

ST MARY'S PARISH BULLETIN

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3rd Sunday of the Year (A)

Masses & Services this week: 23rd - 29th January 2011

FIRST CONFESSION MEETING All parents wishing to have their children make their first Confession this year (*ie parents of children in P3 and P4*) are asked to attend a Meeting in the chapel of St Catherine's Convent at 7pm on Wednesday of this week.

SENIOR PARISHIONERS PARTY will be held on Sunday 6th February in St Athanasius' Carluke. There will be a special Mass in St Athanasius' Church at 12.30pm, immediately followed by the meal in the Church Hall.

There appears to be some confusion regarding the transport which is being provided. So, to clarify: those who have requested transport will be given a door-to-door service, *ie* you will be collected at your home and taken by car directly to (*and from*) Carluke. For more information regarding transport please call Jim McAlavey on 661176.

300 CLUB Many thanks to all who continue to support us through their membership of the 300 Club, which raises £200 per week for our Renovation Fund. The vast, vast majority of members are paid up well in advance. However, most likely with the change of routine for our Sunday Masses, a dozen or so have fallen behind with their payments. Don't worry, you are still included in the draws even if you have fallen behind! Gentle reminder letters, where necessary, will be sent out in the next fortnight.

From 6th February we will have two vacant numbers. See any collector if you wish to join.

CHURCH INCOME

Collections:

Sunday 9th January Offertory collection: £1,978
(of which £400 is lodged in St Mary's Renovation Account)

300 Club

Week 4 (23rd Jan): £100: No 18 Alicia Haetzman, 151 St Leonards Street, Lanark

First Confession : Tuesday 8th March 2011 (Shrove Tuesday) at 7pm

for children in primary 3 & 4 in St Mary's Primary School,
and others by special arrangement with Fr Joseph.

Parents' Meeting: Wed 26th January at 7pm, in St Catherine's Convent Chapel.

First Holy Communion : Saturday 21st May 2011 at 12 noon.

for children in primary 4 & 5 in St Mary's Primary School,
and others by special arrangement with Fr Joseph.

Parents' Meeting: Wed 9th February at 7pm, in St Catherine's Convent Chapel.

Confirmation : Tuesday 31st May 2011 at 7pm

for children in primary 4 & 5 in St Mary's Primary School,
and others by special arrangement with Fr Joseph.

Parents' Meeting: Wed 23rd February at 7pm, in St Catherine's Convent Chapel.

DAY	MORNING	EVENING
Sunday 23rd	Convent: 9am, R Owen School: 10am & 11am	
Monday 24th	Mass in St Catherine's: 9.30am	
Tuesday 25th	Mass in St Catherine's: 9.30am	St Catherine's: 7pm
Wednesday 26th	Mass in St Catherine's: 9.30am	
Thursday 27th	Mass in St Catherine's: 9.30am	
Friday 28th	Mass in St Catherine's: 9.30am	
Saturday 29th	(No Saturday morning Masses during Renovations)	Robert Owen School: 5pm
Sunday 30th	Convent: 9am, R Owen School: 10am & 11am	

- Please note that the Church and the Clubrooms are now both closed for renovations.
- Until further notice the 5pm Saturday Vigil and the 10am and 11am Sunday morning Masses will be held in Robert Owen Memorial Primary School on Smyllum Road.
- All other Masses will be held in the sister's chapel (St Catherine's).

READERS & EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

This weekend (22nd / 23rd January):

5pm **Reader:** G Abernethy **E. Ministers:** R McConnell, P Shanks, J Moynagh
9am **Reader:** TBA **E. Minister:** Sr Margaret
10am **Reader:** G Lamarra **E. Ministers:** A Scott, M Keenan, J Wilson
11am **Reader:** B Farrell **E. Ministers:** J Nicholson, A Boyle, P Brady

Next weekend (29th / 30th January):

5pm **Reader:** R McConnell **E. Ministers:** P Stewart, A Eder, G Abernethy
9am **Reader:** TBA **E. Minister:** Sr Mary
10am **Reader:** A Haetzman **E. Ministers:** P Cunningham, A Filmer, G Lamarra
11am **Reader:** C Jackson **E. Ministers:** K Johnson, K McCrossan, B Farrell

Today's Gospel Message...

“The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light.”

