

Weekly Bulletin

St. Margaret's, St. Joseph's & St. Finnan's

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Weekly Bulletin Online: www.gaeldom.com/bulletin/

Sunday April 29th. 2007

Welcome home to Spean Bridge!

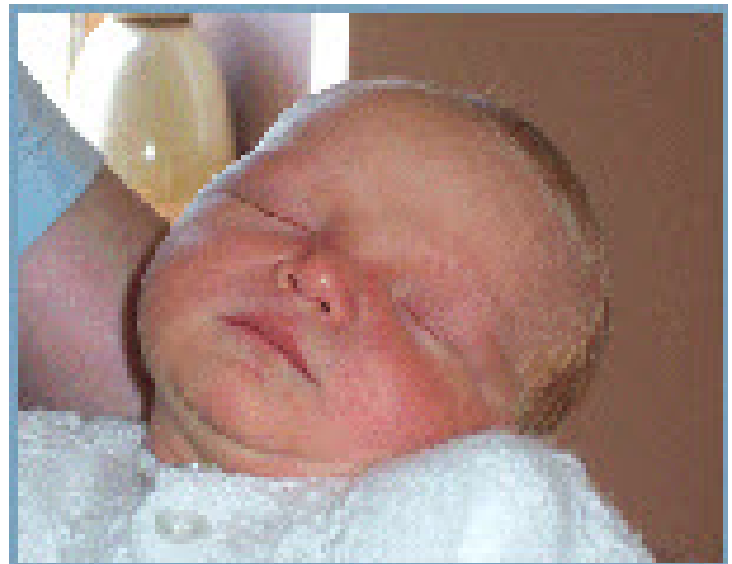


Samantha, baby Seonaid and John



The excited children welcoming Seonaid

This is the moment we have all longed and prayed for so much! There was great rejoicing in both Spean Bridge and Roy Bridge when the wonderful news went round the villages like a flash on Sunday evening that John and Samantha had been blessed with a son, born at 9.30 p.m., April 29th. We all share John and Samantha's joy, for although every baby is precious, Seonaid was more longed for and wanted than anyone could ever imagine. Our prayers have been answered, and we thank God for the gift they have received of a beautiful child. John and Samantha were allowed to take the baby home on Monday afternoon, less than 24 hours after he was born. To their great surprise, the children lined either side of the avenue, and the house was festooned with balloons to welcome them. Each of the children were thrilled to be allowed to hold Seonaid for a few moments, and have their photograph taken with him

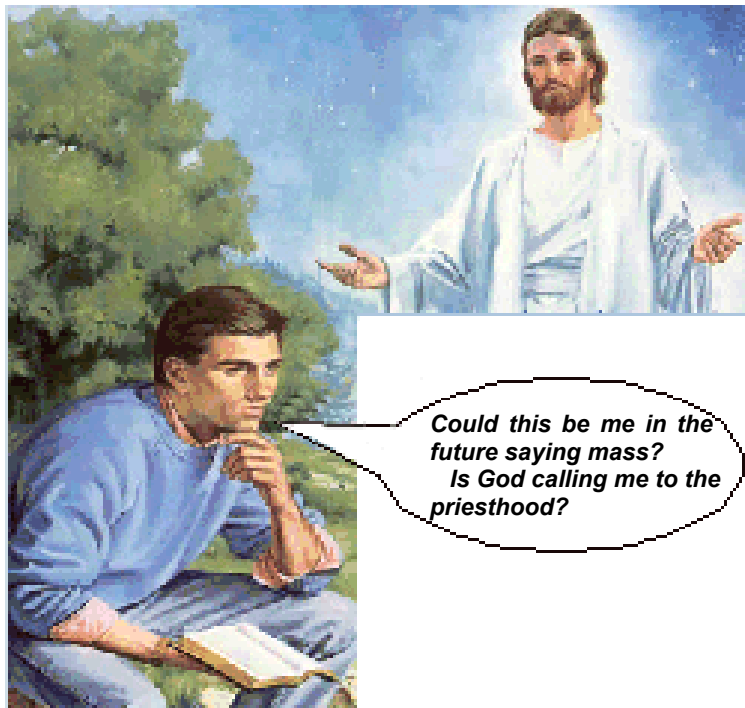


Seonaid sound asleep

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Vocations Sunday in the Church



When I went to the junior seminary at Blairs in 1944, there were 180 young students studying for the priesthood.

