

Welcome to St Andrew's Cathedral & St Mary's, Forebank, & Our Lady of Good Counsel

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Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time 13 February 2022

Next Sunday: 7th Sunday of Ordinary Time -
Year of Luke (C)

Dear Friends and Parishioners,

Synod
2021
2023

Thank you to everyone who took a copy of the Synod Questionnaire last Sunday. This can be filled in and posted to the Diocesan Office at 24-28 Lawside Road, DD3 6XY or

handed into the sacristy in any of our churches. If you weren't here last Sunday you can collect a questionnaire today from the back of the Church.

Our Sunday Masses:

Vigil Masses: 4pm in the Cathedral

5.30pm in Our Lady of Good Counsel

Day Masses:

9.45am in Our Lady of Good Counsel

11am [Solemn Mass] & 6pm in Cathedral

11.15am [Solemn Mass] in St Mary's, Forebank

1.15pm: Mass in Polish in St Mary's.

This week's Daily Masses

St Andrew's Cathedral:

Monday – Friday at 1pm

Saturday Mass at 10am (with Novena)

The Funeral Mass for Arlene Strachan RIP will take place in the Cathedral on Wednesday 16th at 11am.

St Mary's, Forebank:

Monday - Friday at 11.30am.

Our Lady of Good Counsel:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday at 10am

Wednesday at 9.30am – please note.

Sacrament of Reconciliation - Confession

We are still not using the Confessional "boxes" but the Sacrament can be celebrated in a private space in the church before or after Mass. Please just ask.

Easing of restrictions: We have been advised that we no longer need to continue the practice of taking names of worshippers as they arrive at Church.

Our Prayers for the sick: Ross Murray, Ian Davidson, Janet Isherwood, Theresa Kay, Dawn Wood, Heather Moffit, Steven Hackney, Jane Budge, Alan McKenzie, Joyce Scott, John McCarry, Margaret McMenemy, Tony Beck, Isobel Blackmore, Karen Dammer, Allison Matthew, Jackey Forrest-Moore, Catherine Gallacher, Thinley Chodron, Natalia Lucka, Benedict Stephens, Steven Kennedy, Aubrey McMullan, Sonya Rostan, Alexander McNeil, Sheila McCallum, Marie Manunga;

for those who have died recently:

those whose anniversaries occur at this time:

Edward Smith, Helen Dailly, Colin Lynch, Clifford Paine, Kazimierz Rak, Dennis Addly, John Beeching, Patricia Fairweather, Letitia Lebonnois, Filo Arias, Brian Smith, Michael Llewellyn Walter Hepburn, Isabella Cord, John Wilkie, Agatha Mac Chuen Ho, Catherine Prophet, James Brough.

Thank you for your generosity on Sunday 30 January of £579 in the Cathedral, £471 in Broughty Ferry, £384 in St Mary's, Forebank and £198 at the Polish Mass; and last Sunday 6 February: £861 in the Cathedral, £550 in Broughty Ferry, £434 in St Mary's, Forebank and £304 at the Polish Mass.

Student News: On Monday 14 February the Dundee CatSoc will have Mass at 7pm in St Joseph's, Wilkies Lane, - all Students welcome. I'm sure there will refreshments afterwards.

Father Sebastian will be away this coming week to his native Poland, on business with his religious congregation. He will return at the start of next week. The Polish Mass in St Mary's will be at **12.30pm** this Sunday and next Sunday 20th February there will be **no** Polish Mass in St Mary's.

Thank you for the welcome you have given Father Sebastian since his arrival. He is very happy to be among us and we are happy to have him. He is generous and willing to serve in all aspects of parish life and for that I am very grateful. We wish him a safe journey and look forward to his return.

School News: On the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, we welcomed to Mass in St Mary's, Forebank, the boys and girls of Primaries Five, Six and Seven, who sang God's praise and led us in the Liturgy of the Light. On Tuesday this week I was most impressed during a visit to the Primary Five class in Our Lady's Primary, who asked me many insightful questions about growing up in St Mary's Parish and my journey to the priesthood.

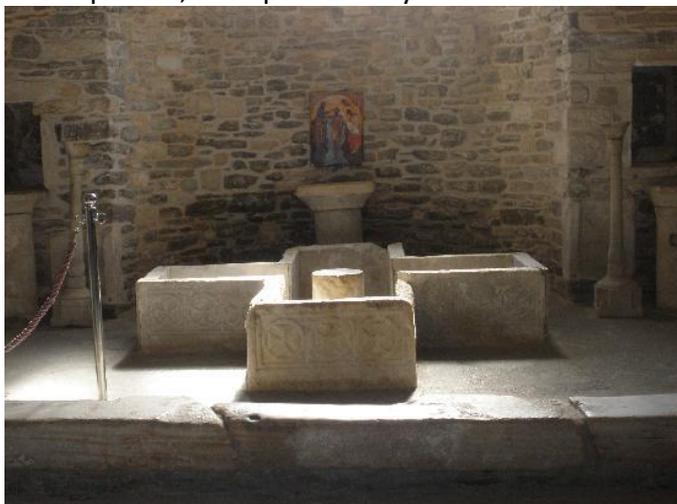
Anointed & Sent

During Holy Communion at the 9.45am Mass at Our Lady of Counsel the past two Sundays, a meditative refrain has been sung by our Cantor, Anna. The words of this piece are profound and the sentiments are a reflection of the Procession that is making its way toward the Eucharistic Table, the Altar. The words read:

