

FRANCIS, BISHOP OF ROME, SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD. ON MERCY. TO ALL WHO READ THIS LETTER GRACE, MERCY, AND PEACE

6. "It is proper to God to exercise mercy, and he manifests his omnipotence particularly in this way".[5] Saint Thomas Aquinas' words show that God's mercy, rather than a sign of weakness, is the mark of his omnipotence. For this reason the liturgy, in one of its most ancient collects, has us pray: "O God, who reveal your power above all in your mercy and forgiveness ..."[6] Throughout the history of humanity, God will always be the One who is present, close, provident, holy, and merciful.

"Patient and merciful." These words often go together in the Old Testament to describe God's nature. His being merciful is concretely demonstrated in his many actions throughout the history of salvation where his goodness prevails over punishment and destruction. In a special way the Psalms bring to the fore the grandeur of his merciful action: "He forgives all your iniquity, he heals all your diseases, he redeems your life from the pit, he crowns you with steadfast love and mercy" (Ps 103:3-4). Another psalm, in an even more explicit way, attests to the concrete signs of his mercy: "He executes justice for the oppressed; he gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the sojourners, he upholds the widow and the fatherless; but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin" (Ps 146:7-9). Here are some other expressions of the Psalmist: "He heals the broken hearted, and binds up their wounds... The Lord lifts up the downtrodden, he casts the wicked to the ground" (Ps 147:3, 6). In short, the mercy of God is not an abstract idea, but a concrete reality with which he reveals his love as of that of a father or a mother, moved to the very depths out of love for their child. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that this is a "visceral" love. It gushes forth from the depths naturally, full of tenderness and compassion, indulgence and mercy.

7. "For his mercy endures forever." This is the refrain that repeats after each verse in Psalm 136 as it narrates the history of God's revelation. By virtue of mercy, all the events of the Old Testament are replete with profound salvific import. Mercy renders God's history with Israel a history of salvation. To repeat continually "for his mercy endures forever," as the psalm does, seems to break through the dimensions of space and time, inserting everything into the eternal mystery of love. It is as if to say that not only in history, but for all eternity man will always be under the merciful gaze of the Father. It is no accident that the people of Israel wanted to include this psalm – the "Great Hallel," as it is called – in its most important liturgical feast days.

Before his Passion, Jesus prayed with this psalm of mercy. Matthew attests to this in his Gospel when he says that, "when they had sung a hymn" (26:30), Jesus and his disciples went out to the Mount of Olives. While he was instituting the Eucharist as an everlasting memorial of himself and his paschal sacrifice, he symbolically placed this supreme act of revelation in the light of his mercy. Within the very same context of mercy, Jesus entered upon his passion and death, conscious of the great mystery of love that he would consummate on the Cross. Knowing that Jesus himself prayed this psalm makes it even more important for us as Christians, challenging us to take up the refrain in our daily lives by praying these words of praise: "for his mercy endures forever." To be continued....

Parish Priest: Fr. Gregory E. Umunna Ph.D.

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Hospital Chaplains: Please call: N/wells Direct line: 07821624124.

Hospital Pager 01382660111; P.R.I: 01738259371. *Pls let the priest know if you are on a long stay at the hospital and would like a visit.

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals: Please make appointment with Priest before any arrangements are made.

Diocese of Dunkeld Scottish Charity No:SC00810

Parish Ministries, Volunteers and Contact Persons: (May God bless these & others for their selfless service)

H/T: St. Steph's P. S: Lindsey Smith, Ph: 871950.

Catechists: Elizabeth Bush: Catechism Classes for 1st Holy Comm & Confirmation everyin the Hall. Email: alzbeta.krajcikova@gmail.com Ph:07934884759

Parish Safeguarding Coordinator: Maureen Jackson. 07952376985; Email: ststephenpsc@dunkelddioocese.org.uk

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

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

Responsible Person for Eucharistic Ministers: Mr. Alan Scott.