Their vocations had been nurtured in families where God was revered and loved, where the Church was the most important factor in the life of the family, and where it was considered the greatest privilege if a son was called by God to serve him in the priesthood. Today there are no junior seminaries, and our seminaries for senior students are slowly emptying from lack of vocations. Two years ago, the Royal Scots College in Salamanca ceased as a seminary and is a now retreat-cum-holiday centre.

In most dioceses throughout the country, some parishes have been closed or amalgamated because of the fall in numbers of people coming to mass. With small numbers, the churches are no longer financially viable, as there are not sufficient funds to maintain and heat them, and as a consequence of this, the state of the buildings deteriorate and become unsafe.

The average ages of priests in many dioceses are into the fifties, and as older priests retire, or die while still working in a parish, there are few young priests to replace them.

People have always taken for granted that they will have a priest to say mass, administer the sacraments, baptise their children, marry their young people, attend to the sick and bury the dead. But this will not always be the case in the future as the stream of vocations runs dry.

What has caused this? One reason which is often quoted is celibacy in the priesthood. Yet other churches where clergy are permitted to marry are finding similar difficulties. The Church of Scotland, like ourselves, has a serious lack of vocations, and many of its churches have been closed down and parishes

amalgamated. In the Episcopal and Anglican churches, women have been admitted to the priesthood, and if it were not for this they also would also be experiencing severe difficulties. Even so, their bishops have had to close and amalgamate churches because of falling numbers.

In this month's *Flourish*, there is an excellent article by the Bishop of Paisley, Philip Tartaglia warning us about secularism, a doctrine that

provides ***a view of the world without God!***

Religion is supposed to die with the progress of secularism, but it is still very much alive! The German philosopher, Nietzsche, advanced his theories on secularism, proclaiming God was dead. His evil philosophy found an enthusiastic follower in Hitler, who used it to justify the most evil acts ever to have taken place in history.

Secularism, in its many forms, has seduced people without their realising it, and is the cause of some people compromising the teachings of Christ. It can seriously affect the quality of their faith.

Vocations will only return when families take their faith seriously and practice it anew with greater devotion. From a deeper reverence and love of the mass and the Eucharist, there can be a new springtime of the faith, and God's voice will once again be heard speaking in our hearts and calling young men and women to serve him in the religious life.

We thank God that in America there is a great revival of the faith with many applying to join the priesthood and religious life. In many countries of the Third World, the seminaries are full to overflowing

The Church has suffered many attacks in its long history, and has overcome them all, for that is Christ's promise to us.

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Cardinal O'Brien to visit Roy Bridge



Cardinal O'Brien receiving his red hat from Pope John Paul

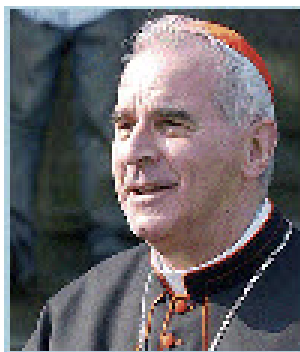
I hope to celebrate 50 years in the priesthood in the middle of June, and Cardinal O'Brien has expressed a wish to join the parish for the occasion. He cannot be here for June 14th, but has asked to come on Saturday, June 16th., and will say the 9.15 a.m. mass on Sunday at Invergarry. and the 11.30 a.m. mass in Roy Bridge.

