



St. Mary's R. C. Church

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St. Paul's R. C. Church

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Fr Henry O'Brien – Parish Priest

Charity Number - SC011041

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Newsletter

The Twenty-Fifth Sunday of the Year

September 24th 2023

My dear parishioners,

I hope this finds you well as we begin our journey into Autumn and beyond. *Journey* is a word that describes so much about our human lives. St. John Henry Newman was fond of saying: *To grow is to change and to have changed often is to have grown much.*

I think it is no exaggeration to say that we have made quite a journey together since St. Mary's Parish and St. Paul's Parish were twinned in the Autumn of 2012. I never received a single complaint from anyone that our two parishes were to be twinned. Instead, we opened ourselves to one another in new and deeper ways as we shared our common love and concern for the church and its ministry. In fact our circle of Christian friendship widened and how wonderful was that!

Then in 2017 we took a further step on our journey when we became the one parish of St. Mary's and St. Paul's Hamilton, one parish with two churches. I remember that day as one of great joy and it meant so much to me to be the parish priest of St. Mary's and St. Paul's Hamilton. I think it is safe to say that as a parish community we love our two churches, so different in style and architecture, but both special places where God's family gather to celebrate the sacraments, especially the Sunday eucharist. As your parish priest both buildings have a special place in my heart and soul, for in these sacred spaces I celebrate the Christian liturgy with you and for you.

For so many reasons therefore you will understand how vexing it is for me to tell you that the next stage of our journey together as St. Mary's and St. Paul's Parish will see us continue as the one parish, but with only one church building, and that will be the venerable old house of prayer that we know and love as St. Mary's, Hamilton, the mother church of the whole of South Lanarkshire.

We have known for a while that the future of St. Paul's Church was in doubt and, as I mentioned in last week's newsletter, recent surveys of the building mean that we need to move now towards closing the church to public worship. It would be irresponsible of me to keep the building open given the health and safety advice which I have received in these recent weeks. For this reason I suggest that we have a special *Mass of Thanksgiving on Sunday October 15th at 11 am* for all the graces and blessings of St. Paul's Church. As your parish priest I would like us to close this sacred space together and to do so with dignity, thanksgiving and sincere love. In taking this step we are facing up to the challenges of our times and we can only do this *together*, bishop, priest and people and we can only do this with faith, hope and charity.

As I have said to you so often, the closure of the church building is not the closure of the Church. We are the church, and so the church in Whitehill is present in you who live there, just as it is present in the Old Town, in Silvertonhill and in Fernigair, through our parishioners who live there. This is the truth of who we are; Christians in action, the Catholic Church in action. It is this that we seek to deepen; it is this that we need to deepen if the Christian Faith is to survive as we journey further into the 21st Century.

I have invited Bishop Toal and Mr. Guy Logan, the Estates Manager of the Diocese, to join us for a meeting in St. Paul's this coming Wednesday, September 27th at 6.30pm We can *listen* to one another and we can *pray* together, Bishop, Priest and People, for courage and strength, so that we can go on serving Jesus and his gospel with joyful hearts. Please join us on Wednesday evening at 6.30pm. Your good and prayerful presence means a great deal to me,
Father O'Brien

I offer here the times of the Liturgy for the coming week:

Monday September 25th: Mass at St. Mary's at 10am

Rosary at 9.40, Confessions at 6.30-650pm, Novena at 7pm

Tuesday September 26th: Mass at St. Paul's at 10am

St. Paul's Primary will be with us for Mass; Coffee Morning in School afterwards

Wednesday September 27th: Mass at St. Mary's at 10am

Rosary at 9.40am

Thursday September 28th: Requiem Mass for Mr. John Jones, St. Mary's at 10am

Saturday, September 30th

Vigil at St. Paul's at 4pm

Vigil at St. Mary's at 5.30pm

Sunday, October 1st

Mass at St. Paul's at 9.15am

Mass at St. Mary's at 10.30am

Wrap-Up Lanarkshire Appeal: once again the Rotary Club of Hamilton are inviting us to support 28 local charities which care for people who are homeless, seeking refuge from domestic violence, reliant on food-banks or refugees seeking asylum. Please donate a spare winter coat, jacket or anorak by bringing it here to the church during September. *It was the late Mr. Harry Doyle who arranged this in the past and so let us do this in memory of Harry, who is greatly missed here at St. Mary's*

The Parish Walking Group meets every Tuesday at 11am at the Museum on Muir Street. Those gathered walk for around 1 hour and then enjoy some refreshments together in the Museum café.

New walkers are always welcome.

CREDO, the parish faith-sharing group meets this Tuesday in the parish meeting room at 1pm.

New members are always welcome and after the meeting there is a cup of tea together.

Please pray for,

Recently Deceased: John Jones, Brian Carolan, Peter Lynas, Margaret Kane, Grazi Ventioei, Donald Alan McQuarry, Flora Ann McLean, Isobel Parker, Catherine Casey (London), George Currie, James Campbell, Andrea McGarry (Australia), Jimmy Carr (Carfin), Jim Scrimgeour

Special Remembrance: Rosaleen Mournian, Kathleen Lynas, John Mallon, Joe McCafferty, Frank and Mary McAteer and deceased members of the McCafferty and McAteer families, and all our deceased relatives and friends and the benefactors of St. Mary's and St. Paul's.