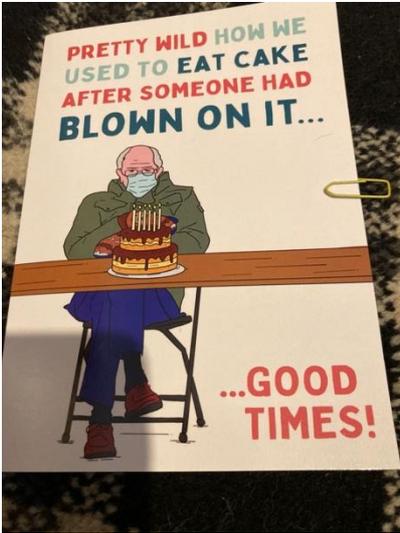


## PAX



Dear friends in Christ,

I recently received this card and I cannot help thinking that it demonstrates how our lives have progressed since the pandemic. In Afghanistan the lives of people living there are changing in unimaginable ways, especially for women and girls. Gross fear, according to the news reports, is everywhere. I think I heard a news bulletin yesterday that predicted the fall of Kabul – something that would have been unimaginable until recently. Worrying about eating a cake that someone has blown on first suddenly seems trivial.

Yet fear has always been present in our lives but perhaps it is more obvious today as we learn to live with the pandemic.

A religious life, properly lived, is a benefit to society, but extremes and a misunderstood Faith leads to fear. The difficulty here is that there is no agreed common norm. What is acceptable to one is extreme or lax to another! So what can we do?

I was really struck last week by this quote of Edith Stein's:

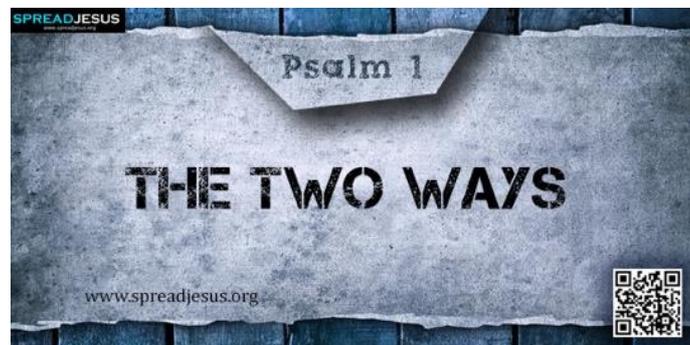
*"Let go of your plans. The first hour of your morning belongs to God. Tackle the day's work that he charges you with, and he will give you the power to accomplish it." ~ Edith Stein*

The pressures of life: The ones we place on ourselves, perceive others place on us or are dictated to us, can prove overbearing, but a correct orientation to Love of God, as proposed by Bernard of Clairvaux can change one's outlook and perspective. Our lives have moved on since the beginning of the pandemic and yes things have changed and will change. The continual evolution of society through knowledge and technical advancement has meant that the world has never stood still. There have just been times when advancement or decay (depending on your opinion) have been more apparent.

The pandemic has taught us that we all depend, irrevocably, on each other. (You know the list too well of people who society did not recognise but are

important to all our well-being). The way to a secure future is through the Love of God and each other. A true Faith leads the way. There are many paths to God but all 'true' religious life leads to the same place. (For some, even this may be a controversial statement). We must work together, fail and succeed together as we take our, perhaps, faltering steps into this new era. Our world is 'local' in our churches, our towns and country, but more than ever we are surely aware that we live in a 'global' village. What is happening in the Yemen, Lebanon, Afghanistan and the Arctic is as important to you and me, as the shelves in our local shops remaining full or the length of the NHS waiting lists.

If God and God's principles are put first in our lives then the rest will fall into place through Love. Perhaps to see where you stand in this world you might care to pray the first Psalm which is sometimes titled the two Ways. Which way will you take?



Yours prayerfully in Christ

Christopher

**Please Pray for:**

For Earle, Anne and Marion Gardner, Gill Piper, Francis Turnbull, Clem' & Ann Gault, Katherine Hatfield and Jenny Wright, Dr. Ann Wilson, Billy and Llyn Glendinning, Ian Mather, Inez, Alison Coolican and all their families. Remember especially those who are struggling particularly at this time.

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



anyone is in need of help, conversation or prayer please do not hesitate to contact Christopher 01556 505894, Helen Evans 01556 504007 or Christine Collier 01556 670275. We are all available to talk or help in any way. It is important that we keep in touch as much as possible.

