

FRANCIS, BISHOP OF ROME, SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD. ON MERCY. TO ALL WHO READ THIS LETTER GRACE, MERCY, AND PEACE

9. In the parables devoted to mercy, Jesus reveals the nature of God as that of a Father who never gives up until he has forgiven the wrong and overcome rejection with compassion and mercy. We know these parables well, three in particular: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the father with two sons (cf. Lk 15:1-32). In these parables, God is always presented as full of joy, especially when he pardons. In them we find the core of the Gospel and of our faith, because mercy is presented as a force that overcomes everything, filling the heart with love and bringing consolation through pardon.

From another parable, we call an important teaching for our Christian lives. In reply to Peter's question about how many times it is necessary to forgive, Jesus says: "I do not say seven times, but seventy times seven times" (Mt 18:22). He then goes on to tell the parable of the "ruthless servant," who, called by his master to return a huge amount, begs him on his knees for mercy. His master cancels his debt. But he then meets a fellow servant who owes him a few cents and who in turn begs on his knees for mercy, but the first servant refuses his request and throws him into jail. When the master hears of the matter, he becomes infuriated and, summoning the first servant back to him, says, "Should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?" (Mt 18:33). Jesus concludes, "So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart" (Mt 18:35).

This parable contains a profound teaching for all of us. Jesus affirms that mercy is not only an action of the Father, it becomes a criterion for ascertaining who his true children are. In short, we are called to show mercy because mercy has first been shown to us. Pardon-ing offences becomes the clearest expression of merciful love, and for us Christians it is an imperative from which we cannot excuse ourselves. At times how hard it seems to forgive! And yet pardon is the instrument placed into our fragile hands to attain serenity of heart. To let go of anger, wrath, violence, and revenge are necessary conditions to living joyfully. Let us therefore heed the Apostle's exhortation: "Do not let the sun go down on your anger" (Eph 4:26). Above all, let us listen to the words of Jesus who made mercy an ideal of life and a criterion for the credibility of our faith: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Mt 5:7); the beatitude to which we should particularly aspire in this Holy Year.

As we can see in Sacred Scripture, mercy is a key word that indicates God's action towards us. He does not limit himself merely to affirming his love, but makes it visible and tangible. Love, after all, can never be just an abstraction. By its very nature, it indicates something concrete: intentions, attitudes, and behaviours that are shown in daily living. The mercy of God is his loving concern for each one of us. He feels responsible; that is, he desires our wellbeing and he wants to see us happy, full of joy, and peaceful. This is the path which the merciful love of Christians must also travel. As the Father loves, so do his children. Just as he is merciful, so we are called to be merciful to each other. To be continued...

Parish Priest: Fr. Gregory E. Umunna Ph.D.

Phone: 01250872171. **Email:** ststephen@dunkelddiocese.org.uk

Address: 8, Bank Street, Blairgowrie, PH10 6DE.

Hall Reservations: Contact no: 01250872171.

Hospital Chaplains: Please call: N/wells Direct line: 07821624124,

Hospital Pager 01382660111; P.R.I: 01738259371. *Pls let the priest know if you are on a long stay at a hospital and would like a visit.

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals: Please make appointment with Priest before any arrangements are made.

Diocese of Dunkeld Scottish Charity No:SC00810

Parish Ministries, Volunteers and Contact Persons: (May God bless these & others for their selfless service)

H/T: St. Steph's Primary School: Mrs. Lindsey Smith. Ph: 871950.

Catechists: Ms. Elizabeth Bush: Catechism Classes for 1st Holy Comm & Confirmation everyin the Hall. Email: alzbeta.krajcikova@gmail.com Ph:07934884759

Parish Safeguarding Coordinator: Mrs. Maureen Jackson. 07952376985; Email: ststephenpsc@dunkelddiocese.org.uk

Parish Webmaster: Mr. Irek Kawalinski. Email: irekkowalinski@gmail.com

Music Directors: Mr. Tom Buckham and Mrs. Gail McIntyre.

Welcomers: Mary O'Brien, Doreen Dobbie, Pat McCarthy, Snooky Marshall, Carol Kennedy, Daria Mcdowall (Alyth)

Responsible Person for Eucharistic Ministers: Mr. Alan Scott.

