

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

18th December 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



Noticeboard

Monday	Mass at 5 p.m.
Tuesday	Mass at 10.15 a.m.
Wednesday	Mass at 10.15 a.m. Confessions, 6 to 7 p.m. (<i>Mgr. James MacNeil</i>)
Thursday	Mass at 10.15 a.m.
Friday	Mass at 10.15 a.m. Confessions 7 to 8 p.m. (<i>Fr. MacKinnon</i>)
Saturday	Mass at 10.15 a.m. Confessions, 11 to 11.30 a.m.; 4 to 4.30 p.m. (<i>Fr. MacKinnon</i>) THERE WILL BE NO VIGIL MASS AT 6 P.M. The Mass of Christmas Night will be at 10 p.m. There will be Carols from 9.45 p.m.
Sunday	Christmas Morning Mass, 10.30 a.m.

The Bishop clearly enjoyed his contact with you last Saturday and Sunday. Thank you for making him feel so welcome. We wish him every blessing at Christmas.

The Blessing of the Crib will take place this Sunday, after the 10.30 Mass. The children will be blessed by the "Oil of Gladness", from Bethlehem and Jerusalem. The Christmas Tree will also be blessed. Our sincere thanks to those who set up both Crib and Tree!

We remember our Faithful Departed. We pray for those whose anniversaries are about this time: **Rose McTaggart, Stephen Haggerty, Patricia Argue, William Gillies, Alick MacLean, John MacDonald, Margaret Gallacher, Mary MacPherson, Chrissie MacIntyre, Angus MacDonald, Jack Cronin, Maureen Thompson, Margaret Payne (MacFarlane) Mary MacDonald, Thomas MacLean and Nell Holness.** We pray also for the eternal peace of **Kathleen Gallaway**, of the Kearney family, who has died peacefully in Canada, aged 92. Hers was a life of shared blessing for all who knew her. May she, and all our Faithful Departed, now rest in the peace of the Saviour born for them in Bethlehem.

Please note that there will be **no Vigil Mass** next Saturday evening. Instead, we will have the Mass of Christmas Night at 10.p.m, with carols beforehand.

Our Christmas collection this year will be in aid of SCIAF's support of the refugees of Syria. Many of us feel uneasy when we see the adverts on TV, promising us abundance at the Christmas table. This is a Dickensian creation that has nothing in common with little children shivering in tents on the borders of a nation that continues to self-destruct. It is among these children that Christ will be born this Christmas. We respond accordingly.

Please note that Mgr. James MacNeil will be our visiting confessor on Wednesday, *from 6 to 7 p.m.*

Holy Communion will be taken to the housebound from Wednesday 28th December to Friday 30th.



The Parish Crib
We await the Child

The traditional "Christmas tree" is a very ancient custom which exalts the value of life, as in winter the evergreen becomes a sign of undying life. In general, the tree is decorated and Christmas gifts are placed under it. The symbol is also eloquent from a typically Christian point of view: It reminds us of the "tree of life" (see Genesis 2:9), representation of Christ, God's supreme gift to humanity. The message of the Christmas tree, therefore, is that life is "ever green" if one gives: not so much material things, but of oneself: in friendship and sincere affection, and fraternal help and forgiveness, in shared time and reciprocal listening. *(Pope St. John Paul II)*

A novice master once responded when asked about a life lived in Christian authenticity, said that to be a Christian was not to know the answers but to begin to live in the part of the self where the question is born....He was speaking of an attitude of listening, of awareness of presence, of an openness to mystery. *(Wendy M. Wright)*

Each year, God asks us to shed one more coat of awareness, one more dream state and come alive to the vision of God's plan for each of us and the world-at-large. The older we get, the harder this is to do. As children we had a sense of wonder. Our eyes were wide open and drinking in the fascinating gifts we beheld...Our thirsty souls could not have enough of the wonders of creation. Then, somehow, we grew too old to dream. We tired of the abundance of the world, or at least grew weary of keeping up with the feast of life, and stepped away from the banquet of life.

The natural gift of wonder God gave us as children was meant to be kept alive.... Instead we let wonder go to sleep. We entered the typical dream state of most humans. *(Father Alfred McBride)*



ALEPPO

"Ubi solitudinem faciunt, 'pacem' appellant." (Tacitus, Roman historian, A.D. 56-120)
"Where they make a desert, and call it 'peace.'"