

TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

21st October 2012

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

www.stmarysfortwilliam.org



“For the Son of Man himself did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

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.)

There are no Feasts or Memorials this week.



This is **Mission Sunday**. Our parish-community has a long and honourable tradition of generous support for the Church's missions. We are sure that this will be the case this year as in so many previous years. *Missio*-Scotland members are invited to renew their membership.

Please remember our **October Devotions** on Wednesday and the half-hour before the Blessed Sacrament beforehand.

We pray for our Faithful Departed, especially those whose anniversaries are about this time: **Mary MacIntyre, Alistair MacKellaig, Isabel MacKellaig, Robert Brown, Ewen MacLennan, Jim McLaughlin, Kathleen Timbrell, Simon MacKinnon, Kenny Cairns, Ray Dryden, Angus Campbell, Sally MacPherson and George MacFarlane (Senior)**. May their souls and the souls of all the Faithful Departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

Would you like to have a **Crib in your home**? If so, you can order one of the two displayed on the sheet at the back of the church. Please do so as soon as possible, as CBC's stock is quickly reduced in the months before Christmas. Advent calendars, Christmas cards and 2013 calendars, as well as Christmas candles have been ordered.

Mary's Meals have written to thank you for your very generous support of their good work. On the 29/30 September, you contributed 128 bags and £697.63. Well done, St. Mary's!

Holy Communion will be taken to the housebound next week, from Monday, 29th to Wednesday, 31st October..

Please remember to put the names of your loved ones in the new **Anniversary Book!**



There are some rather lovely special **Eucharistic Prayers** in the new Missal. We will use them more often in this Year of Faith. Our series on Faith in the Old Testament continues overleaf. This week we look all too briefly at the psalms, primarily as the songs of a *community* of faith.



"I have the right of education, I have the right to sing. I have the right to talk. I have the right to go to market. I have the right to speak up."
(Malala Yousafzai, 2011)

This 14-year old Muslim girl from North West Pakistan is now known all over the world. Her name is Malala Yousafzai. The daughter of a teacher who runs a school for girls, she defended her right to education and a normal life, this in the shadow of the Taliban's power in her region. For this the fundamentalists sent their assassins. Malala was shot in the head in front of her terrified school friends. Surgery in a local military hospital saved her life. Now she has been transferred to Britain for further treatment. There is real hope of a good recovery. Millions of people, of every faith, are praying for her and her family. But she would ask us to think of the children she represents. Perhaps *one third* of the girls on this planet are denied a basic education. Some because of the situation in areas controlled by the Taliban and their like; others because of cultures that see women as inferior or remove them from school to be girl-brides; or because conflict has destroyed schools; or because child labour is the only answer to extreme poverty; or because tens of thousands are trapped in the hopelessness of refugees camps. We take so much for granted in our country. Malala teaches us otherwise.

Women of the Bible HANNAH

Who could not be moved by the first chapter of the First Book of Samuel in the Old Testament? It tells us of Hannah, one of the most admirable and loveable women in all of scripture. If her story were to have its *Dramatis Personae*, the list would be as follows:

- Elkanah** Hannah's husband. He loved her dearly, although she was unable to have children, a social stigma in old Hebrew culture.
- Penninah** Elkanah's other wife (polygamy was common at that time). She had given him children, but was jealous of his special affection for Hannah. She often taunted Hannah, reducing her to tears. Not a nice lady! One wonders how Elkanah himself dealt with her waspish tongue.
- Eli** The priest of the Temple of the Lord at Shiloh. By now old and pretty worn out. His two sons are out and out rascals. Essentially a good man.
- Hannah** Her name is thought to mean, "God is gracious". It is the source of such names as Ann, Anne, and Anna.

Despite her husband's special love for her, a love that in no way blames her for bearing no children, Hannah is deeply distressed at her apparent infertility. Penninah's sneering is wearing her down. At the Temple of Shiloh she prays for a child. Eli is seated on his chair outside the Temple. He and Hannah do not get off to a great start. He thinks that she is drunk! But on hearing why she is praying with such emotion, he says these beautiful and prophetic words:

"Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him." (1 Samuel 1:17)

Hannah does indeed conceive and give birth to a baby boy to whom is given the name Samuel. Her Song of Thanksgiving (1 Samuel 2:1-10) will be echoed in Our Lady's *Magnificat*. In her prayer for a child she had promised God that the one born to her would be dedicated to His service in the Temple at Shiloh. She carries out that extraordinary promise. Later, she and Elkanah would have more children together. Samuel would grow up to be a great leader and prophet in Israel. He would anoint both Saul and David.

The story of Hannah gives us much to reflect upon. She reminds us of the power of the prayer that comes from the broken heart. Her dedication of Samuel must be one of the most unselfish acts of the Old Testament. Could she not be a patron for the mothers of clergy and religious? Finally, Elkanah's tenderness for her reminds us that married love is not only to do with procreation.



Faith in the Old Testament THE PSALMS: SONGS OF FAITH

There are 150 psalms. The whole spectrum of the human condition is there, as is every aspect of man's relationship with God. There is the tenderness of Psalm 23 (*The Lord is my shepherd*) and the repentance of Psalm 51 (*Have mercy on me, O God*). There are psalms that rejoice in creation; others that call upon God in times of danger. The ancient theme of 'āman, of firmness, reliability or stability is expressed, of course, and that poetically. For example:

"Be a sheltering rock for me, a walled fortress to save me! For you are my rock, my fortress..." (Psalm 31:2)

This week, let us focus on one set of psalms, the so-called "*Songs of Ascent(s)*", that is, Psalms 120 to 134. These were sung by the Israelites as they went up together to Jerusalem to celebrate the great festivals. Two of them we know well: Psalm 130 (*Out of the depths I cry unto thee, O Lord*) and Psalm 122 (*I rejoiced when I heard them say, 'Let us go to God's house.'*)

The first is, of course, one of our traditional prayers at the time of death. The second is often said at the Reception of the Body on the night before a funeral and in some parishes as an entry song for the Mass. And there is a third that we say during Night Prayer at the Altar of Repose on Holy Thursday. It is psalm 133. It is short and beautiful, and would make a suitable night prayer for each of us:

*O come, bless the Lord,
all you who serve the Lord,
who stand in the house of the Lord,
in the courts of the house of our God.*

*Lift up your hands to the holy place
and bless the Lord through the night.
May the Lord bless you from Zion,
he who made both heaven and earth.*

The Israelites sang these psalms as fellow pilgrims. Faith was not just an individual matter. It had to be part of the faith of a community, a fellowship that must *SING* to its God. There is a message there for us: personal faith is best fulfilled when it seeks and finds a community of faith that gathers to worship in the sacred place. And what psalm would have been sung when the Temple was reached? It could only be the 100th Psalm, the one you know so well as the hymn, "*All people that on earth do dwell.*"

Potpourri

Q. What do you call Santa's helpers? A. Subordinate Clauses!

Q. Why are there so many Smiths in the phone book?
A. They all have phones!

TOMORROW: A mystical land where 99% of all human productivity, motivation and achievements are stored.

SHOPPING LIST: What you spend half an hour writing, then forget to take with you to the shop.

MIGIE: A Scottish insect that makes you like flies better.

Q. What's black and white and eats like a horse? A. A zebra!

Q. What's pink and fluffy? A. Pink fluff!