

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

10. Mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life. All of her pastoral activity should be caught up in the tenderness she makes present to believers; nothing in her preaching and in her witness to the world can be lacking in mercy. The Church's very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love. The Church "has an endless desire to show mercy".[8] Perhaps we have long since forgotten how to show and live the way of mercy. The temptation, on the one hand, to focus exclusively on justice made us forget that this is only the first, albeit necessary and indispensable step. But the Church needs to go beyond and strive for a higher and more important goal. On the other hand, sad to say, we must admit that the practice of mercy is waning in the wider culture. In some cases the word seems to have dropped out of use. However, without a witness to mercy, life becomes fruitless and sterile, as if sequestered in a barren desert. The time has come for the Church to take up the joyful call to mercy once more. It is time to return to the basics and to bear the weaknesses and struggles of our brothers and sisters. Mercy is the force that reawakens us to new life and instils in us the courage to look to the future with hope.

11. Let us not forget the great teaching offered by Saint John Paul II in his second Encyclical, Dives in Misericordia, which at the time came unexpectedly, its theme catching many by surprise. There are two passages in particular to which I would like to draw attention. First, Saint John Paul II highlighted the fact that we had forgotten the theme of mercy in today's cultural milieu: "The present-day mentality, more perhaps than that of people in the past, seems opposed to a God of mercy, and in fact tends to exclude from life and to remove from the human heart the very idea of mercy. The word and the concept of 'mercy' seem to cause uneasiness in man, who, thanks to the enormous development of science and technology, never before known in history, has become the master of the earth and has subdued and dominated it (cf. Gen 1:28). This dominion over the earth, sometimes understood in a one-sided and superficial way, seems to have no room for mercy... And this is why, in the situation of the Church and the world today, many individuals and groups guided by a lively sense of faith are turning, I would say almost spontaneously, to the mercy of God".[9] Furthermore, Saint John Paul II pushed for a more urgent proclamation and witness to mercy in the contemporary world: "It is dictated by love for man, for all that is human and which, according to the intuitions of many of our contemporaries, is threatened by an immense danger. The mystery of Christ... obliges me to proclaim mercy as God's merciful love, revealed in that same mystery of Christ. It likewise obliges me to have recourse to that mercy and to beg for it at this difficult, critical phase of the history of the Church and of the world".[10] This teaching is more pertinent than ever and deserves to be taken up once again in this Holy Year. Let us listen to his words once more: "The Church lives an authentic life when she professes and proclaims mercy – the most stupendous attribute of the Creator and of the Redeemer – and when she brings people close to the sources of the Saviour's mercy, of which she is the trustee and dispenser".[11] To be continued....

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**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 the 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:SCO0810

**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 every .....in 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 Robbie, Pat McCarthy, Snooky Marshall, Carol Kennedy, Toni Nugent, 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)

**Responsible Person: Altar Servers:** Mr. Rolly Colanese

**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

6th Sunday Year B 5/5/24

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

E-mail: [ststephen@dunkelddiocese.org.uk](mailto: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.**

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E-mail: [ststephen@dunkelddiocese.org.uk](mailto:ststephen@dunkelddiocese.org.uk)

Contact Address: 8 Bank Street Blairgowrie, PH10 6DE  
01250872171

### Parish diary: Week beginning from 5/5/24.

**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.

**Tuesday 7th May** -10.00am: Holy mass at St. Stephen's:

**Wed 8th May** -1.00pm Dunkeld Clerical Friendly Society AGM meeting

- 6.00pm adoration, 7pm: **Vigil Mass of the Ascension**

of the Lord. Solemnity. Holy Day of Obligation. Holy mass at St. Stephen's

**Thursday 9th May** - 9.30am: **Mass of the Ascension of the Lord.** Solemnity.

Holy Day of Obligation. mass at St. Luan's;

**Thursday 9th May** - 11.00am: **Mass of the Ascension of the Lord.** Solemnity.

Holy Day of Obligation. mass at St. Stephen's

**Friday 10th May** - Holy mass at St. Stephen's **Novena to the Holy Spirit begins in view of Pentecost.**

**Saturday 11th May** - 5.30pm: Vigil mass St Stephen's

**Sunday 12th May** - 9.30 am: Holy mass at St. Luan's Alyth

**Sunday 12th May** -11.00am: Holy mass at St. Stephen's.

*This Sunday, ... "God has no favourites" exclaims Peter as he encounters the non-Jewish Cornelius. The Holy Spirit surprises them all by taking the initiative and descending with powerful signs into the group. Jesus in John's Gospel, stresses that the initiative always comes from God. "You did not choose me: I chose you!"*

### Mass intentions for the week:

Patrick O'Brien, Mary Mackenzie, Leanne Carr.

