

VATICAN NEWS

Overcoming difficulties in prayer:

Pope at General Audience

In his catechesis at the weekly General Audience, Pope Francis says we must always persevere in order to overcome the difficulties we face in prayer.

Speaking at the Wednesday General Audience, Pope Francis identified three difficulties we often experience in prayer: distraction; feelings of dryness or barrenness; and "acedia," a certain listlessness in prayer.

Distractions

Distraction is a common experience, not only in prayer but in all we do. "The human mind finds it difficult to dwell for long on a single thought; we all experience this constant whirlwind of images and illusions in perpetual motion, which accompany us even in our sleep." But if we give into this temptation, said the Pope, we are unable to do anything well.

The Pope explained that distractions are not sinful in themselves,

but we must nonetheless fight against them. To do so, we must embrace the Gospel virtue of perseverance. We do not know the day or hour in which Jesus will come, and so we must be watchful, striving to concentrate and be attentive to the task at hand.

Aridity

Aridity or "dryness" in prayer – when prayer seems to do no good, and inspires no joy or enthusiasm – is different from distraction in that it doesn't always arise from within us. Sometimes, said Pope Francis, God Himself allows us to experience this spiritual dryness, and at such times we must rely on "pure faith."

Acedia

Acedia, sometimes called sloth, "is a real temptation against prayer, and more generally against Christian life," Pope Francis said. Quoting the catechism, he described it as a form of depression due to "lax ascetical practice, decreasing vigilance, and carelessness of heart." As one of the seven deadly sins, "it is fuelled by conceit, and can lead to the death of the soul."

Perseverance in prayer

In the face of this "succession of enthusiasm and discouragement" in prayer, Pope Francis called on Christians to persevere, to always keep walking.

"All the saints have passed through this 'dark valley,'" he said, and we should not be scandalised when we hear about their struggles with prayer, "the account of evenings of listless prayer, lived without taste."

At those times, the Pope continued, we must learn to remain constant in prayer. "Believers never stop praying!" he insisted.

Even if, like Job, we complain and protest against God, "we know that at the end of this time of desolation" God will answer us.

"God will gather up even our harshest and most bitter expressions with the love of a Father, and consider them as an act of faith, as a prayer," concluded Pope Francis. —By Christopher Wells

Announcements:

Following the announcement of the joyful news of the priestly ordination of Rev. Christopher Daig

to be held on the 16th of July 2021 at the Cathedral in Aberdeen and his thanksgiving mass here in St. Stephen's on Wednesday the 21st of July at 7.00pm. A 20 minute meeting of eight parishioners was held this morning and we agreed that as a parish, we joyfully look forward to celebrating the holy mass with Frs. Christopher Daig and Michael Hewing as well as receiving their priestly blessings. We agreed that it would be lovely to make available to them some symbolic expression of our gratitude for example Priestly vestments. To this end, we agreed that:

—Envelops be made available from next Sunday to parishioners who may want to make donations and these be handed back to Marion Duffy and Daria McDawall (for Alyth) and Annette Stewart and Pat Macarthy for Blairgowrie and Couper Angus latest by the 13th of June. Thanks.

*Wishing you and your loved ones a very happy Sunday.
Fr. Gregory Umunna*



ST. STEPHEN'S R C CHURCH BLAIRGOWRIE

⇒ St. Mary's Coupar Angus

⇒ St. Luan's Alyth

Pentecost Sunday. Yr B. 23/5/21

Parish website: <https://www.st-stephens-blairgowrie.org.uk/>



Warm Welcome to all our Parishioners and visitors .

Whether you are visiting our parish or just moved into the area, please feel very welcome ... thanks.

Parish diary for the Week:

Sat. Vigil mass at St. Stephen's 6.30pm

Sun: Mass at St. Steph 9.30 am and 11.00 am.

Tue - Mass at St. Steph 10.00am

Wed - Mass at St. Steph 7.00pm

Thurs - Mass at St. Luan's 10.00am

Frid - Mass at St. Luan's 10.00am

Sat - Vigil mass at 6.30pm in St. Stephen's

Sun - 9.30 am and 11.00 am in St. Stephen's

Mass intentions for the week

Jim Warden

Family Private Intentions

⇒ **NEXT SUNDAY: BUILDING MAINTENANCE SPECIAL COLLECTION. PLEASE SUPPORT IT.**

⇒ **MAY...THE MONTH OF MARY! PRAY THE ROSARY**

⇒ **ORDINATION SUPPORT ENVELOPES AVAILABLE AT THE ENTRANCE**

Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

*wisdom, understanding,
counsel, fortitude,
knowledge, piety, and fear
of the Lord*



Fam. Rosary, adoration.

