

Weekly Internet Bulletin

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

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Blessed Mary MacKillop web site : www.gaeldom.com/mmk/
Weekly Bulletin Online: www.gaeldom.com/bulletin/

Sunday January 7th. 2007

Feast of the Epiphany

The story of the Epiphany captures the imagination with its rich mixture of mystery and intrigue. Into the Holy Family's impoverished and temporary shelter come three wise men from the East dressed in majestic robes and bearing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. They had travelled from unknown lands following a star and had experienced the deviousness of King Herod before they were filled with delight in finding the newborn child. After paying homage they left for home by a different route.

The story of the Magi is so colourful we may overlook its significance and fail to see its deeper meaning. *The wise men represent all of us.* Their journey through desert and mountain following a star reflects our search for a purpose and meaning in our own life, which is not possible unless we are guided by faith. Our faith helps us to see beneath the surface of appearances. On this feast of the Epiphany, the innocent new-born child, who is surrounded by adoration, wonder and mystery, wishes to draw us all into his presence. The story is always relevant because God sees to it that people who really search will find him. He will shed light into our darkness and make us new.

As the Christmas season draws to a close with faded holly and sagging decorations, the Epiphany reminds us of our journeying into another year following the individual path which we alone tread. Life is a pilgrimage, a long journey, but we need not necessarily travel alone as we make our way towards heaven.. The Epiphany story concerns the many varying circumstances of joy and sorrow in which we encounter Christ. It calls for us to look around and search for our Lord who is always in our midst, in so many of our ordinary situations. He comes in the needs of many of the people we meet daily, and in places and times we would least expect him to be. God stands in our very midst revealing himself and inviting us to enter his company. Nothing is ever the same again for those who have discovered this Light. The responsibility we bear is to let the divine Light within us shine through to others, like the sun shining through a stained glass window. The gospel of love, forgiveness and redemption is something we are asked to practice in our every-day life. May Christ's Light lead us all safely through this new Year of 2007, and may he accompany us in all we do, and may we see him present in the poor, the needy, and indeed, in every situation.



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Christmas "Thank You"

I would like to express my sincere thanks to everyone who helped to make Christmas such a happy and blessed time in our parish:

To those who erected the cribs and Christmas trees in St. Margaret's, St. Joseph's and St. Finnan's. It meant a lot of hard work and time, but it helped to make Christmas so special for us all.

To a parishioner for the gift of the lovely Christmas trees for our churches.

To the ladies who decorated our three churches with holly and flowers and made them look so beautiful and cosy for the Midnight and Christmas Day masses. Again, it meant a lot of time and dedication, but the results were truly lovely and worthy of our Saviour's birth.

To the organist and the choir for the magnificent music we had at Midnight Mass, and again on Christmas morning. We have a Christmas liturgy in St. Margaret's that any Cathedral would be proud to have.

To our readers at the masses in sharing in the liturgy of the Word, and to our **Servers** for their loyalty and willingness to assist at the altar.

Finally—to **all our parishioners** who helped to make Christmas a truly great and blessed feast by coming out to mass, along with their families, in such large numbers to honour the Christ Child and to receive his blessings.

It was also a great joy to see so many of parishioners who live away from home, and other visitors on holiday, present at mass.



Are there any mole trappers in the parish?

Our lawns round the chapel house and the church are under siege from a colony of moles who moved in during the last few weeks. They are certainly burrowing at great speed with the amount of mounds of earth they have brought to the surface. There seems to be no limit to the area they cover, and they must be on shift work to keep up the pace, for each day there are more new mounds!

If anyone knows how to get rid of them, I would be very grateful for their help before too much damage is done

Christmas holidays are over!

The weather did not prevent the children having a great time over the Christmas period. All too soon, the holidays are over and it is back to school on Monday morning as usual.

There is a certain sadness knowing that the school will ultimately close and be amalgamated with Spean Bridge primary school.

Spean Bridge school extension

The Highland Region recently badly miscalculated the new large extension to Fortrose Academy because of the number new houses built in that area. Portacabins will probably be brought back again to give the extra classrooms required to



accommodate the increase in pupils.

It seems possible that a similar situation may yet occur in Spean Bridge primary school as the extension to be built will be only to accommodate the extra Roy Bridge pupils.

According to our councillor, Thomas MacLellan, planning permission has already been granted for over 65 houses in Spean Bridge, and at the moment planning permission is being sought for 14 houses near Stronlossit, Roy Bridge. During my final days as chairman of Lochaber Housing Association, it was suggested that there was sufficient ground for more houses to be built at Bunlossit, and this may yet come about.

Is the Highland Regional Council fully aware of all of this, and are they going to make the same mistake at Spean Bridge as they made at Fortrose? Only time will tell. A large number of councillors retire in May, and will they be concerned after May about the decisions they made which will have such a serious affect on our local schools?

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Rota for our churches Weekend of January 13th. -- 14th.

St. Joseph's

Reader: Margaret Muncie
Prayers of Intercession: Liz Campbell
Eucharistic Ministers: Almy Leider, Moira Coutts
Church Cleaning: Any volunteers?

