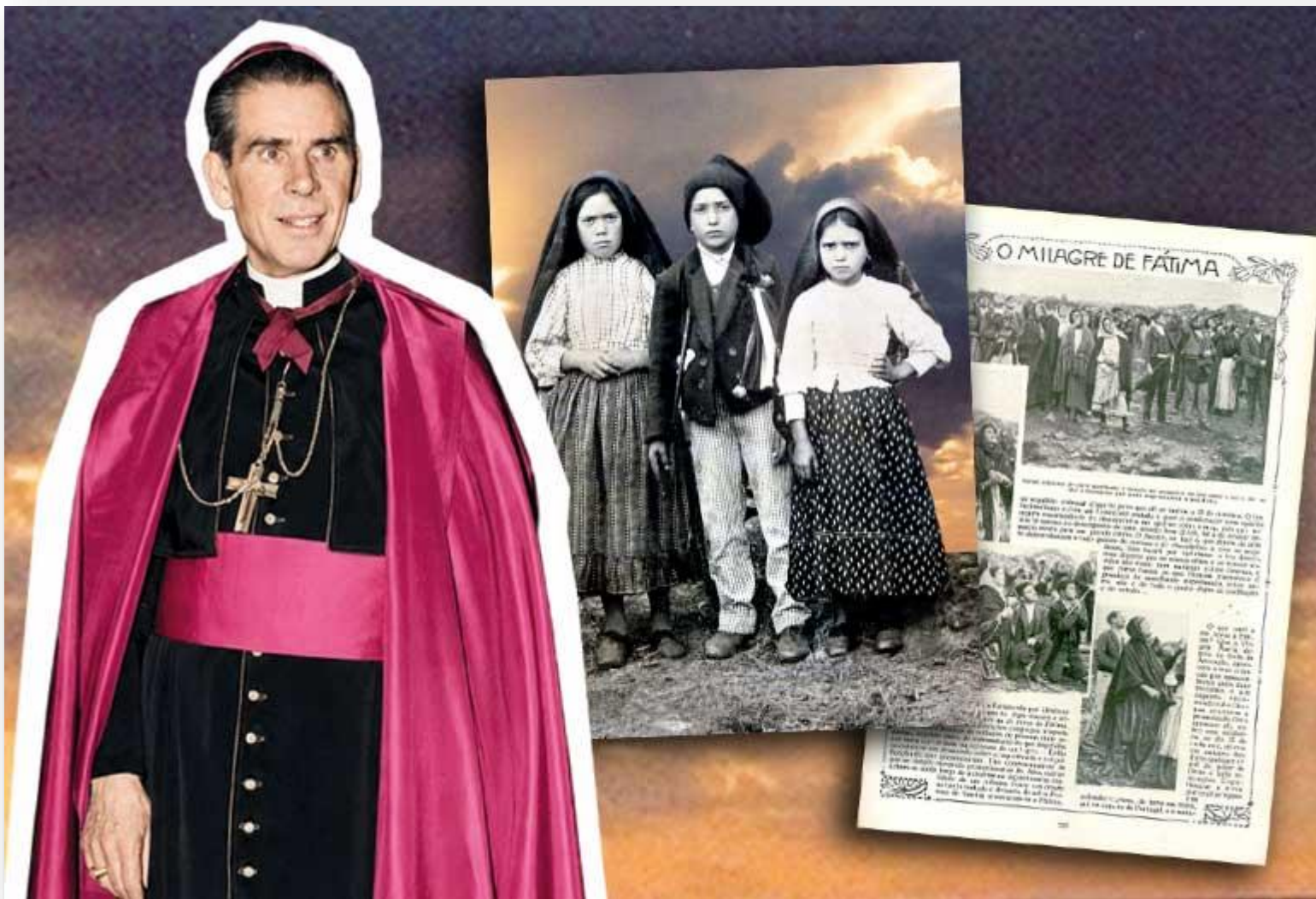
A Simple Resolution

In this month of the Rosary, and especially on the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, let us thank God for the gift of this prayer. And let us resolve to say it with even greater devotion — unhurried, attentive, and glad to be pupils once more in the Mother's school.