Responsible Person for Children's Liturgy: Mary Wojtowicz

Responsible Person for Lectors:

Responsible Group for Parish Social Justice Issues: SSVDP

Responsible Person for Church Flowers: Jean Scott (Blair), Elma Sharp (Alyth)

Resp. Person: Altar Servers: Rolly Colanese

Grounds Flowers: Jennifer FitzPatrick

Adviser on Finance: Mr. Mike Coyle

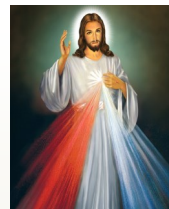
Adviser on Fabric: Mr. Jim Graham

Wishing you and your loved ones a lovely Sunday -Fr. Gregory

Please submit all items for the parish bulletin by 6.00 p.m. on Thursday each week.

Email: peacegreg2002@yahoo.com

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St. Stephen's RC Church Blairgowrie

St. Luan's R C Church Alyth

St. Mary's Coupar Angus

Second Sunday of Easter: Year B 7/4/24

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

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Address: 8 Bank Street Blairgowrie, PH10 6DE

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.

Father Gregory E. Umunna Ph.D.
Parish website: [https://www.st-](https://www.st-stephensblairgowrie.org.uk/)
[stephensblairgowrie.org.uk/](https://www.st-stephensblairgowrie.org.uk/)
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Parish diary: Week beginning from 7/4/24.

DIVINE MERCY WEEKEND

Saturday 6th April – 5.30pm: Easter Vigil mass St Stephen's

Sunday 7th April – 9.30 am: Holy mass at St. Luan's Alyth

Sunday 7th April – 11.00am: Holy mass at St. Stephen's

Tuesday 9th April – 10.00am: Holy mass at St. Stephen's:

Wednesday 10th April – 6.00pm adoration, 7pm: Holy mass at St. Stephen's

Thursday 11th April – 10am: Stations of the Cross & mass at St. Luan's;

Friday 12th April – 10.00am: Mass at St. Stephen's.

Saturday 13th April – 5.30pm: Vigil mass St Stephen's

Sunday 14th April – 9.30 am: Holy mass at St. Luan's Alyth

Sunday 14th April – 11.00am: Holy mass at St. Stephen's.

This Sunday, the resurrection morning, ...

Thomas Merton wrote in his book Asian Journal, 'Faith is not the suppression of doubt. It is the overcoming of doubt, and you overcome doubt by going through it. The man of faith who has never experienced doubt is not a person of faith'. There was a great honesty about Thomas; he didn't pretend to believe when he didn't.

The gospel suggests that such honesty is never very far from authentic faith.

Mass intentions for the week:

Jim Warden, Monsignor Vincent Mba, Catherine Nolan: 90th Birthday, Bishop Gregory Ochiagha.

Other Devotional Programmes of the Parish:

Family Rosary and adoration. Every Wednesday 6.00pm - 7.00pm. -Mass for the sick every Wed 7.00pm, -Sacrament of Reconciliation: 5.00pm every Saturday and 9am every Sunday, -Divine Mercy Devotion: Tues after morning mass. -Mass with St. Stephen's Primary School: 1st Fri. of the month; end of terms and core events masses.

In your prayers, kindly remember those on our prayer list:

Michael Rolls, Neil Mcdowall. Pam McKenna, Val Naughton, Dr. Paul Kinnear, Mary and George Flockhart. Snooky Marshall, Maud McGinn, Alex Forrester, Cipriano and Carmelita, Tom O'Malley, Roy Sweeney, Diana Richardson, Pamela –

You are never alone:

For a shared prayer, or just have someone listen to you, a candle lit for you or yours, have a mass offered for your intention or that of a loved one living or dead, please speak to the priest. Thanks.

Warm Welcome:

Tea/Coffee, biscuits and a warm welcoming space in the Lower Hall after the 11.00am mass every Sunday to May 2024.

Please feel free to pop in. More volunteers to help with serving please. Thanks.

Let us Pray:

God of life, source of all faith, through the waters of baptism you have raised us up in Jesus and given us life that endures.

Day by day refine our faith, that we who have not seen the Christ may truly confess him as our Lord and God and share the blessedness of those who believe.

Grant this through Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

