

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

7th October 2012

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Noticeboard

<u>Sunday Masses:</u>	Vigil Mass, Saturday, 6 p.m. Sunday Morning Mass, 10.30 a.m.
<u>Weekday Masses:</u>	10.15 a.m.
<u>Sacrament of Reconciliation:</u>	Saturday 9.45 to 10 a.m. 4 to 4.30 p.m. 5.30 to 5.50 p.m.
<u>October Devotions:</u>	Wednesday, 7 p.m. (Exposition, 6.30 p.m.)

Friday is the Memorial of St. Kenneth (Diocesan Calendar)

Our celebration of the **Year of Faith** opens officially with a special Mass in the Cathedral on Thursday at 7 p.m. All the clergy and people of the Diocese are invited. What makes this Mass a little more special is Thomas Wynne being raised to the Lectorate, an important step in his journey to the Permanent Diaconate. We support Thomas with our prayers. Copies of a letter from Cardinal O'Brien and Archbishop Tartaglia are available to reflect upon. There are also Year of Faith prayer cards to take home.

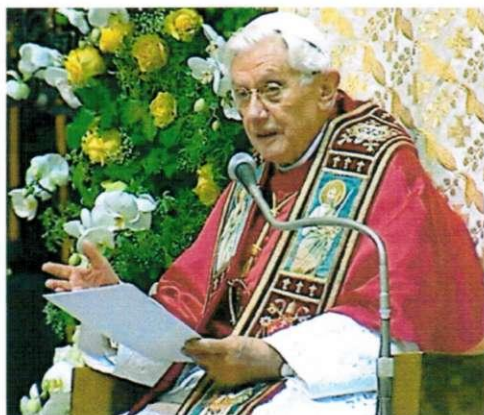
Mission Sunday is just two weeks away! We know that you will be as supportive as ever.

We remember our Faithful Departed, especially those whose anniversaries are about this time: **John McAuley, Charlene Maselet, Teresa Mannion, Larry Lenkas, Ray Ann MacRae, Flora McManus, Christine Dougan, Colin MacMillan, Maureen MacPherson, Sister Isabel Kelly, Sandy Campbell, Sandra Campbell, Ena MacDonald, Allan MacKellaig, Monsignor William MacMaster, Ronnie MacLeod and Archie MacKay.** May their souls and the souls of the Faithful Departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

The Deanery pilgrimage to **Pluscarden** was blessed by the peace of a truly holy place. Our thanks to the monks who made the pilgrims feel so welcome and whose talk had such an impact on them. They discovered something of what has made Pluscarden Abbey and its community so special to the priests of Lochaber over the years.

The Bishop will administer the **Sacrament of Confirmation** on Friday, 14th December. We have a greater number of young Confirmands this year, from very diverse backgrounds. Please keep them all in your prayers.

The Compassion of a Pope



Today's Gospel invites us all to reflect. At the beginning of June, Pope Benedict joined with families from all over the world in Milan. In response to a Brazilian family's question about divorced and remarried Catholics, the Pope spoke these words: *"This is one of the great causes of suffering for the Church today, and we do not have simple solutions. ... Naturally, one very important factor is prevention. This means ensuring that, from the beginning, the act of falling love is transformed in a more profound and mature decision. Another factor is that of accompanying people during marriage, to ensure that families are never alone but find authentic company on their journey. We must tell people in this situation that the Church loves them, but they must see and feel this love".* Parishes and other Catholic communities *"must do everything possible so that such people feel loved and accepted, that they are not 'outsiders' even if they cannot receive absolution and the Eucharist. They must see that they too live fully within the Church. ... The Eucharist is real and shared if people truly enter into communion with the Body of Christ. Even without the 'corporeal' assumption of the Sacrament, we can be spiritually united to Christ".* It is important for divorced couples *"to have the chance to live a life of faith, ... to see that their suffering is a gift for the Church, because they also help others to defend the stability of love, of Marriage; ... theirs is a suffering in the community of the Church for the great values of our faith".*

Women of the Bible MIRIAM

Miriam was the sister of Moses, and if there were ever a “big sister” it was her, and that from the very beginning of Moses’ life. Hidden in the reeds beside the River Nile, she watched as the Egyptian princess discovered her baby brother in the basket. She then showed the strength of her character by daring to approach the princess and persuade her that she (Miriam) should find a nurse for the child. The one she then produced was the baby’s own mother, although this secret was kept from Moses as he grew up in the Egyptian court. Incidentally, the names “Moses” and “Miriam” are Egyptian in origin and from “Miriam” comes our name, “Mary”.

