

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

St Mary Magdalene's Church

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PARISH MOTTO - 'THE BEST IS YET TO COME'

4th Sunday of the Year 28th of January 2024

Dear Parishioners and Friends of our parish, we are so happy that you could join us today to celebrate the 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

The unmarried man: Even though it is directed to the things of the Lord, his care is not a good thing; it suggests a fawning servility rooted in a lack of confidence in God's love; this is the person who is distracted from really living because he is overly concerned that everything he does is right - its probably a kind of scruples that this person is suf-



fering from. So even though he is not married and devotes all of his energy to pleasing God this is not necessarily a good thing. The married man: Paul does not have in mind the love of husband and wife but the complete absorption in one another of the newly married. Since the married man is a member of a community of love, his wife has only the first, but not the exclusive, claim on his affection.

So Paul is not saying that one way of life is better than another. Many people think that this passage is saying that the celibate life is better than the married life. Not so. Both lives can have sources of distraction in them. Anxious concern is a characteristic of unredeemed existence. What could it possibly mean that we want protection from anxiety? We usually think of being protected against enemies, or robbers or being hurt or some calamity of nature. Why are we asking God to protect us from anxiety?

The obvious answer is that God doesn't want us to become anxious if God wants to protect us from this reality. Our faith in God then must say something about this. How does our faith in God keep us from becoming anxious? First of all, what is anxiety? It's not easy to completely explain this word but most of us know when we are becoming anxious about something. We become so concerned about something that it takes us over. It's like someone else is living inside of us, controlling us.

When we are anxious we have lost our freedom and certainly we have lost our peace. It's interesting that we say this prayer just after the Lord's Prayer has been proclaimed where we proclaim that God is Father to us. It seems like it is so unreal an expectation that we should be freed of all anxieties. And yet it is what God wants for us if we believe that God is really a God of love and one who has our ultimate concern always in his heart. Trust is the only adequate response to anxiety. A trust that is so deep that it goes beyond death. Do not worry about him who can destroy the body - fear him who can destroy even your soul. We are talking here not about another virtue like patience or humility. We are talking about a basic stance that we are asked to cultivate. What is a basic stance? It is the horizon out of which I see. We all know how we all like to have a pleasing and comforting physical horizon. Many people would dearly love to live on a lake

where they could see the water anytime they wanted. Or perhaps in the mountains.

People who have grown up with the ocean as part of their lives know how important that can be for their own sense of comfort. Well we are talking about a horizon that we carry around with us - a trusting inner horizon. Something out of which we see everything. Does this mean that we are not to experience human emotions? Is the spiritual person one who is entirely emotionless - like a stoic - no matter what happens in life the person remains the same - no highs, no lows - just a kind of dull pattern that is always present in one's life?

The Scriptures don't seem to say this at all. We see in the life of Jesus himself many strong emotions. But below the surface of those emotions is the basic horizon that Jesus had. He was in touch with his Father through a deep trust. But he also said to us - what good does it do to worry about our life - we can't add one minute to our lives simply because we are worrying about losing our life. And besides the one who loses his life is the one who gains his life.

We don't fully understand life. I have always been impressed that it is the mark of the saints that they could spend so much energy on doing good for others and yet not be totally discouraged by the evil that they encountered so frequently in their ministry. It was because the horizon they were working out of was that of Jesus - a horizon that looks beyond this life, that looks beyond what can be seen with the human eye - that takes on the mind of Christ.

What is our horizon? What is our basic stance out of which we see everything? Not an easy question - but one worth looking at. One of the ways that we can do this is by getting to know Christ better and better - through, prayer, Scripture, discussion, meditation, wondering, reading, loving him. Our knowledge will not just be a head knowledge but a knowledge of the heart.

Have a wonderful week - stay well. Please keep me in your prayers as you all are always in mine.

For today's Mass

Responsorial Psalm

O that today
you would listen to his voice!
Harden not your hearts.

Gospel Acclamation

Blessed are you, Father,
Lord of heaven and earth,
for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom
to mere children.
believe the Good News.

PRAYERS

For our departed parishioners,
friends, and family members.

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

Thank You!!!

We thank you for your spectacular generosity. Your generous support of our Parish and your help with the needs of our community is greatly appreciated!

Collections

21st January 2024 – £787.50.

Second Collection today is for the Organ Fund.

