

# Weekly Bulletin

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

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Weekly Bulletin Online: [www.gaeldom.com/bulletin/](http://www.gaeldom.com/bulletin/)

Sunday December 9<sup>th</sup>. 2007

## Second Sunday of Advent



St Alphonsus used to quote St Augustine's saying:

*"God promises us his grace; he does not promise us tomorrow."*

The first week of Advent reminded us of the Second Coming of Christ when God will call us into his presence to give an account of our lives.

Our Lord often spoke of these things. He said that we should store up treasure in heaven (Mt 6:19) for we will be judged at the end on the state of our soul at the moment of our death. If we sin seriously, we risk losing the friendship of God, and Our Lord taught us very clearly that this is the greatest misfortune that could happen to us, to lose heaven for all eternity

The Church prepares for great feasts by prayer and penance. ***The purpose of this is to help us to change our lives and to grow in holiness.*** With humility and trust in God, everyone can change their lives, no matter what the past has been. God has more mercy than we have sins to commit.

Advent is also an opportunity to deepen our love of God—to move from being lukewarm to being more fervent. It may help

us to remove some obstacle in our lives that is a barrier between Christ and our soul.

One of the most important means of grace in the life of a Catholic is the Sacrament of Penance, confession. More Catholics are returning to this sacrament in recent years, discovering how powerful it is, not only helping us to overcome our failings, but to give us God's grace, and also a peace and joy that nothing else can equal.

For those who have been away from confession for years, they will receive a great welcome and the assurance of God's love and forgiveness. It is not uncommon at Christmas for a priest to hear a penitent say "it is 20 or 30 years since my last confession," and they cannot believe how simple and easy it is to make their confession—and then the joy and the peace!

Advent is also a time when we can look at how much, or how little, we pray. We can perhaps decide to put aside a little time each day that belongs just to God, to pray or do some spiritual reading.

The rosary is one of the most beautiful prayers that will help us grow in holiness.

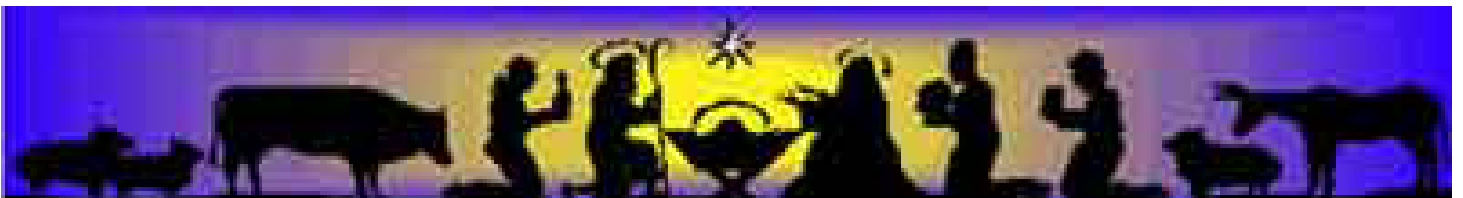
Remember there is mass each day during the week. Have you ever thought of coming to mass on a weekday, and using your privilege to receive Our Lord in Holy Communion?

Advent is also a time of thinking of others. What we save by our own self-imposed acts of penance, we can put aside for feeding the hungry. Christ was poor, and there are many poor and starving children in the world today.

Advent can also be a time when we should review how much television we watch. Some one said: *Abusing television in our homes means we so often devalue our little time on earth, wasting it rather than living it!*

If we enter into the spirit of these last few weeks of Advent, Christ will come alive in our souls. The prayer of the Israelites was:

***Come, Lord Jesus, Come—and he will come if we prepare to receive him.***



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## *A mother's complaint about television*



**O** Television, how I hate thee: let me count the ways in which you cramp my beloved family's spiritual growth.

- You destroy social life.
- You impose a global Hollywood-manufactured standard of beauty, behaviour and misbehaviour on people of all cultures.
- You damage our conversation - our ability to focus on things for a long time
- You make us fat.
- You stop our children learning to read.
- You coarsen our natural responses to violence and pornography ... and this is all before we even count the hours wasted in front of your flickering face when we could be doing something really useful which uses up calories.
- The most depressing advertisement on television right now is the one where a father smugly ends the squealing mayhem of his daughter's birthday party by gathering all the children around a giant TV screen!

### **Do you agree with this frustrated mother?**

**If you do, then maybe Advent is as good a time to try to put a little of this into practice.**

**More reading and less television can make a tremendous difference to a child's education. Once the habit of reading is acquired, it will last for the rest of a child's life.**

## **Visiting Confessor next Saturday, Dec. 15th**

Fr. Roddy Johnstone will hear confessions next **Saturday** at the following times;



**Spean Bridge: 2pm. to 2.30pm.  
Roy Bridge: 3pm.—3.45pm.**

**Please note that the confessions are on  
SATURDAY instead of Sunday.**

**This is an excellent opportunity during Advent to  
prepare our souls to welcome Christ at Christmas**

## **Weekly Rota**

**(My apologies for the gaps. Rotas will be  
distributed this week and appear regularly  
in the Bulletin)**

**December 15th –16th**

### **Spean Bridge**

**Reader:** Liz Campbell

**Prayers:** Margaret Muncie

**Euch Mins:** Moira Coutts & Amly Leider

**Cleaning:** Private rota

### **Roy Bridge**

**Readers:** Betty Campbell Helen MacDonald

**Prayers:** Deirdre MacDonald

**Euch Mins:** Ishbel Campbell & Ann MacKintosh

**Cleaning:** Margaret Watt

**Special Collection this weekend  
for the Bishop's Pastoral Fund.**

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## Roy Bridge School. Review of options

By Stuart Taylor

**AN INDEPENDENT third party is to take a close look into the financial information which influenced Highland Council's decision to close Roy Bridge Primary School.**

It follows a meeting last Friday between representatives of the council and parents campaigning for the retention of the award-winning school, which was arranged and attended by Lochaber MSP Fergus Ewing and by parents Marie-Clare Russell and David Dignan, representatives of the school

It was agreed that key financial information regarding the costs of all three options concerning the future of the school should be reviewed by an independent third party, with guidance sought from the Scottish Government.

The review will consider how Highland Council's finances would be affected by each of the three options presented during the statutory consultation process in 2006, namely: the status quo - retaining Roy Bridge Primary with Roy improvements; amalgamation with Spean Bridge Primary, including a two-classroom extension to accommodate Roy Bridge pupils; or building a new school at Roy Bridge under an innovative public community partnership model.

The review will look at the impact each option would have on capital costs and revenue funding, plus future council funding from the Scottish Government.

Public Private Partnership (PPP) liability costs in each case will also be considered. Highland councillors voted in December 2006 to close Roy Bridge and merge it with neighbouring Spean Bridge Primary.

However, the move was put on hold after parents, supported by the Scottish Rural Schools Network, complained the consultation process was flawed.

As reported in the *Lochaber News* last week, the campaigners had uncovered a number of financial inaccuracies and anomalies relating to the council's official case for closing Roy Bridge. Detailed research carried out by parents suggests that



closing the school will prove more costly to the council over the long-term.

The council's representation at last Friday's meeting in Inverness was led by Councillor Bill Fernie, chairman of the authority's education, culture and sport committee.

He said there would now be an upfront exchange of information which would hopefully establish all the facts and move the matter forward.

Roy Bridge parent Marie Clare Russell told the LN: *"We got a sympathetic hearing and we're delighted with the outcome of the meeting.*

*It is a great step forward and we're confident our figures will stand up to scrutiny."*

Councillor Allan Henderson, who is supporting the bid to retain Roy Bridge Primary, said:

*"It does look like progress and I think colleagues are softening to the impressive, well-researched pitch being presented by the parents."*

*Lochaber News, with permission of the editor*

### Lorna MacDonald RIP

Lorna MacDonald, Inverness, died gently on Saturday after a long illness, and we offer our sincere sympathy to her brother Ian and her sister Betty.

The family originally came from Arisiag, and both sisters became teachers. Lorna taught for many years in Kilmonivaig school, and is still fondly remembered by many of her former pupils.

The Requiem Mass was at St. Ninian's, Inverness on Friday, and, unfortunately, I was unable to attend because of a cold I developed.

I have written to Betty and Ian to express the sympathy of the parish, and mass was said for Lorna in St. Joseph's, Spean Bridge, on Saturday evening.

*May her good soul rest in peace*

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## Roy Bridge says *Thank You to* Margaret Sargent.

**“Thank you for 30 wonderful years” was the message that Margaret Sargent gave to the parents and people of Roy Bridge.**

The community packed into Roy Bridge Hall to express their thanks to a wonderful teacher, and give her a night that she will always remember. It was truly a night of laughter, music and lots of fun, and that's how Margaret would have wanted it.

The parents put an immense amount of work into preparing the evening, and the highlight was the surprise when Fr Tom, holding the famous red book, said to her:

*Margaret Sargent, This is your Life!*

It would be impossible for the book to contain everything that Margaret did during her 30 years of teaching, but it cleverly chose the most important events, and introduced the people who played a relevant part in her life.

**Starting from April 19, 1977**, which was her first day in Roy Bridge School, when Mrs Maureen McSherry was head teacher. Margaret worked on and off for ten years while she brought up her family, and then was given a permanent contract in August 1986, when Mr Jim Cranston became the new head teacher. Maureen and Jim spoke highly, and with humour, about Margaret.

Former pupils reproduced *Cinderella*, written by Margaret, in which themselves played the parts in 1986! It was hilarious.

**The success of the school in the National Festival of Youth**, when they won the competition at the Albert Hall, in London was shown on the screen, and it was very moving seeing young children, who are now adults and professionals themselves, singing and playing so beautifully.

**Prince Charles** visited the school in 1992 to launch the Birchwood Initiative, and there was a short film of Margaret and the prince sharing an umbrella! A letter was received from the prince wishing Margaret a happy retirement, and was read by Richard Sidgwick.

**Dick Balharry** spoke on behalf of the BBC, paying tribute to Margaret for her involvement with the children in the BBC series *Spring Watch*.

Margaret encouraged the children to adopt a disabled Romanian orphan, **Ana Maria**, after hearing about her from **Peter Sidgwick**, and the children have gathered funds regularly for her over the years. Peter came with a message to tell us about Ana Maria's progress, and how happy she is. Peter was instrumental in founding an orphanage in Romania for abandoned children.



*There was a personal letter from Cardinal O'Brien to Margaret*, which was read out by Fr. Tom, expressing his great affection for Roy Bridge School and for the staff and children, and for the great welcome he always received when he visited the school

**Margaret's action music dramas** with the children are famous because of the important lessons they gave about recycling—two in particular, *Charlie and the Compost Bin*, and *The Litterbugs*, were outstanding and a film of these was shown which brought loud laughter and cheers from the audience. There was also a personal message on film from Charles Kennedy who attended the plays/

The visit of **Mairi Hedderwick**, the author of the Katie Morag stories, was also shown on film, and Betty MacNeil appeared in the guise of one of the characters, Granny Mainland.

**Helen Critchley**, who accompanied Margaret to London, told us of the prestigious National Award given to Roy Bridge school for *CSV- Make a difference day*

Margaret was presented with many personal gifts from parents and children, and the main gift from the community was an **incredible garden seat with gigantic sea eagles at either end supporting the seat!**

The first part of the evening ended with the children singing *farewell* from the *Sound of Music*, and then there was the final magnificent rousing song, *Monarch of the Mountains*, with the verses written by Margaret herself, and the music composed by her brother, Peter Rose. (*It should become Fort William's anthem*)

A magnificent buffet was provided by the parents, and dancing and music completed a memorable evening.

There are more pictures in parts 2 and 3, which are accessible from the main menu