

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

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

### Sunday March 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday before Lent.

*'When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD.'*

*Exodus 34:29. 'Each of us needs an opportunity to be alone, and silent, to find space in the day or in the week, just to reflect and to listen to the voice of God that speaks deep within us. Our search for God is only our response to his search for us. He knocks at our door, but for many people their lives are too preoccupied for them to be able to hear.'* (Cardinal Basil Hume)

God of deep quiet, still my soul, my heart, my mind, that I may listen in such a way that my listening in itself becomes an act of love. Amen.

We pray for the congregations of the Mid Ross Charge - St. Anne, Strathpeffer; Dingwall Town Chaplaincy: Julia Boothby, Gordon Sleight, Barbara Chandler, Norma Higgott.



### Monday March 3<sup>rd</sup>

*'Jesus, the Son of God, is a peacemaker. His peace doesn't only mean absence of war. It is not simply harmony or equilibrium. His peace is the fullness of well-being, gratuitously given by God. Jesus says, "Peace I leave to you, my own peace I give you, a peace which the world cannot give, this is my gift to you." (John 14:27) Peace is Shalom – well-being of mind, heart, and body, individually and communally. It can exist in the midst of a war-torn world, even in the midst of unresolved problems and increasing human conflicts. Jesus made that peace by giving his life for his brothers and sisters. This is no easy peace, but it is everlasting and it comes from God. Are we willing to give our lives in the service of peace?' (Henri Nouwen – Bread For The Journey)*

God our Father, deliver us from evil: not only the evil in our own hearts but the evil in our world today: the evil of unjust governments and tyrannical regimes; the evil of religious intolerance and racial strife; the evil of war and the slaughter of countless innocent lives; the evil of organised crime, terrorism and drug trafficking; the evil of world poverty in a world of abundant wealth. Deliver us, O God, from all such evil; and let your kingdom come and your will be done on earth, for the glory of your name. Amen.

We pray for King Charles and members of the Royal Family.

### Tuesday March 4<sup>th</sup>

*'A wise person draws from the well within.' Proverbs 20:5.*



*'I love the way that the phrase "God is nowhere" becomes, with the gentle tap of a space bar, "God is now here". It is when I take the time to pause and open up a little gap that I sense God's presence most clearly.'* (Brian Draper – Soulfulness)

**As we begin the season of Lent tomorrow, here is a prayer for the Spirit of God.**

When we come face to face with the challenge of self-giving, when we are asked to go the extra mile, to take the risk of reaching out to another, to offer forgiveness to the heart that rejects us ...

*Spirit of God, fill us with the energy of your love.*

When our world seems bleak, when we walk with sadness written on our soul, when we have days when everything goes wrong ...

*Spirit of God, stir the energy of your joy within us.*

When anxiety and concern take over our spirit, when restlessness or boredom holds sway over us, when our world cries out in distress and turmoil ...

*Spirit of God, deepen in us the energy of your peace.*

On those days when we hurry too much, during those times when our anger flares because our agendas aren't met, when we stop giving people our understanding and acceptance ...

*Spirit of God, draw us towards the energy of your patience.*

In those difficult times when fear threatens to drown our trust in you, during those experiences of growth when we are tempted to doubt all the ways we have known you ...

*Spirit of God, renew in us the energy of trusting in you.*

When harshness or abruptness dominates our moods, when we feel challenged by the power of another, when we use the things of this good earth ...

*Spirit of God, bless us with the energy of your gentleness. Amen. (Joyce Rupp – May I Have This Dance?)*

We pray for our link Diocese of Tuam.

**Wednesday March 5<sup>th</sup> Ash Wednesday.**

*'Life, lovely while it lasts, is soon over.*

*Life as we know it, precious and beautiful, ends.*

*The body is put back in the same ground it came from.*

*The spirit returns to God, who first breathed it.' Ecclesiastes 12:7.*

*'Ash Wednesday brings us up short. As the ashes are traced on our foreheads the priest says these words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." If you come to church looking for good cheer this doesn't sound like what you had in mind. This, surely, isn't the good news the gospel speaks about? Yet this is precisely the best news of all, because this is the proclamation of reality. We are all going to die. This is the basic fact of our life, the destination towards which all our lives are travelling, the reality that frames our life. Unless we acknowledge it, we will never have the grace to stand at the foot of the cross and discover the reality of God's involvement with our life – still less the liberating challenge of God's love and forgiveness. Lent is thus an invitation to embrace reality.'*  
(Stephen Cottrell – *I Thirst*)

*For reflection: How does thinking about Christ's death help me to feel about my own death? Have I in any sense prepared myself for death? And what does this mean, anyway?*

Bring us, O Lord our God, at our last awakening into the house and gate of heaven, to enter into that gate and dwell in that house, where there shall be no darkness or dazzling, but one equal light; no noise or silence, but one equal music; no fears or hopes, but one equal possession; no ends or beginnings, but one equal eternity; in the habitations of Thy glory and dominion world without end. Amen. (John Donne 1572-1631)

We pray for those leading and attending Lent groups and other activities.



