

Continued from Page 3..

To stick to the way of evil will only leave one deluded and sad. True life is something entirely different. God never tires of reaching out to us. He is always ready to listen, as I am too, along with my brother bishops and priests. All one needs to do is to accept the invitation to conversion and submit oneself to justice during this special time of mercy offered by the Church.

20. It would not be out of place at this point to recall the relationship between justice and mercy. These are not two contradictory realities, but two dimensions of a single reality that unfolds progressively until it culminates in the fullness of love. Justice is a fundamental concept for civil society, which is meant to be governed by the rule of law. Justice is also understood as that which is rightly due to each individual. In the Bible, there are many references to divine justice and to God as "judge". In these passages, justice is understood as the full observance of the Law and the behaviour of every good Israelite in conformity with God's commandments. Such a vision, however, has not infrequently led to legalism by distorting the original meaning of justice and obscuring its profound value. To overcome this legalistic perspective, we need to recall that in Sacred Scripture, justice is conceived essentially as the faithful abandonment of oneself to God's will.

For his part, Jesus speaks several times of the importance of faith over and above the observance of the law. It is in this sense that we must understand his words when, reclining at table with Matthew and other tax collectors and sinners, he says to the Pharisees raising objections to him, "Go and learn the meaning of 'I desire mercy not sacrifice'. I have come not to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mt 9:13). Faced with a vision of justice as the mere observance of the law that judges people simply by dividing them into two groups – the just and sinners – Jesus is bent on revealing the great gift of mercy that searches out sinners and offers them pardon and salvation. One can see why, on the basis of such a liberating vision of mercy as a source of new life, Jesus was rejected by the Pharisees and the other teachers of the law. In an attempt to remain faithful to the law, they merely placed burdens on the shoulders of others and undermined the Father's mercy. The appeal to a faithful observance of the law must not prevent attention from being given to matters that touch upon the dignity of the person.

The appeal Jesus makes to the text from the book of the prophet Hosea – "I desire love and not sacrifice" (6:6) – is important in this regard. Jesus affirms that, from that time onward, the rule of life for his disciples must place mercy at the centre, as Jesus himself demonstrated by sharing meals with sinners. Mercy, once again, is revealed as a fundamental aspect of Jesus' mission. This is truly challenging to his hearers, who would draw the line at a formal respect for the law. Jesus, on the other hand, goes beyond the law; the company he keeps with those the law considers sinners makes us realize the depth of his mercy.

The Apostle Paul makes a similar journey. Prior to meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus, he dedicated his life to pursuing the justice of the law with zeal (cf. Phil 3:6). His conversion to Christ led him to turn that vision upside down, to the point that he would write to the Galatians: "We have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified" (2:16).

Paul's understanding of justice changes radically. He now places faith first, not justice. Salvation comes not through the observance of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, who in his death and resurrection brings salvation together with a mercy that justifies. God's justice now becomes the liberating force for those oppressed by slavery to sin and its consequences. God's justice is his mercy (cf. Ps 51:11-16).

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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:SC00810

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

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

Email: peacegreg2002@yahoo.com

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St. Stephen's RC Church Blairgowrie

St. Luan's R C Church Alyth

St. Mary's Coupar Angus

12th Sunday Year B 23/6/24

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

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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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Parish diary: Week beginning from 23/6/24.

Saturday 22nd June - 5.30pm: Vigil mass St Stephen's

Sunday 23rd June - 9.30 am: Holy mass at St. Luan's Alyth

Sunday 23rd June - 11.00am: Holy mass at St. Stephen's.

Tuesday 25th June - 10.00am: Holy mass at St. Stephen's;

Wed 26th June - 6.00pm adoration, 7pm: Mass for housebound & loved ones/parishioners who are sick. Holy mass at St. Stephen's

Thursday 27th June - 10.00am: mass at St. Luan's

Friday 28th June - 10.00am: Holy mass at St. Stephen's

Saturday 29th June - 5.30pm: Vigil mass St Stephen's.

Sunday 30th June - 9.30 am: Holy mass at St. Luan's Alyth.

Sunday 30th June - 11.00am: Holy mass at St. Stephen's.

This Sunday, ... The storms in our life.

The disciples of Jesus knew exactly who to contact when the storm in the sea became violent. They cried to him saying, 'Lord, save us, we are perishing!' Jesus is our saviour from turbulent storms in our life. When all things go south, when our hearts get troubled, during sickness, during financial difficulties, our refuge is Jesus Christ. Let us know today that Jesus is our protector and our refuge in times of sorrows and difficulties. Jesus assures us that when we seek His help, we will surely get help and the answer we need.

