

## TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

14<sup>th</sup> October 2012

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

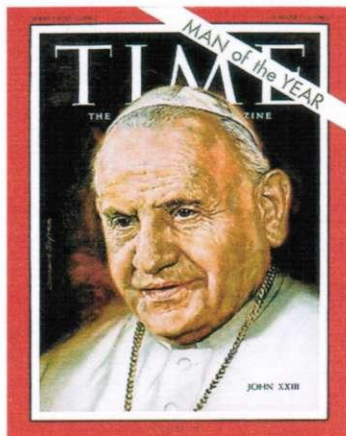
[www.stmarysfortwilliam.org](http://www.stmarysfortwilliam.org)

### Noticeboard



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

*Monday is the Memorial of St. Teresa of Avila; Wednesday, the Memorial of St. Ignatius of Antioch; Thursday, the Feast of St. Luke; Friday, the Memorial of St. John de Brébeuf and Companions, the missionary martyrs of Canada.*



**The Year of Faith** began on Thursday, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council. A special Mass was celebrated in Oban. Perhaps we should remember the Pope who summoned the Council, John XXIII. In twenty centuries there had only been twenty of such gatherings. Normally, they had been called in times of crisis and to combat heresies. Pope John saw things differently. While remaining true to the essence of Catholic faith and tradition, he felt the need for *aggiornamento*, an Italian word he used meaning "to bring up to date," "to renew," "to revitalize." He also used the homely image of "opening the windows to bring some fresh air into the Church." Describing the Council as a "new Pentecost", he stressed the pastoral, not the doctrinal, nature of the Church. In his opening address he called upon the Council Fathers "to use the medicine of mercy rather than the weapons of severity" in the documents they would produce. This remarkable man – so saintly and so warmly human and humorous, too – did not live to see the end of the Council. Pope Paul VI would continue what he began. Our debt to both Popes is incalculable.

We pray for our Faithful Departed, especially those whose anniversaries are about this time: **Mona McGovern, Alastair Weir, Hamish Mathieson, Ellen McGinley, Katie MacLean, Robert Francis Boyd, James MacKintosh, Robert Brown, Connie Swift, Mary MacNeil and John MacLeod.** *Requiescant in pace.*

We urge you to fill in the new **Anniversary Book** in the next few weeks. There are different good reasons for this. At present Fr. MacKinnon is using the old anniversary book *and* the new. This can lead to some mistakes, which he deeply regrets. Usually, the bulletin is completed and printed on Saturday afternoons, and time can indeed be pressing. That wise Latin adage, *Festina lente* ("Hasten slowly!") is not always possible!

**Our sincere thanks** to those who have volunteered to clean the church in the coming months.

Our warmest congratulations to **Thomas Wynne** whom Bishop Toal installed as one of the Church's official Lectors at Thursday's Mass in Oban. This is a milestone in Thomas's journey towards the Permanent Diaconate. We know that he has your support and your prayers.



Next Sunday is Mission Sunday, and we are all called to support our missionaries in our prayers and our donations. Those who wish to renew their membership of *Missio-Scotland* are invited to collect a form at the back of the church. And Gift Aid envelopes are also at hand.



Our Year of Faith articles continue with the second on *Faith in the Old Testament*, found on the back of this bulletin. We now move from the times of Abraham and Moses to the Book of Isaiah, one of the greatest of the prophets.



## Women of the Bible DEBORAH

The Book of Judges in the Old Testament covers the period between the Hebrew entry into the Promised Land and the foundation of the Kingdom of Israel. It was not an easy time as God's people settled throughout ancient Palestine. Inevitably they would encounter or make enemies. The best-known of these were, of course, the Philistines. (From them comes the name "Palestine").

Earlier than this there was opposition from the native Canaanites. Deborah belongs to that period. She is the only woman numbered among the so-called "Judges". These were leaders of God's people, especially in time of conflict or danger. Some were also honoured as arbitrators whose decisions had great authority. In a way, they were rather like the old Highland chieftains: leaders in war, but also the judicial authority for the clan.



This rather dramatic picture of Deborah was painted over a century ago. She certainly does not look like a woman you would argue with. The palm tree behind her is no accident, for it was under such a tree that she sat when the people came to her for her advice or decisions.

When the Canaanites under King Jabin and King Sisera attacked the Israelites, the people came to Deborah. She commanded Barak, another "Judge" or leader, to gather an army of 10,000 men. Barak refused to advance against the enemy unless Deborah went with him. This she did. She gave the men a courage that ensured victory. In the Book of Judges, chapter 5, you will find the Song of Deborah, her celebration of victory, sung with Barak.

This song is probably the oldest extant piece of Hebrew literature. Its attribution to Deborah ensured her place among the great historical figures of her people.

The name "Deborah" comes from the Hebrew word for a bee. What significance can we attach to that? Let's just say that, thanks to her, the Israelites enjoyed the sweet taste of victory and the Canaanites certainly were exposed to her sting! She remains one of the most remarkable women of the Old Testament. And there are more!



## Faith in the Old Testament

*"If you do not stand by me, you will not stand at all."*  
(Isaiah 7:9)

These words are addressed through the prophet Isaiah to King Ahaz of the little Kingdom of Judah. It is not easy to translate the word play of the original Hebrew. Essentially it means that one can only be firm by accepting that God is firm. Faced with Assyria, the superpower of its day, Ahaz is tempted to join a coalition of neighbouring kingdoms. What Isaiah is saying to him is this: if you join with other kings against Assyria you are effectively not trusting God. Better to put your faith in his power and saving will than in the shifting sands of human and material resources. God alone will give security to his people.

Later in the Book of Isaiah another of its authors gives us these verses:

*"You yourselves are my witnesses – it is the Lord who speaks – my servants whom I have chosen, that men who know and believe me and understand that it is I. No god was formed before me, nor will be after me. I, I am the Lord, there is no other saviour but me."* (Isaiah 43:10-11)

We are told several things here. First, faith and the knowledge of God are inseparable: for Israel, knowing, experiencing God was an integral part of faith. And a new dimension of faith is beginning to appear. God's people are called to WITNESS to the truth of the one, true God. Witness is a saving message for others. Through Israel's faithfulness, the pagans will learn about the true and eternal God. We are gradually moving from the tribal God of ancient Israel to a God who must be known beyond the boundaries of former times, a God for all peoples.



*This illustration shows King Ahaz at his very worst, as he welcomes a pagan idol into his palace. He may not have gone quite that far, but he certainly did indulge in what is called syncretism: combining elements of pagan worship with the Jewish religion. He also tolerated pagan shrines outside the city. Isaiah's easy access to the King could be evidence that he was related to the royal family. This in no way affected the prophet's stern warnings to Ahaz. However, one meeting did give us the beautiful prophecy about Emmanuel. (Isaiah 7:14) The chroniclers of Ancient Israel were harsh in their judgement of this unfortunate King. From the religious and political points of view, he was one of the worst of the Jewish monarchs. On his death, he was not buried alongside the other kings. His son, King Hezekiah, did much to restore the purity of Jewish faith and worship.*