



APRIL NEWSLETTER

Incorporating St. Mary's Church and St. John Ogilvie's Church

HAPPY EASTER

It almost seems too late to say, "Happy Easter", but it is important to remember that Easter is a season and not just a day or two. Just as it does during the Seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Lent, the Church's liturgy takes us on a journey as we listen to the various testimonies that affirm the bodily resurrection of Jesus, and learn of the emergence of the community, initially known as 'The Jesus People', who would later come to be known as the Christian Church.

From a faith perspective it is important to *ask God to lead us on our own personal journey* during these days of new life and new hope. Easter is not just about accepting that Jesus was raised from the dead. Neither is it the simple acknowledgement that his life continued after he had been crucified and his body was laid in a tomb – almost akin to the raising of Lazarus. Easter is the time when we celebrate God's love spectacularly transforming the crucified Christ into a whole new being through the resurrection. It is the time when we are also reminded that God can help us to pass over to a new life that is transformed by His love.

Faith allows us to accept the reality of Christ risen from the dead, but faith also invites us to be His witnesses. Like everything else that is wonderful in life, we are instinctively moved to share this particular piece of Good News. The very essence of Easter is to be found in the fact that people wanted to tell the story that Jesus rose from the dead, hence the reason that we have the universal church today. Our forebears were all witnesses to the Risen Christ, and we are encouraged to follow in their footsteps.

In this the Fourth Week of Easter, we focus on the fact that Jesus is "the Good Shepherd, who lays down his life for his sheep". We would do well to reflect on what we need to lay down in order to look after "his sheep" today. It is in laying down our lives that we witness to the presence of the Risen Christ and bring hope to others. So, please don't succumb to the temptation to think of Easter as a single event or see it as a couple of days that constitute a "long weekend" in April. If Easter is nothing more than a day or two, then it is over already! It is so much more than that! We are still in the heart of this wonderful season that is filled with new life and new hope! Happy Easter!

CORONAVIRUS REGULATIONS

Only last month we found ourselves in the happy position of being able to announce that Churches would once again reopen for worship. Now there is even better news; from Monday 26th April the cap of 50 has been removed, so long as the current physical distancing regulations can be maintained. In practical terms, neither of our churches will be able to increase our capacity beyond the current ceiling, but the good news is that for funerals and weddings the capacity has increased from 20 to 50, with

immediate effect.

I think there is good reason to be optimistic that in the coming weeks progress will continue. Presently the need to book has been rested for Weekday Masses, although there is still a requirement to book a slot for Sunday Masses. Hopefully, the regulations concerning physical distancing will eventually be amended, and that might afford us some leeway when it comes to booking for Sunday Masses.

However, there is still no indication that any of the other protocols are about to change. We continue to be guided by the findings of the Scottish Government which works closely with representatives of the Bishops' Conference for Scotland to try and establish sound principals to protect our communities from risk or harm. Therefore, not singing at Mass, the need to gather 'Track and Trace' details, hand-sanitising, "stewarding", and regulations concerning movement within the church (entering and leaving and going for Communion) are likely to be with us for a while. However, we are undoubtedly moving forward, and now we have to attend to what God is saying as He breathes new life into the Church. I hope we can move forward in a spirit of faith, hope, and charity as we negotiate the next set of challenges.

SACRAMENTAL LIFE OF THE CHURCH

I am delighted to report that we have been inundated with families trying to make arrangements for the Baptism of their children. Similarly, some of the families who missed out on the opportunity to have their children receive First Communion last year, have taken steps to try and ensure the completion of the process of Sacramental Initiation. Likewise, I've spoken with the staff in both our Primary Schools about celebrating First Reconciliation in school before the summer holidays and plans for the celebration of First Holy Communion for the current Primary 4s are presently under consideration (and may be slightly different in each parish). Couples are tentatively making enquiries about making new arrangements for weddings that had to be cancelled due to the Coronavirus restrictions. All in all, the general picture is that things are gradually taking on a more familiar look. I would also hope that there will be people who might be considering joining the Church. If you know someone who is interested in becoming a member of the Church, please get in touch as soon as possible. As well as being a source of encouragement, these positive developments serve as a reminder to all of us of the importance of participating in the sacramental life of the Church.



SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

It goes without saying, that in every parliamentary election it is important that we each use our vote well and that we don't pass up the opportunity to remind our politicians of what really matters in shaping our country in a fair and equitable way. Politics plays a huge part in determining what happens in all our lives, but it particularly affects the lives of people who live on the margins.

The election on 6th May reminds us of the duty we have as people of faith to share the Gospel and to help form the public conscience on key moral issues. Some of the issues you might want to consider in this election are as follows:

- the fundamental human right to life and the protection of human life at every stage.
- the importance of family life and the significance of dignified work and decent working conditions.
- poverty as the scourge of many people's lives and the tragedy of human trafficking and slavery.
- the need to care for the environment.
- free speech, free expression, and freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Please see the website; rcpolitics.org and use the resources there to help you in your consideration of election issues and use the tools available to question candidates.

USEFUL WEBSITES FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

Sacredspeace.ie

<https://pray-as-you-go.org>

<https://prayingeachday.org.uk>

universalis.com

alonetogether.org.uk

hallow.com



HELPFUL PATHWAYS



There are also other useful websites and contact details for more pressing needs, all of which are confidential:

Breathing Space – for anxiety, low mood and stress
breathingspace.scot

Stop It Now – for adolescents concerned about their own thoughts or feelings, or about another adult or young person
stopitnow.org.uk

Clear Your Head – for help keeping in touch with others and managing moods and anxieties
clearyourhead.scot

Together in Mind -provides good on-line resources to support mental health and wellbeing
togetherinmind.nhs.uk

Recovery College - provides a range of educational courses and resources to people who might be struggling with mental health issues.
recoverycollegeonline.co.uk

TELEPHONE HELPLINES

Samaritans	116123
Children 1 st Parentline	0800 028 2233
Domestic Abuse Scotland	0800 027 1234
Victim Support Helpline	0800 160 1985
Scottish Women's Aid	0132 226 6606
Rape Crisis Helpline	08088 010302
Abused Men In Scotland	0808 800 0024
NSPCC	0800 1111
Stop It Now Scotland	0131 556 3535
Alcoholics Anonymous	0800 9177 650
Narcotics Anonymous	0300 999 1212
Gamblers Anonymous	0370 050 8881
Alzheimer Scotland	0808 808 3000

CAN YOU HELP US?



We hope that you are enjoying these newsletters and feel that they are informative. A significant number of you have contacted us, giving us your email address to be added to the circulation list. This has allowed us to reduce the postal list and cost significantly!

If you have received this newsletter by post then we do not have your email address or the email address we have for you is wrong. To correct this (and save on postage) please email your name to rcchurches@gmail.com letting us know.

We will then add you to our circulation list and email further newsletters and important information to you. Emails are sent out in such a way that your email address is protected. Only you will see your email address.

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