



St. Mary's R. C. Church

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Charity Number - SC011041

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Newsletter

Sixth Sunday of the Year

February 14th 2021

My dear parishioners at St. Mary's and St. Paul's,

I hope this finds you and your family well and I pray that you are finding the inner strength and resolve needed to face the ongoing challenges of the pandemic. From what we are hearing on the news there are glimmers of hope as the vaccines are given to more and more people. Let us go on encouraging one another and supporting one another through acts of kindness and compassion.

This is an important week in the life of the church as we begin the great spiritual pilgrimage of Lent 2021. Through the liturgy of Ash Wednesday, Christians throughout the world will resolve to seek the face of Christ more deeply and love his world and its peoples more tenderly. Of course it is painful to us all that we cannot gather to celebrate the Lenten liturgy together as we normally do. Let us be together on Ash Wednesday in the power of the Holy Spirit and together let us turn our gaze towards Christ the Saviour, the great hope of the human race.

On Ash Wednesday the church addresses its members in these words: *'Repent and believe in the Gospel'* and *'Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return'*. We are then invited to sincere spiritual renewal through fasting, prayer and almsgiving. In other words, in remembering that we are dust, we are called to new life here and now, the life of Christ and his Gospel, the way that leads to eternal life, our final destiny.

Strange as it may seem, many people look forward to Lent, grateful for the opportunity to reflect on life and faith. It is lengthy, some six weeks in all, and maybe it has to be if we are to have the time we need for prayerful reflection on how we are responding to the gift of life. Near the beginning of John's Gospel, Jesus says, "I have come that you may have life and have it to the full." Through prayer, fasting and almsgiving, we are invited to experience a new fullness of life, this life that is so precious and yet so very fragile, as we are seeing day and daily just now.

I want to encourage you to take a moment of prayer on Ash Wednesday to begin your Lenten pilgrimage. Make the sign of the cross on your forehead and pray, *"Lord, teach me to remember that I am dust and into dust I shall return, help me to repent, to turn away from anything that does not belong to you and to embrace your Gospel."* Of course you could do this together at home as a family, blessing one another and making this prayer for one another.

Finally, I ask you to pray for me, your parish priest, that I too may make the great pilgrimage of Lent 2021 with sincerity of heart. Please God, lockdown will ease and at least some of us may be able to celebrate the liturgy of Holy Week and Easter Sunday. I would look forward to that very much indeed,

Father O'Brien

Ash Wednesday, February 17th is a Day of Fasting and Abstinence from Meat. It will be possible to make the Stations of the Cross online in the afternoon by contacting Mr. Harry Doyle at h.doyle@blueyonder.co.uk.

Friday, February 19th is also an important day for the Catholic Church in Scotland; the bishops invite us to make this a special Day of Prayer for those who have suffered abuse. Bishop Toal has written a thoughtful Statement to the Diocese of Motherwell and this can be found on the diocesan website: www.dom.org.uk. In this statement the Bishop renews his commitment to listen to and assist all who report abuse and who seek our assistance.

Please remember in your prayers:

Mr Eric Murphy, who served as sacristan at St. Mary's for many years and who was buried on Friday. Many parishioners remember Eric with great affection; he served us all with such sincerity, kindness and gentle humour. *May he rest in peace now with his beloved wife Helen.*

Recently Deceased: Roseann Markey, Eric Murphy, John McInnes, Fr. Angus (Robert) McLaughlin OP, Jacqueline Equi, Therese Norton, Stuart Campbell, Helen Connor, Stephen Hunter, Betty Hutcheson, Kathleen McArthur, Anne Connolly, Owen McVey, William McCaffrey, David Waterton, James Cahill, Janet Gaffney, Owen Warner, Sheila McGurk, John Smillie, William Ward

Special Remembrance: Ronnie Boyd, Maimie Lally, Kevin Bryant, Ella and Joe Paterson, Anna McAdam, Elizabeth and Michael McSorley, John Harkins, Dan Daly, Diane Daly, Mary Daly, Agnes Daly, Christopher Norris, John Lynas, George and Rose Terrett, Laraine Fox, Rita Kane, Fr. Walter Scott