Responsible Person for Children's Liturgy: Mrs. Mary Wojtowicz

Responsible Person for Lectors:

Responsible Group for Parish Social Justice Issues: SSVDP

Responsible Person for Church Flowers: Mrs. Jean Scott (Blair), Mrs. Elma Sharp (Alyth)

Resp. Person: Altar Servers: Mr. Rolly Colanse

Grounds Flowers: Mrs. Jennifer FitzPatrick

Adviser on Finance: Mr. Mike Coyle

Adviser on Fabric: Mr. Jim Graham

Wishing you and your loved ones a lovely Sunday—Fr. Gregory

Tear this off please:... Are you going into the hospital? Do you have someone going into the hospital? Would you like him/her/you to be visited with communion, please fill the form below and return to Fr. Gregory.

Name:.....Hospital:.....

Date:.....

Please submit all items for the parish bulletin by 6.00 p.m. on Thursday each week.

Email: peacegreg2002@yahoo.com Phone: 01250 872171



St. Stephen's RC Church Blairgowrie
St. Luan's R C Church Alyth
St. Mary's Coupar Angus
5th Sunday Year B 28/4/24

Parish website: <https://www.st-stephens-blairgowrie.org.uk/>

E-mail: ststephen@dunkelddiocese.org.uk

Address: 8 Bank Street Blairgowrie, PH10 6DE



Warm Welcome
to all our Parishioners and visitors.
Whether you are visiting our parish or just moved
into the area, please feel very welcome ... thanks.

Father Gregory E. Umunna Ph.D.
Parish website: [https://www.st-](https://www.st-stephensblairgowrie.org.uk/)
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01250872171

Parish diary: Week beginning from 28/4/24.

Saturday 27th April - 5.30pm: Vigil mass St Stephen's

Sunday 28th April - 9.30 am: Holy mass at St. Luan's Alyth

Sunday 28th April - 11.00am: Holy mass at St. Stephen's.

Tuesday 30th April -10.00am: Holy mass at St. Stephen's:

Tuesday 30th April: 7pm: mass followed by Talk on "Looking for God in a Broken World: The Case of Persecution of Christians in our world today" by Fr. Gregory Umunna.

Host: Sera Vocation Group. Venue: St. Mary's Lochee, 7.00pm. Everyone is invited.

Wednesday 1st May - - 6.00pm adoration, 7pm: Holy mass at St. Stephen's

Thursday 2nd May - 10am: mass at St. Luan's;

Friday 3rd May - Holy mass at St. Stephen's

Saturday 4th May - 5.30pm: Vigil mass St Stephen's

Sunday 5th May - 9.30 am: Holy mass at St. Luan's Alyth

Sunday 5th May -11.00am: Holy mass at St. Stephen's.

This Sunday, ... While the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep was explored last Sunday, this Sunday explores the connectedness between the Vine and its branches especially for the branch to remain alive and to produce... "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit." Questions to reflect on this Sunday: Am I alive in Him? How am I alive in Him? Do I bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit? What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit?

Mass intentions for the week:

Fr. Martin Chambers, Elaine McDonald.

Other Devotional Programmes of the Parish.

Family Rosary and adoration. Every Wednesday 6.00pm - 7.00pm. -Mass for the sick every Wed 7.00pm, -Sacrament of Reconciliation: 5.00pm every Saturday and 9am every Sunday, -Divine Mercy Devotion: Tues after morning mass. -Mass with St. Stephen's Primary School: 1st Fri. of the month; end of terms and core events masses.

In your prayers, kindly remember those on our prayer list:

Michael Rolls, Neil Mcdowall, Pam McKenna, Val Naughton, Dr. Paul Kinnear, Mary and George Flockhart, Snooky Marshall, Maud McGinn, Alex Forrester, Cipriano and Carmelita, Tom O'Malley, Roy Sweeney, Diana Richardson, -

You are never alone:

For a shared a prayer, or just have someone listen to you, a candle lit for you or yours, have a mass offered for your intention or that of a loved one living or dead, please speak to the priest. Thanks.

Warm Welcome:

Tea/Coffee, biscuits and a warm welcoming space in the

Lower Hall after the 11.00am mass every Sunday to May 2024. Please feel free to pop in. More volunteers to help with serving please. Thanks.

Take time today to contemplate... the metaphor of the image of Vine and Branches, as Christ uses it to communicate his closeness to us. Like branches of one tree, we are held together by our faith in Christ. Because we are all part of this one living plant, we come together in thanksgiving and praise.

