

Weekly Bulletin

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

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

Sunday September 2nd. 2007



Our Lady's birthday September 8th

Usually it is the custom of the Church to celebrate the feast day of a saint on the date of their death as this is truly the day remembered as their birth into everlasting happiness. Mary, however, entered this world sinless through the privilege of the Immaculate Conception and is the firstborn of the redeemed. Her nativity is a cause for great joy as it is considered the "dawn of our salvation" as Pope Paul VI wrote in the document, *Marialis Cultus* in 1972.

The earliest document commemorating this feast comes from the sixth century. It is generally believed that this feast originated in Jerusalem since there is evidence, in the fifth century, of a church dedicated to St. Anne, close to the the Pool of Bethesda. The Patriarch of Jerusalem affirmed in the year 603 that this was the location of Mary's birth. After the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD, popular devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary increased. It is generally believed that the date of September 8th was chosen to celebrate the Nativity of Mary since the civil year began in Constantinople on September 1. Scholars believe that this date was chosen since it was symbolic that the beginning of the work of salvation

should be commemorated near to the beginning of the new year.

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary was later fixed at December 8, nine months prior. This feast day was introduced in Rome from the Eastern Church in the seventh century. Pope St. Sergius I, who reigned from 687-701, prescribed a litany and procession be part of the liturgical celebration of this feast day. Paschasius Radbertus (d.860) wrote that this feast of Mary's Nativity was being preached throughout the universal church and it became a holy day of obligation for the west by the year 1007. The theme portrayed in the liturgical celebration of this feast day is that the world had been in the darkness of sin and with the arrival of Mary begins a glimmer of light. That light which appears at Mary's holy birth pre-announces the arrival of Christ, the Light of the World. Her birth is the beginning of a better world: The antiphon for the Canticle of Zechariah in the priest's breviary expresses these sentiments in the following way: "Your birth, O Virgin Mother of God, proclaims joy to the whole world, for from you arose the glorious Sun of Justice, Christ our God; He freed us from the age-old curse and filled us with holiness; he destroyed death and gave us eternal life."

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The Basilica of St. Mary Major (*The church of the snow*)

The story of the Basilica of St Mary Major's, and the *true* date of Our Lady's birthday?

The Church celebrates the birthday of our blessed Lady on September 8th. However, there are two incidents that happened on the same day, although separated by many years, that confirm the possible date of Our Lady's birthday may be August 5th. Considering the coincidence that exists between the incidents, there seems little doubt, that they are the work of Divine Providence.

The first happened in August, year 352, in Rome, with a miraculous snowfall on the Esquiline Hill.

Giovanni Patricio and his wife both dreamed that Our Lady wanted a church built in her homage and informed that the place would be marked by a fall of snow.

In the dream, Our Lady appeared with the Child Jesus in her arms, and asked the couple to take the news to His Holiness. In the audience with the Pope Liberian (352-366), the couple described their dream, and the Pontiff was not surprised, because he had also received the same message while slept. For that reason, he decided to check up on the marvellous event. He and a companion went to see the place, and they found it covered with snow in the middle of summer in Italy. It was August 5th, 352. The Pope built on the spot, indicated by Our Lady, the church of St. Mary of the Snow, and also, on same date he instituted the feast of the White Virgin of the Snow, in honour of the Mother of God.

The second incident happened in the year 431, when Pope Celestin I ordered the Council to convene at Ephesus. At this council, Mary was officially declared the Mother of God. On August 5th in Rome, His Holiness celebrated Mass and read out the text of the Dogma of Our Lady's divine maternity. Another indication of the date of Our Lady's birthday?

The old Church built by Pope Liberian disappeared in the time without leaving a vestige. The new church was named the Basilica of St. Mary Maggiori (*Saint Mary, the Great*) referring to the greatness of her virtues, and the immense power of intercession she has so near to God. With the passing of the centuries, the Basilica was embellished with great artistry and transformed into a truly beautiful sanctuary of Mary.

The Basilica is one of the important shrines dedicated to Our Lady, and each year, on August 5th, crowds gather at the Basilica in her honour to renew their devotion to Mary, and also celebrate with great enthusiasm the anniversary of its construction, and in their own way also celebrate the day which many hold to be the true date of her birthday. May we honour our Lady on Sept 8th, the liturgical date of her birth, with the same devotion as they do.

Collection for the Bulletin next Sunday

It is many years since we have had a collection for the Bulletin. I would be grateful for your support to help meet the printing costs. There will be a second collection next Sunday for this purpose.