## Church Services

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> August 'Dormition of the Mother of God' at 11:00am**

**Trinity 11. Family Eucharist at St Ninian's, Castle Douglas**

Please book your seat in church in advance of your attendance between Monday and Friday tel. Sandra 01557 331 596 or mailto:

[sandrawalshkbt@btinternet.com](mailto:sandrawalshkbt@btinternet.com)

Please take a note of your seat number.

**Sunday 22nd August at 11:00am**

**Trinity 12. Service of Family Eucharist at Christ Church, Dalbeattie**

Please book your seat in church in advance of your attendance with Sue tel. 01556 612863 or emails [suethomas21@btinternet.com](mailto:suethomas21@btinternet.com)

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> August Eucharist Bothwell House**

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> August at 11:00am**

**Trinity 13. Family Eucharist at St. Ninian's, Castle Douglas**

### Prayer Themes for Trinity 11

- Sunday: Pray for those affected by climate change especially those living around the Mediterranean contending with the terrible fires. For the mission of our church and our church family. For Refugees and Asylum Seekers as they make their journeys to safety. We pray they may be welcomed and cared for.
- Monday: For continued Peace in the world. For tolerance and understanding among the nations. May they have a love for the poor and vulnerable.  
For those in danger of losing their jobs and those sectors of industry and hospitality which are not allowed to open. For those in financial difficulties.
- Tuesday: For University students & staff. For all school teachers and pupils as they begin the return to school.
- Wednesday We pray for our care homes and especially their residents at Bothwell House, Hanover House, Carlingwark Care Home, Barlochan House Care Home, Munchies Park House, and Alma McFadyen Care Centre. For those at home who are dependent on carers and those who look after them.
- Thursday: For our politicians, Governments, Councils and all in authority.

Friday For the people of Afghanistan, Myanmar and Hong Kong. For those awaiting execution on death row.

Saturday For the people of India, Brazil and all nations struggling with the Covid pandemic. For the people of war-torn Syria, and Yemen. All who suffer the effects of 'Global Warming'.  
For the NHS, our local surgeries, and all at DGRI. For those affected by the Coronavirus throughout the world. For all who are experiencing 'Lockdown', and for our own communities.

### **Gospel Readings for Trinity 11**

Sunday	Trinity 11	John 6: 51-58
Monday	feria	Matt 19: 16-22
Tuesday	feria	Matt 19: 23-30
Wednesday	feria	Matt 20: 1-16
Thursday	feria	Matt 22: 1-14
Friday	St. Bernard of Clairvaux	John 17: 20-26
Saturday	feria	Matt 23: 1-12

### **St. Bernard of Clairvaux**



Bernard (1090–1153) was one of the great leaders in the history of the Church. He was an eloquent speaker and considered by many to be one of the holiest individuals who ever lived. He grew up in Dijon, France, and at the age of twenty-two entered as a novice in the monastery of Cîteaux. Three years later he was appointed to supervise a group of his fellow monks in the newly founded monastery at Clairvaux. Though he was offered high positions in the church, Bernard remained at Clairvaux until his death.

Thanks to careful preservation over the centuries, many of Bernard's writings have survived today. His works had a profound influence on both Martin Luther and John Calvin. The following reading is taken from his well-known work, his treatise *On the Love of God*. In it Bernard incisively outlines his famous "four degrees of love."

#### **Why God Should be Loved**

You ask me, "Why should God be loved?" I answer: the reason for loving God is God himself. And why should God be loved for his own sake? Simply because no one could be more justly loved than God, no one deserves our love more. Some may question if God deserves our love or if they might have

something to gain by loving him. The answer to both questions is yes, but I find no other worthy reason for loving him except himself.

#### The First Degree of Love: Love of Self for Self's Sake

Love is a natural human affection. It comes from God. Hence the first and greatest commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." But human nature is weak and therefore compelled to love itself and serve itself first. In the human realm people love themselves for their own sake. This is planted within us for whoever hated his own self?

But if this love of ourselves becomes too lavish, it will overflow its natural boundaries through excessive love of pleasure. People can easily become slaves to the soul's enemy: lust. This love of self is held in check by the command to love our neighbour. If we cannot love our neighbour because of our love of self, then we must restrain our lusts and give to our neighbour's needs. Your love will then be temperate when you take from yourself and give to your neighbour.

... In order to love our neighbour we must see that God is the cause of our love. How can we have a pure love for our neighbour if we do not love him in God? And you cannot love your neighbour unless you love God. God must be loved first in order that we may love our neighbour in God.

