

# Weekly Bulletin

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

Parish priest: Fr. Tom Wynne. Tel/fax: 01397-712-238 Mobile 00796-588-598  
e-mail : [frtom@rcroybridge.co.uk](mailto:frtom@rcroybridge.co.uk) Parish web site: [www.rcroybridge.co.uk](http://www.rcroybridge.co.uk)  
Blessed Mary MacKillop web site : [www.gaeldom.com/mmk/](http://www.gaeldom.com/mmk/)  
Weekly Bulletin Online: [www.gaeldom.com/bulletin/](http://www.gaeldom.com/bulletin/)

Sunday December 2<sup>nd</sup>. 2007

## The Holy Season of Advent



The Advent Wreath originated in Germany, and now has become a universal symbol which helps to tell the story of Christmas.

The **green of the wreath** reminds us of the eternal hope we should have in God, a hope of renewal, always the possibility a new beginning.

The **candles** are a reminder of the **light of God** coming into this world in the presence of the Child in the manger, God's only Son.

The four outer candles of the wreath represent the period of waiting during the four Sundays of Advent, which are a reminder of the four centuries from the prophet Malachai to the birth of Christ.

The **colours of the candles** have a particular meaning: the **three purple candles** encourage us to make a serious effort during Advent to prepare our souls for the coming of Christ. The **pink candle** is lit on the third Sunday of advent, which used to be called : *Gaudete Sunday— Rejoicing Sunday*. The Church wishes us to relax a little from our efforts of prayer and fasting .

The **white candle** is lit at midnight mass after the consecration: **Christ, our Saviour, is born —the true Light of the world**

### *Blessing of the Advent Wreath*

*Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe. You sent your Son to be the Light of the world and to spread his light of love to all.*

*Bless and accept this wreath of light made from our hands. May its ever increasing brightness be a sign to us of the approaching nearness of your Son, that we might prepare in joy for his humble birth in a manger and be ready to receive him at his coming again in glory. Amen*

The light from Advent wreath is a symbol and reminder to us all of the true meaning of Christmas,

At the very beginning of St. John's gospel we read:

*"In him was life, and that life was the light of men. He is the true light that gives light to every one coming into the world. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness did not understand it"*

May we allow the Advent Light to lead us through the maze of the commercial world to the peace and joy of Bethlehem, for there in the dim light of the stable, in his poverty, lies in a manger the infant Christ, the Light of the Light of the World —and there is the true message of Christmas.

### **The Spirit of Advent**

There is a movement among many good Christians to bring back the former traditional spirit of Advent. In previous years, people chose a penance for themselves during Advent: perhaps they would try to assist at a weekday mass, or fast on Fridays, or give up alcohol, forgo certain luxuries, or give alms to charities and avoid excessive entertainment such as dancing and cinema. In many ways it was like a min-Lent, and it had a very wonderful effect on them, for it prepared them spiritually for the coming of our Saviour, and increased their joy on Christmas Day, just as Lent makes Easter Sunday very special.

I wonder if any families in the parish would consider making this Advent special by following the old traditional ways of Advent? It will make your Christmas richer, and give the Christ-Child a very special place in your hearts.

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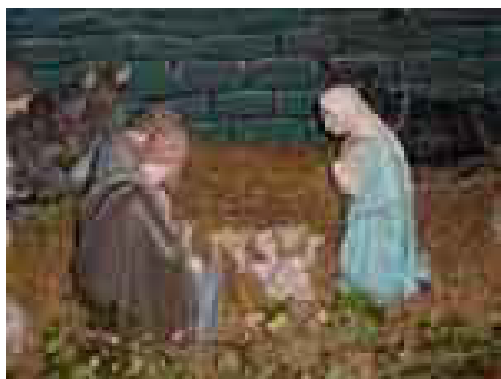
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## Friday night Concert for Margaret Sargent's retirement



Margaret chatting with parents after the farewell service at the school

The Bulletin is printed on a Friday morning at PrintSmith's, Fort William, so it will be next weekend before a full account of the concert can be given. But, as it goes to print, we are all looking forward to what promises to be a wonderful night of song, music, and drama. Although it will be a happy night, it will also be an emotional one, as the parents, the children, the school staff and the people of the village gather together to thank Margaret for all that she has done for the children of the village over the passed thirty years. It will give them an opportunity to express their thanks to Margaret in a very tangible way.



## Christmas Cards

There is a selection of Christmas cards available at the back of the church.

## Cille Choirill

This year, the Cille Choirill Christmas cards are at a very attractive price—4 for £1. This will allow parishioners the opportunity to send a Cille Choirill card this year to more of their friends. I am sure those with loved ones at rest in our cemetery will cherish the card.

We had a large number of cards printed last year, which allows us to reduce the price for the card for this Christmas. The card is the work of Nick Simpson, who, along with his wife, Lyndsay, owns the holiday cottages at Corrievew, Spean Bridge.

Nick is a professional graphics designer and gave his services free to the church.

I will have to ask him what ideas he has for next year. Perhaps it would be nice to have a photograph of our St. Margaret's Christmas crib on the front of the card.

## Christmas is coming

It is difficult to realise that this Saturday is December 1st., and Christmas is just a little over three weeks away!



We are all still waiting for summer to come, and suddenly it is almost Christmas! I had a phone call from Australia during the week, and the temperature is hitting over 30 degrees already, and water is being rationed in some areas! They all make for

the beach on Christmas Day.

