



St Francis Xavier's Carfin

Taylor Ave, Carfin, Motherwell ML15AJ



14th March 2021

Fourth Sunday of Lent (Year of Mark)

'LAETARE SUNDAY'

God so loved the World

The Word of God Today



NUMBERS

The first reading gives a short summary of the events leading up to the exile of the people of the Kingdom of Judah into Babylon. It speaks of the grievous sins and infidelity of the Jews, Gods punishment in consigning them to exile in Babylon, and eventually his merciful release of the people and their return to their Homeland.

PSALM is the lament of the Exiles in Babylon

PAUL The letter to the Ephesians reminds us that God's plan of Salvation for us is not merited but is sheer gift by grace received through faith.

JOHN St John recounts the meeting of Jesus with Nicodemus. After having told him that we must be reborn from above through water and spirit, Jesus explains that God has sent the Son of Man to be lifted up so that through our belief in him, we can be saved . There is an analogy between this reference to Christ on the cross and a bronze serpent which God told Moses to raise on a pole so that the Jews, while in the desert, would not die even if they were bitten by serpents.

Streamed Masses this Coming Week

Mon	7.00pm	Lighting of Candles followed by Holy Mass
Tue	9.30am	Holy Rosary followed by Holy Mass
Wed	9.30am	Stations of the Cross followed by Holy Mass
FEAST OF ST PATRICK		
Thu	9.30am	Morning Prayer followed by Holy Mass
Fri	9.30am	Stations of the Cross followed by Holy Mass
FEAST OF ST JOSEPH		
Sat	-----No streamed Mass -----	
Sun	11.00am	Holy Mass, Fifth Sunday of Lent

LAST WEEK'S COLLECTION -

Loose	£780
Standing Orders	£300
Total	£1080
Contactless (Grotto)	£30

Your continued contributions to the financial support of the parish are truly appreciated.

I am enormously grateful to those who have diligently handed in their envelopes /cash /standing orders during these strange times.

Thank You!

Please note:

Monday 22nd March will be the final lighting of candles and devotions to St Joseph for the time being.

Friday 19th March makes it ONE WHOLE YEAR since we were last able to celebrate Mass 'normally', with congregational singing, movement, no masks, no sanitising... It's a year also since the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays was temporarily rescinded by the Bishops of Scotland.

Although, this dispensation is still in place, I am hoping and praying that this Easter will see a massive return to Holy Mass by all parishioners. Things have greatly moved on since the first lockdown. We have a vaccine and many will already have received at least the first dose. There is good reason to be less anxious about coming back to church. If you are one of those who chose not to come to the church after the first and second lockdowns, please give some serious thought to reversing that decision.

WE MISS YOU.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

The plain wooden crosses which have stood in the grotto for well over a decade have reached the end of their lives. The wood at the part where it has been sunk into the concrete base is pretty rotten and could easily dislodge easily – creating a 'health and safety issue'. Before this happens and someone gets hurt, I have taken them down and replaced them with 14 little 'Wayside shrines' such as you would see in many places in Eastern Europe.

I know that, many years ago, the wooden crosses were donated by generous benefactors of the grotto. I take this opportunity to express the appreciation of so many who have used them in their prayers over many years. **Thank you once again to all donors.**

Since there has been no opportunity to pray the stations in the church, I have temporarily placed the church's stations in these 'wayside shrines' so that people might 'do the stations' in the grotto.

The church stations will come to no harm since they are extremely weatherproof. If we get an opportunity to pray the Stations of the Cross in the church during Holy Week, I will make use of some stations that I 'rescued' from a church basement. They belonged to a church that had been demolished and sadly were not being used.

OLSF Primary school will come over class by class to the grotto pray the Way of the Cross **the week AFTER next.**

RE-OPENING OF CHURCHES

It is good that our churches will reopen in time for Holy Week, but, if I may be permitted a personal viewpoint, I am deeply disappointed that the Scottish bishops' request, in favour of more flexibility with regard to the numbers, was not heeded.

We now have now to work with the limitations imposed upon us – a major headache to all parish priests to accommodate the numbers who will wish to venerate the Cross on Good Friday and attend Holy Mass on Easter Sunday. **More information about this next Sunday.**

PLEASE NOTE

Although 'Places of Worship' can re-open for 'communal worship' from 26th March 2021 allowing up to 50 people to attend subject to social distancing, there is no change at this time regarding the following.

Funerals (maximum of 20 attending)
Weddings (maximum of 5 attending)
Baptisms are not allowed at this time.

ST PATRICK'S DAY FESTIVAL, C/BRIDGE

The annual St. Patricks Day Festival will be streamed live on Saturday 20th March 2021. This will include music performances on the part of some of our regular festival acts over the years as well as first-timers.

This year's digital festival will showcase several lectures on some outstanding topics, including Celtic FCs Brother Walfrid as well as one on some anniversaries involved in Irish-British relations: the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 and the Irish Hunger strike of 1981. More information can be obtained from **St. Patricks Day Festival Coatbridge Facebook page.**

NEW GIFTAID ENVELOPES

Those who donate to the parish by using Giftaid envelopes will realise that they are now on their last two envelopes. New envelopes are now available to be uplifted from the porch of the church. Please collect them at your convenience.