We next meet Miriam after Moses had led his people through the Red Sea.

“Miriam, the prophetess...took up a timbrel, and all the women followed her with timbrels, dancing. And Miriam led them in the refrain: “Sing of the Lord: he has covered himself in glory, horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.” (Exodus 15:20-21)



This song is the basis of one of the canticles sung at our Easter Vigil. Miriam’s song lives on, but what about her status as “a prophetess”?

In the Book of Numbers, Miriam and her other brother, Aaron, turn against Moses for marrying a foreign Cushite woman. They claim equal authority with Moses.

“They said, ‘Has the Lord spoken to Moses only? Has he not spoken to us too?’ The Lord heard this. Now Moses was the most humble of men, the humblest man on earth.” (Numbers 12:2-3)

God’s anger flares up against Miriam and Aaron. Miriam is suddenly afflicted with leprosy. In his goodness, Moses prays for her recovery. His prayer is answered. Seven days exile from the camp will suffice as a punishment for his erring sister. Is this a case of a “big sister” going too far, or is the author of the Book of Numbers trying to play down or qualify Miriam’s extraordinary role as a prophetess and a leader in Ancient Israel?

Miriam would never see the Promised Land. She died at Kadesh, a watering place in the desert. She would never enter the Promised Land; nor would her two brothers.

FAITH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

As the Year of Faith approaches, let’s go the Old Testament. What does faith mean in Genesis and Exodus, for example? We take just two verses:

“Abram put his faith in the Lord, who counted this as making him justified. (Genesis 15:6)

“Israel witnessed the great act that the Lord had performed against the Egyptians, and the people venerated the Lord; they put their faith in the Lord and in Moses his servant.” (Exodus 14:31)

The root word involved here is the Hebrew **‘āman**. This word conveys firmness, reliability or stability. When it takes the verb form, it means to be certain or sure. The “great act” referred to in Exodus is the passage through the Red Sea. Israel’s faith is in a real God and in the reality of what he has done. This is a God who can be relied upon, whom they can be sure about.

Abram’s faith is in the words spoken to him by God. God promises that he and his wife Sarah will have a child and so Abram’s descendants will be as numerous as the stars. Abram, our Father in Faith, puts his trust in the God who speaks to him. This is not the product of his imagination. God speaks directly to him. Abram puts his faith in the reality and the reliability of the God who stands behind these words. The “great act” will eventually follow when Sarah gives birth to Isaac, whose descendants will become a nation.

There is nothing over-subjective or introspective about early Hebrew faith. It is a response to word and events outside self: words that come from God Himself, events willed and enacted by God. The modern maxim, “Have faith in yourself!” would be meaningless to ancient Hebrew culture and religion.

That said, **‘āman** has a passive or reflexive form (the so-called “niphāl” form) and so “to trust” becomes “to be trustworthy”, “to believe” “becomes “faithful”. (Sorry for being so pedantic!) **‘āman-niphāl** can be applied to both God and man. God’s faithfulness should be put in the context of the great underlying fact of his relationship with Israel: THE COVENANT. God has chosen Israel as his own and no matter how close or how removed from him his people are, in good times and bad, he will be faithful to them.

“Know then that the Lord your God is God indeed, the faithful God who is true to his covenant and his graciousness for a thousand generations towards those who love him and keep his commandments..” (Deuteronomy 7:9)

Finally, all your life you have been saying a word directly derived from the Hebrew **‘āman**. It’s “Amen”! What meaning would you now give it?



YEAR OF FAITH 2012
2013