



St Mary's, Lanark

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Sunday 17th May 2020 - Sixth Sunday of Easter Year A

Mass Times - There are currently no masses at St Mary's Church, due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Feast Day: Thursday – Solemnity of the Ascension

Month of May: The power of Mary's intercessory role is attested to by the early saints of the church: St. Irenaeus remarked, "He who is devout to the Virgin Mother will certainly never be lost." St. Augustine addresses Mary, "Through you do the miserable obtain mercy, the ungracious grace, and the weak strength." St. Jerome wrote, "Mary not only comes to us when called, but even spontaneously advances to meet us." St. Basil the Great (379 A.D.), bishop of Caesarea, declared, "God has ordained that she should assist us in everything!" St. John Damascene prayed, "O Mother of God, if I place my confidence in you, I shall be saved. If I am under your protection, I have nothing to fear, for the fact of being your client is the possession of a certainty of salvation, which God grants only to those whom He intends to save." St. Ephraem beseeches Mary, "O Lady, cease not to watch over us; preserve and guard us under the wings of your compassion and mercy, for, after God, we have no hope but in you!" St. Fulgentius (533 A.D.), bishop of Ruspe, stated, "Mary is the ladder of heaven; for by Mary God descended from Heaven into the world, that by her men might ascend from earth to Heaven." Pope St. Leo the Great (461 A.D.) observed, "Mary is so endued with feelings of compassion, that she not only deserves to be called merciful, but even mercy itself."

First Communicants: Saturday should have been a very special occasion for the boys and girls who should have celebrated the sacrament of First Holy Communion. We remember the children in our prayers and look forward to celebrating this sacrament at a later date. We ask our Lady's blessing and prayers on all the children who will be missing all their friends at school as they continue their schoolwork at home.



Anniversaries & Recent Deaths

Please remember in your prayers those who have died recently, May Welsh and the Anniversaries of Bishop Joseph Devine (Motherwell Diocese), Dr. Gerry Murphy (Bothwell Medical Centre) Edward Doyle



SCIAF - Thanks to our parishioners for their generosity to SCIAF the total raised by St Mary's so far is £945! If you still wish to make a donation to SCIAF, you can do this on their website or by phoning them. All donations made before the 20th of May will be matched £1 for £1 by the Government. God reward you for your kindness.

Fr. Doyle's Homily for Sunday:

A prayer many of us will be familiar with is the prayer we use at the Stations of the Cross. It's beautiful and powerful prayer, a spiritual and theological gem, but we probably take it for granted and never really give it a second thought. However, when we do give it a second's thought we get to the very heart and kernel of what it means to be a follower of Christ. The prayer is below, and I invite you to pray it, filled with deep faith and an ardent desire to be close to our Lord.

***I love you, Jesus, my love above all things,
And I repent with my whole heart of having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again,
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.***

This prayer expresses perfectly the movement of the soul towards God. Only drawn by love can we progress toward God, only when we recognize that God alone is the perfect love for which we strive in this life can we begin the pilgrimage to heaven.

As Jesus prepare his disciples for his return to the Father at the Ascension, he also instructs them on the one and only way by which they can follow Him to heaven and that is by love.

This Sunday's Gospel begins by Jesus saying, ***"If you love me"*** and it begs the question of all of us: do I love Jesus, Our Lord. In the answer to that question lies all things; our life, our happiness and salvation. Be of no doubt God loves you, with an infinite and unquenchable love, unqualified and unconditional.

But love demands a response, it insists that we choose, and the choice is personal and always ours to make. Today at this moment, as I read these words, do I choose love: to know and love Him above all thing, before all things and in all things.

The famous Christian thinker C.S. Lewis wrote about the cost of love. "To love at all is to be vulnerable, love anything and your heart will certainly be wrung out and possibly broken." But "if you want keep your heart intact...you must give it to no one, not even an animal...lock it up safe in the casket ...But in that casket -safe, dark, motionless, -It will change, it will not be broken, rather it will become unbreakable, hard, irredeemable."

