

Our sacramental, spiritual and pastoral life in St. Brendan's.

Sung Response to the Psalm today "The Lord will bless his people with peace."

Hymn for 2020 in our parish.

Verse 1 Come as you are, that's how I want you. Come as you are, feel quite at home. Close to my heart, loved and forgiven, Come as you are, why stand alone? **Verse 2** No need to fear, love sets no limits. No need to fear, love never ends. Don't run away, shamed or disheartened, Rest in my love, trust me again. **Verse 3** I came to call sinners, not just the virtuous. I came to bring peace, not to condemn. Each time you fail to live by my promise, Why do you think I'd love you the less? **Verse 4** Come as you are, that's how I love you. Come as you are, trust me again. Nothing can change the love that I bear you. All will be well, just come as you are.

BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION IN THE CHURCH. *The Year [2020] of the Word: The God Who Speaks:*

"For many Catholics the Sunday Mass is the only point of contact with Scripture."

Last September the Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology, Cambridge University [MBIT], hosted a 'A new vision of biblical formation in the Catholic Church.' Participants came from the UK, Ireland, Poland and Sri Lanka. The event provided unique conversation about biblical studies, biblical education and Catholic Faith formation. *The Year of the Word: The God Who Speaks*, which Pope Francis has established for the whole of 2020 in every country, provides an opportunity for all of us to engage with the Bible.

There is a huge gap between what the Church teaches about Scripture and the everyday experience of many members of the Catholic Church. The documents of the Second Vatican Council emphasise the role of Scripture in the life, liturgy and teaching of the Church and encourages and instructs **all the Christian faithful to engage in 'frequent reading of the divine Scriptures.'**

In many Catholic communities, reluctance to engage with Scripture remains connected with religious and/or national identities being constructed in opposition to the Protestant tradition associated with the practice of reading the Bible.

Pope Benedict XVI in a papal letter written ten years ago, *Verbum Domini* [The Word of the Lord] emphasised that the whole Bible, including the Old Testament, conveys the Word of God and holds **a great potential for private devotion and political and social life alike.** However, for most Catholics their experience of Scripture is limited to the biblical passages in the Sunday Lectionary read at Mass and biblical quotations included in the liturgy. *There are some parish-based Bible study groups, but frequently the participation rarely goes beyond a small number of more interested parishioners.*

There is a need for a fresh vision of biblical formation in the Catholic Church, going deeper and beyond an offer of yet another course in biblical theology and biblical study.

A good way to presenting biblical formation would be to change the emphasis from transmitting knowledge about Scripture, **to establish and foster a living relationship between Scripture and the reader**, who may or may not be already an active member of the Church. Considering that the Lectionary is where most people's journey with the Bible starts, we can approach it as a door, an invitation to go further in the relationship with Scripture. ***We should ensure high quality of proclamation of the Word of God during the Mass.*** This can be **accompanied by preaching in which all readings, not only the Gospel, receive attention and the links between particular Mass readings are indicated, with an encouragement to add to this with reading slightly longer passages directly from the Bible, or to read prayerfully daily Mass readings.** Since for many Catholics the Sunday Mass is the only point of contact with Scripture, creating around it a framework for reflecting together on Lectionary readings, for sharing experiences and asking questions, could also be considered.

In trying to engage readers directly with biblical texts, Church educators and pastors need to listen attentively to the voices, experiences and the spiritual, emotional, and practical needs of the people. This should include those already in the process of formation in their parishes, those who only come to Sunday Mass, but also those who at the moment are not within the scope of the Church's outreach: the Bible can speak, and indeed speaks, also to the unchurched.

Crucially, the Church needs to respond to time and mobility limitations of the people and set realistic goals. For busy parishioners engaged in work and family responsibilities, who may not be able to attend meetings on a regular basis, the prospect of committing time to daily reading from the Bible will be a daunting one.

PARISH AND PARISHIONERS.

The Christmas Tree: has been a wonderful sight alongside the Crib on the sanctuary throughout the Christmas Season *which ends today.* We thank the family of the parish who met the cost of the tree and the stand for it, which we will keep for future use. We have kept our Christmas Candle and the "Light from Bethlehem" Candle in place but these will be extinguished after the 4.30pm Mass. **From tomorrow until Ash Wednesday:- the Ordinary Season [green vestments and green banners on the sanctuary wall.]**

The St. Margaret's Children and Family Care [Adoption] Society is the only Catholic Adoption Agency in the UK. The annual Crib Appeal is a vital source of income to the Society. Please be generous in response at the Collection Box next to the Crib. It too will be removed today and the donations passed to the Society.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: we have invited the community from St. Margaret's to join us on Sunday 26th January in a Service to pray for Christian Unity. Even if they are unable to join us on that day, we will hold a Service at 3pm to pray for Christian Unity. That is also the day when the Pope has instructed every priest to focus with their community on the Word of God. We will do this at the Service lasting forty five minutes. **We hope initiatives and invitations will thrive in 2020 between us and the community of St. Margaret's through joint services during Lent and extending through Easter to Pentecost.**

Wednesday evening - Faith Matters starts at 7pm and will resume this Wednesday. As part of the "Year of the Word" we will explore the depth of Jesus' teaching in the chapters of Matthew's Gospel using **Lectio Divina.** This is a way of praying using Gospel passages. It gives each person participating an opportunity to say what attracts them in the Gospel passage read for that evening. **Copies of Matthew's Gospel are available at no charge from the Stall. This Gospel is the longest in content and it will be read throughout the Ordinary Season of this liturgical year at Mass on Sundays and in midweek.**

Marriage and Baptism: we encourage all couples who live together yet are free to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony to come and discuss and plan for this in 2020. Couples who wish to arrange a baptism for a child should contact Fr. Ness as soon as possible. **Baptism should not be celebrated during the Season of Lent except in a case of pastoral necessity. Ash Wednesday is 26th February.**

Sacramental Preparation in this parish:

Last week Mrs. Oates met with Fr. Ness to discuss the relationship between the school and the parish in the preparation of the children for the celebration of Sacraments. **Her focus is the children.** She wishes that all children should celebrate the Sacraments and should celebrate them together in this church. **His focus is on the children and their families.** His mission is to build a worshipping community which in this parish principally involves children and their families. Without the regular and widespread participation of the many families with children, the parish here in which the Sacraments could be celebrated would cease to exist. Mrs. Oates and Fr. Ness will work together to ensure that her wish for the children is fulfilled.

