



**5<sup>th</sup> February, 2023.**

**Fifth Sunday of the Year, A.**

RC Diocese of Argyll and the Isles

Fr Roddy McAuley, Parish Priest

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Charity registration number - SC002876

### Masses during the Week

Tuesday: 10.00am.

Wednesday: 10.00a.m.

Thursday: 10.00a.m.

Friday: 10.00am. St. Scholastica.

Saturday: 6.00p.m. Vigil Mass.

Sunday: 9.00a.m. and 11.00a.m.

**Confessions:** Saturday at 5.00p.m.

**Eucharistic Adoration:** Wednesday morning after Mass.

**Rosary:** The Rosary will be prayed after Mass in the Lady Chapel on Thursday.

Following the beatitudes, there are two short sayings, “proverbs”, depicting Jesus as a Wisdom teacher in the Jewish tradition. Jesus tells his new disciples that they are **salt for the earth** and **light for the world**: not that they will become these. This reminds us that we already give flavour and light to the world, but is it good or bad? We cannot choose not to be flavour, but we can choose what flavour to give.

A **three day Mission** will be celebrated in our parish, given by John Pridmore. John is an ex-gangster and international bestselling author of the book, “From Gangland to Promised Land”. For those who would like to help in the running of the Mission, which will be held in our parish from Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> March – Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> March., there will be a meeting in the church hall on Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> February at 7.00p.m.

A new **sound system**, which was badly needed, was installed in the church recently by “Drummond AV” from Glasgow. The total cost is £ 2 232. Some parishioners have mentioned that the “Loop system” is causing issues. This is being looked at.

### **Diocesan Prayer for Discernment:**

God of love, we come before you as the Diocese of Argyll & the Isles, humbly seeking your guidance in determining our way ahead.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us, guide us and give us the grace and courage to go where you want us.

Cleansed and enlightened by your Holy Spirit may we follow in the footsteps of your beloved son, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

As we stand at the crossroads and wonder what road to take, help us to discern the path you wish for us.

May we listen with an open heart and embrace your will.

Stir our hearts O Lord to consider what we can all do as individuals and be instruments of your Church's mission among all people using our talents.

### **A Reflection from Fr. Roddy: Something that must involve all of us:**

For a lot of children today, their first Holy Communion is their last Holy Communion, and similarly, their First Confession is their last Confession. Why? What needs to be talked about? What needs to be done? I think of Jesus healing the ten lepers (Luke 17: 11-17, found only in St. Luke's Gospel). Only one came back to thank God and he was a foreigner. That didn't mean Jesus stopped healing the lepers. Why do so few children return to give thanks after their first Communion? Why do their parents not return with their children to give thanks? Thanksgiving is important. Eucharist means thanksgiving.

Pope Francis has called the Eucharist the “Sacrament of Love”....”The Eucharist is at the heart of ‘Christian

initiation', together with Baptism and Confirmation, and it constitutes the source of the Church's life itself. From this sacrament of love, in fact, flows every authentic journey of faith, of communion, and of witness".

In a homily at a Mass where children made their First Communion in Bulgaria, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Pope Francis said to the children, "I am sure you will never forget this day: your first encounter with Jesus in the sacrament of the Eucharist". There is something beautiful about the word "encounter". It means so much more than a "meeting". Ask any parishioner if they remember their first Holy Communion and they affirm positively.

Napoleon Bonaparte, the French emperor who conquered most countries of Europe and wished to conquer the whole world, was asked, "What is the most important day in your life?" They expected answers like the day of his coronation as emperor, the day of his royal wedding, the day of a famous victory. But he said, "The most important and the most memorable day of my life is my First Communion Day.

Would it be sensible to have the parents of a child approach the church requesting First Communion, as in baptism, rather than the child going along with the others in a class and going through the motions of getting ready for their Communion day as a "rite of passage?" After all, parents are the first educators of their child in the ways of faith. Sacramental preparation cannot just be left to the teachers in our Primary School. Parents must play their part and set the example for their children.

The bond between the church, school and parish is often a tenuous one today. I wholeheartedly believe in the words of St. Francis de Sales that "a spoonful of honey gets more flies than a barrel full of vinegar".

Using a football analogy, if a person wants to play for a team, he/she needs to attend practices. They can't just turn up on the day. Even with a lot of preparation behind the scenes, many children preparing for First Holy Communion just turn up on the day. They don't train before or after "the match".

I appreciate that, in the words of Fr. Denis McBride C.S.S.R, "The Eucharist is not something we come to watch; rather it is something we come to do". Can we give the children something to do? eg. altar servers, parish readers, Eucharistic ministers etc.

Again, in the words of Fr. Denis McBride, "The Eucharist is the heart of everything, but it can never be separated from the washing of the feet. The two realities are linked, being in communion with Jesus so that we can be in communion with others. It would be a pity if the Eucharist became just a ritual, an empty ritual. Jesus gives himself to us here, so that we in turn may give ourselves to others".

What do you think?