



*Drawing by John R Hume,
courtesy of Scotland's Churches Trust*

St Mary Magdalene's Church

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Monsignor Charles Hendry - Parish Priest
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4th Sunday of Lent, Laetare Sunday

Year C, 31st March 2019

God's great love revealed in Jesus

The parable Jesus tells in today's Gospel is unique to the Gospel of Luke. Jesus has been teaching the crowds as he journeys to Jerusalem. As he teaches, the Pharisees and scribes complain and challenge Jesus because he is welcoming sinners at his table. Today we hear the third of three parables that Jesus tells in response to his critics. These three familiar parables—the lost sheep, the lost coin, and today's parable of the prodigal son—invite us to consider the depth of God's mercy and love.

The Pharisees taught a scrupulous observance of Jewish Law. In their interpretation and practice, observant Jews who shared table fellowship with sinners would be made unclean. Like Jesus, the Pharisees hoped to lead sinners back to God. The Pharisees, however, required that sinners first become ritually clean—observant of the Pharisees' interpretation of Jewish Law—before sharing table fellowship. This appears to be one of the major differences between the Pharisees and Jesus. Jesus reaches out to sinners while they are still sinners, inviting them to conversion through fellowship with him. Jesus is God acting among us; by befriending us, he is inviting us to return to friendship with God. Through friendship with Jesus, our sins are forgiven and we, in turn, bear fruit for God. Recall last Sunday's Gospel and the barren fig tree.

For today's Mass

Responsorial Psalm

Taste and see
that the Lord is good.

Gospel Acclamation

I will leave this place
and go to my father and say:
'Father, I have sinned
against heaven
and against you.'

Our familiarity with today's parable risks dulling us to its tremendously powerful message. We call this the parable of the lost son or the prodigal son. Any focus on the younger son, however, must also be balanced by an examination of the unusual behavior of the father.

First we must imagine our first response to the audacity of a son who asks for his inheritance before his father has died. Indignation would certainly be a justifiable response to such a request. Yet the father in this parable agrees to honor the son's request and divides his property among his two sons. How might we describe such a father? Foolish comes to mind, but so does trusting. Without property of his own, the father must rely upon his sons to provide for his well-being.

The younger son takes his inheritance and leaves home. The older son remains, continuing to provide for the father and the household. Having been disgraced by the younger son, the father spends some time watching the road for the return of the lost son. When he eventually sees his wayward son returning, the father not only welcomes him but also runs out to greet him and then honors him with a party. We say that this father is loving and forgiving. Yet these adjectives only begin to describe the depth of love and mercy that characterise the father.

We find no surprise in the anger of the older son. Yet the father appears sad and even confused by the older son's indignation. He says in reply that they should celebrate because the lost son had returned. The father is filled with gratitude and love for the older son's faithfulness. This love is in no way diminished by the father's rejoicing at the return of the younger son. Yet the older son's jealousy reveals his limited understanding of the depth of his father's love.



The Fourth Sunday of Lent is traditionally called Laetare Sunday. Laetare is a Latin word that means "rejoice." Today's Gospel describes the reason for our joy: God's great love for us has been revealed in Jesus. Through his Passion, Death, and Resurrection, Christ has reconciled us with God and one another.

Extreme Way of the Cross

A group of Perth parishioners are planning to repeat last year's "Extreme Stations of the Cross" - walking a 25 mile, cross country route to Perth, overnight and in silence, on Friday 5th-6th April. You are warmly invited to consider if you can join them. If you would like to take part please contact Jaromir Kruczynski 07756 569898.

The route begins at St John's Perth, on Friday 5th April, with Mass at 6pm and a Blessing for all who are taking part.

AROUND PERTH

Mass in

St Mary Magdalene's, Craigie

10am - Sunday

8am - Weekdays

(except Wednesday and Saturday)

7am - Wednesday; 10am - Saturday

Sunday Mass in

Our Lady of Lourdes, Letham

5.30pm (vigil); 11am

Sunday Mass in

St Mary's, Kinnoull

10am

Sunday Mass in St John's

4pm (anticipated Mass); 9am; 11am,

5pm (Polish) & 6.30pm

PRAYERS

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Gerald Hendry and of all the faithful departed.

Eternal rest grant unto their souls, O Lord. May they rest in peace. Amen

FEASTDAYS

Tuesday 2nd April
St Francis of Paola

Thursday 4th April
St Isadore

Friday 5th April
St Vincent Ferrer

Justice and Peace

Some consider reconciliation as an impossible dream which ideally might become the lever for a true transformation of society. For others it is to be gained by arduous efforts and therefore a goal to be reached through serious reflection and action. Whatever the case, the longing for sincere and consistent reconciliation is without a shadow of doubt a fundamental driving force in our society, reflecting an irrepressible desire for peace.

**Pope Saint John Paul II,
Reconciliatio et Paenitentia**

Collection

Last Sunday's collection amounted to £387.60 - thank you for your generosity. The special collection for the Sick and Retired Priests Fund amounted to £159.94. Thank you again.

Special Collection

There will be a second collection at Mass this Sunday in aid of the Papal and Episcopal Charities - including the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund.



Italian Pilgrimage

A few places remain on this year's Italian Association 8-day Pilgrimage to Rome, Sorrento (including Pompei) Capri and Monte Cassino 16th-23rd September this year. Cost will depend on the final number taking part. For more details please call Perth 622661.

Italian Classes will take a break now - until Saturday 4th May

Stations of the Cross

During Lent there will be Stations of the Cross following Mass on Sundays.

SCIAF Boxes

SCIAF boxes are available at the back of the Church for your Lenten Alms - please return them on Holy Thursday - at the start of our Holy Triduum.

All Parish catechists and Catholic teachers

You are invited to a series of faith formation meetings with Bishop Stephen Robson, Canon Kevin Golden and Mary O'Duffin - continues on Mondays, 7pm, Pastoral Centre, 24-28 Lawside Road, Dundee. DD3 6XY.

If you are unable to attend - the series is being recorded and can be viewed online on www.dunkelddiocese.org.uk

Fr Edward Vella S.Th.L, M.Soc.Sc. will lead two Lenten talks in St Mary Magdalene's Church on Tuesday evenings at 7pm



Lent

Talks entitled -

Tuesday 2nd April

Do we need God?

Tuesday 16th April

Easter Triumph of Love

All are welcome: Catholic or not Practising or not, Believer or not.

ARE YOU GOING TO BE IN HOSPITAL? DO YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO IS IN HOSPITAL?

Name _____ **Hospital** _____ **Ward** _____

Please complete/ tear off and hand it to Mgr Hendry after Mass