What Jesus offers is quite different, he offers us his own friendship built and based on the foundation of love, care and the generosity of his complete self-sacrifice. The perfection of His love and self-offering for us is found in the Eucharist: His abiding, perpetual, true and real presence among us in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. The Blessed Sacrament is the Sacrament of Divine Love, which feeds and nourishes our lives and fills us with grace of God's friendship. A phrase in today's Gospel sheds some light on depth of that relationship we have with God, when Jesus says, "the one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I shall love him and show myself to him."

Saturday should have been the wonderful celebration of God's generous and lavish love, when the children for the very first time received Christ our Lord in the Eucharist. In this sacrament they would have received in a new and wonderful way the friendship and love of Jesus. Unfortunately given the present circumstances the celebration of First Holy Communion is postponed, a great sadness for the boys and girls, their families and teachers and the parish as whole. But we support the children with our prayers, that when at last they meet Christ, in this most wonderful sacrament, they may receive a friendship that will last a lifetime, and love that will sustains them through everything. Just as Christ's love and friendship sustains each one of us, in a friendship that will not die, and a love which helps and sustains us at every step of our journey of life.

Sunday Scripture Reflection:

Jesus will not leave us alone. He won't make us children of God in Baptism only to leave us "orphans," He assures us in today's Gospel He asks the Father to give us His Spirit, to dwell with us and keep us united in the life He shares with the Father.

We see the promised gift of His Spirit being conferred in today's First Reading. The scene from Acts apparently depicts a primitive Confirmation rite. Philip, one of the first deacons proclaims the Gospel in the non-Jewish city of Samaria. The Samaritans accept the Word of God and are baptized.

It remains for the Apostles to send their representatives, Peter and John, to pray and lay hands on the newly baptized—that they might receive the Holy Spirit. This is the origin of our sacrament of Confirmation, by which the grace of Baptism is completed and believers are sealed with the Spirit promised by the Lord.

We remain in this grace so long as we love Christ and keep His commandments. And strengthened in the Spirit whom Jesus said would be our Advocate, we are called to bear witness to our salvation—to the tremendous deeds that God has done for us in the name of His Son.

In today's Psalm, we celebrate our liberation. As He changed the sea into dry land to free the captive Israelites, Christ suffered that He might lead us to God, as we hear in today's Epistle.

This is the reason for our hope—the hope that sustains us in the face of a world that cannot accept His truth, the hope that sustains us when we are maligned and defamed for His name's sake.

Put to death in the flesh, He was brought to life in the Spirit, Paul tells us today. And as He himself promises: "Because I live, you will live."

Fr Doyle's Reflection for the Solemnity of the Ascension:

In the feast of the Ascension we celebrate our Lord's return to the Father. After Jesus had completed his public ministry and fulfilled the paschal mystery he returned to heaven to prepare a place for us.

As Jesus leaves his disciple at the Ascension he understands the immense task he entrusts them with. Alone in a hostile world they will need courage and direction, leadership and wisdom. But the Apostles are frail fragile men unequal to the task.

However already Jesus has chosen Peter to be the Chief Shepherd of the flock and Prince of the Apostles, he is to be Christ's Vicar on Earth to lead and shepherd the church, to give his life at Rome in witness to Christ. But all that is ahead of them.

At the moment of his departure from them at the Ascension Jesus assures them I will not leave you orphans. Instead Christ promises to send them the Advocate the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

Together with Mary the Mother of God the disciples must wait and pray for outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

So the Ascension of Christ is never about Jesus leaving us for he returns to the father to prepare a place for us in heaven; our true home. And from heaven he will confirm their work and ministry through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Through the Spirit they will establish Christ Church upon earth by the preaching of the Gospel and the continuation of Christ's earth ministry through the celebration of the sacraments.

But we too share in the mission of the church, Christ has entrusted us with the precious gift of faith and salvation and it is for us to bear witness to him in our lives, our families and world.

Jesus doesn't leave us alone He gives us the powerful gift of the Holy Spirit, the very breath of God who breathes new life into our souls, our church and world. With Mary and the Apostles we remain in prayer asking our Heavenly Father to pour the Holy Spirit into our hearts and into the Church and to renew the face of the earth!

Keeping In Touch

If you or anyone you know requires help or information, please get in touch on 01555 662234, if there is no answer please do leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

To keep up to date with any Parish news or updates please visit:

Facebook page –
St Mary's RC Church

Website –
www.stmaryslanark.org.uk