Our Lady of the Rosary, pray for us.

Archbishop Sheen on Fatima

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen hosted the television programme *Life is Worth Living* during the 1950s and 1960s. It broke audience ratings records in the USA. We publish a transcript of the programme devoted to Fatima.



OUR MODERN WORLD with its great crises began on October 13, 1917. Three cities will quickly be visited to see what happened on that day: Moscow, Rome, and a little village in Portugal called Fatima.

October 13, 1917—Moscow. Maria Alexandravich, a young Russian noblewoman, was teaching religion to a class of two hundred children in the Church of the Iberian Virgin. Suddenly there was a disturbance; horsemen entered the front door, rode madly down the middle aisle, vaulted the communion rail, destroyed the icons, the statuary, and the altar, then turned on the children, killing many of them.

Maria Alexandravich ran out of the church screaming. Knowing there was an imminent revolution and suspecting the leader of them all, she went to him, saying, “A most terrible thing has happened. I was teaching catechism to my children when horsemen came in, charged them, and killed some of them.” The revolutionist leader said, “I know it. I sent them.” Such was one of the events that heralded the beginning of the terrible Communist Revolution that has since harassed the world.

Rome—October 13, 1917—the same hour of midday. Church bells are ringing throughout the city, heralding a joyful event: the consecration of a bishop. His name—Eugenio Pacelli—a man who then was not very well known but who one day would become the greatest spiritual force in the world against the revolutionary tyranny of Communism.

After his consecration on that thirteenth day of October 1917, he went to Munich. At that particular time the Communists had started a revolution on April 7, 1917, under the leadership of a sailor, Rudolph Egelhofer, and two Bolshevik Commissars, Levine and Axelrod, who set up a Soviet republic. Calling themselves Spartacists, and rising under the leadership of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, Communist gunmen roamed the streets. A Red army was created, which, going into action, killed 325 people on April 25 in Munich alone. They had raked with machine-gun fire the home of the man who, unmoved by threats, had mounted the pulpit of the Munich cathedral against the orders of the Red committee. Finally, they decided to assassinate him. On April 29 at three o’clock in the afternoon, Commander Seller of the Red Army of the South and his aide-de-camp Brongratz, armed with orders from Egelhofer, appeared at the door of his house in company with a group of Red sailors. The thugs, gaining entrance to the house by threatening the servant with hand grenades, made their way to the library and, with guns drawn, awaited the appearance of their prey. Seller took up his post closest to the door with a

pistol drawn; the soldiers stood around in a semicircle, some with drawn guns, some with hand grenades.

Suddenly the wanted man appeared. With a blasphemy, Seiler threw out his pistol hand and as he did it hit the pectoral cross on the man's breast. This tall, lean figure, grasping the pectoral cross and facing the raised guns, said in soft, low tones. "All right—kill me! But you gain nothing! I am only trying to save Germany."

Under the gaze of those spiritual eyes no one dared pull a trigger. Neither Seller nor Brongratz nor the soldiers knew why they did not shoot; when they got back to headquarters, they were unable to explain to Egelhofer why they did not kill that man. They were never able to explain why a pair of eyes, a lean figure holding a cross, and a soft voice should be more powerful than their guns, grenades, and orders. There was only one thing that was certain. From that day on that man was afraid of absolutely nothing in all the world. And his name? Eugenio Pacelli, the future Pope Pius XII.

That pectoral cross which he was wearing that night, I am wearing now. Pius XII gave it to his esteemed friend His Eminence, Cardinal Spellman, who loaned it to me for this telecast.

October 13, 1917. Near the little village of Fatima three little children, Lucy, Jacinta, and Francis, were gathered, expecting a revelation. They had said that Mary, the Mother of God, had appeared to them. It would not be surprising if she had, not only because the Lord came through her, not only because through her He worked His first miracle, and not only because from the Cross He commended us to her with His kind words, "Behold thy mother", but above all, because being the Mother of mankind she should have a motherly interest in our troubles during the twentieth century.

