

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

3rd December 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

www.stmarysfortwilliam.org



Noticeboard

Sunday Masses

Vigil Mass, Saturday, 6 p.m.

Sunday, 10.30 a.m.

Weekday Masses

Monday, 5 p.m.

Tuesday to Thursday, 10.15 a.m.

Friday, Funeral Mass at 12 noon

Mass of the Immaculate Conception at

6 p.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday

- 9.45 to 10 a.m.

- 4 to 4.30 p.m.

- 5.30 to 5.45 p.m.

Thursday is the Memorial of St. Ambrose; Friday, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

There is an ecumenical **Advent Service** at the Duncansburgh MacIntosh Church at 6.30 p.m. this Sunday evening. Do come along!

We pray for our Faithful Departed. We remember especially **Marjory Kennedy** who has died in the Belford Hospital. We give thanks for Marjory's faithfulness and gentle goodness. She will be missed by all of us. We offer our sincere sympathy and prayer to Caroline, Michael, David and all the family. Marjory's Funeral Mass will be on Friday at 12 noon. May she now rest in the peace of her beloved Saviour. We pray for those whose anniversaries are about this time: **Father Roddy MacDonald, Allan MacLean, Thomas MacPherson, Angus MacDonald, Margaret Barron, Penny Kennedy, Alistair Semple, Angus MacDonald, Lachlan Wynne, Arthur McGinlay, Margaret MacDonald, Margaret B. MacDonald, Marion Wynne, Rose McTaggart, Roderick Gemmel, Agnes Gemmel, Mary MacKellaig, and John MacDonald.** May they all rest in peace. And we remember **Elizabeth Gudelis** whose funeral took place earlier this week. Hers was a warm and welcoming heart. She was a blessing for the Belford Hospital. We extend our sympathy to her husband and all her loved ones.

Workbooks for First Confession and First Holy Communion are available for collection at the front of the church. There should be enough for each child.

The Blessing of the Crib and the Children will take place on the *Third Sunday* of Advent, after Mass on the 17th December.

Friday is the **patronal feast** of the parish, hence the extra Mass at 6 p.m. It will be offered for the intentions of all our parishioners.

Father Stanislaw will be our visiting pre-Christmas confessor, for Polish and other parishioners. He will be here on the 20th December, from 7 to 8 p.m.

Our thanks to all those who cleaned the church so thoroughly on Thursday!

Fire of Advent

Edward Hays, *A Pilgrim's Almanac*, p. 187

"Advent, like its cousin Lent, is a season for prayer and reformation of our hearts. Since it comes at winter time, fire is a fitting sign to help us celebrate Advent...If Christ is to come more fully into our lives this Christmas, if God is to become really incarnate for us, then fire will have to be present in our prayer. Our worship and devotion will have to stoke the kind of fire in our souls that can truly change our hearts. Ours is a great responsibility not to waste this Advent time."

An Advent Examination

Edward Hays, *A Pilgrim's Almanac*, p. 196

"Advent is the perfect time to clear and prepare the Way. Advent is a winter training camp for those who desire peace. By reflection and prayer, by reading and meditation, we can make our hearts a place where a blessing of peace would desire to abide and where the birth of the Prince of Peace might take place."

"Daily we can make an Advent examination. Are there any feelings of discrimination toward race, sex, or religion? Is there a lingering resentment, an unforgiven injury living in our hearts? Do we look down upon others of lesser social standing or educational achievement? Are we generous with the gifts that have been given to us, seeing ourselves as their stewards and not their owners? Are we reverent of others, their ideas and needs, and of creation? These and other questions become Advent lights by which we may search the deep, dark corners of our hearts."

Meanings of Christmas

Fr. Andrew Greeley, *Woman's Day*, 12-22-81

"It might be easy to run away to a monastery, away from the commercialization, the hectic hustle, the demanding family responsibilities of Christmas-time. Then we would have a holy Christmas. But we would forget the lesson of the Incarnation, of the enfleshing of God—the lesson that we who are followers of Jesus do not run from the secular; rather we try to transform it. It is our mission to make holy the secular aspects of Christmas just as the early Christians baptized the Christmas tree. And we do this by being holy people—kind, patient, generous, loving, laughing people—no matter how maddening is the Christmas rush..."

The Christmas Woman

William Freburger, "Making Christmas a Saving Event," *Catholic Update*, 12-85

"Luke's Gospel account of the Christmas event is full of activity...And yet, in the middle of the frenetic action, here is this woman wrapped in mystical silence...She demonstrates the necessity of a quiet place within ourselves at Christmastime—that place where we are most ourselves in relation to God.

"It is a place of silence, not because it is untouched by all the activity of our lives, but because it is capable of wonder. Every prayer begins with silent wonder before it turns to words. Our first response to God is dumbstruck awe at who he is and what he has done for us."

"Into this world, this demented inn
in which there is absolutely no room for him at all,
Christ comes uninvited."

- *Thomas Merton*

Advent: the time to listen for footsteps - you can't hear footsteps when you're running yourself."

- *Bill McKibben*

"This Advent we look to the Wise Men to teach us where to focus our attention. We set our sights on things above, where God is. We draw closer to Jesus. When our Advent journey ends, and we reach the place where Jesus resides in Bethlehem, may we, like the Wise Men, fall on our knees and adore him as our true and only King." - *Mark Zimmermann*