



St Mary's, Lanark

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Sunday 31st May – Solemnity of the Pentecost

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

Feast Days:

Next Sunday is - Trinity Sunday
Monday - Mary, Mother of the Church
Tuesday - St's Marcellinus & Peter
Wednesday - St Charles Lwanga & Companions
Friday - St Boniface

Anniversaries & Recent Deaths

We pray for those who have died recently; Sr. Jean Harris & Agnes Monaghan.
And for the Anniversaries of, Thomas McCallum & John Seeley.

Pentecost marks the end of Eastertide/Paschaltide the paschal candle which has remained on sanctuary since the Easter Vigil is removed and relocated to the Baptistry:

During Pentecost the giving of the Spirit to the new people of God crowns the mighty acts of the Father in salvation history. The Jewish feast of Pentecost called all devout Jews to Jerusalem to celebrate their birth as God's chosen people in the covenant Law given to Moses at Sinai (see Leviticus 23:15–21; Deuteronomy 16:9–11). In today's First Reading the mysteries prefigured in that feast are fulfilled in the pouring out of the Spirit on Mary and the Apostles (see Acts 1:14).

The Spirit seals the new law and new covenant brought by Jesus, written not on stone tablets but on the hearts of believers, as the prophets promised (see 2 Corinthians 3:2–8; Romans 8:2).

The Spirit is revealed as the life-giving breath of the Father, the Wisdom by which He made all things, as we sing in today's Psalm. In the beginning, the Spirit came as a "mighty wind" sweeping over the face of the earth (see Genesis 1:2). And in the new creation of Pentecost, the Spirit again comes as "a strong, driving wind" to renew the face of the earth.

As God fashioned the first man out of dust and filled him with His Spirit (see Genesis 2:7), in today's Gospel we see the New Adam become a life-giving Spirit, breathing new life into the Apostles (see 1 Corinthians 15:45, 47).

Like a river of living water, for all ages He will pour out His Spirit on His body, the Church, as we hear in today's Epistle (see also John 7:37–39).

We receive that Spirit in the sacraments, being made a "new creation" in Baptism (see 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15). Drinking of the one Spirit in the Eucharist (see 1 Corinthians 10:4), we are the first fruits of a new humanity—fashioned from out of every nation under heaven, with no distinctions of wealth or language or race, a people born of the Spirit.

Mary, Mother of the Church:

In 2018 Pope Francis decreed that the ancient devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, under the title of Mother of the Church, be inserted into the Roman Calendar. To be celebrated annually in the Universal Church as a Memorial on the day after Pentecost. In the decree Cardinal Robert Sarah, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship said the Holy Father wishes to promote this devotion in order to "encourage the growth of the maternal sense of the Church in the pastors, religious and faithful, as well as a growth of genuine Marian piety".

The decree says, at the foot of the Cross (cf. Jn 19:25) Mary became the Mother of the Church when she "accepted her Son's testament of love and welcomed all people in the person of the beloved disciple as sons and daughters to be reborn unto life eternal." In 1964, Pope Paul VI "declared the Blessed Virgin Mary as 'Mother of the Church and of all Christian people, the faithful call on Mary as a most loving Mother' and should further honoured and invoked her by this tenderest of titles".

Fr Doyle's Homily: I heard Gordon Brown, the former Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer being interviewed. He was asked to compare the present global crisis with the financial crisis of 2007. The comparisons were, as you would expect to find numerous; stock market crashes, a run on the pound and a crisis in business confidence. But the differences were more sticking and perhaps more disturbing. In the financial crisis of 2007 the world pulled together, all the major political players cooperated closely and worked together. Unlike what has gone on during the present pandemic, where there has been much fingers pointing, threats exchanged and accusation and counter accusations made. There has been a marked disunity and lack of common purpose.

At a time when the world should have come together, many politicians have looked to their own political advantage and gain, rather than the common good of humanity.

To those who wrote the scriptures such divisions would have come as no surprise. For they presume the fragility and brokenness of human relations. A flaw explained in the Old Testament by the story of the Tower Babel, which has become metaphor for the divisions in the human family.

At Pentecost one of the principal actions of the Holy Spirit is to overcome the chaos of Babel and bring about unity. And we see that most clearly in the mysterious gift of tongues the apostles receive; the gift to speak and be understood by all who heard them. For the Holy Spirit allows them to overcome every barrier of culture, language and creed. So that all those who hear, understand as if it was spoken in their own native language. The Holy Spirit at Pentecost reunites the human family.

And that unity of the human family is the first mark of the Church. In the Creed, our profession of faith: we proclaim that the church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic. The word Catholic means universal and the first characteristic of the church is her unity – she is one!