The children said the Lady had appeared to them before, on April 13, May 13, June 13, and July 13, August 19, and September 13. In the course of these earlier revelations, something very interesting was said which goes to show that our world conditions are determined by the way we live rather than by politics.

The Lady said that the present World War, which was World War I, would end in a little over another year. The United States went to war on Good Friday of that year, 1917. Actually, the war did end in a little over another year, on November 11, 1918.

The Lady told the children that there would come an era of peace to the world if the world would only return to God; Russia in that case would be converted. But she added, "If people do not stop offending God, another and worse World War will have its remote beginning during the reign of the next Pontiff." This, it was disclosed, was the Civil War in Spain. World War II could have been prevented by penance and prayer and return again to God. For the failure of the world to return to God, the Virgin foretold another World War: "Russia will spread her errors throughout the world, promoting wars and persecutions. The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have to suffer much, and various nations will be annihilated."

The Blessed Virgin promised the children that on October 13, 1917 she would give a sign that her revelation was true. Seventy thousand people gathered at Fatima on that rainy day with the children, awaiting a sign. Most of them were unbelievers. Portugal in those days was an anarchistic, Communistic, anticlerical, and atheistic nation. Most of the people came out of curiosity, not out of faith. They doubted that anything would happen, but the children assured them that the Heavenly Lady would show a great sign as a proof that she had actually appeared. The proof was what has since been called the "Miracle of the Sun" The testimony of these seventy thousand people, as well as the records of the atheistic and anarchistic newspapers of the time that I have read, attested the fact of what happened. One anarchistic newspaper stated that there was a miracle of the sun, but it hoped that nobody would interpret it in a Divine way.

The Blessed Mother first appeared to the children and then pointed to the sun as a rift in the clouds made it visible. The sun seemed almost to detach itself from the heavens, becoming like a great silver ball-shooting sparks in all directions, it seemed to descend to the earth as if about to

precipitate itself upon the people. Immediately they all cried out to God in prayer and supplication, in sorrow and in contrition Three times the sun became a whirling mass of flashing silver and, spinning on its axis, cast off beams of multi-coloured light, as it plunged and zigzagged its way to the earth. The crowd shrank in fear and clamoured for mercy as the molten mass seemed about to destroy them. And though it rained all day, after the miracle of the sun had taken place three times, everyone discovered that their clothes were dry.

From that time on, Fatima became a kind of gathering place of all the people of the world who believed that peace is made somewhere else than at the tables of the politicians. The Heavenly Lady had told them that peace was conditioned on prayer, expiation, and sacrifice. On October 13, 1951, I was at Fatima when a million people gathered there to pray for peace. They had gathered the night before during one of those cold rains so common to Portuguese mountaintops; all through that wet night, they either stood or knelt as they prayed for the peace of the world. I stayed with them until three o'clock, when I was offered a cot. But I could not sleep. The luxury of a cot is unbearable when there are a million people staying up all night in prayer to beg peace for a war-weary world. The only thing to do was to get out of bed and pray with them through the night for the peace of the world.

The next morning as the statue of Our Lady of Fatima was carried through the throng, these million people waved white handkerchiefs as white flags of purity, in tribute to the Lady of Peace. One's mind suddenly left that White Square of Fatima and went to the Red Square of Moscow, where there were flags, dyed red in the blood of the victims. Somehow one felt that the White Square was giving the only answer there is to the Red Square. A great change seemed to come over the Communist hammer and the sickle. The hammer that had beaten down so many homes, and profaned so many sanctuaries, will one day, in virtue of such prayer and penance, be held aloft by millions of men and begin to look like a cross; the sickle which the Communists used to cut human life like unripe wheat will also change its symbolism and begin to look as "the moon under the Lady's feet".

World War II would not have happened if men had returned to God. World War III need not happen, and it will not happen if we as a nation return to God. If there is a cold war in the world, it is because our hearts and our souls are not on fire with the love of God.

It may be worth inquiring, however, why Almighty God in His providential dealings with the universe should see fit in this day to give us a revelation of His Blessed Mother in order to bring us back to prayer and penance.