FIRST CONFESSION and FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

I have been talking with the Miss Lewis, Head Teacher and Mrs Taggart of OLSF Primary school regarding the celebration of the Sacraments, particularly, First Confession and First Holy Communion. At the time of our discussion we were unaware of what the First Minister announced on Tuesday of last week. Even so, this is the result of our discussions:

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION OF THOSE CHILDREN IN PRIMARY 5 *This would be my first priority.*

I am aware that there are a number of children, now in Primary 5, still to make their First Holy Communion. These are the children whose parents wanted to wait until the capacity allowed would be increased. At this moment, it looks as if we are back to where we were – capacity of 50. I have absolutely no way of knowing if this will change anytime soon. Consequently, I ask you to consider what you want to do. Here are the options which are the same as were offered last October:

1. postpone your child's First Communion until the capacity is increased?
2. have a 'double celebration' in the church with two families having a combined capacity of 50?
3. an individual First Holy Communion in the Glass chapel with capacity of 20.

N.B. I would imagine options 2 and 3 would take place in the evening.

I would intend celebrating these First Communions in April/early May

Arrangements for the above would only be made at the end of Sunday Mass and not via email, phone etc...

FIRST CONFESSION AND HOLY COMMUNION OF CHILDREN IN PRIMARY 4 *This would be my second priority.*

I would like to celebrate First Confession with the children during April.

Re. First Confession. The format would be this:

1. Parents are to practise the formula for Confession with their children at home. *To be distributed*
2. They should also go through a nightly examination of conscience with their child to get their child into the habit of examining their conscience before celebrating the Sacrament. *To be distributed*
3. Once the child's parent(s) are confident that their child is ready to celebrate the Sacrament without undue anxiety or nervousness, then they should personally speak to me, Fr Jim, **at the end of Sunday Mass.**

I politely request that you DO NOT DO THIS VIA SOCIAL MEDIA, EMAIL OR TELEPHONE. I want to see with my own eyes, parents and child before giving them a day and time for their child's First Confession. After speaking with me, if I am also confident that the child is ready and suitably prepared, I will give them a day and time mutually agreed between both of us. I am well aware that this is a significant change from previous years but this was my practice over many years in my previous parish and it worked well.

Re. First Holy Communion

At this moment in time when the capacity is as it is, I can think of no other way than to offer these children the same choice as above, viz

1. postpone your child's First Communion until the capacity is increased?
2. have a 'double celebration' in the church with two families having a combined capacity of 50?
3. an individual First Holy Communion in the Glass chapel with capacity of 20.

N.B. I would imagine options 2 and 3 would take place in the evening.

I would intend celebrating these First Communions in mid to late May

FIRST CONFESSION OF CHILDREN IN PRIMARY 3 *This would be my third priority*

I would hope to hear the confessions of children in Primary 3 during the month of June. At this moment in time, I ask the parents of these children **NOT** to approach me just now.

I fully appreciate that this is not what one would have wanted, but I am trying to do my very best within the parameters afforded me to make your child's First Confession and First Holy Communion both meaningful and memorable. *Fr Jim Grant, P.P.*

THE PILGRIMAGE CENTRE

No work has been done on the Pilgrimage Centre this year. However, the new boiler is due to be installed during Easter Week. Once this has been completed, we shall look at the essential repairs needed for the floor to meet 'Health and Safety' requirements. This time last year, I would have been very hopeful that the Pilgrimage Centre would be re-opened after Easter, Of course, I did not count on the pandemic and lockdown restrictions placed upon us. Apart from hindering the structural work on the Pilgrimage Centre, the lack of funds will pose a problem of its own. All financial support for the grotto comes from the large events held during the

year. Last year there were no events and so our income has dropped dramatically.

Although the Diocese of Motherwell 'gifted' the Pilgrimage centre to the parish, I would feel uncomfortable using a substantial amount of parish money to fund these works. Anyway, thanks to the pandemic and the closure of our church for a good part of the last year, the money is not really there in the parish account anyway.

That having been said, I shall do my very best to open the Centre, Café and shop, as soon as I possibly can.



SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION. I was waiting to see if the bishop sanctioned a General absolution for everyone as part of the preparation for Easter and for the churches re-opening. It doesn't look likely that this will be the case. What I propose, therefore, is that I will celebrate the Sacrament from 5.00pm till 6.00pm, Monday – Friday inclusive **in a tent beside the Glass chapel**, beginning Monday of this week. A Holy Ghost Father will assist me. Unless I can 'rig up' a confessional screen before Monday, these confessions will have to be 'face to face' for the time being. In addition to the above, Fr. Bernadine and myself I will hear confessions in the same place, Monday – Friday 12.30-1.30pm

So to summarise:

Monday – Friday from 12.30pm - 1.30pm. Fr Bernadine (St Teresa's) and/or myself, Fr Grant (Glass chapel)

Monday – Friday from 5.00pm - 6.00pm Holy Ghost Father and/or myself, Fr Grant (Glass chapel)

READERS ETC

When the churches re-open and public worship resumes, I would want to make everything as 'NORMAL' as possible. We will still need to sanitise hands and wear masks for the foreseeable future. We will still need the assistance of stewards, but I would love to reduce the protocol as much as possible.

As part of this, I would like to re-instate the readers rota. I have left a blank schedule in the porch and would ask all readers, including any who wish to offer their names for this ministry, to add their names as appropriate. I am grateful to Alan Wilson for contacting those who used to read in the church at the 9.00am Mass but, for the time being, we will still need readers for the 9.00am Mass in the hall. Please remember, **NEW READERS ARE MORE THAN WELCOME.**



THE MASS OF CHRISM, will be celebrated in the Cathedral on Holy Thursday as in previous years though this year with much restricted numbers – 50 in total. Each Deanery will be represented by three priests who will concelebrate the Chrism Mass with Bishop Toal and the Vicar General. Three Deacons will be invited and 30 from the Lay Faithful and Religious. Numbers are limited, but the Mass will be live-streamed.

MASS WILL BE BROADCAST on BBC Scotland today at 12 noon from Our Holy Redeemer, Stornoway