Mass intentions for the week:

11 am - Joe Antropus; 9.30am - Danny Murison,

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 Kinneer, 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.

Tea/Coffee: Everyone is welcome to tea and coffee served in the Lower Hall after 11.00am mass in St. Stephens every Sunday morning after 11.00am mass. and coffee. For all parishioners and visitors who attend mass, coming together after mass is an excellent way to meet, socialise and get to know one another. If you feel you would want to get involved and join the rota of helpers, please call or text Maureen on 07952376985. Thanks

Take time today to contemplate...

This Gospel is a metaphor for our lives. We are in the boat, the storms of life are raging around us, and like the disciples, we may believe that Jesus is unconcerned, or 'sleeping.' We hope that we will be as familiar with Jesus as his disciples. If we feel that Jesus is sleeping, are we comfortable enough to wake Jesus and present him with our needs? Jesus does not chide his disciples for waking him. Instead he chides them for their lack of faith, for their lack of perspective. When we bring our worries to God in prayer, we might just begin to learn to see things from God's perspective.

Let us Pray:

In the beginning, O God, your Word subdued the chaos; in the fullness of time you sent Jesus, your Son, to rebuke the forces of evil and bring forth a new creation. By that same power, transform all our fear into faith and awe in your saving presence. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen



Introduction to the Scripture Readings
 Job 38: 1, 8-11 —God alone has the power to calm the storm, a power Jesus displays in the Gospel. 2 Corinthians 5:14-17 — The death of Christ has made us all into a new creation Mark 4:35-41 — Who could this man be, whom even the winds and the sea obey? Seeing Jesus calm the sea, his disciples wonder how a man could have such power.

This weekend, I have attach an electronic copy on information from the Catholic Bishops Conference of Scotland about the General Election.

I have also attached a copy of the "Vote For Both Lives" campaign.

This weekend at the Vigil Mass, please welcome parents and godparents of Baby Eliza Anya who will be baptised. Wishing her every grace and blessings.

Spring cleaning to benefit Soup Kitchen:
 Your Spring cleanings could translate to many **happy little tummies**. St. Stephen's Parish will be reaching out to many children that are supported through a soup Kitchen in Africa. Please let us have whatever is of value after your Spring Cleaning as we plan ahead of a Summer Charity shop in support of a Soup Kitchen supporting many children. Contact: Fr. Gregory, Daria McDowall (Alyth) Mary O'Brien, Rolly Colanese, Maureen Jackson and Gail McIntyre (Blairgowrie) Please support it. Thanks.

Coffee Morning In Support of Happy Little Tummies Soup Kitchen in Africa.
 Date: Saturday 10th August 2024 in Airlie Street Hall, Alyth. Sheets will be available at the back of St. Stephens and St. Luan's over the coming weeks for you to put your name down if you'd like to contribute refreshments/baked goods/biscuits etc and or help out on that day. Contact: Fr. Gregory, Daria McDowall (Alyth) Mary O'Brien, Rolly Colanese and Maureen Jackson, Gail McIntyre

MARY'S MEALS COFFEE MORNING will be held on Saturday 13th July at 10 – Noon in Blairgowrie Town Hall. We are a month late this year due to renovations taking place in the hall in June. As a result many of our dedicated helpers are no longer available. If you can help us on the day with your time to man stalls or to serve please let Lynne Fryer know by email mmsarf19@outlook.com or ring 01250 872512. Also let her know if you can bake, supply raffles, tombola prizes or bottles. I hope you will support Lynne as she takes over from me as our new coordinator.

Mary's Meals are also screening the plight of people in Tigray and Ethiopia. This will be shown at the Queens Hotel Dundee on Wednesday 26th June at 7.30. Doors will open at 7 pm. Again let Lynne know and transport could be shared. Thank you again for all you have done in the past. Margaret 01250 87508.

Ratray Tennis Club Jumble Sale:
 Friday 28th-Sunday 30th June.
 Items: Bric-a-Brac, Jigsaws, Childre's cloths electrical, toys.
 At Middle Road Ratray

The date of the Episcopal Ordination of Bishop-Elect Andrew McKenzie has been confirmed. The ordination will take place in St. Andrew's Cathedral, Dundee at 11.00 a.m. on Saturday, 10th August, 2024. Tickets will be allocated to parishes in due course. Meanwhile, we keep Andrew in our prayers.

-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: SVPD, Wednesdays 7.30pm; Divine Mercy, Tuesdays 10.30am; Adoration, Wed. 6.00pm.

Today and Up Coming Events:
-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.

-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.

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. £392.95**
 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.