One reason immediately comes to mind. Since the world has lost Christ, it may be that through Mary it will recover Him. When Our Blessed Lord was lost at the age of twelve, it was the Blessed Mother who found Him. Now that He has been lost again, it may be through Mary that the world will recover Christ their Saviour. Another reason is that Divine Providence has committed to a woman the power of overcoming evil. In that first dread day when evil was introduced into the world, God spoke to the serpent in the Garden of Eden and said, "I shall put enmity between thee and the woman; between thy seed and her seed, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel" (Gen 3:15). In other words, evil shall have a progeny and a seed. Goodness, too, shall have a progeny and a seed. It will be through the power of the woman that evil will be overcome. We live now in an evil hour, for though goodness has its day, evil does have its hour. Our Blessed Lord said that much the night that Judas came into the garden: "This is your hour, the power of darkness" (Lk 22:53). All evil can do in that hour is to put out the lights of the world; but it can do that. If then we live in an evil hour, how shall we overcome the spirit of Satan except by the power of that Woman to whom Almighty God has given the mandate to crush the head of the serpent?

Excerpt from the book by Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, *Life is Worth Living*, Ignatius Press, 1999.



Around the World

The sometimes-missed news

UNITED RUSSIA

THEY WON BECAUSE THEY HAD TO

The outcome was scarcely unexpected. According to preliminary official figures, President Vladimir Putin's United Russia party won almost 58 per cent of the vote in elections to the State Duma, the lower house of parliament. The Kremlin presented the ballot as a public endorsement of Russia's soldiers and of the continuing war in Ukraine. United Russia's lists — as well as those of other parties considered loyal to the authorities — included numerous veterans of the campaign.

Alongside United Russia, parties widely viewed as system opposition — the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia and A Just Russia — are set to take seats, as are smaller nominally liberal groupings. Notably, no party critical of the war, or meaningfully independent of the state, was permitted to stand.

Even on the authorities' own terms, the figures are disputed. An analysis by the independent Russian-language outlet *Novaya Gazeta Europe* alleges that the vote for United Russia was inflated by roughly a third and that turnout was similarly overstated, implying a result closer to 37 per cent.

If these claims are credible, serious ethical questions arise about the integrity of the electoral process and the moral legitimacy of using elections to sanctify violence. For the authorities, the contest functioned less as a choice of representatives than as a plebiscite on support for the regime.

EDUCATION IN RUINS

BACK TO SCHOOL AFTER YEARS

Thousands of children in the Gaza Strip have begun returning to face-to-face schooling for the first time in three years, though many lessons are taking place in damaged buildings and improvised classrooms. UNICEF says 98 per cent of schools in the enclave were destroyed or damaged during the war between Israel and Hamas.

A ceasefire, brokered under US patronage, has held in Gaza for a year. Local education officials estimate that around 660,000 pupils have been without regular in-person schooling. In response, the Palestinian Ministry of Education, with support from international organisations, has opened the 2026/2027 school year by establishing dozens of temporary learning sites. Officials say at least 540,000 pupils are now attending classes in makeshift private schools, teaching centres and other educational points. Remote learning will continue for children who cannot attend or who have left Gaza.

The scale of loss remains stark. Education authorities estimate that some 22,000 pupils were killed during the conflict, along with more than 770 education sector workers, including 532

teachers.

The reopening raises urgent ethical questions. Children have a right to education and to safe learning environments; war's damage to schools is not merely material but strikes at human dignity and the future of a society. The protection of civilians—especially children and those who teach and care for them—remains a moral imperative under both natural law and international humanitarian norms.

DEMOGRAPHICS

THE FRENCH, STRANGERS IN THEIR OWN LAND

Could ethnic French people one day become a minority in their own country? A recent study by the French Observatory of Immigration and Demography (OID) suggests it is possible—though far from inevitable, and highly dependent on political choices made now.

The authors model several population trajectories based on differing migration-policy assumptions. In two of their scenarios, people of native French background would fall below 50 per cent of the population between roughly 2050 and 2060. Even in the more restrained projections, the study anticipates marked demographic change over the coming decades.