Priest's Musing

Worried because they hadn't heard anything for days from the widow in the neighbouring apartment, Mrs. Silver said to her son, "Timmy, would you go next door and see how old Mrs. Kirkland is?" A few minutes later, Timmy returned. "Well," asked Mrs. Silver, "is she all right?" "She's fine, except that she's angry at you." "At me?" the woman exclaimed. "Whatever for?" "She said 'It's none of your business how old she is,' snickered Timmy.

World Day of Prayer

The World Day of Prayer, which is held annually, will take place in St John the Baptist Church, Melville Street, Perth on Friday 1st March 2024 at 11.30am. This year the theme is "Bear With One Another in Love" and has been prepared by a group of Palestinian Christian Women. The call to bear with each other in love, despite all difficulties and oppression, is particularly meaningful in view of the current war in Gaza. All are very welcome to attend.

Knock Pilgrimage

Escorted Tour to Westport, Knock & Co Mayo, 10th March 2024. £899.00 pps. Price includes flight, 10kg hold luggage, 5 nights in 4* Castlecourt Hotel, Westport with Dinner, Bed & Breakfast. Lunch on three days. All entertainment, excursions and transport included. Visit Knock, Galway City, Kylemore Abbey, Croagh Patrick & Ashford Castle. Single supplement on Enquiry. Contact Patricia or Natali on 01268 762 278 or 07740 175557 or email knockpilgrimages@gmail.com. More information you can find on the poster in the church porch.

2nd February - The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

According to the Church's liturgical calendar, the feast held on Feb. 2 each year is in honor of the Presentation of the Lord. Some Catholics recall this day as the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary because such was the feast day named until the 1969 changes in the Church's calendar. Until the Second Vatican Council the feasts on 2nd February ended the Christmas season. Today, the season ends in January on the feast of the Baptism of our Lord. Under Mosaic law found in the Old Testament Book of Leviticus, a Jewish woman who gave birth to a child was considered unclean.

The mother's purification ritual obliged her to bring, or purchase at the Temple, a lamb and a turtledove as sacrificial offerings. The lamb was offered in thanksgiving to God for the successful birth of the child; the turtledove was a sin offering. Families that could not afford a lamb could bring two pigeons or two turtledoves. After these animals were sacrificed, the Temple priest prayed over the woman and she could once again resume her normal role or status. Mary, the ever spotless Mother of God, certainly did not have to comply with this ritual, but did so to honor God and observe all the rules handed down by Moses.

She was the holiest of all women, but she still submitted to the humbling requirements of the law. She remained at home for 40 days, denied herself all association with sacred things and on the day required walked the five miles from Bethlehem to the Temple in Jerusalem.

Arriving at the Temple, Mary likely stood in line and waited her turn to see the priest. The

SAINTS DAYS THIS WEEK

Monday 29th January
4th Week of the Year

Tuesday 30th January
4th Week of the Year

Wednesday 31st January
Memorial of St John Bosco, priest

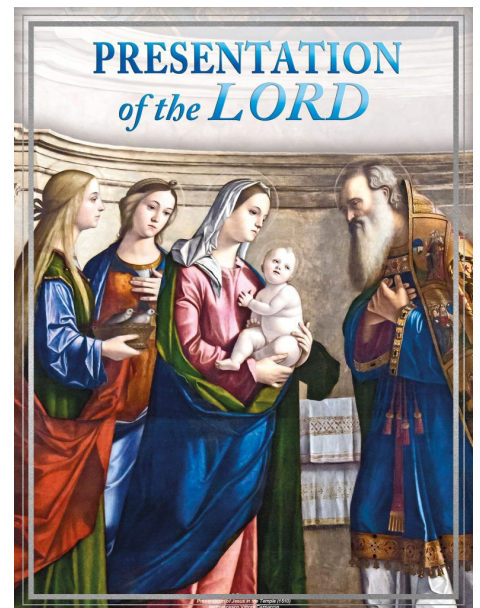
Thursday 1st February
4th Week of the Year

Friday 2nd February
Feast of the Presentation
of the Lord

Saturday 3rd February
4th Week of the Year

Holy Family must have experienced great joy, even wonder at all that had happened to them. Consider the events of the previous weeks. First, the shepherds miraculously arrived to adore and praise Jesus on the night He was born. And now, Simeon, another stranger, singles out Jesus as the Savior, not only of Israel but of the world. Someday all the other children being presented will know Jesus as their Saviour.

But here in the Temple there is also pain. The old prophet, moved by the Holy Spirit, tells Mary that she will experience unspeakable grief because of the outrageous way the world would judge and treat her Son. But Mary remained always committed to God's will and to her Son.



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 Fr Bogdan after Mass