



St. Mary's R. C. Church

120 Cadzow Street, Hamilton, ML3 6HP
Tel: 01698 423552



St. Paul's R. C. Church

Backmuir Road, Hamilton, ML3 0PX
Tel: 01698 423552

Fr Henry O'Brien – Parish Priest

Charity Number - SC011041

www.stmarysandstpaulsparishhamilton.org

Newsletter

Fourth Sunday of Easter

May 2nd 2020

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

You remain very much in my thoughts and prayers during these difficult days and especially when I celebrate the eucharist each morning here at St. Mary's and on those days when I go along to celebrate the liturgy in St. Paul's. I like to offer Mass at the altar in our church buildings as I find it easy then to see your faces, because like most people who attend church you usually sit in the same seat Sunday by Sunday or day by day! I have said to you before that a parish priest is never less alone than when alone, for in those alone moments his people are very close to him and dear to him. This has been my experience while on retreat and it is certainly my experience in these days.

I know from speaking with some of you on the telephone that many are able to participate in Mass through social media and thank goodness for that. It is also clear that many Catholics have come to know Pope Francis very well through sharing in his morning Mass at the Vatican or following what he is saying through the Vatican News website or on Twitter. We are sharing deeply in his ministry as Bishop of Rome, successor of Peter, as he reaches out to the people of the whole world. It is beautiful to see that.

One parishioner, who placed a special remembrance request in the post-box at the church house, left a note that said, *“Even though our churches are closed at the moment we have opened up churches in our home”* This thoughtful remark reminded me of something Pope St Paul VI was fond of saying during his years as Bishop of Rome, namely, that the family is the domestic church, meaning by this that that we are to live our Christian faith together at home, allowing Jesus and Mary to be in our midst, guiding our thoughts, words and deeds. Someone else remarked, *“The Coronavirus is robbing us of much that we hold dear but it is also showing us what we really value. Let's hope we can hold on to that memory.”* There is no doubt that the consequences of the virus are making us reflect on *the art of living*, inviting us to appreciate people in an altogether new way.

In this message I want to share with you the names of those who have died during these weeks when we have been unable to gather for Mass:

*John Boyce,
James Donnelly
Mary Teresa Lees,
Silvio (Steve) Ferri.
Tess McMahon
Helen Brown
Margaret McCluskey,
James McDougall,
John Henderson
Tom O'Brien,
James McMenemy,
Frances Murphy,
Brian Porteous
Susan McAteer*

I know that you will remember these men and women in your prayers and also their families, who said farewell to a loved one in the most difficult of circumstances. Among the deceased I have a dear aunt and uncle, Tess and Tom, so I know personally what the present restrictions take from us. So much that is helpful in times of bereavement, the coming together to offer thanks for the life of the one who has died and to share memories, the comforting liturgy of the Requiem, the eating together afterwards, sometimes with relatives and friends whom we haven't seen for some time, all of this is not possible just now.

I know that I for one will never again take any of this goodness for granted. As the parishioner said in the message I quoted above, *"The Coronavirus is robbing us of much that we hold dear, but it's also showing us what we really value."* Of course in the end it is people that we really value, who they are, how they have lived, what they have shared with us as fellow pilgrims on life's journey.

So you can see how I have been spending my time during these weeks since we last met. It has brought me into contact with all of these lovely families and with the undertakers and those who work at the cemetery and the crematorium. I would ask you to remember them all in your prayers.

Finally, this mention of prayer reminds me to ask you to join with Pope Francis in praying the Rosary each day during May, one of the special months dedicated to Mary, Mother of Jesus and Mother of the church. If the whole Rosary is perhaps too long for your children then why not choose one of the decades to pray with them for the peoples of the earth and for our beautiful world.

Please know that I am here at home at St. Mary's if you need me in any way and remember that you are close to me when I celebrate the liturgy each day. I look forward very much to welcoming you back to St. Mary's and St. Paul's when it is safe to do so. In the meantime look after one another as the precious gift you truly are.

Father O'Brien