These shifts are linked not only to immigration levels, but also to fertility patterns, integration outcomes and the long-term effects of France's recent openness to large-scale migration, particularly from Africa and predominantly Muslim countries. The OID's most optimistic scenario still predicts significant change, even if native French births remain numerically predominant.

Ethically, the discussion demands care. Demography is not destiny, and migrants are not mere statistics: they are persons with dignity, often fleeing hardship. At the same time, a nation has a legitimate duty to safeguard social cohesion, the common good and the cultural inheritance that has shaped France—including its Christian roots. A fair debate must reject both alarmism and denial, and insist on policies that are prudent, humane and ordered.

We Read Pope Leo

Man errs when he claims that God is dead. If God is not with man, man loses the meaning of his own existence.

Humanity – and with it work, progress and the autonomy of created realities – when it encounters God, is not absorbed or annihilated, but received in its entire integrity, remaining free and active in Christ. For it is in Him that humanity discovers the fullness of truth and freedom. (...) In order to encounter God, man does not need to abandon his earthly occupations, but can fully live out his vocation by carrying out his daily work well and sanctifying it. (...) The Second Vatican Council encourages us to share the bread of knowledge and practical skills, so that every person and every people may develop their potential, and so that all of us – with God's help – may together build a better future.

General Audience, 23 September 2026.

Leo XIV in France, 25–28 September 2026:

When science and technology are not enlightened by conscience, they may propose stopgap solutions which seem to respond to human longings and sufferings, yet which may, in reality, lead man far away from the good his heart truly desires.

A Christian engaged in public life, who acts in the light of a conscience enlightened by faith, cannot be regarded as someone practising proselytism, nor as a threat to the unity of his homeland.

Rightly understood, secularism does not consist in excluding religion from public life or from education and upbringing, but in seeking to ensure that the state and religious institutions engage in dialogue with one another and join forces in the service of the common good.

Without truth, language becomes subject to the logic of violence and the arbitrary will of the powerful. In the name of profit, others are then excluded, and in the name of freedom, the innocent are killed.

Man errs when he claims that God is dead. If God is not with man, man no longer finds salvation and loses the meaning of his own existence, which is then reduced to a dead end or to nothingness.

There is no failure from which God cannot lift us up: His mercy is our joy.

Whoever lives with God strives towards what is better: he works unceasingly upon himself. He seeks virtue, that strength which makes him good and true.

For Christians, the poor are not a sociological category, but the very body of Christ.

To be the Church means welcoming new people in search of God and recognising in their presence both an opportunity and a mission.

I encourage you to be vigilant in defending the freedom and rights of the Church: to evangelise, to educate towards true freedom and to practise worship publicly, so that love may be visibly lived out in the name of Jesus Christ.

For a new missionary zeal to be born in France, which I so greatly desire, there is only one "road map", always the same one: to make Jesus Christ ever better known and ever more loved, truly and passionately.

In the name of the inalienable dignity of the human person, the temptation to inflict death under the guise of false compassion must be firmly rejected. The inflicting of death cannot be regarded as something normal. Not everything that is lawful is morally right.

In my opinion

Which France did the pope visit?



So, what sort of France did the Pope come to? A France where churches are being sold and pews are emptying — or a France where cathedrals can still fill up, young people are asking for baptism, and Catholic life refuses to disappear?

Pope Leo XIV's apostolic visit has made that question harder to avoid. The images from the trip carried a clear tension: part warning, part encouragement. France can look post-Christian in the statistics, yet unexpectedly resilient on the ground.

A country that looks post-Christian on paper

The long decline in French Catholic practice is well documented.

- On average, one church is said to be lost every two weeks through demolition or sale.

- In the 1960s, France had around **50,000 priests** for a population under 50 million.
- By 1980, that figure had fallen to **31,000**.
- Today there are roughly **9,000 priests** for about 67 million people, with more than half aged over 75.

Sacramental life has also fallen sharply.

- In the 1960s, around **85%** of couples who married in a civil ceremony also married in church.
- Today it is closer to **16%**.
- Regular Sunday Mass attendance is estimated at **3–5%**, compared with roughly a third of the population sixty years ago.
- Thousands of churches are considered at risk of closure.

