

# Sixth Sunday of Easter

21<sup>st</sup> May 2017

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



**"I will not leave you orphans."**

## Noticeboard

<u>Sunday Masses:</u>	Vigil Mass, Saturday 6 p.m. Sunday Morning Mass 10.30 a.m.
<u>Weekday Masses:</u>	Monday, 12 Noon ( <i>Requiem Mass of Margaret Meek</i> ) Tuesday and Wednesday, 10.15 a.m. ASCENSION THURSDAY 10.15 A.M. 1.15 P.M. 7 P.M. Friday and Saturday, 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 5.45 p.m.
<u>May Devotions</u>	Wednesday, 7 p.m. ( <i>Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, 6.30 to 7 p.m.</i> )

*Friday is the Memorial of St. Philip Neri.*

Fr Wynne's retirement after many years of pastoral care and devoted priesthood will take place very soon. St. Mary's is his home parish, and it is appropriate that we have a collection for him. There will be collection baskets at the back of the church *next Sunday* for those who would like to donate in gratitude for all that he gave of himself for others. If you would like to donate by cheque, please make it out to "St. Mary's, Fort William". The sum collected will be donated through the parish account.

We pray for our Faithful Departed. We remember especially **Margaret Meek** who has died peacefully in the Belford Hospital. Margaret's life was dedicated to her family. Hers was a warm and gentle strength that was blessing for them all. Fr. MacKinnon remembers her kind welcome, the cup of tea, and the times he spent in the back garden! We extend our sincere sympathy and prayer to Caroline, Linda, Susan; the grandchildren and great grandchildren, and all the family. May the Lord be close to them all. We remember also those whose anniversaries are about this time: **Ann MacDonell, Bill Smillie, Mairi Girvan, Duncan MacDonald, John Archie Gillies, Roddy Wright, Mary MacNeil, Angus MacAlister, Jock MacDonald, Gregory McKee, Bella MacKinnon, Stephen Archibald, Doris Borill, Laurence Childs, Neil MacKinnon, Ellen Thompson and Thomas Grant.** May they, and all our loved ones, rest in the peace of the crucified and risen Lord.

Please remember that the **Solemnity of the Ascension** remains a Holiday of Obligation. We cannot be casual about such days. In a very serious way, they call upon our faithfulness to Christ and the Holy Eucharist.

Please remember in your personal prayers the **First Communicants** who have recently made their First Confessions. They will make their First Holy Communion in just two weeks' time, on the 4<sup>th</sup> June, Pentecost Sunday. May God bless them and all who have prepared them for this day.

Please note and read seriously the letter from the **Bishops of Scotland** on the other side of this bulletin, regarding the forthcoming General Election. There are good and worthy people in most political parties. The promises made are sincere, but national governments have to deal with globalisation and elements beyond their control. We live in difficult times. All that gave us security in the past seems to be undergoing a radical change. Some would call this disintegration, others readjustment. At all times, good or bad, Christ remains our King, and his Kingdom the centre of our lives. No political leader can replace him: no political manifesto take the place of his Sermon on the Mount and his revelation of himself as Son of God and crucified and risen Saviour. We remember his command to us on Ascension Day, that we take his Gospel to all the nations, including our own. Surely, the energy of our souls should be in this, above all else.

## THE GENERAL ELECTION: A LETTER FROM THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF SCOTLAND

This General Election presents us with an opportunity to reflect on Catholic social teaching. As Christians, we have a civic and moral duty to engage with our democracy. As Catholics, we believe that the primary goal of society should be the common good; that is the good of all people and of the whole person. Indeed, the common good is the very reason political authority exists. This election provides an opportunity to reflect on the beauty and goodness of Church teaching and to keep that teaching at the forefront of our minds as we engage with candidates across all parties. During elections, a range of issues compete for your attention; we highlight some of them here in the hope that you will reflect on them and raise them with your candidates.

### **Human Life**

Human life at every stage of development is precious and must be protected. Any laws which permit the wilful ending of life must always be rejected as reprehensible and unjust. We must create a culture of life where the most vulnerable are valued and their dignity respected. The undeniable value of human life, created in the image and likeness of God, is fundamental to the Catholic faith. We should remind our politicians that abortion, assisted suicide and euthanasia are always morally unacceptable.

### **Marriage and the Family**

Society relies on the building block of the family to exist. The love of man and woman in marriage and their openness to new life is the very basic cell upon which society is built. The well-being of society depends on the flourishing and health of family life and those in authority should respond to this with policies that create economic and other advantages for families with children.

### **Poverty**

Sadly, poverty continues to be a scourge for many at home and abroad. Too many people still struggle to make ends meet. This sad reality cannot and should not endure in our country in the twenty-first century. Our concerns should also extend to providing international assistance, while ensuring that aid is not used to support immoral practices such as those which compromise the basic right to life.

### **Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Immigration**

The United Kingdom should be a place where the most vulnerable are welcomed and given the resources necessary to rebuild their lives. At the same time, we should provide for those people living in and around conflict zones, and commit to working towards the peaceful resolution of conflict.

### **Living in Europe**

There are millions of EU citizens living in the UK and millions of UK citizens living across the EU. Mindful of the uncertainty affecting them, candidates should commit to working towards delivering stability and security for them in future. Our politicians should forge and renew international partnerships and establish rights for those who wish to work in the UK, in a spirit of cooperation and friendship.

### **Freedom of Religion and Conscience**

Millions of people worldwide are persecuted for their beliefs. People of faith, including Christians, should be able to freely practise their faith and bear witness to it in their lives, without fear of prejudice, intolerance, abuse or violence. Candidates should be committed to the right of people not to be forced to act against their conscience.

### **Nuclear Weapons and the Arms Trade**

The use of any weapon that causes more than individual and proportionate harm to civilians is immoral and, thus, rejected by the Church. The use of weapons of mass destruction is a serious crime against God and against humanity. While states are entitled to possess the means required for legitimate defence, this must not become an excuse for an excessive accumulation of weaponry which becomes a considerable threat to stability and freedom.

### **Respectful Politics**

Often, politicians are tempted to score points or resort to insults. We need politicians who are willing to change this and to take politics in a new direction, where dialogue is respectful, and where different points of view, including those of a religious nature, are tolerated.

As we cast our votes this election, let us bear in mind the words of Pope Francis when he said, "The greatness of any nation is revealed in its effective care of society's most vulnerable members." Our nation, our Parliament, and our Government will be judged on how it treats its poorest and most vulnerable citizens.

Yours devotedly in Christ,

- + *Philip Tartaglia, President, Archbishop of Glasgow*
- + *Leo Cushley, Archbishop of St. Andrews and Edinburgh*
- + *Joseph Toal, Vice-President, Bishop of Motherwell*
- + *Hugh Gilbert, Episcopal Secretary, Bishop of Aberdeen*
- + *Stephen Robson, Bishop of Dunkeld*
- + *John Keenan, Bishop of Paisley*
- + *William Nolan, Bishop of Galloway*
- + *Brian McGee, Bishop of Argyll and the Isles*