#### The Second Degree of Love: Love of God for Self's Sake

God, therefore, who makes everything that is good, makes himself to be loved. He does it as follows: first, God blesses us with his protection. When we live free from trouble we are happy, but in our pride we may conclude that we are responsible for our security. Then, when we suffer some calamity, some storm in our lives, we turn to God and ask his help, calling upon him in times of trouble. This is how we who only love ourselves first begin to love God. We will begin to love God even if it is for our own sake. We love God because we have learned that we can do all things through him, and without him we can do nothing.

#### The Third Degree of Love: Love of God for God's Sake

In the first degree of love we love ourselves for our own sake. In the second degree of love we love God for our own sake, chiefly because he has provided for us and rescued us. But if trials and tribulations continue to come upon us, every time God brings us through, even if our hearts were made of stone, we will begin to be softened because of the grace of the Rescuer. Thus, we begin to love God not merely for our own sakes, but for himself.

#### The Fourth Degree of Love: Love of Self for God's Sake

Blessed are we who experience the fourth degree of love wherein we love ourselves for God's sake. Such experiences are rare and come only for

a moment. In a manner of speaking, we lose ourselves as though we did not exist, utterly unconscious of ourselves and emptied of ourselves.

If for even a moment we experience this kind of love, we will then know the pain of having to return to this world and its obligations as we are recalled from the state of contemplation. In turning back to ourselves we will feel as if we are suffering as we return into the mortal state in which we were called to live.

### Reflection

If anyone deserves to stand beside St. John as an “apostle of love,” it has to be Bernard. He wrote some eighty-six sermons on the Song of Solomon as an allegory of divine/human love. His beautiful hymn, “Jesus the Very Thought of Thee,” reverberates with the language of divine love.

*O hope of every contrite heart, O joy of all the meek;  
To those who fall, how kind thou art! How good to those who seek!  
But what to those who find? Ah, this No tongue nor pen can show;  
The love of Jesus, what it is None but His loved ones know.*

How very appropriate of Bernard to remind us of the centrality of love. We so easily elevate other things to the place of first importance: our big budgets and impressive buildings, our dedicated service to the world, our doctrinal eccentricities. But Bernard cuts through all our ego-strutting activity and calls us again to love God in purity of heart, in sincerity of soul, in holiness of life.  
—Richard J. Foster<sup>1</sup>

### **Stewartry Food Banks**

If you cannot attend tel: 07730 788 335 or  
email [projects@castledouglas.info](mailto:projects@castledouglas.info) and they will deliver to your door.

Castle Douglas Food Bank (Stepping Stones), 198 King Street, Castle Douglas

[steppingstones@castledouglas.info](mailto:steppingstones@castledouglas.info)

Manager Emma Haigh Open 10-12pm Monday to Friday. Dels M,W, F only.

Dalbeattie Food Bank, 24 High Street, Dalbeattie. Telephone 07730 788 335 between 9am & 5pm. Enquiries [donnamck.dci@gmail.com](mailto:donnamck.dci@gmail.com) The shop is open between 6 & 8pm.

### **Useful Contacts**

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpts taken from [Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups](#) (Richard J. Foster & James Bryan Smith, Editors. HarperCollins, 1993.).

**National COVID-19 Helpline** 0800 111 4000

For people who don't have family or existing community support and can't get online and who are over 70, disabled, require the support of mental health services, are pregnant or receive a flu jab for health reasons, will be directed to our dedicated local team who can offer essential assistance.

**NHS24** 111 [www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot)

**Emergency** 999

**Doctor Out of Hours** 111

**Dumfries and Galloway Council** 030 33 33 3000

[www.dumgal.gov.uk/SupportDG](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/SupportDG)

**Business Support Helpline** 01387 260280 Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

**Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub** 030 33 33 3001

**Social Work Out of Hours** 01387 273660

**Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway** 0300 303 8558

**Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service** 0300 303 4321

[www.dagcas.org](http://www.dagcas.org)

**Samaritans** 116 123

**SHOUT** Text SHOUT to 85258 for free

**Scotland's Domestic Abuse Helpline** 0800 027 1234

**Age Scotland** 0800 12 44 222 Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

**Shelter Scotland** 0808 800 444 Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

**LGBT Helpline Scotland** 0300 123 2523

**Childline** 0800 1111

**Food Train** tel: 01556 288427 email: [everything@thefoodtrain.co.uk](mailto:everything@thefoodtrain.co.uk)  
(for food deliveries from local supermarkets)

## **Dumfries and Galloway Community Bulletin**

[SupportDG - Dumfries and Galloway Council - Community Bulletin  
\(dumgal.gov.uk\)](http://dumgal.gov.uk)