If you only read the figures, the conclusion can seem straightforward: French Christianity is nearing the end of a long chapter.

Many French Catholics identify May 1968 as a decisive turning point — a cultural revolt that rejected limits and institutions, including the Church. Slogans such as “It is forbidden to forbid” became shorthand for a new spirit: personal freedom framed as liberation from restraint. Some of the most extreme arguments of that era, including calls by certain public figures to relax laws protecting children, are now widely seen as a grim illustration of what can happen when “no limits” becomes an ideal.

The generational debate remains live. Older activists sometimes describe the period as moral progress. Yet younger French people, on both left and right, increasingly accuse that generation of spending the country’s capital — materially and spiritually — and leaving the bill for others.

“Eldest daughter of the Church” — and a public challenge

In 1980, Saint John Paul II put the issue bluntly: *“France, eldest daughter of the Church, are you faithful to the promises of your baptism?”*

It was not simply a historical reference. It was a reminder that France’s Catholic identity was once central to its national story — and that, in the Church’s view, baptism is not a private sentiment but a lasting bond.

For many believers, the question still hangs in the air: not just what France once was, but whether it intends to hand on the faith at all.

Yet the story is not only one of decline. A striking counter-trend has been growing: the number of catechumens — people, often teenagers and young adults, preparing for adult baptism.

- In the 1960s: fewer than **1,000**
- By 2000: around **2,500**
- By 2026: a reported record of around **21,000**

This matters because it suggests something more than cultural habit. These are people choosing baptism deliberately, often in a society where that choice can bring social friction rather than approval.

Even in places where parish life seemed close to collapse, some communities report a return of energy when priestly leadership and pastoral presence improve.

In one example from Corsica, a village parish that had struggled with infrequent Mass and an overstretched priest saw a revival after new, younger clergy arrived. More Masses were offered, churches filled again, singing returned, and younger faces became common.

It would be easy to overstate such cases. But they point to a reality often missed by national surveys: Catholic life can revive quickly where it is actively supported.

The political optics of papal visits have also been part of this story.

In December 2024, Pope Francis visited Corsica on his final apostolic journey. Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost — now Pope Leo XIV — was with him. That trip drew criticism from some French elites, especially because the Pope did not attend the high-profile reopening events at

Notre Dame in Paris.

Leo XIV's visit has followed a similar pattern. He prayed at Notre Dame and celebrated solemn Vespers, but reports suggest he declined several elements of official ceremony:

- he did not accept a proposed “grand tour” designed for prestige
- he refused the **Legion of Honour**
- he did not attend a major republican banquet

For parts of the political class, which read as a snub. For others, it looked like a deliberate message: a pope is there to preach the Gospel, not to decorate the state.

There is also an undeniable policy backdrop. President Emmanuel Macron's administration supported constitutional protection for abortion and has advanced legislation on euthanasia under the wording “assistance in dying”.

Against that, a pope visiting under the theme “**That the world may have life**” (cf. John 6:51) is unlikely to present himself as a comfortable guest of honour. The contrast is not personal; it is ideological and moral.

So, which France did the Pope visit?

He visited both.

- The France where practice has collapsed, clergy numbers have fallen, and churches are closing.
- And the France where conversions are rising, young Catholics are organising openly, and reverence and tradition are being rediscovered in some quarters.

The French Church has been battered, and the decline is real. But the evidence suggests it is not finished. If the crowds, the catechumens, and the local revivals continue, the France being reborn may prove more visible — and more influential — than many in Paris expected.

Prayer



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

Please keep in your prayers Andrew McLaughlin who entered into the mercy Christ on Friday and also James Carroll (Jimmy) (1965) **and all others whose anniversaries occur 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!

Sunday 11th October at 6pm we celebrate the 800th anniversary of Saint Francis of Assisi's birth into heaven in words and song.

Readers for texts and to sing if willing, will be very much appreciated, so as to make this a worthy celebration of the gift of Saint Francis to us. Contact Lesley: lyoneda13@gmail.com



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