### 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...** "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. Remember, you did not choose me, no, I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last."

### Let us Pray:

Opening Prayer: God of all nations, in the gift of your Son you have embraced the world with a love that takes away our sin and bestows perfect joy. Grant to all who have been reborn in baptism fidelity in serving you and generosity in loving one another. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the firstborn from the dead, who lives and reigns with you now and always in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.



**Today and Up Coming Events:**

**-8th of May 2024.** .Sacrament of Reconciliation for candidates for the sacraments. 5pm.

**-June 12th:** National Prayer Breakfast for Scotland, Edinburgh all morning and afternoon.

**-19th May:** The Apostolate of Communication. Special collection. Please support it.

**26th May:** Building maintenance Fund collection. please support it.

**2nd June** -Sacrament of Confirmation and First Holy Communion for School and Parish Candidates: Time 11.00am.

**-2nd June:** Day of Life Special Collection. Please support it.

**-30th June:** Building maintenance Fund collection. please support it.

**-14th July:** Peter's Pence. Please support it.

**-28th July:** Building maintenance Fund collection. please support it.

**-11th August:** August: The Apostleship of the Sea. Please support it.

**-25th August:** Building maintenance Fund collection. please support it.

**-15th September:** Bishop's Mensal Fund/Sick and Retired Priest Fund. Please support it.

**-29th September:** Building maintenance Fund collection. please support it.

**Introduction to today's Scripture Readings.** Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48

— Peter once believed that the message of salvation was only for Jews. But in this part of the story of the early Church, he sees the Holy Spirit given to Cornelius, a Roman. As a result, he preaches that all can be baptised. I John 4:7-10 — The sign that we know God is that we love each other. John 15:9-17 — We are called to lay down our lives for each other, as Jesus did for us.

**-St. Mary's Coupar Angus** will, *ad interim*, be happy to receive and store your unwanted gift items and other items you may wish to donate in support of the Church fund. Please hand them in

or leave in the Lower Hall. Stalls will be set up in St. Mary's Coupar Angus at specified date in Spring and Summer. Contact MOB 01828627723.



**-Children's Liturgy:** Many thanks to 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. £335.90; BMF £261.76** 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 require-

ments 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.

**Last Will and Testament**

Just before leaving his disciples, Jesus reminds them and by extension us of what he expects of them and us. Earlier he had sent them out to spread the Kingdom of God. Those who go in his name, do so with his authority. The authority goes with the mission, so to speak. In Matthew's version he now adds this great promise, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Mark says that the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it". And Luke emphasises that they will be "clothed with power from on high", that is, with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is very definite about what he has to say. Like any gathering of people, the feelings of his disciples were varied. But he sends them out to speak and act in his name.

Their mission was both easy and hard: easy to understand but hard to carry out. It was to teach others all that he had taught them. Just as he asked them to follow his way, they were to ask that others should follow that way too.

Has a doctor ever put you on a course of antibiotics. The most basic guidance about antibiotics is to complete the course. Even if the patient starts to feel well after a few days, to discontinue taking the medicine can let their condition grow worse. Similarly, the message of salvation must continue to be shared until the end of time. With all the changes in the church and in society, neither Jesus nor his message have changed. His Gospel remains a call to live our lives to the full. You write a new page of the gospel each day, through all that you do and whatever you say. Others read what you write, be it faithful or true.

So what is the gospel according to you? He is with us always. This can be a real help against loneliness. Being alone is not the same as being lonely. One can feel lonely in a crowded street; or alternatively, like Cicero, never less alone than when alone. This applies especially to those who believe the promise, "I am with you always." Talking with him doesn't even need words. If we are open to His presence in our heart, and treasure it, we can experience fully that "Joy of the Gospel" so warmly described for us by our good Pope Francis.



