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## Newsletter

## Fourth Sunday of Lent

**March 14<sup>th</sup> 2021**

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

I am sure you will have heard the wonderful news that our churches are to re-open on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March, in time for the great spiritual pilgrimage of Holy Week 2021. Even though the Government has capped the number at a maximum of 50 people in places of worship, it is a deep consolation to me as your parish priest that at least some of us will celebrate the moving liturgies which mark the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I remember very well praying last year that our church doors would never again be closed on Holy Thursday, Good Friday or Easter Sunday. I feel deeply grateful that the prayers of so many have been heard.

I know some will be disappointed that they will be unable to attend due to our limited number, but as I have said to you before, please remember that 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, especially during Holy Week, that we will steadily emerge from the trials and tribulations of the pandemic and enjoy once again the wonderful freedom to gather together in good number around the altar of the Lord; it is a freedom we will never again take for granted.

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

*"Today, the Fourth Sunday of Lent, the Gospel reminds us that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life'. We hear this comforting proclamation at a time when so many painful armed confrontations threaten humanity's hope for a better future. Jesus affirmed 'God so loved the world'. So then, the Father's love reaches every human being who lives in the world. How can one not see the obligation that springs from such an initiative of God? Conscious of such great love, the human being can only open himself to an attitude of fraternal welcome towards his fellow human beings."*

Pope Benedict XVI

Perhaps part of our Lenten journey can include the conscious attempt to open ourselves to this attitude of welcome to others, especially those who think they have no one and nothing. As Christians ours is a wonderful vocation, to come to know and love all that God has revealed about the mystery of Divine Love and then to love our neighbour as Christ has loved us. From the moment we are baptised we are invited to swim in the ocean of God's grace. Is there any more beautiful way to live than the one revealed by Jesus?

**A personal message from Father O'Brien:** I write to share with you, my dear parishioners, that this coming Saturday, March 20<sup>th</sup> I will celebrate my 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ordination. Now I know you will be thinking I look far too young! However the calendar tells me it really is so: March 20<sup>th</sup> 1981-2021. Tempus fugit! Of course, given current restrictions, I will mark the day quietly here at home at St. Mary's, and happily so, a day of tender joy and poignant thanksgiving. So many to say thank you to and so much to say thank you for. I write simply to ask that you remember me in your prayers next Saturday; that would mean a great deal to me. *Thank you.*

**Booking for Mass at St. Mary's and St. Paul's:** the diocese advises that we use Eventbrite to book a place for Mass; this helps greatly in our preparations for welcoming people when they arrive at the church door. Of course anyone who does not have access to a computer can phone the church house to book a place. *Further details will be given in next week's newsletter.*

**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 celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation with some pupils in St. Mary's Primary and this Tuesday, 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 are being finalised with the schools and will be given as soon as possible.**

**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 imminent 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), Catherine Phinn

**Special Remembrance:** Mark Hughes, Thomas, Elizabeth and John Kane, John Boyce, Kay Clancy, William Miller, Cornelius (Neil) Murray, Kathleen Tiernan, Bridget Lynas, Marie Lynas, Nessie Lynas, Bella and Owen Currie and all our deceased relatives and friends and the benefactors of St. Mary's and St. Paul's, *requiescant in pace*.