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A fortnight ago, Sister Audrey and Sister Therese erected a stand which they call **Meet the MacKillop Family**, and it is worth stopping for a little while to have a look at it and meet Mary's parents and family. They were a wonderful people, resolute and determined, who kept intact the faith of their Roy Bridge forefathers

On the other display board is a collection of Mary's sayings which are still as relevant today as they were in her day, for progress in the spiritual life demands the same effort in every age.

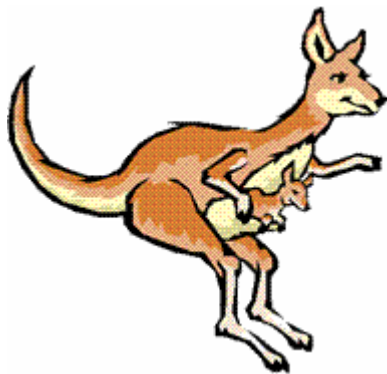
Blessed Mary has been chosen as the patron of the World Youth Rally by the Australian Hierarchy.

We are grateful to the sisters for taking time to come up to Roy Bridge to erect the stands. The display will be at Blessed Mary's shrine for a few weeks to give parishioners the opportunity to become familiar with the family. Do take time to have a good look at it.



Youth pilgrimage to meet Pope Benedict in difficulty *Costs to young pilgrims spiral to a ridiculous price !*

It is not only kangaroos that leap! The cost of the proposed pilgrimage for our youth to Sydney next July has soared out of all proportions! The first quote was a respectable £800, but at the clergy meeting in Oban last week, Fr John Paul MacKinnon, Youth co-ordinator for the diocese, told us that the price had now spiraled to a ridiculous sum of £2,500! None of our youth could possibly meet this cost, and already the few who were hoping to go to Sydney have decided to opt out. This latest and unexpected blow has caused great



disappointment, and will also have its effect on other dioceses throughout Scotland.

Instead of going through a Travel Agent, our diocese is now considering investigating the possibility of making arrangements itself for our own youths. I have some very good friends in Sydney who might be willing to accommodate the small group intending to go from our diocese, and this would cut the cost considerably.

I am sure Blessed Mary MacKillop's Sisters would also be willing to offer some help.

We can try to renegotiated the price of the flight with other airlines, and it may yet be possible to keep the cost below £1,000.

I hope to be in touch with Fr. MacKinnon during this coming week to discuss what further action we can take so as not to disappoint those who had planned to make the pilgrimage.

We will also contact other dioceses in Scotland to inquire if estimates for new block bookings can be made to advantage with other firms to help find more suitable terms.

However, in the meantime, we will go ahead on our own to explore every avenue to try to make the cost of the pilgrimage acceptable.

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Fund raising night makes £1,750 for St Joseph's Roof Appeal

The result of the Race Nite deserves to be announced in big letters for it was a magnificent response by the people of the area to our appeal to help us put a new roof on St. Joseph's church. I would like to thank the sponsors of each race for their kindness, the firm who paid for the printing of the pamphlets, all who readily bought horses and those who came along on the evening to support the function. It was a great success, and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves immensely. The large number of younger members added tremendous fun to the evening, and their laughter and good nature contributed to making the evening such a success. I am most grateful to David and Liz MacFarlane for suggesting the idea, and for all the hard work they put in to planning the evening. Also to Frank MacKenzie for the help he so willingly gave. To everyone, my very sincere thanks for your generosity, kindness, co-operation and for helping to make the evening such a wonderful financial success for St. Joseph's

Church Rota September 15th –16th

St. Joseph's

Readings: Liz Campbell

Prayers of Intercession: Margaret Muncie

Euch. Ministers: Liz Campbell, Moira Coutts

Cleaning: private rota

St. Margaret's

Reading: Peter Rose, Val MacDonald

Prayers of Intercession: Tony Sargent

Euch. Ministers: Linda MacDonald, Ian Mac Donald

Cleaning: Ann MacKintosh

Welcome Home to Monsignor Toal

Monsignor Joe Toal is home for a few days, and he invited a Spanish priest, whose parish is just north of Salamanca, to spend a few days in Roy Bridge before going on to Glasgow to meet another Scottish priest whom he knows from his college days.

Of course, Mgr Joe is home for a particular reason to help celebrate his mother's 80th birthday along with the family and her many friends. We wish Mary every blessing and health and happiness on her birthday.

Our sick at home

We keep in our prayers **Mary Morrison**, Aonachan Gardens who is still confined to bed at home, also **Jimmy Keenan** and **Joe Beattie** that God may grant them renewed health and strength.

It was good to see **Katie MacKintosh**, Murlaggan, at mass during the week. Katie is now making excellent progress and walking well after her accident and stay in hospital. All our sick are prayed for at each of the masses on Sunday.