
Sunday 21st March—Fifth Sunday in Lent (B)

Sunday Mass Streamed from St Mary's at 10am

We pray for those who have died recently: Mary (Cabrelli) Love and Mary Clark **and for all those whose anniversaries occur at this time:** Meg Marr, James Marr, Stephen Keenan, Bernard Robertson and Helen Timmons. 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.

Church Cleaning for Easter: In preparation for our Easter celebrations we will need to clean the churches. Although we gave St Mary's a good clean earlier in the week, it is in need of a bit more work. We would ask anyone who is available to come along and lend a hand at the following times: **St Mary's, Thursday 25th March, 1.30pm; St Leonard & St Fergus, Friday 26th March after 8.30am Mass; St Columba's Saturday 27th March after 9am Mass.**

Stations of the Cross: There will be the opportunity to meditate together on the Stations of the Cross on Friday evenings at 7pm (Facebook).

Reopening of Churches: We reopen our churches from this Friday, 26th March. That means that for the weekend of Palm Sunday we will re-generate the lists that we worked with when we came out of the last Lockdown which had 50 people listed for each Mass. So, if you were on a list for a particular Mass, you should still be on that list. To add to our confusion for the first weekend, the clocks go **forward** on the night of **Saturday 27th/Sunday 28th March**. Please be aware of the change. We will have the usual weekday Masses for Friday 26th—Wednesday 31st March. There will be no need to book for weekday Masses. We will have separate arrangements for the Holy Week Services and Easter (Thursday 1st—Sunday 4th April). See overleaf for these arrangements.

General Times of Masses: Masses will revert to these times:

St Mary's: Mon—Sat 10am; Sunday: Vigils 4.30pm & 6pm (Sat); Morning 8.30am (streamed); 10am & 11.30am

St Columba's: Tuesday & Thursday 8.30am; Saturday 9am; Sunday 11.30am

St Leonard & St Fergus: Monday & Wednesday 6.30pm; Friday 8.30am; Sunday; Vigil 6pm; Morning 10am; 4pm

Stewards: Our stewards continue to be essential to the opening of the churches and I know that many of you have expressed your unreserved appreciation to them and to me for the work that they do. The stewards have our fullest support, please give them your maximum cooperation.

Penitential Services with General Absolution: Special permission has been given to hold Penitential Services with General Absolution. We will hold these services in St Mary's and St Leonard & St Fergus on Tuesday 30th March at 6.30pm. There will be sheets available to sign up for these services. For those wishing to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the usual, individual manner, please see the priests in the sacristy before (up to 15minutes before) or after the weekday Masses.

Think Vocations / Pray for Vocations

Some people approach Philip to ask if they can meet Jesus. Perhaps you could be the one who introduces others to him today, especially in his word and through the sacraments. Speak to Fr Mark, your Diocesan Vocations Director, contact *Priests for Scotland* or visit our website or Facebook pages (PFS or VocationNetworkScotland).

Holy Week and Easter

The Masses and Services for Holy Week will take place at the following times

The Chrism Mass (normally celebrated on Wednesday of Holy Week) will take place later in the year.

Holy Thursday, 1st April—no morning Mass. Mass of the Lord's Supper St Mary's 7pm; St Leonard & St Fergus 7pm

Good Friday, 2nd April: Office of Readings and Morning Prayer: St Mary's 10am; St Columba's 10am

Solemn Liturgy of the Passion: St Mary's 3pm; St Columba's 3pm.

Holy Saturday, 3rd April: Office of Readings and Morning Prayer: St Mary's 10am; St Leonard & St Fergus 10am

There are no early Vigils on Holy Saturday. Solemn Vigil of Easter: St Mary's 8pm; St Leonard & St Fergus 8pm.

Easter Day (Sunday), 4th April: St Mary's 8.30am (Streamed Mass); 10am, 11.30am; St Leonard & St Fergus 10am, 4.30pm; St Columba's 11.30am

The normal lists will not be used for the Easter weekend, so we will need people to sign up for the specific Holy Week and Easter Masses and Services. Lists will be available next weekend.

For Easter Sunday itself we will try to give preference to people who cannot access Mass on-line, but so that everyone has the opportunity to receive Holy Communion on Easter Day itself, Fr Alex and I will remain in the church after the 11.30am Masses (St Mary's & St Columba's) for anyone who wishes to make their way down to the churches to receive Holy Communion.

Please also remember that each weekday Mass of Easter Week (5-10th April) is a celebration of Mass as on Easter Sunday, so if you do not manage for the Sunday, you have the opportunity to celebrate on another day as though it were Easter itself.

Consultation on the time of the 4.30pm Mass in St Leonard & St Fergus: Throughout the time when the churches have been open with restricted numbers, the 4.30pm Mass has never been filled to capacity. Fr Alex and I would like to move the Mass to Saturday at 4.30pm, giving us two 4.30pm Vigils (as well as two 6pm Vigils) in St Mary's and St Leonard & St Fergus. If anyone has any strong views on this one way or the other, could you contact either of us as soon as possible. If we were going to move the Mass, ideally we would like to do so sooner rather than later.

Preparing for Holy Week: Extract From Joyce Huggett's Book, 'God's Springtime'

Jesus was not crucified alone. Two convicted criminals were killed with him. They would have walked to Calvary in convoy with Jesus. They would have watched him fall, seen how Simon of Cyrene was compelled to carry his cross, and they would have been aware that Jesus was unlike most men facing crucifixion. "Crucifixion, where the victim died of exhaustion, cramp, thirst, and pain, was said to be the most appalling of deaths, and the curses and yells of the bystanders could not endure them." (Canon Peter Green). Jesus, on the other hand, behaved more like 'the most heroic of martyrs'. When he spoke, it was in words like the prayer we know so well. 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'. Yet each of the thieves reacted very differently to Jesus: One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." (Lk 23:39-43).

The penitent thief had read no books about the meaning of Christ's death yet, instinctively, he reached out to Jesus and was accepted. When he recorded this incident in his Gospel, was Luke trying to assure us that it is never too late to enjoy God's Springtime? Was he also trying to underline that no crime is so serious that it need keep us from experiencing God's love? Whether or not this was the disciple's intention this story inspired an elderly friend of mine (Joyce Huggett) to confess to God that she had lived 'a terrible life'. 'I asked him to forgive me,' she told me. 'And do you know what happened? He set me free from all that filth and evil. Even guilt is gone. And I don't deserve it after what I've done.' **We pray for all those who cannot believe that God will forgive their past; those who are racked with guilt over their sinfulness. We ask God too to remind us of our own failings that in turn we may receive his forgiveness and know the depth of his love for us.**