



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

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**Newsletter**

**Fifth Sunday of Easter**

**May 9th 2020**

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

Please know that you remain very much in my thoughts and prayers during these difficult days when we are unable to meet together to celebrate the Eucharist and indeed the other sacraments also. It is a great miss to us all and looks as though it will continue for some time to come. The families who were due to celebrate First Holy Communion and Confirmation are very much in my thoughts, and also those families who had planned the baptism of a child and those young couples who were due to be married. I will look forward to these celebrations of life when it is safe for us to do so. There will be a lot to catch up on!

**I have received the following information from the Diocese of Motherwell to share with you:**

Pope Francis has invited the whole world to participate in a Day of Prayer on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May. The following paragraphs are from the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue at the Vatican:

### ***Day of Prayer for Humanity***

***Dear fellow believers and brothers and sisters in humanity,***

“Our world is facing at the moment a great danger that threatens the lives of millions of people around the world due to the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-10) pandemic. While we reaffirm the role of medicine and scientific research in fighting this pandemic, we should not forget to seek refuge in God, as we face this severe crisis. Therefore we call upon peoples of the world to pray according to each one's religious convictions, to observe fasting and do good deeds to end this pandemic. May each of us, wherever we are, and according to the teachings of our own respective faith traditions and philosophies, seek divine help to rescue ourselves and the entire world from this adversity, to inspire scientists to find a cure for the virus and to save the whole world from the health, economic and human repercussions of this serious pandemic

As part of its efforts to realize the objectives of the Document on Human Fraternity, the Committee of Human Fraternity proposes Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020 as a special day of prayers, fasting and works of charity for the good of all humanity. In this regard, the Committee invites all religious leaders and peoples around the world to respond to this call together: to beseech God, the Almighty, to safeguard the entire world, to help us overcome this pandemic, to restore security, stability, health and prosperity, so that, once this pandemic-crisis is over, our world may become a better place for humanity and for human fraternity than ever before.”

*As a community of faith here at St. Mary's and St. Paul's, let us respond to the Pope's call to make this Thursday a special day of prayer, fasting and good works. It would be good to involve the children and young people of our families in this special outpouring of love for our world and its peoples.*

## **Some further matters from the Diocese:**

**The Bishops' Conference of Scotland** has announced the formation of a Covid-19 Working Group, which will begin work on the creation of an Infection Control Protocol to govern the phased reopening of churches for public worship at an early and safe opportunity, in accordance with legislation and the current Scottish Government Guidelines on social distancing and hygiene. The precautions and requirements to allow Catholic Churches to be used for public worship will be studied carefully and proposed Infection Control Protocols presented to the Scottish Government.

**The Working Group will be chaired by Sir Harry Burns**, Scotland's former Chief Medical Officer and Professor of Global Public Health at the University of Strathclyde. Bishop Hugh Gilbert, President of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland will also sit on the group. Speaking about the initiative, Bishop Gilbert said:

“Our lives remain greatly restricted by this crisis in a way that is painful and difficult for us as Christians. As bishops, we want to offer our thanks to our clergy, religious and laity for their patience and forbearance during these testing times. Throughout these weeks of Lockdown, there have been many signs of hope and faith and it is in the hope that we will recover, that we must plan for the future and find a safe pathway to the resumption of our sacramental life. The bishops are keen to benefit from the advice of experts in medicine and public health and are very grateful to Sir Harry Burns for agreeing to chair our working group. In the interests of everyone's safety we will proceed cautiously and carefully in step with public health guidance.”

### **Commenting on the group, Sir Harry Burns said:**

“The unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 pandemic requires innovative and informed thinking. I am glad that the Catholic Bishops are acting proactively to develop Infection Control measures and delighted to be able to contribute to that work. The reopening of churches and the reintroduction of public worship will happen in a phased way, always taking account of best infection control practice and guidelines on social distancing and hygiene.”

*Please keep the work of this group in your prayers.*

## **Bishop Joseph Toal streamed Masses**

**The bishop wishes to inform you** of the following streamed masses he will be celebrating. He is usually invited to celebrate Mass at Carfin on the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima; this Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, he will live stream his Mass at 11am.

**On Ascension Thursday, May 21<sup>st</sup> at 11am** he will live stream Mass for the schools in the Diocese. This is a day when they would all normally attend Mass, so it is an appropriate day to link in with the school communities and to pray for them at this period of disruption and uncertainty.

## **Laudato Si' Week (16-24 May 2020)**

During these days the church will mark the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis' prophetic Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si*, in which he invites us all to care for our planet in much deeper ways: for more information please go to <https://laudatosiweek.org/>

**Finally**, let me 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,  
Margaret Boyd,  
Julia (Sheila) O'Neill

I know 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. It is painful not to have the funeral you would have wanted to have for a loved one.

**I leave you with a prayer** I came across this week while I was looking for something else! I'm sure many of you have had that experience.

*"We thank you Lord for the gift of life.  
Help us to appreciate the unique  
dignity of every human person and the  
individual contribution they make to  
the world, in fulfilment of the task you  
give them."*

*Enable us by your grace to promote  
their well-being, serving you in one  
another in a spirit of generosity,  
through Christ Jesus Our Lord. Amen*

Please remember that I am here at home at St. Mary's if you need me in any way and know 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 continue to look after one another as the precious gift you truly are,  
*Father O'Brien*