**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: Choosing and being chosen**

The experience of being chosen by someone can be a welcome one. It might be as simple as someone choosing us to be on their team; or, some years later, to be their referee, when applying for a job; they trust us to give them a good reference. But being chosen can be even more significant still. At the root of every happy marriage is the fact that two people once chose and then kept on choosing each other. At the heart of every true friendship is a similar choice. Two people choose to be friends with each other; they valued their relationship as special and worthwhile. As in marriage, the choice must be mutual if the friendship is to last. When the choice is one-sided, there can be heartbreak for the one not chosen in return. One of life's really painful experiences is unrequited love.

In the gospel today Jesus uses this language of choice and friendship. He tells them (and us), "I chose you," "I call you friends." We can each hear those words as addressed to us. The disciples here represent us all. He has handed over his life for us all. Like St. Paul we can each say that the Son of God loved me and gave himself for me. In giving his life for us, Jesus chose us, personally, called each of us his friend. His words are to us, "You are my friends." The Mass makes present the self-giving death of Jesus in every generation, to every community that

gathers for the Breaking of Bread. Right here and now he continues to speak those same words from the last supper, "You are my friends," "I chose you." But here's a thing: In our personal lives, choosing one means not choosing another. This is not the case with the good Lord, who is able to choose each of us equally. As Peter says in the first reading, "God does not have favourites."

If I choose someone as a friend, I want that person to make a similar choice of me. Similarly, the Lord's choice of us seeks and desires our choice of him. Having chosen us, he wants us to reciprocate that choice. Earlier in the gospel, at a time when many people stopped following him, he turned to his disciples and said to them, "Do you also wish to go away?" Jesus was inviting them to respond to the choice he had made of them. At that highly-charged moment, Peter said on behalf of them all, "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the message of eternal life." In this way he publicly declared his choice of Jesus. At Mass we both celebrate the Lord's choice of us and we renew our choice of him. When we respond to his invitation to take and eat, we take Him to heart and renew our choice him as our way, our truth and our life.

**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 Cushey 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 Ascension:** Each Sunday we profess through the Creed, "He ascended into Heaven." Christ's Ascension was the culmination of God's Divine plan for Christ Jesus – his return to his Father with his "Mission Accomplished." Ascension is the grand finale of all Jesus' words and works done for us and for our salvation. It is a culmination, but not the conclusion. As Jesus is now with God in glory, so Jesus is with us now in Spirit: "Lo, I am with you always." The feast of the Ascension celebrates one aspect of the Resurrec-

tion, namely Jesus' exaltation. Jesus did not wait 40 days to be glorified at God's right hand. That had already happened at his Resurrection. The focus of this feast is the Heavenly reign of Christ. The Lord is now "seated at the right hand of the Father" as we profess in the Nicene Creed, meaning He alone is in control of the continuing plan of salvation through the Holy Spirit, unrestricted by time, space or culture. Thus, in the Paschal Mystery, Jesus' passion, death, Resurrection, Ascension and the sending of the Holy Spirit form one unbroken reality which is to be understood by Faith. The Ascension means that Jesus, His salvific suffering for our Salvation completed, is with his Father in glory. Being seated at the right hand of the Father is the fulfillment of "the prophet Daniel's vision concerning the Son of Man: 'To him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed'" (CCC #664).

**B) The Ascension account and its significance.**

The Biblical accounts of the Ascension focus not so much on the details of the event as on the mission Jesus gave to his disciples. For example, in the accounts narrated in Luke and Acts, the Ascension took place in Jerusalem. In Matthew and Mark, on the other hand, the event occurred in Galilee. All accounts, however, agree that the Ascension took place on a mountain. In Luke and Acts, the Ascension happened forty days after the Resurrection, a period during which Jesus appeared repeatedly to his followers. In Matthew and Mark there is no indication of the time period between the Resurrection and the Ascension. The Gospel writers apparently were not aiming at accuracy of historical detail but were more concerned with transmitting Our Lord's message. Christ's Ascension or going up to heaven completes his Incarnation or coming down to earth. Christ has opened the way to heaven for us. (CCC #661). "Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, precedes us into the Father's glorious kingdom so that we, the members of his Body, may live in the hope of one day being with him forever" (CCC #666). "Jesus Christ, having entered the sanctuary of heaven once and for all, intercedes constantly for us as the mediator who assures us of the permanent outpouring of the Holy Spirit" (CCC #667).