Let us Pray:

Opening Prayer: O God, you graft us onto Christ, the true vine, and, with tireless care, you nurture our growth in knowledge and reverence. Tend the vineyard of your Church, that in Christ each branch may bring forth to the glory of your name abundant fruits of faith and love. Grant this through Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.



Mary Wojtowicz and her team of the Liturgists for the wonderful work they do for us and I encourage the parents to please support their children to use this wonderful opportunity.

-New to the Parish? Please pick a form at the entrance of the church, complete and hand in the form. Thanks. New members are always welcome to come along and attend or visit the following parish groups: SVDP, Wednesdays 7.30pm; Divine Mercy, Tuesdays 10.30am; Adoration, Wed. 6.00pm.

-Parish Finances: All of us hope to leave the world a better place than when we came into it. When making your will please consider leaving something to St. Stephen's R C Church so that you will continue to assist our parish to flourish and leave behind a legacy of Faith. If you feel able to support the parish in whatever way you could via Standing Order, occasional or one-off payment, it would be very much appreciated. By signing the Gift Aid form, your offertory collection can earn the parish a bit more.

Mass offertory collection goes back to the pre-Covid practise with the plates going round from 1st Sunday of May. Thanks.

Details of Parish account: Royal Bank of Scotland, 14 Allan Street, Blairgowrie, PH10 6AD. Sort code:- **83-16-33**; Account No:- **00240708**. Account name:- Trustees of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dunkeld No3 Char TST St Stephens RC Church. Many thanks.

***Last Sunday's offertory coll. £277.42:** Many thanks for your support to the parish.

*Figures exclude takings from Standing Orders, bank transfers and direct debits. Comprehensive Parish Accounts are published on the Notice Board. Thanks.

First Aid Training: There will be a meeting of those who have registered their interest on the proposed First Aid Training to discuss peoples requirements and what would suit everyone. **Date:** Sat. 4th. **Time:** 6.30pm. **Venue:** Lower Hall. **The names on our list are:** Amanda Donnelly, Kian Donnelly, Juliet Vivers, Hayley Ritchie, Maria Dawson, Katherine Fraser, Ellie William, Gail McIntyre, Anne-Marie Hogan and Mary Wojtowicz.

What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit?

In the reception of the sacrament of confirmation, the person receives the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, wisdom and understanding, counsel and strength (fortitude), knowledge and fear of the Lord (Is 11:2), and piety. These gifts are not to sit idle or be kept in storage. Rather, they are to be put to good use so they will bear much fruit.

In his letter to the Galatians, St. Paul lists the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5:22-23). These fruits emanate or proceed from the Holy Spirit and reveal what the Holy Spirit is like. These are the Holy Spirit's character traits. And because the Holy Spirit is a Person of the Most Holy Trinity, and because the three Persons are one, the fruits reveal what God is like.

Love. Agape love is the highest form of love, love for both God and neighbour. It is selfless, focused on the other person, given freely and gladly without condition.

Joy. Joy is an interior contentment that comes from being close to God and in right relationship with others. Joy also comes with speaking and upholding the truth, honesty and integrity in relationships, enduring hardships and decent conduct.

Peace. Peace is the harmony that occurs when justice prevails. It happens when resources are shared equitably, power is used for service, interdependence is fostered, information is shared openly and honestly, the dignity of each person is respected, legitimate differences are tolerated, the disadvantaged receive help, hurts are forgiven and the common good is upheld.

Patience. Patience is the virtue of suffering interruption or delay with composure and without complaint; to suffer annoyance, insult or mistreatment with self-restraint, refusing to be provoked; and to suffer burdens and difficult tasks with resolve and determination. It is also the willingness to slow down for another's benefit, to set aside one's personal plans and concerns, to go at another's pace.

Kindness. Kindness is a warm and friendly disposition toward another. A kind person is caring and helpful and complimentary.

Generosity. Generosity is a bigheartedness grounded in an abundance mentality. It is unselfish and expresses itself in sharing. It is extended to family and friends, strangers, and particularly those in need, and is offered not only as money, food and clothing, but also as time shared and assistance provided.

Faithfulness. Faithfulness is demonstrated by loyalty to friends, duties performed, promises kept, commitments fulfilled, contracts completed, vows observed and being true to one's word.

Gentleness. Gentleness is sensitivity for another person.

Considering the Priesthood: Have you every thought about a life of loving service to others in God's name?

If so, 'Come and See' at the National Enquirer's Event for anyone considering the Priesthood on Saturday 25 May in Turnbull Hall, Glasgow.

