

## SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

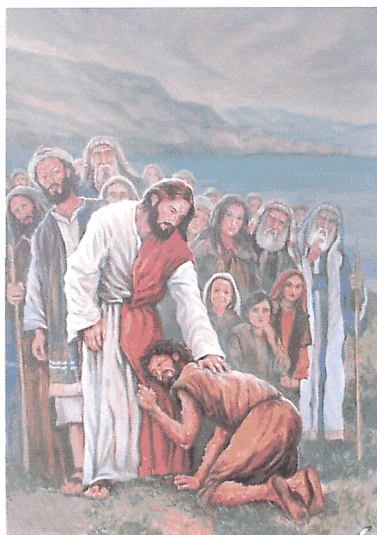
15<sup>th</sup> February 2015

St. Mary's, Belford Road, Fort William PH33 6BT. Tel. (01397) 702174

A Parish of the R. C. Diocese of Argyll & the Isles Charitable Trust

Registered Scottish Charity No. SC002876

[www.stmarysfortwilliam.org](http://www.stmarysfortwilliam.org)



### Noticeboard

Sunday Masses: Vigil Mass, Saturday 6 p.m.  
Sunday Morning Mass 10.30 a.m.

Weekday Masses: 10.15 a.m.

ASH WEDNESDAY Masses at 10.15 a.m. 1.15 p.m.  
and 7 p.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Saturday:  
9.45 to 10 a.m.  
4 to 4.30 p.m.  
5.30 to 5.45 p.m.

*In the Diocesan Calendar, Tuesday is the Optional Memorial of St. Finan. We will celebrate this Memorial.*

We wish you every blessing during the **season of Lent**. Please remember that Ash Wednesday is a Day of Fast and Abstinence.

The three observances of Lent are prayer, self-denial and almsgiving. Should you wish to support SCIAF during Lent, please take one of the boxes as you leave at the end of Mass this Sunday. These should be returned on Easter Sunday, or shortly thereafter. These boxes are *not* part of the SCIAF special collection on the Fourth Sunday of Lent.

We remember our Faithful Departed, especially those whose anniversaries are about this time: **Margaret MacDougall, Charlotte MacDonald, Gordon Turner, Jessie Shields, Mary Donaldson, John MacDonald, Ellen Mitchell, Donald Joseph Currie and Alister MacLean**. May their souls and the souls of all the Faithful Departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

**Our sincere thanks** to all those who gave the church a thorough clean during the past week!

**Holy Communion** will be taken to the housebound from Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> to Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> February.

### Thoughts for Lent

Lent comes providentially to reawaken us, to shake us from our lethargy. *(Pope Francis)*

Lent stimulates us to let the Word of God penetrate our life and in this way to know the fundamental truth: who we are, where we come from, where we must go, what path we must take in life...  
*(Pope Benedict XVI)*

Lent is a fitting time for self-denial; we would do well to ask ourselves what we can give up in order to help and enrich others by our own poverty. Let us not forget that real poverty hurts: no self-denial is real without this dimension of penance. I distrust a charity that costs nothing and does not hurt.  
*(Pope Francis)*

## Leper and Poet

On St. Valentine's Day, many receive cards with all sorts of appropriate verses. This Sunday, we see a poor leper call upon the healing love of Jesus. One man comes to mind, for he was both leper and poet, in fact one of the most revered poets of Vietnam. His name was Nguyễn Trọng Trí, but he is better known by his *nom de plume*, Hàn Mặc Tử. Born in 1912, he would become the most celebrated Vietnamese Catholic literary figure during the years of French colonial rule. He is best known for his love poems. Does the beloved in his poetry spring from an archetype deep in his soul, or is she a real person?

There was one woman, whom Hàn Mặc Tử loved above all others, a beautiful, delicate girl. Her name was Hoàng Thị Kim Cúc. Their love could never find fulfilment. She was from an upper-class Buddhist family; he was a Catholic of humble background. Marriage was impossible. There were three years of secret courtship, then they went their separate ways. However, in 1937, on hearing that Hàn had contracted leprosy, it seems that Hoàng Cúc sent him a photo of herself wearing a white dress. Would he visit her in Vỹ Dạ Hamlet where she now lived, a place they both knew well? By this time Hàn's leprosy had got worse, and he had cut himself off from all contact with the outside world. There was the world "out there", and the inner world of his private anguish. He then wrote a poem, perhaps his most famous. It is, entitled "Why aren't you back in Vỹ Dạ Hamlet?" In a dreamlike sequence, on a moonlit and foggy night, he glimpses Hoàng Cúc in her pure white dress. This poem was his farewell to the one he could never forget. Hàn Mặc Tử died in 1940, aged only 28.



Hàn Mặc Tử



The tomb of Hàn Mặc Tử  
with its statue of Our Lady

There are still 500,000 persons afflicted with leprosy in Latin America, so it is still very much present.  
*(Walter Salles, Brazilian film director)*

I not only play at the prestigious classical concert halls like Carnegie Hall and Kennedy Centre, but also hospitals, churches, prisons, and restricted facilities for leprosy patients, just to mention a few.  
*(Ji-Hae Park, South Korean violinist)*

The wound is the place where the Light enters you.  
*(Rumi, Persian Poet and Mystic)*

The earth is not just for the clever and the strong.  
*(Shūsaku Endō, Japanese Catholic author)*

The people of God cannot be changed until the outcasts are restored to its body.  
*(Umberto Eco, in his novel "The Name of the Rose")*

My father was a man of great charity towards the poor, and compassion for the sick, and also for servants; so much so, that he never could be persuaded to keep slaves, for he pitied them so much: and a slave belonging to one of his brothers being once in his house, was treated by him with as much tenderness as his own children.  
*(St. Teresa of Avila, born 500 years ago this year)*

By reading the scriptures I am so renewed that all nature seems renewed around me and with me. The sky seems to be a pure, a cooler blue, the trees a deeper green. The whole world is charged with the glory of God and I feel fire and music under my feet.  
*(Fr. Thomas Merton, born 100 years ago this year)*