First Reading Isaiah 8:23 - 9:3

Though the present is full of darkness and pain, the days of oppression are coming to an end.

Gospel Matthew 4:12-23

Ancient prophecy is being fulfilled, the light will shine, God's kingdom is near.

Illustration

Way back, in summer 2006, the northern region of the State of Israel was subjected to a prolonged period of rocket attacks from its enemies based in Lebanon. Many of us will remember these events, for daily our TV screens were filled with pictures of people running for cover in underground shelters as the air-raid sirens wailed, warning of yet another attack. And daily, too, we saw pictures of the Israeli military responding with ever increasing aggression to these attacks, as troops were mobilised and warplanes bombed their targets.

It would be hard to imagine a region that historically has been more vulnerable and exposed than that northern border of Israel. For centuries, it has usually been the first part of the country to be invaded, both by neighbouring nations and by the more distant superpowers, and its citizens were always the first to be exiled to foreign countries, as advancing armies conquered the land.

Gospel Teaching

Today's readings focus on those vulnerable northern territories of Israel - the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali, two of the twelve tribes of Israel. In the past, Isaiah tells us, the Lord humbled those lands in Galilee - they are a people who have walked in the darkness of war and the shadow of violence, experiencing the hardships of oppression by foreign neighbours, the horrors of being defeated and conquered. But in the future, Isaiah prophesies, God will confer glory on these suffering lands. A great light will shine on them, and there will be a time of unbounded joy, because the warfare, the death and defeats, will be ended. The rod of the oppressor will be broken, as on the “day of Midian”, when Gideon - with only a tiny army - was able to defeat a huge enemy army, because the Lord was with him.

It is with this promise of deliverance, made by the prophet Isaiah, that Matthew opens his account of the public ministry of Jesus, thereby revealing his understanding of what Jesus is sent to do. Jesus appears in Capernaum as a great light in a time of darkness, to fulfil the Lord's ancient promise to liberate his people from oppression, and not simply oppression by foreign powers. He brings freedom from humanity's oldest enemy - sin - and the death to which sin leads.

And so Jesus' message is that the kingdom is near - the Lord is drawing close to be with his people, and will act to set his people free. Jesus comes seeking a response, asking the people to turn back to God. And so he approaches Peter and Andrew, James and John, the first of the twelve, the first of the new Israel, and invites them to work with him in establishing God's kingdom - in a sense, to make the borders of God's kingdom secure. The fishermen immediately leave their old life and commitments to follow Jesus around Galilee, as he goes on the offensive, undoing the work of the oppressor, the Evil One, by curing people of their illnesses and proclaiming the Good News of the nearness of God. Through Jesus' words and actions, the light of God shines in the darkness of people's lives.

Application

We today, like the people of Zebulun and Naphtali, can experience our lives as vulnerable and insecure in all kinds of ways - physically, emotionally or spiritually. People experience darkness in their lives in many forms - the victims of warfare, of violence in the home, of religious, sexual or racial prejudice; the oppression of extreme poverty and injustice; the burden of loneliness and a life without love; the pain of losing one's home, or health, or spouse; the sense that God is distant or that life is meaningless; the dead weight of guilt or inability to forgive; the simple attraction of sin or addiction. All these are modern forms of living under the rod of oppression, in a land of deep shadow.

Today's Gospel challenges us to believe that the Lord is still working to set his people free and it invites us to respond - to hear Jesus calling us by name, asking us to share in his work of proclaiming the Good News and working to build up God's kingdom. All the baptised are called personally to share in Christ's work of liberating others, so that all God's people may dwell secure within God's love, safe within the borders of God's kingdom. We are invited to let the light of the Lord shine through our lives - through our words and actions - so that others may share in the joy of knowing the nearness of God and the security of God's love.

YOUR PRAYERS ARE ASKED FOR...

Died Recently:

Elizabeth Toman (*18 Braxfield Terrace. Funeral: Convent: Tuesday 9.30am*)
Jimmy McEwan (*51 St Leonard St. Funeral: St Isidore's Biggar: Friday 10am*)
Sr Elizabeth (*St Catherine's*), Henry McKenzie, John Scott (*Wishaw*)

Anniversary:

Martha McConway, Clare Farrell, Charles McAllister, Mary McTaggart, Breda O'Connor, Annie Scotland, Margaret Campbell, Anna Alunowski, Catherine Grant.