Please be in touch with Fr Jim Walls (stmaryslochee@dunkelddiocese.org.uk; or 01382-611282). Transport will be arranged from Dundee.

Also, the link below gives bulletin prompts up until Pentecost.

<https://priestsforScotland.org.uk/think-vocations-2024-prompts-for-parishes/> Any queries don't hesitate to be in touch. God bless, Jim

Reflection: Spiritual pruning.

Are you open to allowing yourself to undergo pruning? Just like how it is necessary to prune a plant to yield an abundance of good fruit or beautiful flowers, the same goes for our lives. If we are not pruned, we may produce many small and insignificant results. However, if we allow ourselves to be pruned, we can bear an abundance of good fruits and achieve the best results possible.

Jesus employs the concept of pruning to impart to us a lesson on producing good fruit for His Kingdom. He desires that we lead fruitful lives and that we serve as influential agents of His mercy on earth. If we are not open to the process of spiritual pruning every now and then, we will not be suitable for God to work through as His instruments. Allowing God to remove the negative qualities in our lives is what spiritual pruning means. This involves allowing Him to uproot our vices so that our virtues can flourish. To achieve this, we must permit God to humble us and strip away our pride, even though it may cause discomfort. The pain associated with being humbled by God is an essential part of our spiritual development.

As we become more humble, we increasingly depend on God for our sustenance instead of relying on our own thoughts and agendas. God's wisdom is limitless, and if we keep turning to Him as our source, we will

become stronger and better equipped to fulfil His will. However, this can only happen if we allow Him to prune us.

To undergo spiritual pruning, we need to release our own will and ideas and let the master grower take charge of our lives. It involves surrendering control over our lives and placing complete trust in God. To achieve this, we must die to ourselves and recognize that we depend entirely on God, just like a branch relies on the vine for life. Without the vine, the branch withers and dies. Therefore, it is only by staying connected to the vine that we can truly live. This requires true humility, where we acknowledge that we cannot do anything without God.

On this day, pray and ask the Lord to remove from your life anything that does not come from Him. Have faith in Him and in His perfect plan, knowing that this is the only way to bear the good fruit that God desires to bring forth through you.—**Catholic Daily Readings**

"Dear brothers and sisters, we are always journeying in life. And we become what we go towards. Let us choose the way of God, not of self; the way of "yes", not the way of "if". We will discover that there are no unexpected events, no uphill path, no night that cannot be faced with Jesus. May Our Lady, Mother of the journey, who by receiving the Word made her entire life a "yes" to God, show us the way." - Pope Francis.

The Society for the Protection of Unborn children (SPUC)

recently launched a new prayer initiative in collaboration with the Knights of St. Columba. **Let Life Flourish:** A Spiritual Bouquet is a rallying call to Catholics, the wider Prolife community and all people of goodwill to pray with renewed faith and trust for the protection of all human life from conception to natural death. See link for more information www.spuc.org.uk/letlifeflourish

"**The two different paths** of those first disciples tell us, Jesus' disciples today, that in life we have two opposite directions before us: there is the path of those who, like those two on the out-bound journey, allow themselves to be paralysed by life's disappointments and proceed sadly; and there is the path of those who do not put themselves and their problems first, but rather Jesus who visits us, and the brothers who await his visit, that is, our brothers who are waiting for us to take care of them. Here is the turning point: to stop orbiting around one's self; the disappointments of the past, the unrealised ideals, the many bad things that have happened in our life. Very often we tend to keep going around and around.... To leave that behind and to go forward looking at the greatest and truest reality of life: Jesus lives, Jesus loves me. This is the greatest reality."

Pope Francis

Memorial Mass: A memorial mass will be held for Fr. Martin Chambers on Friday, 10th May 2024 at 7.30pm in the Cathedral. Metropolitan Archbishop Leo Cushley will be the principal Celebrant and Bishop Frank Dougan will preach. Parishioners from across the diocese are welcome to join at the mass as we pray for the happy repose of Fr. Martin Chambers.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of Scotland

in their duty of pastoral care of souls have addressed a letter on Assisted Suicide to all Catholics across Scotland. This electronic copy of this letter is attached for us but will also be read at all masses this weekend. Please take a listen.



Please submit all items for the parish bulletin by 6.00 p.m. on Thursday each week.

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Diocese of Dunkeld Scottish Charity No: