

Weekly Bulletin

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

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RC Diocese of Argyll & the Isles Charity Registration No. SC002876

Sunday December 30th. 2007



Sunday: Feast of the Holy Family &

New Year's Day: the Motherhood of Our Blessed Lady

The Church dedicates the first day of the New Year to the Motherhood of Mary, She is truly the mother of God-made-man, and since the earliest days, she has been called *Mother of God*. Never for a moment did sin enter Mary's soul. By a special dispensation of God, she was preserved from original sin. God prepared for himself a spotless dwelling where he could take on our flesh, and become one like us in all things - but sin. The Church Council met at Ephesus in the 431 to oppose the heretic, Nestorius, who claimed that Mary was only the mother of Christ, *Christotokos*, not the *Mother of God*, *Theotokos*.

He was denounced by the Council who proclaimed Mary truly to be the Mother of God. That night excited people ran through the town of Ephesus with lighted torches shouting joyfully *Theotokos*.

Holy Family

We can only try to imagine the depth and wonder of Mary's love for her child, knowing that he was also truly God. During the nine months she carried Christ, how intimate was her relationship with him. Her whole life was devoted to bringing him up, and she would suffer so much for him. There were the years of

exile in Egypt to safeguard the child from Herod, and then a decision to settle in Nazareth, an area where Jesus would be safe. These must have been happy years as Mary and Joseph watched the child grow into a youth and into manhood.

The only mention of Jesus during this period was when he was twelve years old and was lost for three days and was finally found in the temple. We can only try to imagine the fear in Mary's heart that something terrible may have happened to Jesus, and then the joy and relief when he was found safe in the temple teaching the learned doctors.

Jesus would have learned the skill of a carpenter from Joseph, and as he got older, his work would have contributed to the upkeep of the home.

What an atmosphere of holiness would have been their home, living constantly in the presence of God. We know that Joseph died some time before Jesus began his public mission, and this must have been a great sorrow for Mary and Jesus. The gospels tell us that he cried at the death of his friend Lazarus; how much more sorrowful would he have been at the death of his foster father, Joseph, whom he loved so much. Mary was left a widow, but the home was always there for Jesus when he wished to return with his disciples. We hear of Mary occasionally after this, especially at the wedding feast at Cana when she told Jesus that the young couple would be terribly embarrassed by the wine running out; with confidence in her Son's power, she told the waiters to do whatever he asked of them. This was Jesus first miracle in public, and it was because his mother asked him. Among the final scenes in Mary's life is at the foot of the cross, holding her crucified son in her arms. There is little doubt that, on the morning of the resurrection, >>>>>>>>>



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Jesus would have appeared first to his mother to assure her that he was truly risen from the dead, and the pain and agony were now gone for ever. What joy must have swept through Mary's broken heart, healing it and restoring it at the sight and vision of her glorified Son.

Mary would be in her sixties when finally her time came to leave this world. Surrounded by the Apostles, she breathed her last. When she opened her eyes, she had been transported body and soul into heaven, and there she saw for the first time the glory of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit with whom she had co-operated so willingly, She was crowned Queen of Heaven and Earth and Queen of Peace. She is also our mother, given to us by Our Lord in his dying breath from the cross.



A Christmas "Thank You"

My sincere thanks to everyone who helped to make Christmas so special in our churches.



Singing: to the **choir** for the wonderful singing at the carol service and at the Midnight Mass.



Floral decorations: to the parishioners of our three churches for their hard work in making the churches look so beautiful for Christmas.



Cribs and Christmas trees: to those who erected our three cribs which helped to show us the true meaning of Christmas, and also to those erected the Christmas trees, which are an annual gift from a parishioner.

Washing of the Linen and the cleaning of the churches: to those who were responsible for cleaning our churches and making sure everything was highly polished, and for washing the altar cloths and linen.

Altar servers: to our young altar server at Roy Bridge who has been so faithful in serving mass each Sunday, and was there to serve at Midnight Mass and on Christmas morning, and also to our servers at Spean Bridge.

To everyone involved, a very sincere thank you for all your help so willingly given, that made Christmas such a happy feast in our three churches. May God bless you.

Our cribs will remain in church until the feast of **the Epiphany**, the arrival of the three wise men, which is on Sunday, January 6th. This ends the Christmas season.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 6th, and Easter Sunday is as early as it possibly can be, March 23rd. The time of Easter is all to do with the phase of the moon at the time of Passover, when the Israelites left Egypt on their long journey to the Promise Land. The Orthodox Church uses a different method for calculating Easter. They celebrate Easter this coming year on April 27th.

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Golden Wedding

We wish Dan and Margaret MacDonald, *Blarmona*, every blessing on their Golden Wedding anniversary, which is this Sunday, December 30th—a great way to end the year! The 11.30 am. mass will be said for them in thanksgiving for their 50 years of marriage and for the blessing of their children, grandchildren and great grandchild.

The family had a special function in Roy Bridge Hall on Saturday evening when they all met together to celebrate their parents' wedding anniversary. May the coming year, and the years that lie ahead, bring them health and happiness and all God's blessings.

For many years. Margaret was assistant treasurer to the diocese. When we had no bishop, and Archbishop O'Brien was vicar apostolic in charge of our diocese, for three years Margaret was the sole treasurer and looked after all the finances of the diocese. She was deservedly awarded the *Bene Merenti Medal*, conferred on her by Archbishop O'Brien in recognition for the important work she did to keep the diocese functioning financially until a new bishop was appointed. Today, the work that Margaret did is now in the hands of a qualified accountant and an office assistant. Margaret still looks after the Gift Aid returns for our parish, and, as always, they are accurately completed for the Inland Revenue.

Dan, as we all know, is a highly qualified civil engineer. When I was in Arisaig, the planners of the proposed new road from Lo-chailort to Loch-nan-uam, designed the road so that it was impossible to gain entry to the old church at Polnish. It meant that the building, which was no longer in use, could not be sold.

I appealed to the planners, but with no effect. However, a phone call to Dan, and he came down immediately, surveyed the situation, and sent *three options* to the planners, each of which would allow access to the building. They realised they were dealing with a professional, and the plans were altered to allow access to the church. As a result of this, the building was later sold to someone who wished to convert it into a house.



Anniversaries

We remember in our prayers this weekend those whose anniversaries are at this time:

Charles Millen for whom mass was said on Friday

Campbell Chisholm, for whom the vigil mass was said on Saturday evening.

Canon Calum MacNeil, whose anniversary is on Monday. Fr Calum died on the last day of the year.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord

Burns Supper meeting

There will be a committee meeting in the Chapel House next Sunday at 7 p.m. to discuss the Burns Supper, which will be on **Saturday 26th January**. Anyone willing to help is invited to come along to the meeting where they will be warmly welcomed. Tickets for the Burns Supper go on sale immediately after New Year, but will be limited because of the restriction of numbers in the hall.

Please get your tickets as soon as possible to avoid disappointment

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Masses on New Year's Day
Spean Bridge 10 a.m.
Roy Bridge 11.30 a.m.

**January 1st is the Solemnity of Our Lady's
Motherhood, and is a day of devotion.**

What better way to start off the New Year 2008 than coming to mass. It gives us the opportunity to thank God for the year that has past, for the many graces he has offered to us through the mass and the sacraments and to ask his forgiveness for our faults and failings.

We also ask God to bless ourselves, our families and our loved ones, that he may guide us and take care of us, in all that we do. May this New Year be a year of grace for us all as we strive to increase in our love of God and in our love for each other, and may it bring peace to the world.



Bishop Murray to retire.

It was announced officially before Christmas that Bishop Murray is to retire. Every bishop has to offer his resignation to the Holy Father on reaching the age of 75, and Pope Benedict has agreed to accept Bishop Murray's wish to retire.

During his eight years as bishop, he has achieved an immense amount of good for the diocese, and has been truly a

very pastoral and spiritual father to us all. He has taken great care in visiting the parishes in the diocese regularly to administer the sacrament of confirmation; he has had the joy of ordaining a new priest, Fr Ross Crichton, and of opening two churches in Skye, one at Broadford, a converted barn, which is a veritable jewel, and a beautiful modern church in Portree. He also ordained our first permanent deacon for the diocese in Daliburgh recently.

He has been responsible for assuring that the diocesan finances are in a very healthy state and that every parish has all the means to be viable and active.

The bishop is also a member of the International Liturgical Committee for English in the Liturgy, and this has meant

travelling all over the world to meetings in various countries, a very demanding and tiring involvement.

According to the Catholic press, it may take two to three months to appoint his successor, but in the meantime, he will continue to be our bishop and care for us. Each parish will have the opportunity nearer the time when the bishop retires to acknowledge their appreciation of all that he has achieved for the diocese.

St Mary's statue of St. Joseph stolen

The Holy Family were homeless on the first Christmas night, and St. Joseph is homeless again, as his statue has been removed by thieves from its pedestal at the back of St. Mary's church. It is difficult to understand why people should do such a thing, for, although the statue is quite valuable, there is no likelihood of anyone purchasing a statue from such people.

Sadly, the lovely round window of the new St. Andrew's hall has been broken by vandals.

The devil uses people to create chaos and destroy order.

Let's hope the culprits will be caught.

Monsignor Toal home for Christmas

The parish was delighted to welcome Monsignor Toal back home for Christmas from Spain where he is in charge of the former seminary which is now a combined retreat and holiday centre.

I am grateful to him for his help during the busy Christmas period. He is always so kind in making himself available, and is supplying at St. Mun's, Ballachulish this Sunday and at New Year while Fr. John Paul MacKinnon is convalescing at home in South Uist after his accident trying to avoid deer on the Glencoe road. Fortunately, he is making good progress.

Tom MacKintosh in hospital

Tom took ill suddenly on Thursday morning, and after being taken to the Belford Hospital, he was referred to the Southern General Hospital, Glasgow. Thank God, he is already making some progress. We will remember Tom very specially in our prayers at all the masses on Sunday that he may make a speedy recovery. We will also remember Kenny and the rest of the family in our prayers also, as they must be so concerned about Tom.

*We wish all the readers of the Bulletin,
every blessing, health and happiness in the New*

