

Reflection, Renewal, Reconciliation

Dear Friends,

The Holy season of Lent is here with us again. It begins with the imposition of ashes on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday, a reminder of where we have come from and to where we will eventually return.



In the coming days and weeks we as Christians are going to try our hardest to follow the footsteps of Christ. It is a time for the three R's **Reflection, Renewal** and **Reconciliation**. It is a time for Reflection because at this time we take stock of our Christian living, we reflect on how far we have met our commitments as members of the body of Christ, how far we have been faithful to our baptismal promises and how far we have been "another-Christ" to our neighbours and those we come across in our daily lives. We reflect on our attitude to our immediate community which is the church of God here in Holy Name. Like all fallen human beings, we may have missed the mark in one way or another, this time gives us the opportunity to start afresh. It is an opportune time to make fresh commitments and resolve to do better. This is where Renewal steps in. Reflection and Renewal bring in the challenge of Reconciliation.

Reconciliation stems from the realm of human personal relationship. Where do we stand in our relationship with God and our neighbour? For us here this is a time to renew warmth and trust after apparent hostilities and conflicts we have been through. Forgiveness is an element of reconciliation so we must not only learn to forgive and let the memories fade away, but we must be willing to resume the risk of relating to one another once again. We must do our best to restore an attitude of love because wrong doing is not a valid reason for not loving the wrong doer; we have to work through pain, anger and alienation and with faith and confidence following the examples of Christ to achieve that level of spontaneity where relationship has been fully restored. We must equally be willing to accept that there is no guarantee that there will be no further conflicts.

At the beginning of this holy season, forgiveness and reconciliation must be in the fore front. In Jesus Christ our mentor the act of forgiveness marked the introduction to his mission and was one of the main characteristics of his own teaching activity and self-identification. Forgiveness of wrong doing is a feature of the kingdom of God. We are followers of Christ. We are a people set apart to proclaim the Kingdom of God and more so we as a community have promised to do this in His Holy Name, hence the Church of Holy Name. The eyes of all here in Cumbernauld are on all us. We must show unconditional love to one another and be at the service of one another. Our love of one another must go beyond the love between friends. It must be what in Greek is called **Agape** which is translated as Christian love.

Christian love is not evoked by and not limited to the humanly lovable. It is unconditional and universal in its range. It is a giving love, going out to people, not because they have any special characteristics or qualifications but simply because they are there, because they are persons, children of God. Our attitude should model that of Jesus who seems to have given himself wholly to his neighbours. He spent all his life bringing a new quality of life to others, a new wholeness to the mind and healing to the body, a release from anxious pre-occupations with oneself and a new openness to the neighbour. People crowded around him wherever he went recognising in him the power of a higher quality life and seeking to receive it for themselves. There was something very striking about him. What he said and did revealed a super abundant inner life by which others might be enriched. He poured out his abundant inner life in healing and renewal, eventually dying a violent death rather than limit the scope of his love. Christ is our exemplar, we his followers must do likewise. This is an acceptable time. This is a time of grace, this is the time to come and renew our promises to God. It is a time for abundant blessings.

Wishing you God's choicest blessings

Barnabas

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

7.00pm Every Friday

during LENT



GO ON — MAKE MOTHER'S DAY

Mothers' Union again is highlighting its work with mothers and carers facing adversity, through its Make a Mother's Day virtual gifts with Mothering Sunday cards.

For example, a £28 birthing kit equips MU-trained birthing attendants with sterile medical equipment, vaccinations for the baby, and newborn essentials. Supporters can also choose a gift in memory of their mother. Last year the campaign raised £159,000. Visit www.makeamothersday.org to order.

Orders must reach Mothers' Union by 13 March to ensure delivery before Mothering Sunday, 22 March.

I have the new Mothers Union catalogue with Easter Cards, please let me have your orders as soon as possible so I can collect them at Council Meeting in March, this saves on postage.

Joan

Resignations and appointments

Resignations: Nancy Lawrence as Vestry Secretary; Sarah Jane Allison as Child Protection Co-ordinator; Maureen Avis as Vestry member.

Appointments: Ray Gascoigne as Vestry Secretary; Fiona Morrow as Child Protection Co-ordinator.



We need much more support for the City Mission box. Please remember that as Christians we are commanded to feed the hungry and clothe the naked.

The Christmas Collection for the Diocese of Mbaïse raised a total of £400 which will make a big difference to the Church in this rural part of Nigeria. Thank you for your generosity.

The money has now been forwarded to Bishop Bright Ogu

Margaret Kelbie, Treasurer

Bishop's Lent Appeal 2009



THE Bishop's Lent Appeal this year is for Aquaboxes.

Run by Rotary International, Aquaboxes are a fast and economical way to deliver water purification supplies to communities at risk of water-borne disease.

They have been used extensively in disaster areas.

Cash raised will be passed to Rotary to buy Aquaboxes. Rotarians in our congregations may be able to arrange a speaker and/or additional publicity.

Visit aquabox.org/project.asp for more information.

North East Regional Council A.G.M.

The Annual General Meeting of the North East Regional Council was held on 19th January 2009 within Holy Name, Cumbernauld. The meeting was preceded by a Eucharist celebrated by Canon Barnabas.

