



SAINT BRIDE'S PARISH, EAST KILBRIDE

Bulletin for the Twenty-First Sunday of the Ordinary
Season 23rd August 2026

NEARER MY GOD TO THEE, NEARER TO THEE...

Last Friday was the memorial of Pope Saint Pius X (+1914). As I was preparing my homily for Holy Mass, doing some general reading about the Saint, I chanced across a statement he had made about an English priest, Father Thomas Byles, 42, whom he described as a “martyr for the faith.” Byles, along with two other priests, Father Juozas Montvila, 27, from Lithuania and the German, Father Josef Benedikt Peruschitz, 41, died with more than 1500 souls on the RMS Titanic. I was curious to find out more about them...



The Titanic had set sail, with much fanfare, from Southampton on 10th April 1912. The “unsinkable” ship made first for Cherbourg and then to Queenstown in Ireland. From there it was bound for New York City, due to arrive on 17th April. But the Titanic struck an iceberg at 11.40pm on Sunday 14th April, the Second Sunday of Easter, and sank at 2.20am the following day with the loss of 1,516 lives.

Father Byles, was born in Yorkshire in 1870. He had converted from Anglicanism to Catholicism in 1884, and was ordained to the Priesthood in 1902, despite his sickly disposition. He began his priestly ministry working in a busy London parish, but the pace became too much for him, and the Archbishop of Westminster transferred him Essex, thinking that a small parish, in a rural setting, would bolster his fragile health. He was on board the Titanic to officiate at his brother's wedding – he had also “swam the Tiber” and embraced Catholicism.

On Saturday, 13th April, Father Byles heard Confessions for hours. On the Sunday he delivered a thoughtful – prescient? – homily on the theme of how our prayers, and the Sacraments of the Church, are spiritual “lifeboats taking us back to God”. Survivors would later tell how Father Byles would celebrate Holy Mass each day for passengers in steerage and spend time counselling them in the ship's library.

Here's what one survivor said of him in the aftermath of the iceberg strike: “When the crash came we were thrown from our berths...we tried to find out what had happened. We saw before us, coming down the passageway, Father Byles. We knew him because he had visited us several times on board. ‘Be calm, my good people,’ he said, and then he went about giving absolution and blessings... The passengers were immediately impressed by the absolute self-control of the priest. He began the recitation of the Rosary...”

Another eyewitness said of Byles “Then the priest began to organize the evacuation of women and children, escorting them upward through the various decks while leading the Rosary and giving General Absolution.” Witnesses later reported that the dominant characteristic of Father Byles was his presence of mind. Seeing the first batch of women and children safely aboard lifeboats, he declined an offer to join them.

A young Irish woman, Ellen Mockler, would say: “After I got in the boat, which was the last one to leave, and we were slowly going further away from the ship, I could hear distinctly the voice of the priest and the response to his prayers. Then they became fainter and

fainter, until I could only hear the strains of the hymn *Nearer, My God, to Thee* and the screams of the people left behind. Another passenger on that last lifeboat, Charlotte Collyer, told reporters: "On the boat deck, perhaps 50 men had come together. In the midst of them was a tall figure...Father Byles stood there leading those doomed men in prayer."

The ship sank at 2.20am, its stern rising high in the air before plunging into the freezing waters of the Atlantic. None of the three priests was seen again. All had been offered places on lifeboats; all had declined. Reading accounts of these events, it is easy to hope that we would also act with such courage. It is important to recall that in the ship's last hour, the mood on board became one of sheer terror. It is in this context that the witness of Father Byles needs to be remembered. When it was realised there were not enough lifeboats, it called for the courage of a martyr, perhaps best described in the words of the hymn sung onboard: *E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me; still all my song shall be: Nearer, my God, to Thee...*

In James Cameron's film *Titanic* (1997), Father Byles is portrayed by the Irish-American actor, James Lancaster. Towards the end of the film, he appears holding onto the ship's rail, while leading the passengers in prayer. He reads from the Book of Apocalypse "I saw a new heaven and a new earth" and recites the Rosary. **Father McGachey**

LAUS MARIAE...THE PRAISE OF MARY...

It was wonderful to see last Sunday, the Solemnity of Our Lady's Assumption into Heaven, the great number of people who paused at the Lady Altar on the way out of Church, to to say a prayer. Moreover, there were so many candles lit between Saturday evening and Sunday morning, that the votive candle stand could not accommodate them all - we had to put more than forty on top of Our Lady's Altar. May the Mother of God, bless and protect our Parish!

THE CHILDREN'S LITURGY

The Children's Liturgy will resume on Sunday 30th August at 9.30am in the Parish Hall. This is designed for all levels of Primary School students. Several years ago, we had regular attendance from children in P6 and P7, along with those in P1-5. Our approach will adjust to look after all of our attendees. We have an ambition to increase the number of older students attending. Parents, please encourage your children to come along and enjoy the message of God in the company of their friends from school.



MONDAY EVENINGS IN HONOUR OF OUR LADY

These popular devotions continue on Monday this week at 7pm. Beginning at Our Lady's altar, followed by a torchlight procession, the recitation of the Rosary with the Litany of Loreto, concluding with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Please join us if you can.

ANNUAL VOCATIONS MASS

The Annual Diocesan Vocations Mass will take place this Tuesday, 25th August, in Our Lady of Good Aid Cathedral, Motherwell, at 7pm. All welcome.

THE CHURCH IS OPEN EACH DAY FROM 9am UNTIL 7pm

WEDNESDAYS - EVENING PRAYER WITH THE SAINTS

These Vespers will take place on Wednesday at 7pm, at Our Lady's Altar. Please join us.