**Thursday March 6<sup>th</sup>**

**'Whenever you fast ...' Matthew 6:16.**



*'Jesus is taking it for granted that you will fast, not suggesting it as something you might not have thought of. So consider practising the discipline of fasting this Lent. I don't mean just giving up ice cream or doughnuts. The object of the Christian fast is to deny ourselves something normally experienced as fundamental to life, so that we grow in our appreciation that all things come from God and that*

*without God there is nothing. Hence, we return to the thing we have missed, with a real thanksgiving and a much fuller enjoyment.*

*In which case, consider giving up a whole meal once a week. Or give up coffee or alcohol. Or give up driving your car so fast, or driving it so often. You can give the time saved to God in a more profound thanksgiving for the whole of life. You can give the money saved to those in need as a small token of your desire to build a fairer world. Thus your acts of fasting and self-denial, however small, will begin to draw you into the mystery of the one who gave up everything for you.'* (Stephen Cottrell)

***For reflection :*** *How might fasting put me back in touch with some basic realities about life? Is there some simple, practical way in which I can fast during this Lent?*

Teach us, O God, to view our life here on earth as a pilgrim's path to heaven, and give us grace to tread it courageously in the company of your faithful people. Help us to set our affections on things above, not on the passing vanities of this world, and grant that as we journey on in the way of holiness we may bear a good witness to our Lord, and serve all who need our help along the way, for the glory of your name. Amen.

On World Book Day, we pray for those seeking to promote literacy around the world.

**Friday March 7<sup>th</sup> World Day of Prayer**

***'The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.'*** Isaiah 35:1-2a.

*'To emphasize the reality and the mystery of the cross, some crosses and crucifixes are depicted with flowers growing from the places where Christ was nailed to the tree. The symbol of death is turned into a symbol of life: by his wounds we are healed. The cross contains both realities, God's complete sharing in humanity and God's complete victory over death. In this way we see that the triumph of the cross is the triumph of love.'* (Stephen Cottrell)

Lord, make your home in our hearts and root us in your love. May we understand how broad and long, how high and deep, is the love of Christ, and so be filled with the very nature of God. Amen.

On the World Day of Prayer, we pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world.

**Focus on the world during Lent.**

**YEMEN.**

*'Secret meetings, coded messages and pseudonyms – these are all part of what it means to follow Jesus in Yemen, such are the dangers.*





*“It’s like we have our own language,” says one church leader. Amidst it all, the Holy Spirit is moving.*

*For years, Yemen has been embroiled in civil war, leading to fractures in governance, a rise in extremism and a catastrophic humanitarian crisis. Against this backdrop, religious freedom is non-existent, with Christians and other religious minorities increasingly forced into the shadows. With Islam the state religion, it’s illegal for Muslims to convert to another faith, and being discovered as a Christian can bring house arrest, imprisonment, torture and even death.*

*“Your prayers have done many miracles – your prayers for safety and protection have been answered,” says one leader. “It’s a miracle that we’re able to come back home and safely sleep at night and then do it again and again. Your prayers are what keep us going.”*

*And people are coming to know Jesus, particularly through social media, reaching rising numbers of Yemenis who are questioning Islam. So please pray for new believers – for protection, boldness and wisdom. And that peace and justice will come to Yemen.’*

To find out about Saleh (pictured here) please go to

[In Yemen, death threats don’t deter Saleh from sharing the gospel - Open Doors UK & Ireland](#)



### **Saturday March 8<sup>th</sup>**

***‘And Christ became a human being and lived here on earth among us and was full of loving forgiveness and truth. And some of us have seen his glory - the glory of the only Son of the heavenly Father!’ John 1:14.***

*‘The truth about how God is present to us in Jesus is of vital importance for the Christian faith. If this man – this fully human man – is also fully God, if what it is to be God and what it is to be human are joined together in this man, if in Jesus the frailty of human flesh and the eternity of God are joined together, then the story of this man’s living and dying is the one upon which all the vast and important questions of life and death hang. His life and death have relevance for every life and death.’ (Stephen Cottrell)*

We thank you, Lord God, for your word spoken of old through prophets and apostles and recorded for us in holy scripture; and most of all for your final Word spoken to us in your Son Jesus Christ, made flesh for us and for our salvation. Grant that through the written word we may behold the glory of the incarnate Word, who is now exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high. Amen.

On International Women’s Day, we pray for women who are oppressed or struggling with life.