The members of the Council asked that their thanks to Canon Barnabas for a particularly beautiful Eucharist and to Judith for providing the accompanying music be minuted. They also asked for thanks to be forwarded to the servers and to the members of the congregation both for their attendance and for their hospitality.

The meeting then proceeded with the election of office bearers to the Council which were as follows : -

Convener :Glennis Tavener

Vice - Convener : (member of clergy): to be confirmed

Secretary: Jean Hannah

Stewardship Convener: Glennis Tavener

Diocesan Council Reps: Geoff Scobie, Enid Scobie

Church in Society : Sue Cobb

Election to General Synod:

House of Clergy : David Wostenholm

House of Laity : Anne Jones

Information was then given on an event entitled "Companions Together Worldwide" which is to be held on 31 March 2009. This is being hosted by the Provincial Overseas Committee to explore international Companion links within the Anglican Communion. Delegates from around Scotland will meet to exchange ideas on how to strengthen links with Dioceses overseas, building on relationships developed at the Lambeth Conference. The conference will be held in the Albany Centre off Woodlands Road, Glasgow from 10.00am to 5.30pm; with coffee being served from 9.30am.

9.30 am. Lunch will be provided. Further information and registration forms may be found at info@companionstogether.org.uk or from your lay representative.

Gill Young intimated that as a follow up to the successful visit from representatives of St. Mathews in Kentucky, it was her intention to organise a return visit. Our American visitors were keen to strengthen links and would like to learn more about Scotland. Gil was hopeful that others would like to join her in this visit and would be pleased to hear from any interested parties. More information about St. Mathews and the proposed visit may be obtained from Gill Young.

A large part of the meeting was taken up with a discussion involving disability issues. The region was asked by Barbara Walker to support a proposal to go forward to Synod asking that each diocese should have a lead person to ensure that any decisions made about venues used for Diocesan events would ensure that the venue was accessible to all. This arose after there were considerable difficulties with access at a recent Diocesan event.

A great deal of discussion arose from this. It was noted that many wider issues were involved in this and it was suggested that perhaps each Diocese should have a designated person to take responsibility for disability issues. Another suggestion was that each church should have a representative with responsibility for disability issues.

The meeting was reminded that vestries should be aware of, and fully compliant with current legislation. It was proposed that awareness should be raised, provision looked at and, when Diocesan events were organised, venues should be used that were fully accessible. It was also proposed that the issue should be put on the agenda at Synod, the following proposal being put forward;

“ ...that this Synod proposes that General Synod invite the administration Board to consider requiring all dioceses to have a designated person with responsibilities for disability issues within the diocese”

The date and venue for the next meeting of the Council is 10 March at St. Matthew's.

Further thanks were given to Holy name for their hospitality and the meeting closed with the Grace.

Margaret Gascoigne, Lay Representative

Letter from a Ugandan Mother

The Mothers' Union sponsors a village in Uganda through ActionAid. Here is a letter from one mother in the village.

Dear Friend,

I am called Masanja Betty and I am 50 years old. I am married with eight children and we live in Asuret village in Pallisa district, Eastern Uganda. Caroline Odoi from ActionAid has told me you are a supporter of The Next Step in my country and she helped me to tell you my story.

I used to fall sick frequently but didn't know why and never thought I was in danger of HIV . There are aid programmes run by government and organisations working on HIV & AIDS issues, but most people including myself did not want to know their HIV status, mainly because of fear.

However, when I got more and more ill, I decided to go for an HIV test; I was informed that I had the virus which causes AIDS. The medical person told me that being HIV positive is one of the reasons why I was always falling sick because my body immunity was getting low and could not fight diseases. Although saddened, I felt relieved to know what was making me fall sick.

When I went home, I thought it would be best to share the results with my husband and see what to do together. This did not go well. Instead he beat me accusing me of having brought HIV & AIDS into the family. Whenever I was sick and bed ridden he would mistreat me, and push me out of the house.

He stopped providing food for the family. Even though my children and I do the farming right from clearing the farmland to digging and planting, when the crops are ready for harvest he would sell it and disappear with the money. He was not even supporting our children's education and providing the basic needs for the household.

I was desperate and did not know what to do. But then in the September of last year, ActionAid organized meetings on violence against women and girls and also HIV & AIDS. More than 200 men and women, including my husband attended this meeting.

ActionAid came with some government police officers who educated us about the laws that exist on violence and policy on family protection. They told us if someone was abused they should report the matter to police and the abuser would be punished, including imprisonment when found guilty of such an offence. The meeting explained that people living with HIV & AIDS should not feel ashamed to talk about it, nor should you be treated differently.

Ever since my husband attended this meeting and has been involved in other meetings by ActionAid, he has changed his behaviour and attitude towards me and the family. He understands now that he should not treat me like he did, and also knows he would get punished if he did. Life at home is back to normal. I am receiving the treatment I need to keep healthy, and my husband is helping to cater for the family again.

The information ActionAid brought to our community is being promoted in many other communities too, this will change attitudes among men, just like my husband.

Thank you for supporting ActionAid and The Next Step which has brought happiness back into my life.

Yours sincerely,

Masanja Betty



Ps. Here is also a photo of me and some of my children