Meeting with parents here next Sunday, 19th January at 2pm - Mrs. Oates will attend.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation for children of P3 will be celebrated on the Feast of St. Joseph, Thursday 19th March at 6.30pm. "First Holy Communion Mass" for children of P4 will be celebrated on Saturday 30th May at 11AM with the Mass of Thanksgiving at 10.30AM on the following day.

The names of those children from P3 and P4 whose families have asked that they celebrate the Sacraments here are displayed on the posters at the entrance to the church. Last year thirty three children from P3 celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This year the families of twenty two of those children, now in P4, have presented their child for the celebration of Eucharist at the First Holy Communion Mass. The leaders of the Children's Liturgy are asked to meet with Fr. Ness in the hall after morning Mass today to talk about and to plan our Sacramental preparation programme - the Big Hug and the Faith Friends - for the children of P3 and P4 who will celebrate the Sacraments here in March and May.

PRAYER INTENTION REQUESTS FROM PARISHIONERS

for those who are ill: Lauren Neilly; Tess Murray; Gerald Waddle; Henry Douglas; Louise Foley; Jim Doyle, Margaret Carroll; Angela Torrance; Mairi Sneddon; Elaine Farrell and Helen Farrell; John Gallacher.

those who have died recently: Francis Connelly; Chris McLean; Nellie Lafferty;

those whose Anniversary or Month Mind Remembrance occurs about now: Bobbie Boyle

In our Piety Stall at the main entrance: a range of cards, diaries and spiritual gifts are available:

Pope Francis' own publications *A-Z Living for Christ and Lessons to children*.

My Day by Day booklet for January and the *My Day by Day Pocket Diary for 2020* [*now reduced to £1*].

The *Magnificat* booklet AND the *Sacred Heart Messenger* for January.

Redemptorist pocket/purse size Diary including a print of the Prayers of the Mass [*now reduced to £1*].

Redemptorist Diary for 2020. This has an excellent Introduction to Matthew's Gospel for this year, Year A.

There are several of these left. *The price is now reduced to £3.* This information on the Gospel is easy to follow and will be of great help throughout the year to understand much better the Scriptures at Mass.

Collections at Mass - Christmas Collection: thank you for your continued generous support of our parish community. The parish's overheads are met from our weekly income and not from Diocesan funds. Heat and Light charges have increased this year to make the church a welcoming environment in every sense. **We heat the church fully whenever the school children attend, as P5 did with Mrs. Ferns on Thursday to prepare for Mass here last Friday on the First Friday.** P5 were very well prepared to lead at Mass as Readers of Scripture and Prayers, in the singing of the chosen hymns and in the Offertory Procession, as all the lead classes have been by their teacher month by month.

The Monday Club: resumed last Monday. All are welcome for tea/coffee, music and raffle/bingo.

Wednesday Coffee Morning Masses: will resume in the hall this Wednesday, 15th January. The ladies of the kitchen and catering group who lead this social initiative for our community thank everyone who gave such generous support throughout last year but especially since Mass was celebrated in the hall. May we have a similarly positive year in 2020.

Enrolment in St. Brendan's Primary School for Session 2020-21: begins tomorrow from 1.45pm to 4.15pm. It will continue at the same times on Tuesday [*omit Wednesday*] Thursday and Friday.

The Lion King: SAFETY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CHILDREN - almost the whole school community will travel through on Wednesday to The Playhouse Theatre Edinburgh on Wednesday returning by 6.30 - 7pm. On returning the children will enter the school via our carpark and the new pathway. ***Our car park will be blocked off by our pass keepers to exclude cars and pedestrians to ensure the safety of the children as they leave from the coaches and enter the school.***

Fr. Ness: matters be aware of:

Chaplaincy at OLHS and the commitment there which the bishop demands must be balanced with pastoral engagement at the Primary School. This week he has agreed a spiritual and pastoral programme with Mr. McHugh for Our Lady's until Holy Thursday - the last day of term. He has also agreed a programme with Mrs. Oates which has already begun for the Sacrament of Reconciliation for classes P4- P7 and will include the celebration of morning Mass in the school throughout Lent as last year. This will mean his absence from morning Mass not only each Tuesday but also on other days - to be advised - spread over the term. The community will provide Services for itself when necessary.

Dates in January and into February: The Burns /Scottish Night - a good meal, song, speeches and conversation among friends - 31st January - view the poster and buy a ticket if you wish to come. 3rd- 8th February visit to Nuremberg and 22nd-23rd February Appeal by Fr. Peter for *Let the Children live*.

St. Brendan's the Navigator Parish

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The Feast of The Baptism of Jesus – 12th January 2020.

Let us nourish the spiritual life of every parishioner. Let us pray that more and more families come into our community and feel welcome here and feel that they belong here and are led to a willing participation in the life of this parish.

“Thank you” to everyone who gave of themselves to the community last Sunday by going after Mass for tea and refreshments served in the hall. All are invited there. Please be generous and give some of your time to others.

Mass: Sunday at 10.30am and 4.30pm. Midweek 9.30am.

Holy Hour: every Thursday at 7pm.