

St. John's and St. Columba's Strathpray

Let us pray for one another and for the world ...

Sunday July 7th Pentecost 7.

'The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved - you and your household.'" Acts 16:29-31.

'To know about Christ is not enough. To be convinced that he is the Saviour of the world is not enough. To affirm your faith in him, as we do in the Apostle's Creed, is not enough. You really don't actively believe in Christ until you make a commitment of your life and receive him as your Saviour. You can best demonstrate your faith in a bank by putting your money in it. You can best show your faith in a doctor by trusting him with your physical welfare in times of illness. You can best prove your faith in a boat by getting aboard and going somewhere on it. You can best demonstrate your faith in Christ by trusting him with your life and receiving him unconditionally as your Saviour.'
(Billy Graham – *The Secret Of Happiness*)



Lord Jesus, I want every part of my life to be given over to you, because you have done so much for me. Through your death I live, my life is yours. Keep me from wanting to go my own way; may I rejoice in doing your will. Amen.

We pray for the congregation of St. Andrew, Tain: James Currall. Assistant Priest – Simon Scott.

Monday July 8th

For the next 5 days we will be using reflections from Eddie Askew's book 'Unexpected Journeys' about Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well in Samaria from John 4:4-30.

***'Now Jesus had to go through Samaria.'* John 4:4.**

'Jews and Samaritans despised each other. The Samaritans differed strongly about the Scriptures; they also disagreed about where to worship. It's a story of prejudice with a contemporary ring for us. None of us is immune to prejudice, much of it unconscious. We're quick to judge, to take sides, and to grab the flimsiest of reasons to exclude people. We exclude them through the way we worship, in the way we interpret scripture, even questioning the place of women in the church. And it's so easy to justify it as God's will rather than identify it as human frailty. That didn't work for Jesus. The lowly and despised were to be honoured in the kingdom he proclaimed, and they would include Samaritans – something he would make clear as he talked with the woman who was now coming to the well.'



Lord, sometimes there's territory in my life that I won't explore, places and issues I don't want to think about, people I want no contact with. I'm unwilling to wander through the wilderness of my own prejudice, confront the unnamed fears and insecurity that feed and grow on ignorance and lead me to condemn and spurn people and things that I don't know.

Forgive me, Lord, and give me the courage to face those unacknowledged fears, and to love as you love. Amen.

We pray for those monitoring social media platforms against abuse and disinformation.

Tuesday July 9th

‘When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?”’ John 4:7.

‘Jesus was thirsty. Was it as simple as that? Or had Jesus read the woman’s character and her need as she approached the well, and asked for a drink simply to begin a conversation with her? A conversation most people would have avoided. Society’s rules may have dictated one thing but the compassion at the heart of Jesus always provoked him into breaking them when it seemed the better alternative. And in doing so he set the scene that would heal the wounds of her earlier experiences, transcend her distrust and doubt, draw her into faith and transform her life.’



Lord Jesus, thank you that you come into our lives, as you did into the life of the Samaritan woman. And you disturb us with a love that digs up secrets, unlocks the truths we’d rather not remember. You challenge us to face our failures and you help each one of us to look in honesty at what we were without you and then you show us what we can become with you. Thank you for the new beginning you offer. Amen.

We pray for young people caught up in knife crime and criminal gangs.

Wednesday July 10th

‘Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”’ John 4:10.

‘Jesus waited as the woman lowered her bucket into the well again, then began to clarify the point of the conversation. “I’m not talking about the water you’re splashing around. You’ll be back here tomorrow and the next day for more of that,” he said and went on to offer her something quite different – eternal life. The timeless life of God himself, ever renewing, inexhaustible living water.’



Thank you, Jesus, for the promises of life drawn from a well of love that your sacrifice has dug, tapping a living stream that waters and enriches all I am and do. And all you ask of me is that I drink, and drink again. My thirst is ever quenched – and never quenched in you – because the more I have of you the more I want. Thank you for the living water of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We pray for those whose happiness is dependent on status and money.

Thursday July 11th

“‘Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”’ John 4:19-20.

'Jesus used the woman's words to focus on the truth about worship. The place, he said, doesn't matter. God is Spirit, free-flowing like the living water Jesus was offering the woman, and worship – our intimacy with God – is a Spirit-filled life. It's a pure heart that counts, insofar as flawed human beings are capable of it. True worship isn't connected with race or nation, has little to do with tradition or ritual, but everything to do with the sincerity and commitment with which we seek God. And, to bring it up to date, has nothing to do with the particular brand of Christian worship our diverse personalities favour. It takes courage to step over the boundaries we set and enter into the freedom God offers, but he invites us, challenges us to do it.'



Loving God, my I worship You in the beauty of holiness, with a sincere and loving heart that puts You at the centre of my life, and brings glory to Your name. Amen.

We pray for all people who are struggling to get enough food to eat, especially in Sudan where famine is looming.

Friday July 12th

'Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?' John 4:29.

'In the sudden opening of her eyes in Christ's presence at the well, her life flashed through her mind and she saw herself with a greater clarity and truth than ever before. She was reborn. This event encapsulates the essence of the Christian message – the recognition of human weakness and vulnerability, and the possibility of an individual life being turned around and renewed through God's loving forgiveness and acceptance. Her welcome into the kingdom was immediate and unconditional. In Christ we too can find a new focus for living, new values that help us see our situation in a new way and respond to it in his strength.'

Thank you, Jesus, that your love respects no boundaries, breaks rules and reaches out across the barricades. Amen.

We pray for those grieving the sudden loss of loved ones.

Saturday July 13th

'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life ..' Matthew 6:25.

'Do you know which commandment is most frequently given by God to his people in the Bible? Interestingly enough, it is not one of the 10 Commandments. Instead, it is the command, "Do not fear; do not be afraid." Over 370 times God says to his people in various ways that they needn't fear. Why? Well, obviously, not because bad things don't and can't happen, but because he is the Lord, and they can trust him with their lives.' (J. John - Ten)

Dear Lord, may the knowledge of your love and the promises found in your Word sustain all who go through times of despair. When I am tempted by such moods of darkness help me to turn quickly to you, to find the strength that I need to break free and to go on, secure in the knowledge of your caring. Amen.

We pray for our link Diocese of Tuam.