Every Wednesdays 6pm, and mass for the sick last Wednesdays of the month.

Mass with St. Step Primary School:

1st Fri & 3rd Fri. of the month; end of terms and core events masses.

Sacrament of Reconciliation:

6.00pm every Saturday and 9am every Sunday.

Divine Mercy Devotion.

Tuesday after morning mass. Please join us.

Parish Priest: Fr. Gregory Umunna MA, Ph.D.

Phone: 01250872171. **Email:** ststephen@dunkelddiocese.org.uk

Address: 8, Bank Street, Blairgowrie, PH10 6DE.

H/Teacher: St. Steph's P. S. Mr. Simon Mckell. Ph: 871950.

Parish Volunteers:

Catechists: Mrs Linda Forsyth. Catechism Classes for 1st Holy Communion and Confirmation every Monday 6.00pm in the Hall. Email: lady.linda@live.co.uk 01828632024.

Parish Safeguarding Coordinator: Mrs. Linda Forsyth. Email: lady.linda@live.co.uk 01828632024.

Parish Webmaster: Mr. Irek Kawalinski. irekkowalinski@gmail.com

Music Directors: Mr. Tom Buckham and Mrs. Gail McIntyre.

Responsible Person for Euch. Ministers: Mr. Alan Scott

Responsible Person for Lectors: Ms. Seonaid Johnston

Responsible Group- Parish Social Justice issues: SSSVP.

Church Flowers: Mrs Jean Scot

Grounds Flowers: Mrs Jennifer Fitzpatrick

Financial Adviser: Mr. Mike Coyle.

Responsible Person for Altar Servers: Mr. Rolly Colanese.

Hall Reservations: Contact no: 872171.

Hospital Chaplains: Please call: [N/wells_01382611282](tel:01382611282); [P.R.I: 01738259371](tel:01738259371).

*Please let the priest know if you are having a long stay at the hospital and would like a visit.

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals: Please make appointment with the Priest before any arrangement

Parish News

⇒ **Prayers please:** Please remember the following in your prayers: Michael Rolls, Ron Crisp, Eilidh MacInnes, Neil McDowall, Michael O'Malley, Pam McKenna, Mhari McRae.

⇒ **Have you prayed your Rosary today?**



⇒ Please remember that May is the month of special devotion to Mary!

⇒ **Parish Finances**

We know that the present difficult situation affects individuals and households in many ways. However, if you feel able to support the parish in whatever way you could via Standing Order, occasional or one-off payment. Details of Parish account number are:

⇒ Bank: Royal Bank of Scotland, 14 Allan Street, Blairgowrie, PH10 6AD

⇒ Sort code:- 83-1633
⇒ Account No:- 00240708
⇒ Account name:- Trustees of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dunkeld No3 Char TST St Stephens RC Church. Many thanks for supporting your parish.

Reflection: The Gift of the World

Today, the Church celebrates Pentecost Sunday, a very special day for Christians. We honour this day with great solemnity and festivity. Unfortunately, for two years in a row, we could not properly celebrate this wonderful feast. A year ago, nobody could have imagined what we would experience daily due to Covid-19. This unexpected pandemic has thrown us into an unwelcome 'new normal', drastically re-shaping our ordinary lives. For those struggling at society's margins, its impacts are devastating. As the darkness has gradually engulfed lives, it has become more evident that life has changed into something far different from the normal we remember.

The biblical witnesses show us that the most robust hope emerges out of times of traumatic suffering. The Acts of the Apostles and John's Gospel today is a good example of a biblical witness when the Spirit came amidst painful reality. The story of Pentecost in both readings pictures the Spirit animating the disciples who have been 'cocooning' behind closed doors in the Upper Room, empowering them not only to talk in a variety of languages, but also to continue the vocation of Jesus in increasingly wider fields of ministry. Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me so I send you. (Jn 20:21). Just as Jesus' words 'Peace be with you' must have given the disciples much comfort and solace that eventful day in the Upper Room, these are words that have comforted us during

these days of trial and uncertainty. Fear is all-pervasive in our world and in our lives. Despite this, the Day of Pentecost calls us to imagine what accepting this outpouring of the Holy Spirit might look like in our lives today. If we allow ourselves to imagine something new, something fresh, something holy, then anything is possible.

