

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

(Good Shepherd Sunday)

22nd April 2018

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



Noticeboard

Sunday Masses

First Mass of Sunday (Vigil) Saturday, 6 p.m.
Sunday Morning Mass 10.30 a.m.

Weekday Masses

Monday, Mass at 5 p.m.
Tuesday and Wednesday, Mass at 10.15 a.m.
Thursday, Mass at 10 a.m. (*Requiem Mass for Mary MacDougall RIP*)
Friday and Saturday, Mass at 10.15 a.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation:

Saturday:
9.45 to 10 a.m.
4 to 4.30 p.m.
5.30 to 5.45 p.m.

Wednesday is the Feast of St. Mark

This Good Shepherd Sunday is the **World Day of Prayer for Vocations**. Can there be vocations in our time if we do not pray for them as the Lord commanded? There is an important Pastoral Letter from Bishop McGee on the other side of this bulletin concerning vocations in our Diocese. Please read it carefully. Next Sunday, there will be a special collection for the seminarians of the Diocese. Please be as generous as always.

Next Sunday, the Bishop will be with us for the **Confirmation of ten of the children** of the parish. Please keep these children in your prayers in the coming week.

We pray for our Faithful Departed. We remember especially **Mary MacDougall**, whose faith, loyalty and devotion was so much part of our parish life for so many years. Her devotion to our Blessed Lady was very special. May Our Lady and all the saints now welcome her home. We extend our sincere sympathy and prayer to her sister Anne and all of Mary's loved ones and dearest friends. There will be a Requiem Mass on Thursday at 10 a.m., after which Mary will be taken to Barra for a Funeral Mass in Northbay. We pray also for those whose anniversaries are about this time: **Sister Mary Harrison, Billy Corrigan, Ronnie Gilles, Clement Kirby, Jessie Matheson and Roddie MacDonald**. May they all rest in the peace of the Risen Lord.

Those who wish to take part in the **Rosary of the Coast** next Sunday, are invited to come to the Lady Chapel at 2.45 p.m. At 2.50 p.m. there will be the invocation of the Holy Spirit and prayers for protection, as well as prayers of reparation for the evil of abortion. Scripture readings follow, then the Rosary at 3 p.m., concluding with a Litany for Scotland.

Many of you will remember **Martin Aelred** and his beautiful voice resounding through St. Mary's in previous years. He will be back among us once again on the 6th of May, at 2 p.m., performing the arias of Italy and the Neapolitan Coast. Entrance is free. There will be the opportunity for donations to charity. Make a note in your diary!

On Wednesday, at 11.30 a.m. there was a lovely **French Mass** in St. Mary's, as a young priest and fifty people from the Diocese of Auxerre in France gathered in celebration. The singing was wonderful, and one realized once again how beautiful the French language can be.

DIOCESE OF ARGYLL AND THE ISLES
PASTORAL LETTER TO BE READ OR DISTRIBUTED IN ALL PARISHES
ON THE WEEKEND OF 21ST/22ND APRIL 2018

I am spending ten days in the Western Isles as I confirm children from all eight parishes in the deanery. Therefore, I am writing this letter to you in St Peter's Church, Daliburgh which, as some of you will know, is situated on a croft and is completely surrounded by crofts. The lambing season is in full swing!

Although the birth of the new lambs brings joy and satisfaction to the owners it also demands hard work. The shepherd has to tend his flock in all kinds of weather and at all times of night and day, especially for the weak ones. Even the children are describing to me how they feed the 'pet lambs', those which are struggling on their own. Similar scenes are, of course, being repeated across much of our diocese.

Jesus was a great teacher who often used images that people were already familiar with. This is why Jesus described himself as the Good Shepherd. The people were familiar with what qualities a shepherd should have and Jesus revealed that he alone was perfect in these qualities. Far from being a hireling, Jesus loved us enough to die for us and now he is risen.

After his Ascension, Jesus sent out the apostles to continue his ministry. This is what the Church exists for: to evangelise, to spread the Good News. It is the privilege and duty of every single baptised person to imitate Jesus and be a 'shepherd': to bring people to God. Most of you will do this within your families, in your work places and where you socialise – and I thank you for doing so. However, it is also true that Jesus also calls a smaller number of people to witness to Him as priests, deacons and as religious brothers and sisters.

Priests are called to be shepherds in a unique way. As I travel around the diocese you often speak so highly to me about your priests. It pleases me that you appreciate that your priest has offered his life to God, that he celebrates the Sacraments for you and provides you with spiritual and pastoral care. You recognise that your priest is a shepherd for you. I too, as bishop of Argyll and the Isles, publicly recognise the great efforts of our priests and thank them. I also thank our deacons and sisters for enriching our diocese by their generous witness to Christ.

Brothers and sisters,

I have three favours to ask of you: Firstly, please pray for more priests – we need them. At present we have seventeen priests to cover the twenty five parishes of our diocese. However, God is good and so we have great news. This June I will ordain Rev Emmanuel Alagbaoso to the priesthood in our Cathedral while Ronald Campbell will be ordained as a deacon in Rome. Please pray that both of these young men will be shepherds after the heart of Jesus. Meanwhile, in September we will also have a new seminarian. Please pray for our seminarians and also create an atmosphere within your families and parishes that encourages our young men to hear God's voice. If any man feels the call to priesthood please speak with a local priest or our Vocations Director, Fr Michael Hutson.

Secondly, next weekend we will have a special collection to help pay for training priests for the diocese. Please be generous. Training priests is not cheap – the diocese has to pay fees of approximately £27,000 for each student each year. Of course, this is money well spent – we need new and well prepared priests - and I am delighted that we are in the position of having seminarians but we still have to pay for their training.

Thirdly, please pray for and support the priests which we already have. Like us all, please understand that priests are only human. Pray that they will be shepherds who are increasingly conformed to Jesus, that they will be self-less, willing to give their whole lives to God, who are intimate with God in prayer and so speak and act in the manner of Christ. Please pray also for me, that with God's grace, I will always strive to be a worthy Shepherd to you.

With every blessing,
+ Brian McGee
Bishop of Argyll and the Isles