



St. Stephen's R C Church.

8 Bank Street Blairgowrie Ph10 6DE, 872171

St. Mary's Coupar Angus & St. Luan's Alyth.

23rd Sunday, Year C. 7/9/25

Parish Priest and Prison Chaplain: Fr. Gregory E. Umunna Ph.D

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

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Scottish Charity No: SC001810

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.

Our Vision and Mission: To be a welcoming and participating Catholic community on a journey, striving to be led by the Spirit, strengthened by a bond of love and unity, guided by the gospel message of Christ, refreshed and nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ at the Eucharistic table. Enriched by a vibrant people of God from diverse backgrounds and supported by many gifts and talents employed in various ministries and stewardships, we journey together hand-in-hand through life as a parish family of God's people.

Parish diary: Week beginning from 7/9/25

Saturday - 5.30pm: Vigil mass. St. Stephen's.

Sunday - 9.30 am: Holy mass at St. Luan's.

-11.00am: Holy mass at St. Steph's.

Monday - Prison ministry all day. The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Tues - 10.00am Holy mass at St. Stephen's.

Wed - 10.00am Holy mass at St. Luan's.

- 6.00pm Rosary, adoration, St. Stephens.

- 7pm. Holy mass at St. Stephens.

Thurs - Prison ministry all day.

Frid - 10.00am. Holy mass at St. Stephens.

Saturday - 5.30pm: Vigil mass. St. Stephen's.

Sunday: - 9.30 am: Holy mass at St. Luan's Alyth.

Sunday: -11.00am: Holy mass at St. Stephen's.

This week: Half-hearted Christianity

Following Jesus, means walking with him in his passion, death and resurrection. It is not for the faint hearted. Jesus puts forward three conditions for discipleship: Prioritise - ensure God comes first in your life; Be ready to die to yourself - carry your own cross; Make yourself vulnerable - renounce your possessions. Then he says, because this is going to be challenging, you better sit and discern before you continue the journey of discipleship. When Jesus describes "hating" one's father and mother, he is not talking about feelings. Rather, he is emphasizing very strongly

that choosing to be a disciple means that everything else—family, money, your own life—must come second.

In Matthew's version of this story (Matthew 10:37), Jesus refers not to "hating" father or mother, but to *loving them more* than Jesus. Jesus makes it very clear that being a disciple is not easy. It means to bear one's own cross. These difficult sayings of Jesus are followed by two brief parables (a person constructing a tower and a king marching into battle) that make an obvious point—don't start what you cannot finish. Discipleship is difficult and is something we can commit to only if we are prepared to put the Kingdom of God before everything else.

Opening Prayer: God of the ages, you call the Church to keep watch in the world and to discern the signs of the times. Grant us the wisdom which your Spirit bestows, that with courage we may proclaim your prophetic word and complete the work you have set before us. We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever.

Introduction to the Scripture Readings

Wisdom 9: 13-19 Nothing is possible without the gift of wisdom.

Philemon 9-10, 12-17 This is the only part of Paul's short letter to Philemon read at Sunday Mass; it is a warm letter concerning a former slave whom Paul now regards as his brother.

Luke 14: 25-33 This Gospel contains hard teachings; we are asked to carry the cross of discipleship and to give all we have to it.

Other Participatory Programmes of the Parish.

-Family Rosary and adoration. Every Wednesday 6.00pm-

7.00pm. Mass for the sick every Wednesday 7.00pm-7.30pm.

-Sac of Reconciliation: 5.00pm every Sat and 9am every Sun.

-Divine Mercy Devotion. Tuesdays after morning mass.

-Please join us. Mass with St. Stephen's Pri. Sch: 1st Fri. of the month; end of terms and core events masses.

Kindly remember also those on our prayer list:

Michael Rolls, Neil McDowall. Pam McKenna, Mary and George Flockhart. Snooky Marshall, Maud McGinn, Cipriano and Carmelita, Tom O'Malley, Giles Umunna and Tony Donnan, Lisa Robertson, Philip Lafferty. Philip Jackson.

Today's and Up Coming: 14th September: Bishop's Mensal Fund; 28th September: Building maintenance Fund; 12th Oct: Mission Sunday; 26th October: Building maintenance Fund; 9th November: Sick and Retired Priest's Fund/Catholic Education Service; 30th Nov: Building maintenance Fund; 14th Dec: Poor Mission Fund; 28th Dec: Building maintenance Fund.

-Details of Parish account: Name: **St. Stephens RC Blairgowrie.** Account Number: 28075068; Sort Code: 80-22-60.

Last Sunday offertory collection: £485. Many thanks for your support to the parish. *Figures exclude takings from Standing orders, bank transfers and direct debits. Comprehensive Parish Financial Audits and Accounts are published on the Notice Board. Many thanks .

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.

Tea/Coffee, Everyone is welcome to tea and coffee served in the Lower Hall after 11.00am mass in St. Stephens every Sunday morning after 11.00am mass. Thanks.

