

COMFORT

in

North Carrick

Caring Observant Mindful Friendly Obliging Responsible Tactful

Providing comfort to the people of North Carrick at a time of crisis

Sunday 10th May 2020

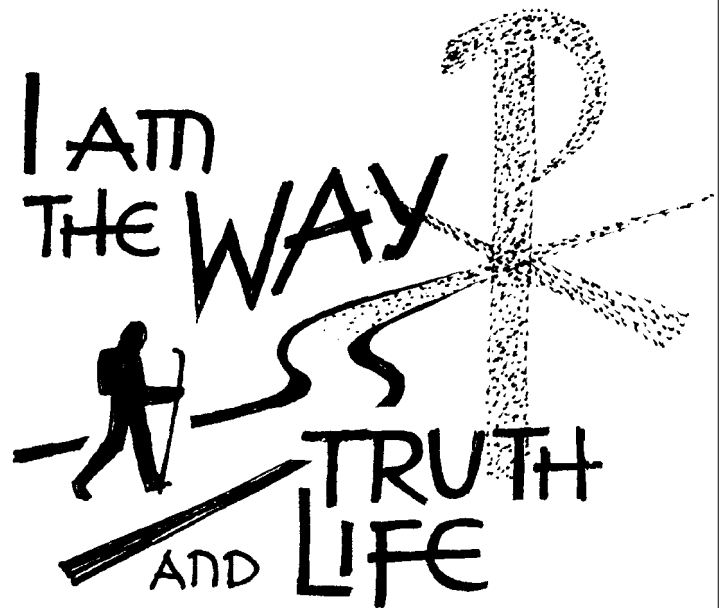
From Marguerite Hunter Blair, Our Lady and St Cuthbert's Church

The fifth Sunday of Easter is about the journey that we embark on as Christians seeking the way, the truth and the life of Jesus. Many of us are surprised to find that the most important work of Jesus is carried out on a daily basis by our family, neighbours, friends, and even at times, ourselves.

This is because the way of Jesus is reflected in the way we live our everyday lives - our daily actions, not our Sunday-best efforts. The truth, as Thomas and the Apostle Philip found, is that if we seek we will find God in our lives. And the life of Jesus must be our life. We must be kind and compassionate, feed those who are hungry, challenge injustice and inequalities, and be the best that we can be.

It is important for us to make quiet time for prayer and reflection so we can be the disciples we are called to be. We must stay focused and not try and be all things to all people. It is better to complete two or three kindnesses every day, however small, than be swamped by good intentions that overwhelm us.

In your quiet place of prayer reflect on the people who have guided you well in your life, and those in the community that you admire. Pray for them.



Jesus, our way—guide me in life;

Jesus, our truth—teach me your meaning of life;

Jesus, our life—love me always.

From Lynne Rankin, session clerk at Maybole Parish Church

Equilibrium—not sure why but this word came into my head this week and I can think of little else. For me, equilibrium means balance and I started thinking that one way I am coping with the lockdown is by finding balance in my life.

We used to talk at work about a work/life balance and by that we meant keeping our school work at school and not taking it home with us, where it eats into our family and recreational time. But now that we are teaching from home and my son Stuart is learning at home, there is school work everywhere and times are not really set as we share our ICT resources.

However, relatively early on in lockdown, we settled into a routine and they say that helps. But as the weeks pass, I realise I need to schedule time for other activities too. Video calls with elderly friends and family, catch-up calls with the grown up weans. Time for church and time for me and time just to spend with my husband.

My sister-in-law used to call me super mum, because I could juggle so many different things at once—work, family, faith. But I don't see it as juggling, for me it is about getting the balance right. And I do that through my faith.

The Cross of Christ is my pivot point. If ever anything gets too much for me (and sometimes it does) I go to Jesus, my Lord and my God, in prayer.

I pray for strength, I pray for help, I pray for guidance, I pray that my actions and words might be what HE needs them to be. And I pray for others.

This week, if you are having good days, pray for those who aren't; alternatively, this week if you are having bad days it's okay to pray for yourself and know that others are praying for you.



The seven weeks of the Easter season keep us in touch with the momentous truth of Jesus' death and resurrection. Now reconciled to God, we have the same hope for ourselves and our loved ones. Death has indeed lost its sting. As such, resurrection to eternal life with God is the anchor of our faith, made more meaningful at this time when so many have been bereaved so suddenly and in such unusual circumstances.



Now we are moving with anticipation towards that other great feast, Pentecost. Jesus, knowing our frailty and deepest needs, promised another source of divine help - the Holy Spirit who would come and dwell within us. If we allow that Spirit enough room to move freely in our lives and in our churches, we will have the wisdom to make right choices.

We could certainly do with the gifts which the Spirit brings for the building up of the Church. These gifts and the wisdom to use them well, especially in the changing circumstances of life today, could be the way ahead for us as Christians to help rebuild a better, more wholesome world, beginning with ourselves. We may not be called to very great works on a global scale but we can each bloom where God has planted us, in the nourishing soil of his Holy Spirit in North Carrick.

As we progress from Easter towards Pentecost, we can use the time to pray about the way ahead.

