

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

Sung Response to the Psalm today "All nations shall fall prostrate before you O, Lord."

Hymn for 2020 in our parish. Please Give the words to those you know who have stopped coming.

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. **[What a beautiful hymn and message to all.]**

Celebrating the Year of the Word during 2020.

Pope Francis wants to highlight that *Jesus is present when his Word is announced to the congregation in the Scriptures during Mass and the priest or deacon gives an explanation to lead the Word to burn in the heart of the listeners. The Word of God prepares us to receive the Bread of Life, the Word that created the Universe, the Word that transforms the heart, the Word made flesh that redeems our humanity.*

Why do we wait and put off what we know we need to do today? Could it be that all of us are prone to 'futility', inclining us to postpone doing good things because of a fear that we may fail, make little difference, leave no mark? Although St. Paul declares he can do all things by the power of 'the One who gives him strength' we sometimes struggle to change and even at the New Year our best resolutions can be quickly derailed by our worst habits.

The Incarnation teaches that only the humble can face being futile, otherwise how can the willingness of a young girl from Nazareth, Mary, the betrothed of Joseph, to accept God's plan for her, lead her to become a motherhood for all, the Magi-Wise kneel before the new-born innocent, one man challenge an empire, a pastor serve through perplexity, a parent care for a dying child? This is called faith. Since 'nothing is impossible to God', the Christian confronts daunting inevitables – this is called hope. And because the dignity of the Christian is not measured by significance, but by insignificance, if we prove brave enough to allow the sword to pierce our own heart (Lk 2.35) – this is called love

The 'Year of the Word' - when we listen to the God who speaks. It will offer everyone the chance to enter this experience of faith so that we live in hope and practice charity.

One of the most startling changes in the RC Church, sparked half a century ago by the Constitution on the Holy Scripture of Vatican II, *Dei Verbum*, has been the attitude to the Bible. Until then the Bible was viewed by Catholics with caution. It belonged to the Protestants, as sacraments belonged to us. It was thought dangerous to examine the Bible too openly, for fear of falling under the condemnations of the Modernist Movement. *All that came to an end with the Council; since then the Bible has taken its place in Catholic minds and hearts as securely as in those of other Christians. Private reading and meditation of the Bible has become commonplace.*

Bible reading and study groups have sprung up in many parishes including our parish [each Wednesday at 7pm.]

The public celebration of morning and evening biblical prayer is a feature of many parishes. Where priests are lacking, biblical service - Liturgy of the Word - has become an alternative way for parishes to meet the Lord. Catholic biblical scholars have taken their place in the broader academic circle of research into the Hebrew Bible so that we might understand our Judeo-Christian faith better. Each week we will distribute to you a commentary on the Scriptures to take home and read and digest and learn about the Word of God.

What do we learn from listening to the God Who Speaks? From the whole of the Bible we gain a greater understanding of ourselves and of our situation, of human nature in search of God in all the varied situations and predicaments of life, and therefore of God and our interrelationship.

Next week we will distribute on Sunday a general introduction to this. It is centred on the myth of Adam and Eve. Please read it. We have the great grace of the Lectionary which provides a sequence of Readings for Mass on Sundays on a three-year cycle: A – B – C and for weekday Mass on a two-year cycle: A – B.

PARISH AND PARISHIONERS.

The Christmas Tree: many people, including very many children, will not yet have seen the tree illuminated in the darkness of the church with all other lights extinguished. ***Yet Douglas the Collie dog has seen it.*** He came with his owners for part of the Holy Hour on Thursday to see it. It is a wonderful sight. The lights on the tree are brilliant white and they shine through the deep shade of green on the branches. The tree will remain in place until after the 4.30pm Mass next Sunday - the Feast of the Baptism of Jesus. Until then we will keep our Christmas Candle and the "Light from Bethlehem" Candle in place. Families and parishioners will be able to see the tree for themselves from 6pm this Thursday. **From next Monday until Ash Wednesday we enter the Ordinary [Green vestments and banners] season of the liturgical year.**

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 displayed in front of the altar. It too will be removed next Sunday and the donations passed immediately to the Society.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: we will invite the community from St. Margaret's to join us in a Service to pray for Christian Unity. This is an international observance kept in the Southern Hemisphere between Ascension Thursday and Pentecost Sunday and in the Northern Hemisphere between 18th and 25th January. We hope the Reverend Ann Paton, the interim Moderator for St. Margaret's, will join us on Sunday 26th January to show our commitment to unity. Cardinal Kasper of the Vatican Curia describes this as the imperative for this generation. We hope initiatives and invitations like this will thrive in 2020 between us and the community of St. Margaret's through joint services during Lent and Easter.

