

Parish News

Alleluia, Alleluia!

The Paschal Candle in St Mun's and the one in The Visitation, are both fine beacons of hope, the light of faith shining, even if we cannot enter the church to see them. Why do we use the word 'paschal?'. The Passion that we have just remembered recalls what? We would probably reply by saying that it refers to the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Greek word *πασχω* (*pascho*), does not really mean 'to suffer,' but rather 'to be done to,' or 'to be affected.'

In the life of our Lord, he spoke, he healed, he performed miracles, he prayed. But once handed over, he no longer does things, he has things done to him – and allows it. This is perhaps the scandal of the Passion and Death of our Lord.

In our own way, these days of 'lockdown' are a time when we don't have the level of control of our lives that we once had. We are all having to deal with a loss of our freedoms, and what starts as quite a novelty can become oppressive. Interesting then that the word 'patient,' someone who has 'things done to them' and 'patient' as having the capacity for calm self-possessed waiting, come from the same Greek word – *πασχω*.

If anything in these days, patience would be a useful attribute to have. Mercifully, one of the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit, is just that, patience. May we continue to pray for that gift from the Holy Spirit.

May we pray, too, for all patients and their medical attendants.

Spiritual Communion

Prayer of St Alphonsus Liguori

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Holy Sacrament of the altar.

I love you above all things and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul.

Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come spiritually into my soul
so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever.

Amen.

Covid 19

During these dark and difficult days please remember that I offer Mass for you each and every day.

Collection

Taynuilt – we raised £160.00 from Direct Debits
Ballachulish – we raised £5.00 from Direct Debits
Many thanks to you.

The Visitation, Taynuilt and St Mun's, Ballachulish & The Good Shepherd, Kinlochleven

19th April 2020 – 2nd Sunday of Easter (A)

No Public Masses this week

Monday	In the 2 nd Week of Easter
Tuesday	In the 2 nd Week of Easter Optional Memorial of St Maelrubha
Wednesday	In the 2 nd Week of Easter
Thursday	In the 2 nd Week of Easter
Friday	In the 2 nd Week of Easter
Saturday	St Mark - Feast
Sunday	3 rd Sunday of Easter

Confession

Is available at the Chapel House on request

Divine Office – Vol 2. Week 2 with proper of season

Weekday readings: for the 2nd Week of Easter

Please remember the sick of the parish in your prayers.

We remember all the faithful departed in our prayers. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

May they rest in peace.



Alleluia

Faith's Darkness

Why does God stay hidden? Why doesn't God reveal himself so concretely and physically that no one could doubt his existence?

I like Karl Rahner's perspective on this. God isn't hidden, he says, we just don't have the eyes to see God because our eyes aren't attuned to that kind of reality: "We are just discovering today that one cannot picture God to oneself in an image that has been carved out of the wood of the world. This experience is not the genesis of atheism, but the discovery that the world is not God."

We struggle with doubt because we can't picture God's existence, imagine God's reality, or feel God's presence in our normal ways. At a certain point, our minds, imaginations, and hearts simply run out of gas, out of room, out of feeling, and leave us dry, unable to nail down the reality of God the way we're used to nailing down most everything else. The reality of God is elusive to our conscious minds and hearts because we can't picture, imagine, or feel God in the usual way we do these things.

Why is that? Rahner's insight provides a clue: we struggle with faith because the world is not God and we can't walk around the landscape of spirit in the same way as we stroll around in this world. Why not? Precisely because God and the other world are spirit and we are being invited into a reality whose hugeness is beyond conception, whose silence is beyond language, and whose reality is beyond the physical and all that we can see, touch, taste, smell, and feel in the normal way. God is life, light, love, energy, vastness, and simplicity beyond our categories. God has a different metaphysics.

Thus, it's easy to have doubts about God's existence, and not just if we are young and still over-enthralled by the reality of this world, its stunning beauty, the promises it dangles before us, and its overpowering physical character. In a world where the physical defines everything, it can be difficult to believe in anything else.

But that struggle, ironically, also afflicts those who are mature in faith, in a more painful way, in fact. It was Jesus, after all, not some wayward youth who cried out: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me!" and who cautioned us to pray daily so as "not to be put to the test." It was this test exactly that Jesus had in mind. What is "the test"?

The classical mystics speak of two "dark nights of the soul," two painful, purifying periods of life we must all undergo. The first of these it calls "the night of the senses." This darkness, they tell us, refers to a period of painful trial which helps purify our motivation so as to make us less selfish. But these same mystics assure us that, during this first dark night, we are given consolation in our faith. God feels near. The feeling is like that of taking a bitter-tasting medicine that we know will make us better.

The second night, "the night of the spirit," is much more "the test" to which the Lord's Prayer refers. What happens here is that God seemingly disappears. All our old securities in faith dissolve and all efforts to reground ourselves through former faith-practices come up dry. God seems unreal to our heads and hearts, even as, in the depth of our being, something else is happening which belies what's happening on the surface, namely, even as our thoughts and feelings about God seem empty, we are, in our more important decisions and values, riveting ourselves ever more firmly to God and the other world. Such are the dynamics of faith. Sometimes what feels like doubt and atheism is the beginning of real belief.

Nicholas Lash, professor of Divinity at Cambridge, once made this comment about our struggle:

... We need do no more than notice that most of our contemporaries still find it "obvious" that atheism is not only possible, but widespread and that, both intellectually and ethically, it has much to commend it. This view might be plausible if being an atheist were a matter of not believing that there exists "a person without a body" who is "eternal, free, able to do anything, knows everything" and is "the proper object of human worship and obedience, the creator and sustainer of the universe." If, however, by "God" we mean the mystery, announced in Christ, breathing all things out of nothing into peace, then all things have to do with God in every move and fragment of their being, whether they notice this and suppose it to be so or not. Atheism, if it means deciding not to have anything to do with God, is thus self-contradictory and, if successful, self-destructive.

Lash isn't saying that a personal God doesn't exist, but that God's person and being are of a different order, beyond the wood of this world, and that over-powering light can feel like darkness.

Ron Rolheiser

https://liturgy.slu.edu/2EasterA041920/relections_rolheiser.html