

The Church, Where the Risen LORD is Present to Save
Station Mass, Saint Ninian's Cluster, Saint Joseph's Clarkston
Wednesday 30 March

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It is a joy to be here with you for our Lent Station Masses as we gather in Saint Joseph's in Clarkston and in our cluster parishes around Saint Ninian's.

Saint Ninian, as know, is the first recorded missionary saint to come among the peoples of Scotland and now beloved as the Apostle of our lands. Settling in south west Scotland, he built his little *Candida Casa* or *White House*, the first church in Scotland, in which he and his brethren gathered to pray and from where they set out to evangelise our lands.

In this year's Station Masses we are reflecting on the Creed, and the Profession of Faith we make when we gather at Sunday Mass and that gives us a simple summary of our Catholic Faith. It is good for us to take time to reflect a little on the words we profess so that we can understand them more deeply and so proclaim them from the heart with renewed conviction. This evening we are reflecting on that part where we profess our faith in GOD's *one holy catholic and apostolic Church*.

So it is good for us to have in mind the little church Ninian founded to understand something of the beginnings and essence of our Church. This is true not least in these times when our Church has been through so much turmoil and had to confront so much sinfulness in our midst. Perhaps most especially in these times it is good for us to remember who we are as a Church and the work of GOD's hands.

As the *Church* we are the people of GOD, called and gathered from every part of the earth, a people who, through faith and Baptism, are now GOD's children, members of Christ the LORD, and temples of the Holy Spirit. Our Church is, in fact, the very Body of Christ Who is our Head with Whom, we form, as it were, one and the same mystical person. So, just as all Creation was *in, through and for Christ*, so Saint Augustine can say that the whole of Creation is for the Church. As a Church we were long prepared for in the Old Testament

with the Father's choice of Israel among the nations and now, in these last days, we are founded in Jesus the LORD and born in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

And until the LORD comes again in glory our mission as the Church is to proclaim the Kingdom of God in all the world. For now, we know we will only form on earth a little seed and beginning of that Kingdom but we are a seed with GOD's divine presence and power within us which helps us bring about reconciliation and communion among all peoples, reconciliation with GOD and peace among peoples. While making our way on earth, we are a body of sinners far from perfect but we look forward to happy perfection in the glory of Heaven as the assembly of all the redeemed.

We are called together as a family because GOD does not want to save any one of us in isolation but as part of the family of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. He wants to save us a family that has GOD as our Father, Jesus Christ as our *Head*; and the Holy Spirit as our *life and holiness*. As children on GOD, He is our dignity and freedom; our *law* and way of life is His commandment of love; our *mission* is to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world; and our *destiny* is the Kingdom of GOD already begun on earth. Offering up of our daily lives and sacrifices we share in Christ's *priestly* office. With unwavering faith and witness we share in Christ's *prophetic* office. And, whenever we serve the poor, the suffering and those on the margins we share in His *kingly* office.

Gathered together in the Eucharist, as here this evening, we are one in love with Him and each other in one Body, even in the rich variety of our personalities, work and gifts.

Most dear to our as a Church, perhaps, is that we are the *Bride of Christ* whom the LORD called to Himself as His *Spouse*, loving us and joining us to Himself in an everlasting covenant and Who will never fail us. We never forget how He gave Himself up for us and will never cease to purify us with His blood, and make us holy and fruitful. He ever builds us up in love by His Word and Sacraments, in virtues and *charisms* for our building up as His Church, for the good of others and the needs of the world.

His grace keeps us, His Church, one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. He makes us one in the very unity of the one GOD through Our LORD Jesus Who is our reconciliation with GOD,

and in the Holy Spirit Who ensures us our one faith, one sacramental life, one apostolic succession, one common hope and one love. He governs and guides us in His Successors of Peter and bishops, and assures us the fullness of the means of salvation.

He confers on us, His Church, His own holiness as our GOD, our beginning and our end. In these days we recall how He offered Himself on the Cross precisely to make us holy and so the source of holiness for the world. Such holiness does not blind us as to how we His children on earth are poor sinners, ever in need of conversion and purification, but He assures us we remain forever holy in our most holy members, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints, our models and intercessors.

And the LORD keeps us *catholic* and *universal* in soul because Christ, the LORD of all Creation, is present in us and: *where Christ Jesus, is there is His Catholic Church*. We are catholic because we proclaim the fullness of the faith; offer the fullness of salvation; and are sent to the whole of the human race without exception.

Put most simply, the LORD loves His Church and, in every age of our trials, will come to us to save us. He assures us *favourable times* when He *will answer* us, our *day of salvation* when He *will help* us. No matter how far we stray from Him, He never forgets how He is our Father Who *formed* us. It is the basis of His promise: *to restore our land that lies waste; so we never hunger or thirst; that scorching wind never plagues us*. Rather, *He consoles, pities us and guides us to springs of water; even makes highways for us across mountains*.

He is Our Father, Who goes on working for us and shows us what to do. He shows us everything He does Himself, and promises to show us even greater things that will astonish the world, raising us from the dead and giving us new life, investing us with words of eternal life, making us the source of His life on earth and investing us with the desire to do not our own will but the will of Him who sent us. And if we should ever wonder if the LORD has abandoned or forgotten us, does a woman forget her baby at the breast or fail to cherish the son of her womb? Yet even if these forget, He never forget us, His Church. Instead, He has established us, the Church as: "the instrument for the salvation of all" so that all salvation comes through us to the praise and glory of GOD the Father, in the Son and the Spirit forever and ever.