And this means that the church must always be a unifying influence in the world: breaking down the barriers of race and prejudice, bigotry and intolerance. The task of the church, our task through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is to promote unity and solidarity in the world, to uphold the rights and dignity of every person, and to be an advocate of the values of justice and peace among nations and peoples.

It's so easy to categorize people and countries in distinction to ourselves, to assert as many opportunists politicians do: that they are different and alien to us, a threat to our safety and wellbeing. They tout lies and half-truths as we have seen during this pandemic with fanciful and outlandish theories. Calling it the China Virus, claiming its origins lie in a laboratory, besmirching the reputation of the WHO. When we choose to see only the differences between ourselves and peddle lies and disunity we drive a wedge deep into the heart of the human family, sowing discord and mistrust among God's children.

The Holy Spirit will not have that! He is the great unifier and reconciler, the breath of God who breathes new life into the brokenness of the world. The Fire of Divine Love, healing and restoring, who speaks the truth that we are all children of God without exception, united in bonds of love and care. During these weeks of lockdown and uncertainty, a new spirit has surely walked our streets and roads. A spirit of love, concern and care, a spirit of service and kindness, of generosity and simple goodness. As so many of us have cared for and looked after the needy and vulnerable in our communities God's Holy Spirit has indeed been present renewing the face of the earth with unity and the fire of Divine Love.

Day for Life is the day in the Church's year dedicated to raising awareness about the meaning and value of human life at every stage and in every condition. The Church teaches that life is to be nurtured from conception to natural death. This year's *Day for Life* is celebrated on **31st May in Scotland**. 'Moses' invitation rings out loud and clear: "*See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil. ... I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live*" (Dt 30:15, 19).' *Evangelium Vitae*, 28. The theme for Day for Life 2020 is Choose Life, with a particular focus on protecting mothers and unborn children, and bringing hope and healing after abortion.



Preparing to reopen the Churches:

As we look forward to the re-opening of the Churches, our first concern must be the safety and wellbeing of everyone. This requires careful planning and preparation and thoughtful reflection on your part. I urge everyone to give first thought to themselves, to their own health and wellbeing.

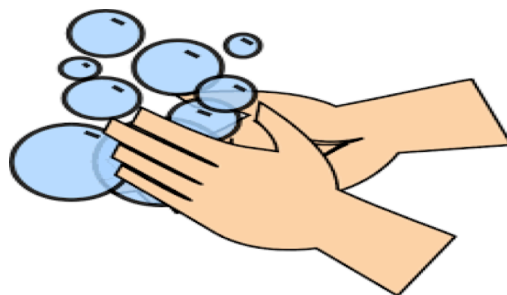
It must be for you to judge whether it is safe for you to visit the church and later come to Holy Mass. I remind everyone that the obligation, we as Catholics have to attend Holy Mass on Sunday has been suspended in these exceptional times. As a priest my first concern is for your safety and wellbeing. And, of course, I also understand how anxious we may feel in our desire to return to Holy Mass. However, we must be guided by Government and medical advice in coming to our own informed decision.

I wish to give a few general guidelines, on the present advice we have received, to which we must adhere in reopening the Church.

- 1. Physical distancing of 2m will have to be maintained with the loss of capacity of up 70 – 80 % in most churches. We will have to stagger the arrival and exit of worshipper as they enter and leave the church. The distribution of Holy Communion and hearing Confessions will also have to be considered. Seating will be clearly signed with appropriate distancing.**
- 2. Church Cleaning will be essential after each service *so we need to appeal for volunteers*. Hand sanitizer will be available and everyone would wear face covering in the church.**

Face coverings: Guidelines will require the use of face coverings. It's likely that your parishioners will have their own face coverings, and they will be asked to bring them and wear in the church buildings. It may also be that you might want to help parishioners who are unable to procure their own face coverings, or come along without one. It might be a good idea to have a small supply of your own. There is good evidence based advice on how to sew home made face coverings at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html> and there may be volunteers willing to sew these.

Hand Sanitiser: Your hands are one of the main routes that viruses make their way from surfaces to your respiratory system, so keeping them clean is one of the most effective things you can do to stop yourself contracting the virus. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water where possible and if you can't get to a sink, an alcohol-based hand sanitiser is a good option.



Keeping In Touch

As always, if you or anyone you know, requires help or information, or you would like to offer help within our Parish, please get in touch on 01555 662234 or email us at stmarylanark@rcdom.or.uk
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

The recent announcements from the Scottish Government regarding Covid-19 are suggesting positive steps to gradually ending lockdown, we will keep you up to date with any changes within our Parish on our Facebook page and website. We pray that we will soon be able to worship together again, stay safe and God Bless.