

Epiphany 4, 29th January 2023

**St. Ninian's, Castle Douglas & Christ Church,
Dalbeattie**

SC011079 & SC010918

<https://dcdchurches.org.uk/> tel: 01556 505894

PAX

Dear Friends in Christ,

Today is Holocaust Memorial Day



What is abnormal is that I am normal. That I survived the Holocaust and went on to love beautiful girls, to talk, to write, to have toast and tea and live my life – that is what is

abnormal.

Elie Wiesel, survivor of the Holocaust

Genocide is facilitated by ordinary people. **Ordinary people** turn a blind eye, believe propaganda, join murderous regimes. And those who are persecuted, oppressed and murdered in genocide aren't persecuted because of crimes they've committed – they are persecuted simply because they are **ordinary people** who belong to a particular group (eg, Roma, Jewish community, Tutsi).

Ordinary people were involved in all aspects of the Holocaust, Nazi persecution of other groups, and in the genocides that took place in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. **Ordinary people** were

perpetrators, bystanders, rescuers, witnesses - and **ordinary people** were victims.

In every genocide, those targeted faced limited choices - 'choiceless choices' (Lawrence Langer) but in every genocide the perpetrators have choices, **ordinary people** have choices.

Sometimes, these choices were limited too, sometimes they had to make life-threatening decisions. And **ordinary people** were the ones who made brave decisions to rescue, to hide or stand up. But **ordinary people** also made decisions to ignore what was going on around them, to be bystanders, to allow the genocide to continue.



The Feast of Candlemass will soon be upon us. It marks the beginning of the end of the Coming of the Light, and the preparation for Lent and the New Life of the Resurrection. I once served in a church where there was an elaborate liturgy for changing the High Altar from white to purple during the Eucharist for the feast of Candlemass. Such a visual change of emphasis in the season was useful, but having been asked, recently, about Faith and Candlemass the person I was talking to was confused until I spoke of Love: Love of God and Love of neighbour. This is surely the essence of all we do and practice in our Worship and every day life. Perhaps, in the violent world in which we inhabit this is

a lesson we all need to relearn and enact in our daily lives.

In *Love and Living*, p.35-36 Thomas Merton writes:

He who loves is more alive and more real than he was when he did not love. That is perhaps why love seems so dangerous: the lover finds in himself [herself] too many new powers, too many new insights. When a person is undergoing that kind of inner cataclysm, anything might happen. And thank God, it does happen. The world would not be worth much if it didn't!

In our preliminary preparation for Lent perhaps we should start by learning to love ourselves. If we do not love ourselves we may put ourselves at risk: many people stay in abusive relationships because they don't have the self-esteem to leave! Maybe we hate ourselves because we are weak in aspects of our life? We do not look the way we would want or perhaps we have not achieved all that we feel we ought to? What an awful word 'ought' is! If you are able to develop your own 'sense of value' you set yourself free from the opinions of others. Then having learnt to love yourself, you are ready to Love God - and others!

Perhaps, a good place is to begin with forgiveness of self and then others. Love can be a messy business. Consider the love stories you may have read or the films you have watched: *Casablanca*. *Brief Encounter*... *Love Story*. I think the best love stories acknowledge the imperfections and messiness of love. It's complicated, frustrating and yet exhilarating, and life changing. In *Moonstruck* the lovelorn baker Johnny Cammareri (played by Nicolas Cage) describes love like this:

*Love doesn't make things easy. It breaks our hearts; it's messy. We are here to love all the wrong people and die. The storybooks are all *#!*

If we are ever called to change our situation or way of life: Could this be the moment we realise the Love we have is 'Enough'!

Let us learn to Love again.

Love God. Ourselves and each other.

As the Beatles sang: *All you need is Love!*

Yours in Christ

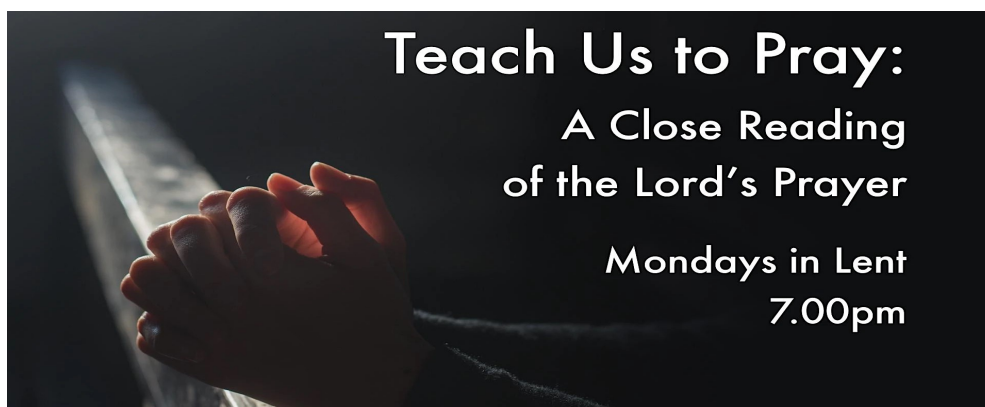
Christopher
Rector

RIP Patricia Margot Greenwood Please pray for Margot and her family. Her funeral will be on Friday 17th February at 10.30am in St.Ninian's and then at Roucan Loch.



Candlemas Day

If Candlemas Day be dry
and fair,
Half the winter's to come
and mair.
If Candlemas Day be wet
and foul,
Half o' winter's gane at
Yule.



Teach Us to Pray: A Close Look at the Lord's Prayer with the Scottish Episcopal Institute

Monday, 27 February 2023 at 19:00

Get Tickets

https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/teach-us-to-pray-a-close-look-at-the-lords-prayer-tickets-520349969767?utm_source=eventbrite&utm_medium=email&utm_content=follow_notification&utm_campaign=following_published_event&utm_term=Teach+Us+to+Pray%3A+A+Close+Look+at+the+Lord's+Prayer&aff=ebemoffollowpublishemail

February Services & Events

St. Ninian's, Castle Douglas & Christ Church, Dalbeattie

2nd	10am	Reserved Sacrament, Christ Church, Dalbeattie
5th	10.30	Sung Eucharist, Candlemass St. Ninian's, Castle Douglas
9th	10am	Reserved Sacrament, Christ Church, Dalbeattie
12th	10.30am	Sung Eucharist, Epiphany 6 Christ Church, Dalbeattie
16th	10am	Eucharist, Christ Church, Dalbeattie
17th	10.30am	Funeral: RIP Margot Greenwood, St.Ninian's, Castle Douglas
19th	10.30am	Sung Eucharist, Epiphany 7 Christ Church Dalbeattie
21st	2pm	Mothers Union, Gordon Memorial Hall
22nd	10am	Ash Wednesday, Eucharist with the Imposition of Ashes, Christ Church, Dalbeattie
	11am	Bothwell House Eucharist
23rd	11am	Barlochan Eucharist
26th	8.30am	Said Eucharist, St.Ninian's, Castle Douglas
	10.30am	Sung Eucharist, Lent 1 St. Ninian's