

*Welcome to the Parishes of
St. Mungo's, Alloa and St. Serf's, High Valleyfield
Sunday 5th April 2024 - Sixth Sunday of Easter (Year B)*



Today's Gospel follows immediately after the Gospel proclaimed last week, in which Jesus taught that he was the vine and that his disciples were the branches. In the example of the vine and the branches, we learned that our union with Jesus will lead to fruitful service. Today's reading extends this teaching to describe the kind of service that Christians are called upon to offer to others. When John wrote this Gospel, his community was influenced by a set of religious beliefs called Gnosticism. It appears that one of John's intentions was to distinguish Christian belief from the beliefs held by the Gnostics. Evidence of this can be found in today's Gospel.

One of the tenets of Gnostic teaching was the importance of knowledge, or gnosis, as the determining aspect of faith. We read today's Gospel as a response to this teaching. In John's Gospel, we hear Jesus affirm that he is known by the Father and that his disciples will know the Father by knowing Jesus. In this passage, however, Jesus reminds his disciples that this knowledge is to be expressed in love. Those who know Jesus well—and Jesus says that his disciples do know him—will love one another. Knowledge leads to love, which leads to action. John reminds his community that Jesus taught that love is the sign of a true disciple and, thus, a true Christian. Even more, a true disciple shows a particular kind of love, sacrificial love.

In the Greek, there are two words for love that are used in this passage. The first is *agape*. The second is *philia*. The first word is most often used to describe love for other persons and for God. It is understood as the highest and most perfect kind of love. The second word is used to describe the affection of friendship. In this context, John appears to use these words as synonyms. The root of the Greek word for friend comes from this second term for love, *philia*. By using this word, Jesus transforms the terms of his relationship with his disciples and redefines for them their relationship with God. In the Hebrew Scriptures, faith in God made one a servant of God. Here Jesus teaches that his relationship to his disciples is based on friendship, not servitude.

Another aspect of Gnostic belief taught that a believer was an elect person, chosen and set apart from the world. John reminds his community that Jesus also taught that a disciple is one who had been chosen—one who had been chosen by Jesus. To be chosen by Jesus, however, is not to be set apart from the world. Instead, to be chosen by Jesus is to be sent to serve the world as he did. The disciples of Jesus were chosen and were sent into the world to bear fruit by serving others, by sacrificing for others, in love.

This reading, like last week's, is part of Jesus' Last Supper discourse. In the context of John's Gospel, these words are spoken before Jesus' Crucifixion. We read his instruction to the disciples in light of his death and Resurrection. We know that Jesus himself gives us the greatest example of the kind of love and service that he teaches to his disciples. He has, in fact, laid down his life for his friends, for his disciples, and for us. Through his death and Resurrection, we have received the grace to love others as Jesus has commanded.

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SVDP UPDATE

Anthony Cassidy writes: *We continue to be blown away by the generosity shown in the donations we receive via our weekly collection. Many thanks for your continued support and additional thanks to those who contribute via standing order plus a special mention to the Woolly Knitters who are also currently supporting SVDP.*

We are engaging with other support groups within the community and continue to look for opportunities to help those in need, including visiting those who are unable to get out or have a befriending need. Let me know if you are aware of anyone who'd like a visit.

Lastly I'm looking for volunteers for each mass (Saturday eve & Sunday morn) to stand at the end of mass to hold the SVDP box - no other commitment! The only requirement is the ability to smile (or scowl). This small service will be a big help and if I can get four helpers each mass then it will only be once a month. Many thanks & God Bless.

DATE	TIME	CHURCH	LITURGY	INTENTION
Sunday 5th May <i>6th Sunday of Easter (B)</i>	6 p.m. (Sat)	St. Mungo's	Vigil Mass	People of the Parish
	9.30 a.m.	St. Mungo's	Mass	
	11.30 a.m.	St. Serf's	Mass	
Monday 6th May	NO	MASS	CELEBRATED	TODAY
Tuesday 7th May	10 a.m.	St. Mungo's	Mass	
Wednesday 8th May	10 a.m.	St. Serf's	Mass	Alistair McNie (Anniv)
	7 p.m.	St. Mungo's	Vigil Mass	
Thursday 9th May <i>Ascension of the Lord Holy Day of Obligation</i>	10 a.m.	St. Mungo's	Mass	
	2 p.m.	St. Serf's	Mass	
Friday 10th May	10 a.m.	St. Mungo's	Mass	Fr Martin Chambers (RIP)
Saturday 11th May	6 p.m.	St. Mungo's		People of the Parish
Sunday 12th May <i>7th Sunday of Easter (B)</i>	9.30 a.m.	St. Mungo's	Mass	Maggie Brotherton (Anniv.)
	11.30 a.m.	St. Serf's	Mass	Anna Fraser (Anniv.)