St. Stephen's Parish Library. Selection of Books on: Spirituality/ Prayer. Lives of Saints/ Martyrs, Theology/ philosophy History/ Psychology, Pilgrimage sites. Pls feel free to borrow any from the shelves in the lower hall and return a week after use. Thanks.

Communion to nursing homes, house bounds and the elderly is part of our ministry of care. Please let any of the Eucharistic Ministers or myself know if you know some- one who is in need of this care. Thanks.

Ellie Morrocco: Group class schedule for church kids, scheduled for this term. Booking link: <https://elliemorroccotuition.as.me/> Discount Code: SCHOLAGRATIS.

Journeying together in Faith Group. 19th September. 6pm.

Topics discussed so far: **Prayer:** How, when and where to pray, types of prayer; **Purgatory:** meaning, why and how long before they are freed, Should we pray for or to those in purgatory; **Sin;** venial and mortal sins; **Reconciliation;** **Hell,** a state of deprivation not a place, devil, fallen angels, will and choice; **Mercy of God:** works of charity, etc. Following the recommendations of the parish group "Conversation in the Spirit." we shall continue to test run this initiative in our parish within an atmosphere of a relaxed, friendly and welcoming gathering every fortnight.



Children's Liturgy: I want to thank Mary Wojtowicz and her team of Liturgists for the wonderful work they do for us and I encourage the parents to please support their children to use this wonderful opportunity.

COFFEE MORNING : It was an amazing show of support to the Happy Tummies Kids Kitchen. Any thanks to all the donors, supporters and participants at the occasion. Huge appreciations to Daria and her team of organizers from Alyth, Blairgowrie and Coupar Angus.

Parish Diversity Day Celebration: Sunday 28th September 2025. This year will showcase cultural diversity in a unique setting: Flags A4bsize, multi linguistic mass celebration and prayers, songs, poems, cloths, prints, culinary and many other initiatives from our diver communities in the parish.

A Reflection from: Catholic for Life

Today's Gospel reminds us that if we truly value being a disciple of Jesus, we must be single minded and focus only on those things that will lead us to love of God and love of neighbour. St. Francis de Sales notes that this may require us to reorient our loves: A true lover has almost no pleasure aside from the loved object. Such is the case with our friendships that are good and excellent. They are wholly for God and in God. The love and friendship we have in God last

eternally because they are grounded in a solid and permanent foundation of divine love.

News from the Vatican: Pope Leo XIV: 'I thirst' is Jesus' cry for love and relationship

Pope Leo XIV reflects on Jesus' final words on the Cross, and recalls that human fragility "is a bridge towards heaven."

In his catechesis at the Wednesday General Audience, Pope Leo XIV focused on Jesus' final words on the Cross—"I thirst" and "It is finished"—according to the Gospel of John.

As He hung upon the Cross and humanity faced our most luminous yet darkest moment, noted the Pope, Jesus spoke those two sentences filled with an entire lifetime, which reveal the entire existence of the Son of God.

Jesus appears on the Cross as a "suppliant for love," not as a victorious hero, he said. "He humbly asks for what He, alone, cannot give to Himself in any way."

The Pope pointed out that Jesus' thirst on the Cross was not only the physiological need of a tortured body, but also "an expression of a profound desire: that of love, of relationship, of communion."

"It is the silent cry of a God who, having wished to share everything of our human condition, also lets Himself be overcome by this thirst," said the Pope. "Our God is not ashamed to beg for a sip, because in that gesture He tells us that love, in order to be true, must also learn to ask and not only to give."

In expressing His thirst, noted Pope Leo, Jesus shows that we cannot be self-sufficient or save ourselves, since His next words—"It is finished"—comes after He receives a sponge soaked with vinegar. "Love has made itself needy," he said, "and precisely for this reason it has accomplished its work."

The Christian paradox is that God saves "not by doing, but by letting Himself be done unto; not defeating evil with force, but by accepting the weakness of love to the very end."

"Salvation is not found in autonomy, but in humbly recognizing one's own need and in being able to express it freely," he said.

Humanity finds fulfilment in trust, added Pope Leo, which opens us up to true hope, since even the Son of God could not be self-sufficient, thirsting as He did for love, meaning, and justice.

"Jesus saves us by showing us that asking is not unworthy, but liberating," he said. "It is the way out of the hiddenness of sin, so as to re-enter the space of communion. Ever since the beginning, sin has begotten shame. But forgiveness — real forgiveness — is born when we can face up to our need and no longer fear rejection."

As He thirsted on the Cross, said the Pope, Jesus expresses all of wounded humanity's cry for living water, in such a way that leads us to God and unites us to Him.

In conclusion, Pope Leo XIV invited Christians to find joy and true fulfilment in fraternity, the simple life, the art of asking without shame, and offering what we can without ulterior motives.

"Let us not be afraid to ask, especially when it seems to us that we do not deserve," he said. "Let us not be ashamed to reach out our hand. It is right there, in that humble gesture, that salvation hides." -- *Wishing you a lovely weekend, Fr. Gregory*