***We are the Body of Christ,
broken and poured out,
promise of life from death.
We are the Body of Christ.***

The timeliness of this refrain has not been lost on me in these days, when the Holy Father is calling us to be more “synodal”, more “together” in our approach to the Church. These words have great authority, as they echo St Paul in a text from Corinthians which we proclaimed recently at Sunday Mass – *You together are Christ’s body and individually parts of it.* St Augustine, writing about the moment when the consecrated elements are raised up in the Liturgy of the Eucharistic Prayer for all to see, exclaims to his people: *Behold what you are, become what you receive!*

What are we at that moment? We are a gathered people, and a journeying, processing people, already immersed into Christ through the first of the seven Sacraments, plunged at that Baptismal moment into the mystery of his dying and rising, *going down into the tomb with him*, as Paul says, and rising up with him to new life. No wonder many of the Baptismal fonts in the early church were actually tomb-shaped! In some parts of the world today, even in the Catholic tradition, there is the practice of Baptism by full immersion of the person, such powerful symbolism.



This moment of Baptism marks the beginning of the Christian pilgrimage and adventure, the

person being overshadowed by the Holy Spirit as he or she continues on life’s journey. Now they are made able to call God *Our Father* in the midst of Church community, becoming part of the *Priestly People* of Jesus.... what dignity, what calling, what empowerment!

Perhaps part of the synodal reflection will help us appreciate more our Baptismal experience, even though many of us don’t actually remember it happening! For most of us, it was a decision made in love by our parents: in truth, whatever their motivation behind presenting us for Baptism, it was the opening of the door of faith and sacramental life, making us into what St Peter call in his letter *living stones* in the building of the spiritual home.

It is always lovely to be present at a Baptism celebration: and all the Christians who are there (whether they realise it or not!) are not there simply as spectators, looking upon a ceremony that is essentially happening to someone else; no they are all in some way “sponsors” of the one being baptised. The ceremony of course reaches a high point in the actual pouring of water, but the celebration of this Sacrament also includes the anointing with two oils: one is a simple blessed olive oil and the other is an olive oil which has been solemnly consecrated, and with perfume mixed into it.

Olive oil, which many of us use daily without a second thought, and of which we have our favourite brands, has a long and illustrious history. The ancient Greeks believed that the human race received the olive tree as a gift from Athena, the goddess of wisdom. It was thought to confer wisdom, power and strength, and indeed, these words are found on the prayer of blessing over the oil. Jesus and his followers lived in a world where olive oil was used as medicine and food.



The use of olive oil found a place even in the earliest Baptismal rites, because the inherent strengthening properties of this oil made it a natural symbol for the catechumen (i.e. the person to be baptised) to help the struggle against evil powers. The oil continues to feature in the ritual, before the pouring of the blessed water, to be an external sign of the preparation for the baptised person being an agent of Christ's divine love and grace in a world which often seems resistant to these gifts.

In contemporary experience, perhaps the best association for understanding the symbolic meaning of the sacramental oil is in the ways oils are generally used for comforting, calming and healing today: oil protects the skin, soothes it and aids healing. The Bishop blesses the Baptismal oil at the Annual Holy Week celebration Mass known of as *The Mass of Chrism*, but actually at that Mass it is not only the Chrism oil which is consecrated, but oil for the anointing of the sick is also blessed, as is a separate baptismal preparation oil, known as the Oil of Catechumens. When the Bishop blesses that oil, he prays that it will strengthen those who are about to be baptised. At the liturgy of the three oils in our Cathedral, after each blessing prayer is complete, the oil is held up for everyone to see and our Cantor, Daniel, announces the oil and invites our joyful sung refrain, *Thanks be to God, Thanks be to God*.



The second anointing with oil at the ceremony of Baptism, that of Sacred Chrism takes place after the pouring of the water. It is a ritual

action which takes only around thirty-seconds, but it is a gesture packed with meaning: the words as the gesture is ritually performed are among the most powerful in our liturgical celebrations: *As Christ was anointed priest, prophet and king, so may you live always as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life.*

Why am I writing all this? Well, it's that bit about being made a *member of his body*: it takes me back to the Communion refrain I mentioned at the start of this piece. This time of synodality, of

everyone being called to witness, reflect, speak and listenthe rationale for all this is found in our Baptismal experience. The synodal journey is an invitation to us to raise our Baptismal awareness once more, the grasping of this awareness being one of the qualities we'll need in order to be ready to engage together as the Holy Father asks us. He is bringing to the forefront of our Catholic experience the far reaching vision of the Second Vatican Council, and indeed the wisdom enshrined in the Catechism of the Church, which, incidentally, devotes around 70 paragraphs to the subject of Baptism, and I guess you could multiply that number several times if you count the many references to Baptism throughout the texts of the Catechism!

