

# Parish of Saint Conval - Weekly Bulletin

## 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter (A) 9<sup>th</sup> / 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020

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Parish Priest: Canon Michael McMahon



**Please Pray For Those Who Are Sick:** Maria Devlin and for those who are working so hard to care for the sick especially those who work in our hospitals.

**Please Pray For Those Who Have Died Recently:** Giuseppe Frangipane (Family Funeral on Monday), Mary Donnelly, Nancy (Agnes) Docherty.

**Please Pray For The Month's Mind:** Elsie Muggins and Elizabeth McAdam.

**In The House Porch** there are copies of the Bulletin, Mass Sheets, Standing Order Forms and Gift Aid Declaration Forms.

**Fr. Michael Will Celebrate Mass Alone Each Day** praying for the members of the Parish Community and their intentions. Fr. Michael is still available in emergencies but is observing the Government's advice on social distancing.

**Fr. Michael Will Take Several Minutes Each Day** to reflect on the Scriptures and his Reflections will be available on "St. Conval's Church Linwood" You Tube Channel.

**St. Mirin's Cathedral And Local Parishes** are livestreaming their privately celebrated Masses:

St. Mirin's Cathedral, Paisley - Visit: <https://tinyurl.com/qv7uqhl>

St. Charles', Paisley - Visit: <https://tinyurl.com/r2gww7a>

St. Margaret's, Johnstone - Visit: <https://tinyurl.com/qv5wde5>

**Pope Francis** celebrates morning Mass at 7.00am (UK time). Visit: <https://tinyurl.com/y8vonq97>

**Financial Support:** The Parish still requires your financial support to pay our bills so please continue to be generous. Electronic donations can be made to St. Conval's RC Parish Church at The Bank of Scotland, Johnstone Branch Sort Code 80-16-53, Account Number 00356472. Standing Order Forms for each Parish can be downloaded from the Diocesan website, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/wj3bone> Please complete the Form, post it in the Parish House and Fr. Michael will forward it to the Bank. Forms also available in the House Porch. Again, thanks to the many who have taken out Standing Orders in favour of the Parish and to those leaving their weekly contributions in an envelope in the House Porch - your financial support is vital and very much appreciated!

**Gift Aid:** Unfortunately, we are presently unable to safely distribute the boxes of envelopes for 2020-2021. However, if you are able to post your donation at the House, please write your existing number or your name and gift aid on the envelope. You may wish to consider making your donation by Standing Order and our Parish's Standing Order Form can be downloaded from the Diocesan website, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/wj3bone> If any parishioners would like to join the Gift Aid Scheme, Gift Aid Declaration (GAD) Forms are available in the House Porch or can be downloaded from the Diocesan website, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/wj3bone> Please complete and sign the GAD Form and post it in the Parish House. Thank you for your continued support of the Gift Aid Scheme.

**St. Benedict's High School:** You may have seen the recent publication in the News of the Secondary School League Tables (based on the number of SQA Qualifications received). Among those involved in education these tables are not genuinely valued except as raw data requiring interpretation - frequently they are a measure of the median income of the parents in the catchment area only! However you may like to note that St. Benedict's has moved from 291 place to 178, which is admirable. Particularly when we note that Linwood HS is 319 place and Johnstone HS 274 place - both sharing the same catchment area as St. Benedict's. So well done indeed to the young people and to their teachers - the Chaplain (Fr. Michael) gets to bask in reflected glory!

**Weekly Parish Bulletin:** Any items for inclusion in the bulletin (including names for the sick, month's mind and anniversary lists) should be put through the letter box of the Parish House or sent by email: [stconval@rcdop.org.uk](mailto:stconval@rcdop.org.uk) by **12noon on the Thursday** before publication. Copies of the Bulletin will be available in the House Porch each week as well as online.

## Pope Francis' Homily

When Paul is invited to speak in the Synagogue of Antioch, to explain this new doctrine, namely, to explain Jesus, to proclaim Jesus, Paul begins by talking about the history of salvation (Cf. Acts 13:13-21). Paul stood up and began: "The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt" (Acts 13:17) . . . and [he recounted] the whole of salvation, the history of salvation. Stephen did the same before his martyrdom (Cf. Acts 7:1-54) and Paul did too another time. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews does the same when he recounts the story of Abraham and "all our fathers" (Cf. Hebrews 11:1-39). We sang the same today: "I will sing of thy steadfast love, O Lord, for ever; with my mouth I will proclaim thy faithfulness" (Psalm 89:2). We sang the story of David: "I have found David, my servant" (v. 20). Matthew (Cf. 1:1-14) and Luke (Cf. 3:23-38) do the same: when they begin to speak of Jesus, they take Jesus' genealogy.