St. Margaret's

Readers; Ann MacKintosh, Deirdre MacDonald
Prayers of Intercession: Ishbel Campbell
Eucharistic Ministers Catriona MacDonald, Linda MacDonald
Church Cleaning: Ann Wardlaw

Anniversaries

We remember in our prayers at mass this weekend, those whose anniversaries occur about his time:

Canon Calum MacNeil, for whom mass was said on the day of his anniversary, December 31st, **Mary Campbell**, sister of Donald Campbell, for whom mass will be said this Saturday evening, **Annie Kennedy, Bohuntin**, whose anniversary is on Tuesday, **Campbell Chisholm** whose anniversary mass was on December 29th and **Charles Millen**, for whom mass will be said on Wednesday. *Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.*

In Raigmore

Samantha MacDonald went into Raigmore for bed rest on Tuesday, and will be there for possibly a month or more. She is free to walk about, but she will be under observation and will receive the best possible attention to ensure that everything goes successfully. This will be of great assurance to John. I mentioned to Sam at the weekend if she would mind if I asked our parishioners to remember her in our prayers, and she was very happy that we do so.

She is in great spirits and looking very well. If anyone wishes to drop Sam a card or a letter, her address is:

Ward 10, Raigmore Hospital, Inverness IV2

I am sure she would also appreciate a visit if you are up in Inverness for the January Sales!



This awful virus!

Many people in the area have succumbed to a type of 'flu virus that is doing the rounds at the moment—and the Chapel House is no exception!

Although it has not the shivering and sore-joints effects of the 'flu, it still leaves people with running noses, sinus trouble, lots of coughing and tiredness. The doctors are inundated with calls, but they tell their patients that there is no ready-made cure—just stay in bed, take the usual tablets for colds and 'flus, and drink plenty of water. All sufferers have my sympathy, and the only

solution is to keep warm, take your favourite remedies, and hope it does not last too long!

St. Joseph's Church—Plans found!

I wrote to Columba House in Edinburgh recently to inquire if there was any information in their files about the opening of St. Joseph's, Spean Bridge. Columba House safeguards the archives of all the Scottish dioceses. The keeper phoned me after New Year to confirm the date of the opening was May 28th, 1967. It was originally planned to have the opening on May 1st, feast of St. Joseph, the Worker, but bishop McGill had prior engagements, and the date was deferred to the 28th May.

But what was more important, I discovered that all the building plans of St. Joseph's have been deposited in the archives! This is good news, as Roddy Campbell will be able to study the plan of the roof and decide if any correction or alternation can be made to overcome the present problem of condensation. Up until now, no one was sure about the material used in the construction of the roof, and what kind of insulation was used by the architect. The only solution was to open a large section of the roof from the interior to assess the situation. Happily, this will not be necessary now. The plans will be here shortly, and it will be interesting to have Roddy's comments on the problem.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE MEETING THIS SUNDAY AT 7 p.m.

There will be a meeting of the Social Committee this Sunday evening in the Chapel House at 7 p.m. to plan our **Burns Supper**. Anyone willing to help will be made most welcome.

Fund-raising

If anyone has any ideas for **fund-raising** to help with the cost of the work to be done on St. Joseph's to prepare it for its 40th anniversary, I am sure the committee would be interested to hear them.

It is some time since we had a Social Committee meeting, and I look forward to welcoming everyone on Sunday evening. If you think you can help, please come along.



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Justice & Peace Sunday

**A Letter from Bishop Moran, Aberdeen, President of the
Hierarchy's Justice & Peace Commission**



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ

In today's Gospel the wise men come in peace and humility to bring gifts to the infant king. But in the background Herod, out of fear and jealousy, is plotting death for the innocent.

In today's Christian churches we are singing of peace and goodwill in the name of that infant king. But in the background, many are plotting death for the innocent.

We are all aware of the suicide bombs, the revenge-driven attacks, the indiscriminate slaughter, the wholesale devastation. We can see violence breeding violence.

Yet people who would never consider such barbarous behaviour, people who long for peace just as we do, are still prepared to threaten death and devastation out of fear. The world's most powerful governments, including our own, seem determined to base our security on having nuclear weapons available. Not for actual use, it is said - just as a deterrent. Last year the Scottish bishops repeated their condemnation of these weapons - not only of using them, but even of holding them as a deterrent.

Many thousands of you, in the name of Justice and in the name of Peace, signed the petition against renewing Trident. On behalf of the bishops, I thank you. A vote will take place in March on whether our country renews Trident; please contact your MPs before then and make sure they know the views of the Church and your own views.

Real peace is much more than the absence of outward violence. Things may be quiet, but the violence can still be there, as a threat, in people's attitudes. For any real peace, the attitudes have to change.

We need to begin building a culture of peace.

On the smaller scale, and very close to home, we need to challenge any pride and selfishness in our own lives. Whenever we start thinking in terms of "them and us", peace is at risk. Our own attitudes have to change, from lofty ideals to the down-to-earth; from "Love thy neighbour" to "Love THIS neighbour"; from "respect for the human person" to "treat this individual as YOU feel entitled to be treated".

On the larger scale too, we need to change attitudes, and challenge the culture which relies on fear and threats. We need to insist that the huge costs of that culture are used, instead, to promote human dignity. We need to insist that countries work together to relieve poverty, injustice and despair. These breed bitterness and hatred, and lead to war.

At local and at national level Catholic organisations are actively promoting justice and peace. Your prayers and your donations today support these aims.

Just before Holy Communion at this Mass, we will wish each other the Peace of Christ. Let's make that wish mean more than mere words. Let's live that message in our own lives. Let's send that message out across our country. As we set out on this New Year, let us begin to build a culture of justice and peace, a fitting Epiphany gift for our Saviour.

Yours sincerely in Christ

+ Peter A. Moran, Bishop of Aberdeen