THE BEREAVEMENT GROUP

Will meet in the Library after 10am Mass on Monday 24th August.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING A ROMAN CATHOLIC?

Several of you have expressed an interest in becoming Roman Catholic. Our new RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) Course 2026-2027, will begin at the end of September. We invite anyone who has been thinking of becoming a Catholic to get in touch with us formally by email: frmcgachey@rcdom.org.uk. We look forward to hearing from you.

CALENDAR

Monday is the feast of **Saint Bartholomew**, apostle. After Pentecost, he evangelised northwestern India where he was flayed (skinned alive) dying a martyr's death. On **Tuesday** we honour **Saint Joseph Calasanx** (+1648). Born in Aragón, Spain, he spent most of his life in Rome, where he showed great interest in the religious instruction of children, for which he founded the *Order of Pious Schools* (known as the Piarists). **Thursday** is the memorial of **Saint Monica** (+387). Born in Tagaste (Tunisia), she married the pagan Patricius, a man of loose morals. Monica's prayers converted him, and he was baptised a year before his death. But it was her son, Augustine, that she wept most over. Finally, she witnessed his baptism at the hands of Saint Ambrose. She died at Ostia, near Rome. **Saint Augustine** (+430), is remembered on **Friday**. As a law student in Carthage (Tunisia), he gave himself to all kinds of excesses and joined the Manichean sect. He was made bishop of Hippo at the age of forty-one and became a great luminary of the African Church. **Saturday** is the memorial of the **Passion of Saint John the Baptist**. Luke's Gospel relate the circumstances of his execution: he castigated Herod for his illegal union with his sister-in-law Herodias, whose husband, Herod's brother, was still alive. Herodias contrived to make Herod imprison him and took advantage of an unexpected opportunity to obtain through her daughter Salome the beheading of the Baptist.

MASS FOR THE SICK WITH THE HOLY ANOINTING

WITH THE SACRAMENT OF THE SICK ON THE THURSDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER

SAINT KATERI TEKAKAWITHA - NEW PUBLICATION (St Paul's Press)

This book is for anyone wishing to know more about the life and faith journey of Kateri Tekakwitha (+1680). The first female Native American Saint, who endured illness, loss and persecution because of her Catholic faith. Her life is a powerful witness of trust in God. The author, Dr Ann McDowell, who is a parishioner, is generously donating all proceeds from the sale of the book to Saint Bride's. Copies are available at the Stall for the reduced price of £5.

FROM THE STARLIGHT DANCE SCHOOL

The Starlight Dance School is registering now for new dancers. Based in Saint Bride's Church Hall, they offer classes in Tap, Modern Freestyle, Cheer and Street for Walking. Contact Jennifer on 07851286759 for more information.

SAINT BRIDE'S PARISH - EAST KILBRIDE

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SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL CONTACT NUMBER	07712 903732

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE IN YOUR PRAYERS

THOSE WHO ARE UNWELL - Monica McShane, Mary Easton, Margaret Rose McMahon, Richard O'Donnell, Owen O'Donnell, Jean Lafferty, Mary O'Brien, Margaret Murphy, Brian Ewing, Alan MacDonald, Jan Milligan, Catherine McLean, Noreen Lockhart, Patricia Carey, Anne McDowell, Paul McCartney, Kevin McCann, Gayle Cochrean, Merisa Todd, James McLean, Elizabeth Kyle, Thomas Quinn, Chris McElroy, Danny McCash, John Paul Quinn, Thomas Finnigan (Prestwick), George Kelman, Ann Marie Kane, Rosemary Maley, Peter Friel, Molly and Robert Ward, Noreen Lockhart, Neil McCready, Michael Conroy, Fiona Jane Anderson, Lindsay Sweeney, Robert Ward, Margaret Boyle, Kenneth McEwan, Rosie Maher Law, Stuart Gibbons, Sadie Elliot, Billy Wilson, Ian McFadyen, Nessie McFadyen, Marie Quigley, Christopher Bailey, Margaret Saroli, Louise Brannan, Raymund Brannan, Louise MacFarlane, Brendan Darcy.

RECENTLY DEAD - John Gallagher, Stephen Clark, Gerald MacDonald, Peter Curran, Peter Lennon, Alice Galbraith, Jaralath McNaught, Irma Montgomery, Tobias Gonzalez Monte Mar.

ANNIVERSARIES, MONTHS MINDS AND BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCES - Austin Toner, James Tollan, Jean Steel, Geraldine Fannon, Jean McCann, John McCann, Gary Jones, Kenneth Cunningham, Irene and Gerry Jones, Charles McGlynn, Tommy Burns, Gertrude Stewart, Justin St. John.

FUNERALS

John Gallagher - Reception - Wednesday 26th August at 5.30pm. Requiem Mass, Thursday 27th August at 10am.

Stephen Clark - Reception - Monday 31st August at 5.30pm. Requiem Mass Tuesday 1st September at 10am.

WEEKLY OFFERINGS

Sunday 16th August - £3,095. This Standing Orders in favour of the off donation to the Parish or take out Parish. Offerings can be made by are as follows: St Brides Parish scanning the adjacent QR code. It If you pay Income Tax, you can receive a further 25 percent on the



included the Basket Collection and Parish. You may wish to make a one-a Standing Order in favour of the Bank Transfer, the details of which 10246966 and 80-12-97 or by will take you to a secure web page. Giftaid your offering - the parish will basis of the donation. you give.