What is there behind Jesus? There is a history, a history of grace, a history of election, a history of promise. The Lord chose Abraham and went with His people. At the beginning of the Mass, in the hymn of the beginning, we said: "When You advanced, Lord, in front of your people and opened the way and walked next to your people, close to your people." There is a history of God with His people. And because of this, when Paul was asked to explain the reason for faith in Jesus Christ, he doesn't begin from Jesus Christ; he begins from the history. Christianity is a doctrine, yes, but not only. It's not just the things that we believe: it is a history that brings God's promise, God's Covenant, to be chosen by God. Christianity isn't just ethics. Yes, truly, it has moral principles, but one is not Christian with just a vision of ethics. It is more. Christianity is not "an elite" of people chosen for truth. This elitist sense that then goes on in the Church, no? For instance, "I am of that institution, I belong to this movement, which is better than yours . . . than this, than that". It's an elitist sense. No, Christianity isn't this: Christianity is belonging to a people, to a people chosen freely by God. If we don't have this awareness of belonging to a people we are "ideological Christians," with a little doctrine of affirmation of truth, with ethics, with a morality - that's fine - or with an elite. We Christians feel part of a group; the others will go to hell or, if they are saved, it's by God's mercy, but they are the rejected . . . And so on. If we don't have an awareness of belonging to a people, we're not true Christians.

Therefore, from the beginning Paul explains Jesus as belonging to a people. And many times, many times, we fall into this partiality; we are dogmatic, moral or elitist, no? The sense of being an elite is that which does so much harm and we lose the sense of belonging to the holy faithful people of God, which God chose in Abraham and has promised, the great promise, Jesus, and made him go with hope and made a Covenant with him; the awareness of being a people.

It always strikes me in Deuteronomy - I believe it's chapter 26 - when it says: "Once a year when you go to present the offerings to the Lord, the first fruits, and when your son asks you: 'But Father, why do you do this?' you must not say to him: 'Because God has ordered it,' no: 'We were a people, we were so and the Lord liberated us . . .'" (Cf. Deuteronomy 26:1-11). Recount the history, as Paul did here. Transmit the history of our salvation. In Deuteronomy itself the Lord counsels: "When you come into the land that you have not conquered, that I have conquered, and eat the fruits that you did not plant and dwell in houses that you did not build at the moment of giving the offering" (Cf. Deuteronomy 26:1, says - the famous 'Creed' of Judaism in the Book of Deuteronomy -: "A wandering Aramean was my father; and he went down into Egypt (Deuteronomy 26: 5). He stayed there for 400 years, then the Lord liberated him, took him forward. History sings, the people's memory, the memory of a people, of being a people. And in this history of the people of God, until Jesus Christ arrived, there were saints, sinners and many common people, good, with virtues and sins, but all. The famous "crowd" that followed Jesus, which had the sense of belonging to a people. A self-styled Christian who doesn't have this sense isn't a true Christian; he is a bit particular and feels somewhat justified without his fellow people. One must belong to a people, have memory of the people of God. And Paul, Stephen too, teach this; it's the advice of the author of the Letter to the Hebrews: "Remember your ancestors" (Cf. Hebrews 11:2), namely, those that have preceded us on this way of salvation.

If someone asked me: "For you, what is the deviation of Christians today and in history? What are, for us, the most dangerous deviations of Christians?" I would say, without a doubt: the lack of memory of belonging to a people. When this is lacking, dogmatism, moralism, ethicalism, and other elitist movements come in. The people are missing. A sinful people always, we are all so, but we are not generally wrong if we have the sense of belonging to a chosen people, one which walks behind a promise and which has made a Covenant, which perhaps we don't always fulfil, but we know it.

Ask the Lord for this awareness of being a people, may Our Lady who sang beautifully her Magnificat (Cf. Luke 1:46-56); may Zechariah who sang his Benedictus so beautifully (Cf. vv. 67-79), canticles that we pray every day, in the morning and in the evening. Give us an awareness of being a people: we are the holy faithful people of God that, as Vatican Council I, then Vatican II say has in its totality the sense of faith and is infallible in this way of believing.

The Pope invited the faithful to make a spiritual communion, with this prayer:

I prostrate myself at your feet, O my Jesus, and I offer you the repentance of my contrite heart, which abases itself in its nothingness in your holy Presence. I adore You in the Sacrament of your Love, the ineffable Eucharist. I desire to receive you in the poor abode that my heart offers You, while waiting for the happiness of a Sacramental Communion, I want to possess You in spirit. Come to me, O my Jesus, that I may come to You. May your Love be able to inflame my whole being in life and in death. I believe in You, I hope in You, I love You.