<p style="text-align: center;">Rosary Wednesdays in St. Serf's at 9.30 a.m. Fridays in St. Mungo's at 9.30 a.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sacrament of Confession No confessions this Wednesday No confessions on Thursday Saturday in St. Mungo's from 5 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament No Exposition this week</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">St. Mungo's Prayer Group Tuesday 2 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. in St. Mungo's Hall</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Teas/coffees Tuesday after 10 a.m. Mass in St. Mungo's Hall Wednesday after 10 a.m. Mass in St. Serf's Hall Last Sunday of the month after 9.30 a.m. Mass in St. Mungo's Hall</p>
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PARISH CONTACT INFORMATION

Parish Priest: Father Michael Carrie (email: stmungo@dunkelddiocese.org.uk)
Postal Address: St. Mungo's Chapel House, 25 Mar Street, Alloa FK10 1HR
Telephone: 01259 212486 **Parish Website:** www.catholicalloa.com

St. Mungo's Hall Bookings: Cathie Ramage
Telephone: 07596 955869 **Email:** ramagethrn@gmail.com

Parish Safeguarding co-ordinators: Margaret Fern and Jean Gilbert
Email: stmungopsc@dunkelddiocese.org.uk

Parish SVDP

Telephone: 07866 538557 **Email:** SVDP.StMungos@gmail.com

St. Mungo's, Alloa and St. Serf's, High Valleyfield are parishes of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dunkeld, a charity registered in Scotland, Number SC001810

IN YOUR PRAYERS....

We pray for all who are ill/housebound: in particular we remember:

Hannah McNally, Jane Fentiman, Fay Miller, Veronica McCluskey, Ann Gray, Joe Crumley, Jacqui Cadwallender, Richard Donald, Mgr Neil Gallagher, Maureen Malkiewicz, Catherine Strathearn, Matthew Kelly, Marjory Robson (*mother of Bishop Stephen*), Bishop Stephen Robson, Brian Bell, Margaret Renton, Lewis McArthur, Eden Smyth, Angie Mortimer-Farthing, John Ferguson.
Our Lady, Health of the sick, pray for them!

We pray for those who have died recently:

Jane McShane

We remember those whose anniversaries fall at this time:

Canon James Matthews, Mgr Charles Hendry, Alistair McNie, Anna Fraser, Margaret Brotherton, Honor McGregor, Richard Clark, Michael Maxwell
Fidelium animae per misericordiam Dei requiescant in pace. Amen

LAST WEEK'S OFFERINGS

St. Mungo's: Offertory collection: £746.52 Direct to bank: £255.50 Total: £1002.02
St. Serf's: Offertory Collection: £212.72

Many thanks for your continued generosity to the parishes.

There will be a special collection next Sunday for Communications

BISHOP-ELECT MARTIN CHAMBERS RIP

A Month's Mind Mass for the late Bishop-Elect Martin will take place on **Friday 10th May at 7.30 p.m. in St. Andrew's Cathedral, Dundee.** The main celebrant will be Archbishop Leo Cushley, our Metropolitan Archbishop, and Bishop Frank Dougan of Galloway will be the preacher.

KNIGHTS OF ST. COLUMBA

During the Masses next weekend in St. Mungo's, there will be a pulpit address from John Glass of the Knights of St. Columba. The Knights are hoping to recruit some new members for their Council.

BINGO TEA THANK-YOU!

The parish Social Group would like to say thank you to all the parishioners who joined us and supported our bingo tea, everyone had a wonderful night and we were delighted to see so many familiar faces. We raised £508 which has been donated to the church funds. We really appreciate all the kind donations of raffle and bingo prizes from parishioners we had lots of fabulous prizes and it was down to everyone's kind generosity in donating.

