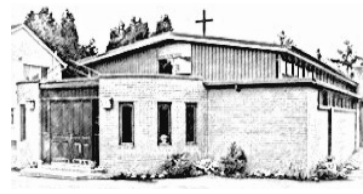




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**Newsletter**

**Third Sunday of Lent**

**March 7<sup>th</sup> 2021**

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

I had hoped by this stage to share with you a definitive date for the re-opening of our churches, but that information has not yet arrived. It is however still expected that our doors will open for Easter. Even though our numbers may be limited to twenty people, it will be a consolation if at least some of us can celebrate the liturgy of Holy Week and the moving ceremonies which mark the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Of course those of us who gather for the liturgy always do so in the name of all who belong to the parish. Let us continue to pray that we will steadily emerge from the trials and tribulations of the pandemic and enjoy once again the wonderful freedom to gather together around the altar of the Lord; it is a freedom we will never again take for granted.

In preparation for the liturgy of the Third Sunday of Lent, I came across these words which you may find helpful:

*“The words of the Apostle Paul, which today the liturgy proposes for our meditation, resound in my mind: “We preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and folly to the Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God”. I have nothing to propose or give to those whom I meet except Christ and the Good News of his Cross, a mystery of supreme love, of divine love that overcomes all human resistance and even makes forgiveness and love for one's enemies possible. This is the grace of the Gospel that is capable of transforming the world. The Church, therefore, does not pursue economic, social or political objectives; the Church proclaims Christ, certain that the Gospel can move the hearts of all and transform them, thereby renewing people and societies from within.”*  
*Pope Benedict XVI*

Perhaps part of our Lenten journey can include the conscious attempt to receive Christ more deeply as our crucified Saviour, this mystery of divine love which pours itself out for us from the cross. If you have a crucifix at home (the one on the end of your Rosary will do) perhaps you might find a quiet moment this week to hold the crucified Christ in your hands and as you look into the face of Jesus to remember that this is the power and the wisdom of God. Such moments can become moments of faith inviting us to place our trust in Jesus, the crucified One.

There may well be a further invitation, namely, to hold sacred whatever share of the cross is in my life right now, especially if the weight of that cross feels crushing. The one thing we can be sure of is that the crucified Christ is very close to humanity's sufferings and, when we are suffering, we are very close to the crucified Christ. From his cross, with arms outstretched, he gazed down on us with eyes of love. In this divine mystery Jesus invites us to look out from our own cross with eyes of love. For the truth is, real suffering pierces the human heart and from that sacred place there flows a new compassion for all human suffering. The world needs you, it needs your suffering, it greatly needs your compassionate heart!

You are in my thoughts and prayers each day at the eucharist,  
Father O'Brien

**Bishop Toal has written a Pastoral Letter on behalf of SCIAF to the members of the Catholic Church in Scotland and it can be read on the diocesan website [www.rcdom.org.uk](http://www.rcdom.org.uk).** Please consult this website for other correspondence from the bishop and for other valuable links.

**Sacramental Celebrations at St. Mary's and St. Paul's:** on Tuesday and Wednesday of this week Father O'Brien is delighted to be able to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with some pupils in St. Mary's Primary and on March 16<sup>th</sup> he will do the same with pupils from St. Paul's Primary; this will be their First Confession so please remember them in your prayers.

**Dates for other sacramental celebrations will be given in next week's newsletter.**

**A Message from the Catholic Men's Society (CMS):** you are invited to join in praying the Stations of the Cross on the remaining Fridays of Lent. To receive the link, please contact Mr. Harry Doyle at [h.doyle@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:h.doyle@blueyonder.co.uk).

**Catholic Charities:** we have some wonderful charities in the life of the church, which seek to be alongside people living in very challenging situations. Lent is a time of almsgiving and the following charities would be grateful for any donations:

**Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund:** details at [www.sciaf.org.uk](http://www.sciaf.org.uk).

Usually we have the Wee Box for Lent and you can collect one from the church house if you wish or you could use an empty jar and bring it along at the end of Lent. *The UK Government is doubling all donations to SCIAF until the end of Ma, so well done to the Government.*

**Mary's Meals:** details at [www.marysmeals.org.uk](http://www.marysmeals.org.uk).

This charity, which helps to feed over a million children every day, is having a special Lenten appeal for the people of Tigray in Ethiopia. The following paragraph is from a letter sent to the parish by Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, founder of Mary's Meals:

*"The people of Tigray are living in fear of immanent starvation. The brutal fighting has forced many to flee their homes. The city of Mekelle is being overwhelmed by displaced people arriving with nothing at all. Many are unaccompanied children who have lost their parents. Probably amongst those children are some who used to eat Mary's Meals at school. The lives of those children have now been changed beyond recognition. Therefore our plans have too. For now, it is just about doing whatever we can to help keep these children alive in a city where everyone is clinging to survival."*

**The UK Government recently doubled donations to Mary's Meals and the charity reached their £2 million target, so again well done to the Government.**

**International Refugee Trust (IRT):** this small Catholic Charity, whose first patron was St. Teresa of Calcutta, helps support some of our brothers and sisters who live in the most challenging of circumstances. It deserves to be better known! Further insight into the projects they support can be found at [www.irt.org.uk](http://www.irt.org.uk).

**Please remember in your prayers:**

**All who are sick in the parish** and all who have asked us to pray for them.

**Recently Deceased:** Sheena Bogan, Tom Ward, David Roden (East Kilbride), Andy Gallacher, Thomas (Tam) McGurk, Aidan McCall Hagan, Roseann Markey, Eric Murphy, John McInnes, Fr. Angus (Robert) McLaughlin OP, Jacqueline Equi, Therese Norton, Stuart Campbell and Margaret Anne (McWilliams) Foldenauer, who died in Munich.

**Special Remembrance:** Eilidh McHugh, Gerard Falsey, William Miller, Cornelius (Neil) McMurray, Annie and John Donnachie, Ian McNab, Kevin Bryant, Ella and Joe Paterson, Tom Lynch, Frank Docherty, Bobby and Barbara Jones, James O'Donnell, Alex and Esther Malone, Kathleen Tiernan, James and Helen O'Donnell, John, James and Elizabeth Fulton, Dietmar Beck,

Harry Watts, John Durnian and all our deceased relatives and friends and the benefactors of St. Mary's and St. Paul's, *requiescant in pace*.