Ellen Hawkes

BEING GOD'S PEOPLE

It is sometimes said that 'one man's rubbish is another man's treasure.'

If we watch television programmes like Bargain Hunt or The Antiques Road Show, what looks like an object of little value is often worth a small fortune, unbeknown to its owner.

In 1 Peter (2: 10), the writer informs his readers that: 'Once you were not a people at all, but now you are God's people.' Or, as we might say: 'Once you were a nobody, but now you are a somebody.' Christians may be ordinary people, doing ordinary tasks, and living an ordinary lifestyle. By their faith in Jesus Christ, however, they acquire a new significance before God. No longer are they a mere 'nobody': they are a chosen 'somebody'.

The readers for whom this letter was meant lived under the constant threat of persecution. They were likely to be branded evildoers, and be the victims of false accusations. This letter was written at a time when it was dangerous to be a Christian, and when the followers of Jesus Christ were subject to 'a campaign of slander and suffering.' To know that, by their faith in the resurrected Lord, they had acquired a new significance before God, must have brought much reassurance.

This is true for us today. In this country, we are not persecuted in the way in which the recipients of this letter were persecuted. We are, however, still subject to sarcasm and sneering, to insult and injury, and to ridicule and rejection. Secularism is now so pervasive that it seeks to write God out of existence, and dismiss all religion as fantasy and superstition. The harrying of Christians in the 1st century continues in the 21st century, but expressed in different ways.

*'Once you were not a people at all,
but now you are God's people.'*

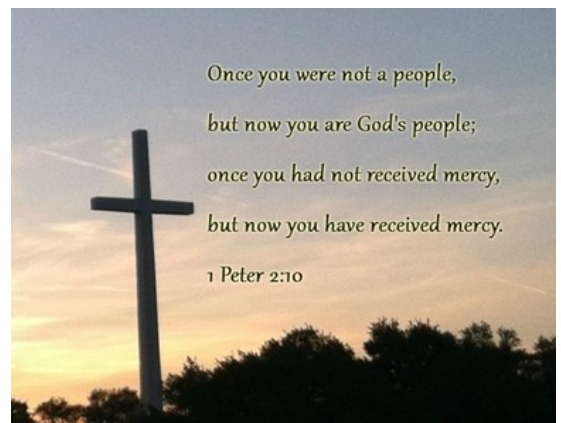
These words assure us that however insignificant we may feel—and at times we do feel unimportant and unwanted—God has invested us with a new significance.

We are chosen and precious in his sight: people with a purpose in life, and called to do his work in the world.

Through God's grace in the risen Christ, no Christian man, woman or child can ever be 'ordinary.' For each of us has a high value that nothing can take away!

As St. Irenaeus said: 'The glory of God is a human being fully alive.'

Rev. W. Gerald Jones



From Rev Dr John Lochrie, Locum minister at Crosshill and Maybole Parish Church

Looking back over history there have been dark times. For the disciples the first Good Friday was the darkest hour. There was no hope any more, no light at the end of the tunnel, no future except a return to the lake and the boats. It was all over, and yet, even for them, there was a new beginning that lifted them out of the depths of despair and set them on a new way. It was to be a way that changed everything. At Pentecost the Church was born and in the years that followed the world was turned upside down.

This weekend sees the commemoration of VE Day, though due to the virus things will be considerably different from the plans. As however we look back to victory in Europe, perhaps we should also commemorate two of the darker hours in our history whose anniversaries fall this month.



In April and May 1917 one of the bloodiest battles of the Great War was fought around Arras. 159,000 casualties were sustained, a third of them Scottish.

The daily casualty rate of the Battle of Arras was the highest of the war. Sadly the battle achieved little beyond ensuring the stability of the Western Front.

Then in May 1940, France fell before the German advance and the British Expeditionary Force had to be rescued from the beaches of Dunkirk by the “little ships” At the time these were both darkest hours, but they did have a part to play to pave the way ahead.

Once again we are living through dark times. Despite the slight glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel we are aware that there is a long way to go. The ever rising death toll from Covid-19 is a clear indicator of the danger of relaxing vigilance too soon.



Maintaining the lockdown becomes ever more difficult as time passes. The temptation to go out as the weather improves becomes greater. Living out in the country we have noticed an increase in traffic recently. We might think what we do matters little, but we should always be thinking of others. The example we set matters. That is why, rightly, some officials have had to resign for ignoring the rules they are urging on others. We all need to be acting responsibly so that we do not help to throw away the benefits that have gained so far.

All these years ago the disciples found the strength and inspiration to move out of their dark days through their experience of the Risen Christ and the gift he bequeathed to them of the Holy Spirit. This is still the source of power and inspiration for us all as we struggle with present circumstances. Difficulty is always easier to overcome when we are not alone. One of the positives of our present circumstances is the way so many are reaching out a helping hand to those most vulnerable. When the lockdown eventually comes to be lifted we all must ensure that we do not lose the obvious gains we have made on our journey through these trying times.

In a time of crisis, everyone pulls together. With all churches closed until further notice, local church members have come together to produce this newsletter. None will be distributed by hand but will be passed on electronically. If you know someone who may be interested in reading it, please send it on. The hope is that that some COMFORT is available. God bless.