Oh well, we are not really jealous, for at least our weather protects us from all the poisonous spiders, creepy crawlies and venomous snakes—and, of course, Jaws, the great white shark, should you be tempted to have a swim in the shark invested waters on Christmas Day!

Give me my thermals, my welly boots, my gloves and my woolly hat, while I enjoy the fresh damp Lochaber air!

## LENT

This year Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, is on **February 6th**. We will hardly have time to clear the table of the Christmas festivities when we are getting ready to fast and do penance for Lent!

*(The reverse was true of Hamlet who upbraided his mother for marrying so soon after his father's death. He told her that they had scarce time to clear the table from the funeral repast until they were resetting it for her wedding nuptials!)*

**Easter Sunday is as early as it can possibly be— March 23rd!** I hope the daffodils know this and don't come out too early!

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## Service for St. Andrew's Day at our schools



I was present at two assemblies on Thursday as the schools anticipated the feast of our national patron, St. Andrew.

Margaret Sargent composed both words and music of a very lovely hymn for the children in honour St.

Andrew, and it was sung with great enthusiasm by the children in both Roy Bridge and Spean Bridge schools. Margaret was no longer there to play the piano for us, so I filled in after a little tuition from Margaret the night before. The talks on St. Andrew by the head teacher, Mrs MacGillvary, were excellent, and the Rev. Donald MacQuarrie spoke about St. Andrew at Spean Bridge school, and Fr Tom at Roy Bridge school.

At the end of the services, the children in Roy Bridge danced a St. Andrew's Day reel, while the children at Spean Bridge danced an American Barn Dance reel.

It all added to the joy of making St. Andrew's Day something special.



Our head teacher, Mrs MacGillvary, dancing a St. Andrew's Day Reel with the children in Roy Bridge School

## Anniversaries

We remember in our prayers this week **Charles Toal**, whose anniversary was on Tuesday, and for whom mass was said in St. Joseph's.

**John Kerr**, Fort William, whose anniversary is on December 1, and for whom mass was said in St. Joseph's on Saturday.

*Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord*

## Feast Days of the week December 3<sup>rd</sup>:

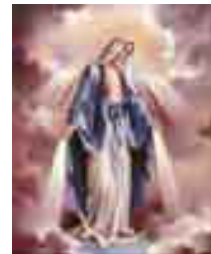
**St. Francis Xavier.** (Monday)

He met St. Ignatius of Loyola, a fellow Spaniard, at the Sorbonne university in Paris, and joined his company known

as the Jesuits. He became the great Apostle of the Far East. He started at Goa, where he was greatly loved, and even today Goa remains solidly Catholic. He travelled 38, 000 miles over a period of 11 years preaching the Gospel in India, Sumatra, Malacci, New Guinea and Japan. He died as he tried to enter Japan. He had a tremendous gift for languages and learned the native dialects so that he could preach the word of God to them. When the atom bombs fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the last war, these were strongholds of the Catholic faith which had their origins from St. Francis's missionary work. He died without a Christian burial, but his body remained uncorrupt and was taken back to Goa where it was buried. He and St. Ignatius were canonised and proclaimed saints in 1662, and he was made patron of the missions by Pope Pius X. His tomb in Goa is a centre of pilgrimage.

## Feast of the Immaculate Conception— Saturday

The Church has always taught that Mary, from the first moment of her conception, was free from original sin by a special dispensation from God. She was chosen to be the mother of our blessed Saviour, God-made-man, and it was only fitting that she, from whom he would take his flesh and blood, was free from any kind of sin. When the Angel Gabriel came into her presence, he greeted her with the words: "*Rejoice, so highly favoured, the Lord is with thee*".



The moment she accepted the angel's invitation from God, "*Be it done unto me according to thy work*", the Son of God took on his flesh within her, where no sin had ever entered.

The parish priest at Lourdes was very sceptical about the visions of Our Lady that Bernadette said she was seeing at the Grotto, and he told her the next time to ask the lady what her name was. When Bernadette returned the following evening she said: "*The lady told me to tell you that her name is the Immaculate Conception*". The priest realised that Bernadette could not have possibly have known about this doctrine, or its name, which she had never heard, and he got down on his knees immediately and begged God's pardon for not believing the messages that the Blessed Virgin had given the child.

Unfortunately, this year with the feast being on a Saturday, we can only have the Vigil mass of the second Sunday of Advent. I would still hope that many of our parishioners will find time to say their rosary on the feast of the Immaculate Conception to honour our Lady.

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## Welcome to our new teacher to Roy Bridge School



**Mrs Siobhan Wilks with her pupils**

Siobhan was appointed by the Highland Regional Education Committee to replace Margaret Sargent, who retired recently. She started last week, and is delighted with her appointment, and has very quickly made friends with all her pupils. Siobhan taught previously at a primary school in Perthshire. She now lives at Laggan, just up the road, and her husband is the principal teacher of Mathematics in Kingussie High School.

We welcome her to the village, and wish her every happiness and success in her new post.

I asked Siobhan if she would mind if I took a few photographs when I was at the assembly on Thursday morning, as people would like to know what the new teacher looks like.—and I am sure they will not be disappointed!



**St. Andrew' Day photo of Siobhan**

### Recent Special Collections

#### Mission Sunday Collection £746.

This is a magnificent sum coming from a small parish like ours. There were two Life Memberships subscriptions of £100 each.

#### Collection for the Holy Ghost Missionary Father £472

Another wonderful contribution which is indicative of your generosity to the missions. *God bless you all.*