



St. Mary's R. C. Church

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Newsletter

Twenty-Seventh Sunday of Year

October 4th 2020

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

I hope this newsletter finds you well and in good spirits; for as long as this pandemic lasts let us go on encouraging one another each day. Please continue to remember in a special way our young people at College and University, that each one will find the inner strength to meet the demands of daily life while doing their very best at their studies. Please let our students know that they are very much in our thoughts and prayers at the Eucharist.

The Season of Creation comes to a close today, October 4th, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. The Sunday liturgy takes precedence over his feast day, but I thought it might be appropriate to say something about St. Francis, who remains very influential in the life of the church and the world, even though he lived almost a thousand years ago (c.1182-1226).

In Pope Francis' Encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, which we have been reflecting upon together over these last few weeks, we gain some insights as to why he chose the name Francis on his election as Bishop of Rome. The following paragraphs are the Pope's own words:

“I do not want to write this Encyclical without turning to that attractive and compelling figure, whose name I took when I was elected Bishop of Rome. I believe that St. Francis is the example *par excellence* of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically. He is the patron saint of all who study and work in the area of ecology and he is much loved by non-Christians. He was particularly concerned for God's creation and for the poor and outcast. He loved and was deeply loved for his joy, his generous self-giving, his open-heartedness. He was a mystic and pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself.

Francis communed with all creation, even preaching to the flowers, inviting them ‘to praise the Lord’, just as if they were endowed with reason. His response to the world around him was so much more than intellectual appreciation or economic calculus. His disciple St. Bonaventure tells us that “from a reflection on the primary source of all things, filled with even more abundant piety, he would call creatures, no matter how small, by the name of ‘brother’ or ‘sister’. Such a conviction cannot be written off as naïve romanticism, for it affects the choices which determine our behaviour. If we approach nature and the environment without this openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits to their immediate needs. By contrast, if we feel intimately united with all that exists, then sobriety and care will well up spontaneously. The poverty and asceticism of St. Francis were no mere veneer of asceticism, but something much more radical: a refusal to turn reality into an object simply to be used and controlled.

What is more, St. Francis, faithful to Scripture, invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness: “Through the greatness and beauty of creation one comes to know by analogy their maker” (Wis 13:5). For this reason, Francis asked that part of the friary garden always be left untouched, so that wild flowers and herbs could grow there, and those who saw them could raise their minds to God, the Creator of such beauty.” Rather than a problem to be solved, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise.”

The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change. The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us. Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home.”

In our own humble ways let us be part of that change, to be in the world as one who loves and cares for planet earth and its diverse peoples. In other words let us be living members of the Catholic Church!

Father O’Brien

First Holy Communion at St. Mary’s and St. Paul’s: the following letter will be of particular interest to the parents of children at St. Mary’s Primary who should have celebrated First Holy Communion in May 2020. Discussions are also underway with St. Paul’s Primary to reach suitable dates for their celebration of First Holy Communion.

A Message from the Catholic Men’s Society: the CMS continue to meet via Zoom on Monday mornings at 11am to discuss matters of faith and practice in the modern world. Any men of the parish who wish to join in this conversation would be most welcome. Please contact Peter Lavery at laverypeter93@yahoo.com

Booking for Weekday Masses needs to be done on a weekly basis to allow for Requiems; booking for the coming week will be possible on Saturday evenings around 8pm. Thank you for your understanding and co-operation.

St. Mary’s has seating for thirty-six people (the balcony is not to be used)

St. Paul’s has seating for thirty people.

Please think about choosing St. Paul’s for your visit as it may well be quieter there, especially on Sunday morning.

The Diocese has recommended that we have a booking system for places at the liturgy; this is for safety reasons and also to ensure that people are not disappointed if they arrive at church and discover they cannot enter. For each service the parish **must** retain details of all those attending to ensure that contact tracing can be carried out if necessary.

Please consult the parish website, stmarysandstpaulshamilton.org, to book a place through **Eventbrite** or by phoning the church house. Details of our services will be given on the parish website, but please be aware that timings for Mass on the Sunday are different to our normal programme:

Sunday services at St. Mary’s: Saturday Vigil at 5.30pm and Sunday Morning at 10.30am
Sunday Services at St. Paul’s: Saturday Vigil at 4pm and Sunday Morning at 9.15am.

The weekday Masses this week will be at St. Mary’s:

Monday at 10.am;

Tuesday at 11.30am

Wednesday at 10am;

On Tuesday morning at 9.30am Father O'Brien will be at St. Paul's Primary School to hear the First Confessions that were postponed in March.

Please book through Eventbrite as this makes things easier for the stewards meeting you at the church door.

Please note that Government guidelines state that only 20 people are permitted to attend Requiems. This means that funerals should be looked upon as private family gatherings; thank you for your understanding and co-operation in this matter.

The guidelines from the Government advise that on entering the building you will be asked to wear a face-covering (this can be a scarf rather than a face-mask) and use the sanitizing gel for your hands. You will then be shown to a seat. As you leave the building you will be asked to use the gel once more. I am sure that we will very quickly adjust to this 'new normal' for the moment.

Thank you to those parishioners who have assisted in the re-opening of our churches by acting as stewards or helping with the cleaning of the benches. I know others would like to help and through time we will need you all as it looks as though we are in this for the long haul!

I am aware that the restrictions which are still in place mean that for the foreseeable future we will be much fewer in number for Sunday Mass. The Scottish Bishops have asked the clergy to remind parishioners that the obligation to attend Sunday Mass remains suspended. This leads me to suggest that you consider attending one of the weekday Masses, especially if you are retired or still furloughed from your employment. This would also leave places free on the Sunday for those who are working.

Recently Deceased: James Dunbar, Mary Donnelly, James Scott, Billy Dawson, Amy Paterson, Patrick Brannigan

Special Remembrance: Rose Terrett, May Russell, Elizabeth Canning, Christopher Clancy, Brian Pearson, Robert Daley, Dr. Brian Tansey, John Cook, William Cook, John Mallon and our own deceased relatives and friends and all the benefactors of St. Mary's and St. Paul's through the years, *reqiescant in pace.*