He has a great affection for our parish:

- he blessed the shrine to Blessed Mary MacKillop,
- rededicated and opened St. Finnan's, Invergarry,
- joined us for the 70th. anniversary of St. Margaret's
- and entertained the Roy Bridge Primary School children at his own home in Edinburgh—a day we will always remember because of his great kindness

Unfortunately, Bishop Murray will be in Ecuador, opening and blessing a new church for Fr. Colin MacInnes Roy Bridge and Invergarry have never had a visit from a Cardinal before, so it will be a great occasion for the parish, and he will certainly enhance the celebrations with his presence.

He has asked me to pass on his good wishes and fond affections for our parishioners. I know our parishioners will make his visit a great celebration in itself. He is extremely busy with so many commitments, yet he has found time to come to visit us.



MONTH OF MAY

Our Lady's month

The month of May has always been dedicated to honouring Our Lady. It is the time of year when Spring is at its height before slipping softly into summer.

There are new lambs in the field, the shrubs and buds are bursting forth, the birds are in full song, for new life has come into the world.



The prophet Isaiah used the same imagery in looking forward to the birth of Christ, Our Saviour. He said that a shoot would come forth from the old dead stock of Juda, and this root would bear a flower. The shoot he refers to is Mary, and the flower her Son, Jesus.

In past years, most homes had their own little May Altar, with a statue of Our Lady, flowers and candles, and the family would gather round it in the evening to recite the rosary.

It was always primroses we gathered at this time of the year to decorate the May Altar, and I can still recall their lovely perfume, mixed with the smell of the wax from the burning candles.

Sadly, so many of these beautiful, old traditions have died away, and they were so instructive helping children to understand their faith better. How good it would be to see them revived in the homes of our parish.

Wherever there is a true love of Mary, there is always holiness for she leads us to her Son. There is no prayer more pleasing to Our Lady than the rosary. Among Our Lord's last words from the cross was the gift of his mother to us. No one could have loved Mary more than Jesus, for it was she who gave him his body, born into the world on Christmas night, nourished him, brought him up with the help of St. Joseph, supported him throughout his public life, and was with him to the end on the hill of Calvary. Our Lord will never refuse his mother anything she asks in our name if it is for our spiritual good. Let's make this May truly the month of Mary by increasing our devotion to her—especially by the recitation of the rosary

Special collection this weekend at all masses for the education of students for the priesthood

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Welcome to the Weir family, new owners of Roy Bridge Stores



Raymond and Lorna Weir took over Roy Bridge store last week, and we wish them every success in their new venture. It will be very much a family-run business, as the children are all very willing to help.

Raymond is an experienced supermarket manager, and will bring his considerable knowledge into the business. Lorna, who is secretary of Spean Bridge Primary School, was an assistant at Spar store in Spean Bridge, where she was very popular with all the customers, and is well used to the retail business.

Already the shop has taken on a new look, and with their desire to offer their customers a first class service and make everyone welcome, they have got off to an excellent start. They are keen to increase their stock so that customers will find most things they need.

Lorna is a superb baker, and the staff in Spean Bridge Primary School, and visiting clergy, can all vouch for the mouth-

watering delicacies she produces at the morning interval—using only the microwave oven in her office! We hope we will see a selection of her baking in time in the shop.

I know the people of Roy Bridge will make them very welcome, and support the shop, for it is an essential part of our village and we would like to see it grow from strength to strength. Customers will find Raymond, Lorna, their family, and other members of staff both helpful and welcoming whenever they call at the shop. They are assured if there is something they require which is not in stock at the moment, it will be obtained very quickly for them.

In wishing their future business every blessing and success, we also bid a fond farewell to Willie Porter who was a very kind and genial owner and was greatly appreciated by everyone for the service he gave to the village.

Anniversaries

We remember in our prayers this weekend **Michael Toal and Archie MacInnes** whose anniversaries are at this time. The evening mass on Saturday will be said for Michael and on Wednesday for Archie.

May their souls rest in peace.

Leaflets from Spuc.

Leaflets are available at the back of the church, and give the response from candidates for our Holyrood constituency regarding a questionnaire put to them by the Pro-Life organisation, SPUC. The Green Party wishes to close faith schools!