How then can we best serve as Christ's disciples, witnesses to the Gospel message when a new outflow of heavenly fire will give us the courage, language and power that we need to make our society and the world in which we live what our faith and love envision?

In answer to this question, we are called to be peacemakers, to aid in conflict-resolution between people and groups that harbour resentments and ill-will towards one another in our polarized society. We are called to fight against injustice and oppression, to act to bring positive change to systems that are discriminatory and which prevent people from being all that they can be in life. We are called to love and forgive others, working in ways that raise each other up and bring about the joy that is inherent in our salvation. This is a tall order and our calling on Pentecost Day! Thank God for the gift of the Spirit.—By the Spiritans.



Please pray for Christians in Nigeria

As a Nigerian born British citizen, in all my years working in the United Kingdom, I have always wondered why BBC, in all her prestige, hardly reports on the atrocities happening in Nigeria. The level of the maiming, raping and genocide on some tribes and on Christians in Nigeria cannot continue. The BBC, by not reporting these atrocities seems to bury her head in the sand. But the world is watching.

Nigeria: Bandits kill one Catholic priest kidnap another
Father Alphonsus Bello, a parish priest in northern Nigeria was killed, while another priest, Father Joe Keke was kidnapped in an attack by armed bandits.

Father Alphonsus Bello, a parish priest in northern Nigeria, was found dead on Friday morning, while another priest, Father Joe Keke was allegedly kidnapped by unknown bandits, a symptom of the rising state of insecurity in the country.

At the time of his death, Fr Bello was the parish priest of St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Church, Malunfashi, Katsina State. Fr Keke was a priest in residence. Confirming the news, the National Director of Social Communications of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), Fr Mike Umoh, in a statement, said that Fr Bello's lifeless body was found on a farmland behind the Catechetical Training School in Malunfashi.

Attack at night

Father Umoh said Fr Bello's tragic death comes after an

earlier report at about 1:35 am by the Dean of Malunfashi Deanery, Fr Stephen Ojapah, MSP, who pointed out that the parish house of St. Vincent Ferrer had been attacked by a group of about fifteen bandits.

Frs. Alphonsus Bello and Joe Keke were abducted by the group of bandits during the attack.

The whereabouts of Fr Keke, 75, is still unknown and the kidnapers have not made contact.

Holy Land: Pope Francis invites entire Church to pray for peace

Pope Francis invites Bishops from all over the world and all Catholics to join in prayer in a Pentecost Vigil celebrated by Catholic ordinaries at St. Stephen's Church in Jerusalem.

The universal Church will unite in prayer at the Vigil of Pentecost celebrated in Jerusalem on Saturday evening.

Pope Francis announced his appeal for Catholics around the world to take part on Friday morning, at the end of his address to new non-resident Ambassadors accredited to the Holy See.

The Pope invited the Churches around the world to pray and implore peace in the Holy Land, joining the celebration promoted by the Catholic ordinaries in the Holy City.

"My thoughts," Pope Francis said, "turn to the events taking place these days in the Holy Land. I thank God for the decision to halt the armed conflicts and acts of violence, and I pray for the pursuit of paths of dialogue and peace. Tomorrow

evening, the Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land, together with their faithful, will gather to celebrate the Vigil of Pentecost in Saint Stephen's Church in Jerusalem and to implore the gift of peace."

"I take this opportunity," added the Pope, "to ask all the pastors and faithful of the Catholic Church to unite themselves spiritually with this prayer. May every community pray to the Holy Spirit "that Israelis and Palestinians may find the path of dialogue and forgiveness, be patient builders of peace and justice, and be open, step by step, to a common hope, to co-existence among brothers and sisters."

These last words echo the appeal for peace in the Holy Land already made on 16 May.

"THE ROSARY IS MY MOTHER'S GIFT TO THE POOR AND THE SIMPLE..."

"There is no problem or difficulty that cannot be solved or resolved by faithful preserving recourse to My Mother's most holy Rosary.

The Rosary is my Mother's gift to the poor and to the simple, to the little ones who are capable of hearing the Gospel in all its purity and of responding to it with a generous heart.

It is to such as these - the childlike and the weak, the poor and the trusting - that the Rosary is given. It is to such as these that the Rosary belongs."

In Sinu Jesu, 252