I leave you with just one quote which reminds us of our universality in the Church and that we are indeed, as is sung, *the Body of Christ*.

"From the Baptismal font is born the one People of God of the New Covenant, which transcends all the natural or human limits of nations, cultures, races, and sexes: 'For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body' [1 Corinthians 12:13].

(Catechism Paragraph 1267)

A Synod Facilitators' event is being held at St Mary's, Forebank Hall, the Pastoral Centre, on Saturday 19 February from 10.30am until 1.30pm. I will be leading part of this event. Would you like to come along and take part? Please let me know if so. Kevin

**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER
- FRIDAY 4 MARCH**

The Cathedral and Broughty Ferry services will be at 2.30pm that day. Full details next week.

***An Evening of Sacred Music
with the Cecilian Choir
at St Andrew's Cathedral
on Tuesday 29 March at 7.30pm.
All welcome***

This event marks the Tayside Organists' Society President's Evening for the choir's Musical director Sheriff Kevin Veal. It will be a most enjoyable experience, and uplifting to hear the choir sing again. Please come along and join us.

The Blessedness of God's Reign

As devotees of old movies know, Mae West said many things in her time! She once remarked, "I've been poor and I've been rich, and believe me, rich is better!" Today, we hear the divine word which says "Blessed are you who are poor". What is "blessed" about being poor? Why would Jesus say this? What poor person would believe it? As we approach this Sunday's Gospel, we need to know that the biblical definition of the word "poor" describes a social reality and not just a person's economic situation.

In ancient Palestine, the peasant population believed that all goods — spiritual as well as material — were finite in quantity. Not only grain and livestock, but honour, friendship, reputation, love, status, power; everything, they believed, was limited in life, and if you lost any of these, there was simply no more where they came from.

If a person suddenly found what was lost, neighbours could become suspicious; they might wonder if what had been found was in fact stolen from someone else. Remember the situation faced by the woman in the parable who found her lost coin [*a parable unique to Luke, which we shall read later in the year on the 24th Sunday*]. This woman had no choice but to summon her friends and neighbours and assure them she had not stolen this coin but rather had found what she had lost.

While in our culture wealth itself bestows a certain power upon people, in the ancient world a person tended to become rich because they already had power or strength to take wealth from those who were weaker and unable to defend themselves; thus power was the means for acquiring wealth. A poor person in that culture was essentially one who was power-less, unable to defend themselves against status and wealth. Remember, in the Bible, the poor are often referred to in terms of "orphans and widows". The orphan had no adult to protect his or her interests, and so was very vulnerable. The widow, even if rich in denarii, if she had no son, was still regarded as a "poor widow".

What is "blessed" about those in these socially unfortunate positions — poor, hungry, weeping? In that society, where one's **honour** was the core value, being poor, or defrauded of one's wealth, insulted, persecuted were not "honourable" experiences. Many would judge people in these situations as being "shamed".



In the Beatitudes, Jesus promises a reward from God for those who suffer from these shameful experiences. Indeed, he declared emphatically that the reign of God is good news primarily for the poor. He was looking at people who lived in humiliation in their villages, defenceless against the powerful landowners; he knew the hunger of the children, he had seen the peasant farmers in their helpless rage as the tax collectors carried off the best of their crops. They, more than anyone, needed to hear the news of God's reign. Jesus calls them *blessed* even in the midst of their unjust suffering, not because they would soon be rich like the wealthy landowners, but because God was coming into their midst, and God's reign would be good for them. God takes the side of the poor, not because they deserve it but because they need it. (Notice that Jesus doesn't praise the poor for their own virtues or qualities; the poor could be as greedy and guilty of taking advantage of those weaker than themselves, just like their powerful oppressors.) But God, the just God, must do justice first for those who have never received justice. This faith was rooted in a long tradition.

The people of Israel had always hoped that their kings would defend the poor and the marginalised. A good king would protect them, not because they were better citizens than the others but simply because they needed protection. Psalm 73 speaks of the ideal of the good king saying *May he defend the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy and crush the oppressor*. The message Jesus drew from this Psalm, is clear: if any king knows how to do justice for the poor it is God the King, who is the great lover of justice. Psalm 146 shows Israel's faith in this God: *The Lord watches over the stranger, he upholds the orphan and the widow!* The Old Testament book of Judith contains this beautiful prayer: *But you are the God of the lowly, the helper of the oppressed, upholder of the weak, protector of the forsaken, Saviour of those without hope*. This is surely the Father-God Jesus knew and whose reign he proclaimed in his Beatitudes.