



**St. Mary's R. C. Church**

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**St. Paul's R. C. Church**

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**Fr Henry O'Brien – Parish Priest**

**Charity Number - SC011041**

**[www.stmarysandstpaulsparishhamilton.org](http://www.stmarysandstpaulsparishhamilton.org)**

**Newsletter**

**The Thirty-Second Sunday of the Year**

**November 12th 2023**

*Dear parishioners at St. Mary's and St. Paul's,*

*We are approaching the final few weeks of the church's liturgical year and the readings begin to invite us to reflect on our final destiny. Today's parable about the ten bridesmaids (Matthew 25:1-13) invites us to such reflection. I offer some words by Pope Francis on this Sunday's Gospel:*

“What does Jesus wish to teach us with this parable? He reminds us that we must be ready for the encounter with him. Many times, in the Gospel, Jesus exhorts keeping watch, and he does so at the end of this narrative. He says: *“Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”* But with this parable he tells us that keeping watch means more than simply not sleeping, but to be ready. In fact all the maidens are asleep before the bridegroom's arrival, but upon waking some are ready and others not. Thus here is the meaning of being wise and prudent: it is a matter of not waiting until the last moment of our lives to cooperate with the grace of God, but rather to do so now. It would be good to consider for a moment: one day will be the last. If it were today, how prepared am I? But I must do this and that; be ready as if it were the last day. This does us good!

The lamp is a symbol of the faith that illuminates our life, while the oil is a symbol of the charity that nourishes the light of faith, making it fruitful and credible. The condition for being prepared for the encounter with the Lord is not only faith, but a Christian life abundant with love and charity for our neighbour. If we allow ourselves to be guided by what seems more comfortable, by seeking our own interests, then our life becomes barren, incapable of giving life to others, and we accumulate no reserve of oil for the lamp of our faith. And this faith will be extinguished at the moment of the Lord's coming, or even before. If instead we are watchful and seek to do good with acts of love, of sharing, of service to a neighbour in difficulty, then we can be at peace while we wait for the bridegroom to come. The Lord can come at any moment, and even the slumber of death does not frighten us, because we have a reserve of oil, accumulated through everyday good works. Faith inspires charity and charity safeguards faith.”

**I offer here the times of the Liturgy for the coming week:**

**Monday November 13th:** Requiem Mass for James McClafferty at St. Mary's at 10am  
*Confessions at 6.30-650pm; Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help at 7pm*

**Tuesday November 14th:** St. Paul's Primary School visiting the church

**Wednesday November 15th:** Mass at St. Mary's at 10am  
*Rosary at 9.40am*

**Thursday: November 16th:** Mass at St. Mary's at 10am  
*Rosary at 9.40am*

**Parish Pastoral Council meets this Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup> in the parish meeting room:** your comments and suggestions are most welcome; you can contact via [PPC1846@hotmail.com](mailto:PPC1846@hotmail.com) or by using the paper at the back of the church and placing it in the PPC box.

**November Lists for the Faithful Departed:** one of our lovely customs is to write down the names of our deceased relatives and friends on one of the November Lists available at the back of the church. Many include an offering (which you do not need to do) and these will be shared between two very good charities, Mary's Meals and Friends of the Holy Land. *Thank you.*

**Annual Census of those attending Sunday Mass in Scotland:** last week we were asked by the bishop to record the number of people attending Mass and the numbers are as follows: Vigil Mass, 141; Sunday Morning 9am, 92; 10.30am 207, which makes the total **440 people**. It's good for us to know this and reflect on where we are as a parish community in terms of church attendance. It points to the accuracy of the diocesan figures which suggest a drop of 58% over the last ten years across the whole Diocese of Motherwell. Please speak about the life of the church with your family and friends and encourage one another to support the ministry of the church. Every day we watch the news we can see how vital the Gospel of Jesus is for the wellbeing of society.

**New Mass Times at St. Mary's Church:** the **Vigil Mass will move to 5pm** and the **Sunday Masses will be at 9am and 10.30am**. *Thankfully it looks as though we need our 9am Mass.*

**Catholic Education Week: Annual Motherwell Diocesan Education Mass: Motherwell Cathedral on Thursday November 16<sup>th</sup>, the Feast of St. Margaret at 7pm:** please join Bishop Toal for this special liturgy to pray for the Head-teachers, teachers and pupils in our Catholic Schools. Let us do all we can to support the church in the important work of handing on and celebrating the Christian Faith. *A second collection will be taken up next week to support the Catholic Education Office.*

**A Message from the Catholic Men's Society:** The Hamilton Branch of the CMS will meet on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November after 10am Mass in the parish meeting room. The topics for discussion will be this Sunday's Gospel reading and 'The Mass'. All are welcome to join us. At world and diocesan level there is a strong focus on revitalising the church and encouraging lay involvement; so new faces are particularly welcome. Since a breakfast roll and hot drink are provided it would be helpful if any new attendees would contact peter Lavery by email: [laverypeter93@yahoo.com](mailto:laverypeter93@yahoo.com) or call 01698 423085.

**Coffee Morning and Christmas Card Sale, Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> November:** the parish stall and Fairtrade are holding a joint coffee morning in the parish hall after the 10.30am Mass. Christmas Cards, Nativity Sets, Advent Calendars (including Fairtrade chocolate ones) Christmas ornaments etc will be on sale. A small selection of Fairtrade food and crafts will be available. Holy Cross High School will also be selling Christmas Cards. *Toast and home-baking will be served; proceeds will be donated to the Hamilton Foodbank.*

**The Parish has purchased a Defibrillator,** to assist should an emergency take place here in the church; it is easily located on the wall in the confessional at the back of the church. Training to use the Defibrillator will be offered later this month.

**Very Rev Dr. Hugh Wyllie RIP:** as a parish we offer our sincere condolences to the family of Rev. Dr Hugh Wyllie, former Minister of Hamilton Old Parish Church and former Moderator of the Church of Scotland who has died.

**Recently Deceased:** James McClafferty, Tommy Selfridge, Margaret McGhie, Janice Donnelly, Patricia McLachlan, Gowans McHutchon, Margaret Caulfield, Mary McPake, Siobhan Lochrie, Rosanna Crolla, May O'Neill, Margaret Thomson

**Special Remembrance:** Frank Lyons, Frank Cullen, Mary and James Casserley, George Terrett, Anna Donnelly, James Malone, Esther McManus, Mary Owens, Michael Owens, Paul McGinn, Bertie Auld and all our deceased relatives and friends and the benefactors of St. Mary's and St. Paul's.