**Parish Fete
 St Stephen's and St. Luan's
 Parish**



Featuring outdoor games, entertainment, barbeques, food stalls, and fundraising activities.
These events bring local communities together & celebrate local life.

**Date: September 13th-15th
 Place St. Stephens**



-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.

Reflection: Today's Gospel describes the end of a day of teaching in Jesus' ministry. Jesus taught the crowd in parables and then offered explanations of these parables to his disciples. Jesus then led his disciples away from the crowds and into the boats that they will use to cross the Sea of Galilee. The sea and its surrounding area are the settings for Jesus' teachings and miracles in this part of Mark's Gospel. Today's reading describes how Jesus calmed a storm at sea. It is the first of four miracles that are presented in sequence at this point in Mark's Gospel. As is typical in Mark's Gospel, Jesus' disciples are frightened by the sudden storm; they do little to inspire confidence in the reader. Mark notes the contrast between the disciples' terror and Jesus' peace. Jesus is sleeping, untroubled by what is going on around him. The disciples' words to Jesus are telling. They are familiar enough with Jesus to dare to wake him. Their words to him are words of reproach, questioning his care for them. A careful reader might wonder what the disciples expected Jesus to do. Are they more troubled by the storm or by Jesus' inattentiveness to their needs? How many of us have chided a family member or friend for not agreeing with our assessment of the severity of a situation? Today's Gospel offers evidence of Jesus' power and authority as he calms the storm. In his day, power over nature was believed to be a sign of divinity—only

God calms storms. Jesus' rebuke of the storm also echoes the rebuke he uses when he talks to and expels demons. In each situation, Jesus' power and authority is a sign of his divinity. Indeed, the disciples are left wondering about Jesus' identity at the conclusion of today's Gospel. They see before them a human being who acts with the authority and power of God. The disciples' uncertainty about Jesus' identity is a recurring theme in Mark's Gospel. This Gospel is a metaphor for our lives. We are in the boat, the storms of life are raging around us, and like the disciples, we may believe that Jesus is unconcerned, or 'sleeping.' We hope that we will be as familiar with Jesus as his disciples. If we feel that Jesus is sleeping, are we comfortable enough to wake Jesus and present him with our needs? Jesus does not chide his disciples for waking him. Instead he chides them for their lack of faith, for their lack of perspective. When we bring our worries to God in prayer, we might just begin to learn to see things from God's perspective. **Loyola Press.**

To be a Christian means to be formed in (and transformed into) the image of Christ. We talk unceasingly about Christian life, piety, education, formation, society, Christian institutions, etc. It is to strive to put together the four characteristics, that make up Christ: 1) the perfect divine element; 2) the perfect human element; 3) the union of the divine and the human; 4) the annihilation of human independence before God. What splendour is in the Christian soul!

Pope Francis: On Mercy. (Misericordiae Vultus)

19. May the message of mercy reach everyone, and may no one be indifferent to the call to experience mercy. I direct this invitation to conversion even more fervently to those whose behaviour distances them from the grace of God. I particularly have in mind men and women belonging to criminal organizations of any kind. For their own good, I beg them to change their lives. I ask them this in the name of the

Son of God who, though rejecting sin, never rejected the sinner. Do not fall into the terrible trap of thinking that life depends on money and that, in comparison with money, anything else is devoid of value or dignity. This is nothing but an illusion! We cannot take money with us into the life beyond. Violence inflicted for the sake of amassing riches soaked in blood makes one neither powerful nor immortal. Everyone, sooner or later, will be subject to God's judgment, from which no one can escape.

The same invitation is extended to those who either perpetrate or participate in corruption. This festering wound is a grave sin that cries out to heaven for vengeance, because it threatens the very foundations of personal and social life. Corruption prevents us from looking to the future with hope, because its tyrannical greed shatters the plans of the weak and tramples upon the poorest of the poor. It is an evil that embeds itself into the actions of everyday life and spreads, causing great public scandal. Corruption is a sinful hardening of the heart that replaces God with the illusion that money is a form of power. It is a work of darkness, fed by suspicion and intrigue. *Corruptio optimi pessima*, saint Gregory the Great said with good reason, affirming that no one can think himself immune from this temptation. If we want to drive it out from personal and social life, we need prudence, vigilance, loyalty, transparency, together with the courage to denounce any wrongdoing. If it is not combated openly, sooner or later everyone will become an accomplice to it, and it will end up destroying our very existence.

This is the opportune moment to change our lives! This is the time to allow our hearts to be touched! When faced with evil deeds, even in the face of serious crimes, it is the time to listen to the cry of innocent people who are deprived of their property, their dignity, their feelings, and even their very lives. Contd on P.4