
Sunday 7th February—Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

Sunday Mass Streamed from St Mary's at 10am

We pray for those who have died recently: Nicol Barile, James Devine, Herminio Abalos, Billy Dailly, Marilyn Docherty, James Warden and Helen Cree **and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time:** Tom O'Donnell, May Short, Kenny Bain, Tommy Flynn, Angela Fortuña, Michael Prendergast, Nan Halliday, Richard Halliday and Alex Small. We also remember all those mentioned in our books of remembrance. **Prayers for the sick:** Please continue to remember in your prayers the sick, especially those mentioned on our sick lists.

Reflections on Prayer: The next in the series of talks will be available on Facebook from 7pm on Tuesday. This week we will look at prayers of petition and intercession. Please continue to send in comments and questions so that we can incorporate these into future talks. There is also some material overleaf from Pope Francis's recent audience to help with our reflection on prayer.

Income for January: St Mary's £3533; St Columba's £421; St Leonard & St Fergus £948. Thank you all for the continuing support that you give for the parishes.

Income and Expenditure: Challenging as last year may have been in a variety of ways, the financial picture in the three parishes is not too different from previous years. The parishes ended the year with St Mary's having a surplus of almost £25,000 (including £18,000 raised for the restoration fund); St Leonard & St Fergus had a surplus of £10,000 and St Columba's had a deficit of £14,000. However, St Mary's and St Leonard and St Fergus showed an increase in the percentage surplus and St Columba's slightly less of a percentage deficit than in the previous 12 months. I have noted below some of the main areas of expenditure but if anyone would like the more detailed version of the balance sheet, then I will be more than pleased to share it with you. Thank you to all who have contributed so generously to the upkeep of the parishes and also to financing the mission of the Church.

Clergy Costs: this came to just over £4,000 from each parish. This covers the salaries of Fr Mark and Fr Alexander; a stipend for Fr Jean and also included is the salary for Fr Jude for the 9 months of his appointment to the parishes.

Heating and lighting: St M's £6,500; Ss L&F £3,500; St C's £6,900 (repayments for overcharging will appear next year). These costs are for churches, houses and halls.

Property costs: St M's £29,000; Ss L&F £878; St C's £6,000. Maintenance and repairs

Insurance: St M's £2,188; Ss L&F £1,998; St C's £1,550.

Contribution to the running of the Diocese: St M's £8,300; Ss L&F £8,800; St C's £4,200 (these are based on a percentage of the parish income from the previous year).

Liturgical Costs: St M's £4,765; Ss L&F £4,210; St C's £2,669. Some of this expenditure is offset by income from candles and for flowers (St M's £1,016; Ss L&F £883; St C's) £350.

Think Vocations; Pray for Vocations

"Let us go elsewhere... so that I can preach there too; for that is why I came." Jesus' mission continues in the Church and in the world in the lives of priests and religious. Do you have a desire to share the Good News with others too?

From the Pope's Audience on 3rd February 2021: Catechesis on prayer: Praying in the liturgy

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

In the history of the Church, there has often been a temptation to practise an intimist Christianity, which does not recognise the spiritual importance of public liturgical rites. Often, this tendency claimed the supposed greater purity of a religiousness that did not depend on external ceremonies, which were considered a useless or harmful burden. At the centre of the criticism was not a particular ritual form, or a particular way of celebrating, but rather the liturgy itself, the liturgical form of praying.

Indeed, in the Church one can find certain forms of spirituality that have failed to adequately integrate the liturgical moment. Many of the faithful, although they participate assiduously in the liturgy, especially Sunday Mass, have instead drawn nourishment for their faith and spiritual life from other sources, of a devotional type.

Much has been achieved in recent decades. The Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* of the Second Vatican Council represents a pivotal point in this long journey. It comprehensively and organically reaffirms the importance of the divine liturgy for the life of Christians, who find therein that objective mediation required by the fact that Jesus Christ is not an idea or a sentiment, but a living Person, and His Mystery a historical event. The prayer of Christians passes through tangible mediations: Sacred Scripture, the Sacraments, liturgical rites, the community. In Christian life, the corporeal and material sphere may not be dispensed with, because in Jesus Christ it became the way of salvation. We might say that we must pray with the body too: the body enters into prayer.

Therefore, there is no Christian spirituality that is not rooted in the celebration of the holy mysteries. The *Catechism* writes: "The mission of Christ and of the Holy Spirit proclaims, makes present, and communicates the mystery of salvation, which is continued in the heart that prays" (2655). The liturgy, in itself, is not only spontaneous prayer, but something more and more original: it is an act that founds the whole Christian experience and, therefore, also prayer. It is event, it is happening, it is presence, it is encounter. It is an encounter with Christ. Christ makes himself present in the Holy Spirit through the sacramental signs: hence the need for us Christians to participate in the divine mysteries. A Christianity without a liturgy, I dare say, is perhaps a Christianity without Christ. Without Christ in full. Even in the sparest rite, such as that which some Christians have celebrated and continue to celebrate in places of incarceration, or in the seclusion of a house during times of persecution, Christ is truly present and gives Himself to His faithful.

The liturgy, precisely because of its objective dimension, demands to be celebrated with fervour, so that the grace poured out in the rite is not dispersed but instead reaches the experience of all. The *Catechism* explains it very well; it says: "Prayer internalises and assimilates the liturgy during and after its celebration" (*ibid.*). Many Christian prayers do not originate from the liturgy, but all of them, if they are Christian, presuppose the liturgy, that is, the sacramental mediation of Jesus Christ. Every time we celebrate a Baptism, or consecrate the bread and wine in the Eucharist, or anoint the body of a sick person with Holy Oil, Christ is here! It is He who acts and is present just as He was when He healed the weak limbs of a sick person, or when at the Last Supper He delivered His testament for the salvation of the world.

The prayer of the Christian makes the sacramental presence of Jesus his or her own. What is external to us becomes part of us: the liturgy expresses this even in the very natural gesture of eating. The Mass cannot simply be "listened to": it is also an expression incorrect, "I'm going to listen to Mass". Mass cannot merely be listened to, as if we were merely spectators of something that slips away without our involvement. The Mass is always *celebrated*, and not only by the priest who presides over it, but by all Christians who experience it. And the centre is Christ! All of us, in the diversity of gifts and ministries, join in His action, because He, Christ, is the Protagonist of the liturgy.

When the first Christians began to worship, they did so by actualizing Jesus' deeds and words, with the light and power of the Holy Spirit, so that their lives, reached by that grace, would become a spiritual sacrifice offered to God. This approach was a true "revolution". Saint Paul writes in the Letter to the Romans: "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (12:1). Life is called to become worship to God, but this cannot happen without prayer, especially liturgical prayer. May this thought help us all when we go to Mass: I go to pray in the community, I go to pray with Christ who is present. When we go to the celebration of a Baptism, for example, it is Christ who is there, present, who baptizes. "But Father, this is an idea, a figure of speech": no, it is not a figure of speech. Christ is present, and in the liturgy you pray with Christ who is beside you.