

## THIRD SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

24<sup>th</sup> January 2016

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)



**“This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.”**

### Noticeboard

First Mass of Sunday (Vigil Mass) Saturday, 6 p.m.  
Sunday Morning Mass 10.30 a.m.

Weekday Masses Monday, 5 p.m.  
Other Weekday, 10.15 a.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation Saturday  
9.46 to 10 a.m.  
4 to 4.30 p.m.  
5.3- to 5.45 p.m.

*Monday is the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul; Tuesday, the Memorial of St. Timothy and St. Titus; Thursday, the Memorial of St. Thomas Aquinas.*

We have just received the news of the death of **Bishop Ian Murray**. The clergy and the people of the Diocese will be deeply saddened by this, and our heartfelt prayer and sympathy are extended above all to his family, who gave him so much support and care in his final years. Many of us have the fondest memories of Bishop Ian. May he now be welcomed home as the Lord's good and faithful servant.

Our annual **Christian Unity Service** takes place in St. Mary's this Sunday evening at 6.30 p.m. Please come along and be one with our Christian brothers and sisters!

The bus for **Mgr. McGee's episcopal ordination** has been ordered. If anyone is going by car, please let Fr. MacKinnon know, just to help the Diocese arrange the seating in the cathedral.

We pray for our Faithful Departed, especially those whose anniversaries are about this time: **Jan Stage, Lizzie MacBeth, Patrick Ryan, Frank Timbrell, Norah MacKinnon, Margaret Doyle, Margaret MacIntyre, Kenneth MacDonald, Flora MacKinnon, John Tully, Morag Fitzsimons, Norman Campbell, Kathleen Gibson and Christina Turner**. May their souls and the souls of all the Faithful Departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

We thank you for your very generous support of our **Crib Collection**, which came to £213.64, well up on last year. This will be sent to the Missions on behalf of our children.

**Holy Communion** will be taken to the housebound, from Monday to Wednesday of this week.

Please remember the invitation to take part in a **pilgrimage to Medjugorje**, from the 11<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> May. If you are interested, please do not hesitate to phone Carol Kelso at 07919 024 993 or contact her at [carol@delaney.ie](mailto:carol@delaney.ie) Joe Walsh Tours will look after the pilgrims. The cost is £599 for seven nights, with half-board at a guest house, travel insurance being £25 extra.

The special candles for the **Feast of the Presentation of the Lord** have arrived. These can be collected before Mass on Tuesday the 2<sup>nd</sup> February. There will be a basket, should you wish to make a small donation.

Some important dates:

Ash Wednesday	10 <sup>th</sup> February
Good Friday	25 <sup>th</sup> March
Easter Sunday	27 <sup>th</sup> March



On Thursday, we celebrated the Feast of St. Agnes, Virgin and Martyr. It is a very special day in Rome. Pope Francis celebrated the Feast with the time-honoured blessing of lambs whose wool will be used to make pallia. The pallium is a vestment worn by metropolitan archbishops, signifying their unity with the Church of Rome.

Two small lambs, traditionally less than a year old, were placed in baskets and carried to the Urban VIII Chapel in the Vatican where they received the Holy Father's blessing. During the blessing, one lamb wears a white crown symbolizing the Agnes's purity, and the other a red crown, emblematic of her martyrdom, which took place in Rome about A.D. 304. Tradition has it that the beautiful teenager, born of a noble Roman family, was betrayed as a Christian by an obsessed pagan suitor she had refused to marry. *"He chose me first and He shall have me!"* are reported to have been her last words before she was beheaded. She is usually depicted carrying a lamb (*"agnus"* in Latin). Agnes is among the saints named in the Roman Canon of the Mass, the First Eucharistic Prayer.

The flock of sheep to which the two little lambs belong are shorn in the summer. Religious sisters collect the wool and use it to weave the pallia. Their use is thought to date back to the fifth century. Those made by the nuns are kept in a special urn near the most sacred part of St. Peter's Basilica. On the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, the pallia are presented by the Pope to the metropolitan archbishops appointed in the past year.

You see some of these archbishops below, each wearing his white pallium with its six black crosses. Above, you can see Pope Francis blessing the lambs. There is also an image of St. Agnes holding a lamb. There are two churches dedicated to St. Agnes in Rome. The one in the photo above looks onto the Piazza Novana, one of the loveliest and most popular squares in the city. We also see a very different encounter with a lamb when the Pope made a surprise visit to a live Nativity scene last year. It was his turn to be surprised, and delightfully so!