Wednesday evening - Faith Matters starts at 7pm and will give all parishioners an opportunity to deepen their knowledge and understanding of our faith and its practice. **We will resume on 15th January As part of the "Year of the Word"** we will explore the chapters of Matthew's Gospel using Lectio Divina - a way of praying using Gospel passages which 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. We also encourage couples who have married in ceremonies outside of the Church **to ask about making their civil marriage lawful in the eyes of the Church under the Code of Canon Law.** 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 on 26th February.**

Sacramental Preparation in this parish: *Meeting with parents on 19th January here at 2pm.*

Mrs. Oates asked Fr. Ness that the Sacrament of First Reconciliation would be celebrated on the Feast of St. Joseph, Thursday 19th March at 6.30pm and that "First Holy Communion" would be celebrated on Saturday 30th May with the Mass of Thanksgiving on the following day.

Those children from P3 and P4 who have participated regularly in the life of this parish community between last August and now will be able to celebrate the Sacraments on these dates. Those who attend other parishes should arrange for their children to celebrate the sacraments there. Parents of those children from this parish who now wish to arrange for their children to celebrate the sacraments in this parish should contact Fr. Ness to arrange this on other dates.

The leaders of the Children's Liturgy are invited to meet with Fr. Ness in the hall immediately after Mass next Sunday to talk over our Sacramental preparation programme for children of P3 and P4.

PRAYER INTENTION REQUESTS FROM PARISHIONERS

those who have died recently: May McCrossan [Liverpool]; Thomas Donnelly [Viewpark]; Elizabeth Lynch.

those whose Anniversary or Month Mind Remembrance occurs about now: Connie McGinn.

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: please continue to support the development of our parish community. Please understand that even when you are not present at Mass and therefore perhaps not contributing on that Sunday to the parish income from Collections, the parish's overheads still accrue and must be met. Heat and Light charges have increased this year to make the church a welcoming environment in every sense and especially because of the commitment we have made to heat the church fully whenever the school children attend such as in rehearsals for Christmas as well as on such **as this Friday for Mass on the First Friday of the new month, year and decade.**

Debt Repayment and Votive Candle income: we paid £3500 from the Parish bank account on 31st December to the Diocese against the loan of £5000 which the bishop had granted to us in March. Our net debt worsened therefore by [only] £1500 this year against the cost of all the works of repair, maintenance and improvement which we carried out in the period February to December. Part of the debt repayment came from the significant increase in income from the St. Killian Votive Candle stands, the purchase of these stands having been met by a donation from one parishioner.

All Signs will soon erect a sign to promote the church on the elevation facing onto Barons Road using option 3 as displayed on the Notice Board. The cost is included in the budget for the year to 31st December.

The Monday Club: resumes tomorrow at 1.30pm. All are welcome for tea/coffee, music and raffle/bingo.

Fr. Ness: some important points to be aware of:

1. On Friday I suffered another incident of Meneer's Disease. Without warning while meeting with a parishioner, I was completely overcome by dizziness which was followed immediately by projectile vomiting. He had to guide me to the toilet in the chapel house and make a hasty retreat. The last incident was six months ago and the gap before that was twelve months. The sickness effect continues for days and the possibility of shorter intervals between attacks can't be ignored. There is no cure and no remedy. The community must be prepared so that no matter what happens, service to the community from within its own members can take over from the priest as far as possible.
2. The role of chaplain at OLHS and the commitment there which the bishop demands means there is little time available for the Primary School compared to the last ten months. Families must realise that they will have to come with their children to this church regularly for the children to be in meaningful contact with the priest especially in the context of their preparation for all Sacraments.
3. We thank St. Brendan's Yoker for their New Year Card and their gift of a Cake with spiritual greeting set out on the surface in the icing. We'll share out the cake in the hall after Mass this morning.

St. Brendan's the Navigator Parish

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The Feast of The Epiphany – 5th January 2020.

Best wishes to all our families for this New Year.

Today: Day of Prayer for Peace [led by Justice and Peace Scotland.]

Second Collection TODAY for the 53rd *World Day of Peace.*

Let us nourish the spiritual life of every parishioner through a sense of them belonging here and their participation in all elements of our parish's life.

Today: after Mass Tea and refreshments will be served in the Hall. Everyone at Mass is invited. 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.