MAY—MONTH OF OUR LADY

The month of May is traditionally dedicated to Our Blessed Lady. During this month there will be Marian Devotions in both churches - in St. Serf's we will say the rosary on Wednesdays at 9.30 a.m. and in St. Mungo's we will have the rosary on Fridays at 9.30 a.m. **The annual Marian Procession will take place in St. Mungo's on Sunday 12th May at 3 p.m.**

ST. MODAN'S HIGH SCHOOL ANNIVERSARY SUPPER AND CEILIDH

To mark the end of the school's 90th year, St Modan's Anniversary Committee have organised a semi-formal buffet supper and ceilidh for all members of the school's family. So, whether you are a former pupil, parent, former member of staff or current, you are warmly invited to attend this unique event. This celebration will take place on the evening of **Friday 21st June** in Stirling's Albert Halls – and will feature entertainment from St Modan's alumni. The start time will be 7.00 for 7.30 pm, the ticket price will be £20 per head - which will cover food and entertainment in a sumptuous location- and the event will include a well-stocked licensed bar. Tickets can be reserved by contacting the school office on 01786 470962.

SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

**Is celebrated on Thursday, and is a Holy Day of Obligation. Masses in our parishes will be:
In St. Mungo's: Vigil Mass on Wednesday at 7 p.m. and Mass on the Thursday at 10 a.m.
In St. Serf's, Mass will be at 2 p.m. on Thursday**

Dear Parishioners,

I hope you are still enjoying the blessings of this Easter season. Thank you for your continuing prayers and support as we await the appointment of a new bishop.

As you may know, Clackmannanshire Council has begun a consultation on the relocation of St Mungo's RC Primary School to the Alloa Academy site. After the ongoing problem with water ingress, the school was decanted to Alloa Academy in April 2018 and in November of that year it was decided that the school would remain there for the medium term. The Council now wishes to make that arrangement permanent.

While we are grateful to the head teacher, staff, parents, and pupils of Alloa Academy, past and present, the Diocese of Dunkeld cannot support this proposal. We are also profoundly disappointed that this consultation process points in only one direction.

After discussions with the school, parent council, parish priest, and church representative, and following a visit from my delegate, Canon Tom Shields, during which he spoke with Colin Bruce, the Chief Education Officer, we have concluded that the Alloa Academy site is totally unsuitable for the housing of both Alloa Academy and St Mungo's Primary School.

It is the experience of the Church in the Diocese, and throughout Scotland, that even where a shared or joint campus is intended from its inception to accommodate two school communities, usually of the same sector, there are tensions and problems to overcome. Alloa Academy was never intended to house two schools, one denominational and the other non-denominational, let alone a secondary and primary school. Each sector has very different needs. The layout of the building and grounds does not provide a nurturing atmosphere for young children. The Head Teacher and staff of St Mungo's must be constantly on call throughout break times to make sure that the children can use facilities safely.

The adaptations made by the Council, though welcome, do not go far enough. Nor are the benefits of the additional facilities provided by a secondary school obvious. There seems to be no real commitment to substantial funding that might radically change the present building or provide additional staff so that some of these concerns might be addressed.

A Catholic school must be able to pursue its rhythm of prayer and devotions, and have the opportunity within the school to celebrate Mass. Again, it is far from clear how any of this can be achieved within the existing or any proposed building layout. While I am sure this is not the intention, it appears to us in the Diocese that Clackmannanshire Council is not providing adequate provision for Catholic education in its proposal.

With all of this in mind, I ask you to do three things:

- That every one of you take part in the formal consultation process that Clackmannanshire Council has published. This can be found on the Council's website. If you are not confident about taking part in an online survey, please let your parish priest know and he will suggest someone who can help.
- That you write to your local councillor making your views known and asking them what they intend to do about the situation. If you are not sure who your ward councillor is or how you should frame the questions, again the local parishes are there to help.
- That you talk about this issue with everyone you meet, in the shops, in the street, and whenever you get a chance. It is often the case that people don't know what is going on unless they are directly involved.

Since the pioneering work of Fr James Donlevy and the generosity of the Calder family in 1874, the community of St Mungo's has had a proud history of supporting Catholic education. With the 1918 Education (Scotland) Act, St Mungo's was one of the many Catholic schools entrusted to the local authority. The Catholic community of Alloa and the County of Clackmannanshire have every right to expect a building and staffing provision that will not just facilitate basic education but inspire new generations in faith and learning.

Yours sincerely,

Canon Kevin J. Golden

Diocesan Administrator