

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

1st July 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

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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.
Other Weekdays, 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.

Tuesday if the Feast of the Apostle St. Thomas; Friday is the Optional Memorial of St. Maria Goretti.

Please remember that we have the annual "Peter's Pence" collection today, in support of Pope Francis. We know that you will be as generous as always.

We pray for our Faithful Departed, especially those whose anniversaries are about this time: **Christina MacDonald, Ellen Kennedy; Angus Kennedy, Daniel Dougan, Margaret MacMaster, Charles McKeown, Louis Boni, John O'Hare, Morag Donoghue, Alexander MacDonald, Michael Deeny, Alexander MacDonald, Gladys White, Billy MacLeod, Christine Smith and Michael Morrison.** May they all rest in peace.

Next week, Deacon Thomas will speak at both Masses about the work of the **Apostolate of the Sea**. There will be a basket at the back of the church for those who would like to give support.

Copies of the minutes of the meeting with the Bishop in Caol last Saturday are available at the back of the church. Please take one home. We thank those who attended on behalf of the parish.



The only known photograph of Maria Goretti, taken about 1902

Saint Maria Goretti (October 16, 1890 – July 6, 1902) is an Italian virgin-martyr of the Catholic Church, and one of the youngest canonised saints. She was born to a farming family. Her father died when she was nine, and they had to share a house with another family, the Serenellis. Maria took over household duties while her mother, brothers, and sister worked in the fields. One afternoon, Alessandro, the Serenellis' son, made sexual advances to her. When she refused to submit to him, he stabbed her fourteen times. She was taken to the hospital but she died forgiving him. He was arrested, convicted, and jailed. During imprisonment he repented. After 27 years he was released from prison, and visited Maria's mother to beg forgiveness, which she granted. They both went to Mass and received communion together the following day. He later became a lay brother in a monastery, dying peacefully in 1970. Maria was beatified in 1947, and canonised by Pope Pius XII in 1950. Alessandro was at the canonisation.

Here is part of the homily given by Pope Francis in St. Peter's Basilica on the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul. Please spend some time with it!

It is interesting to see what follows this passage in the Gospel where Peter confesses his faith: "From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised" (Mt 16:21). God's Anointed kept bringing the Father's love and mercy to the very end. This merciful love demands that we too go forth to every corner of life, to reach out to everyone, even though this may cost us our "good name", our comforts, our status... even martyrdom.

Peter reacts to this completely unexpected announcement by saying: "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you" (Mt 16:22). In this way, he immediately becomes a stumbling stone in the Messiah's path. Thinking that he is defending God's rights, Peter, without realizing it, becomes the Lord's enemy; Jesus calls him "Satan". To contemplate Peter's life and his confession of faith also means learning to recognize *the temptations that will accompany the life of every disciple*. Like Peter, we as a Church will always be tempted to hear those "whisperings" of the evil One, which will become a stumbling stone for the mission. I speak of "whispering" because the devil seduces from hiding, lest his intentions be recognized. "He behaves like a hypocrite, wishing to stay hidden and not be discovered" (SAINT IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA, *Spiritual Exercises*, n. 326).

To share in Christ's anointing, on the other hand, means to share in his glory, which is his cross: Father, glorify your Son... "Father, glorify your name" (Jn 12:28). In Jesus, glory and the cross go together; they are inseparable. Once we turn our back on the cross, even though we may attain the heights of glory, we will be fooling ourselves, since it will not be God's glory, but the snare of the enemy.

Often we feel the temptation to be Christians by keeping a prudent distance from the Lord's wounds. Jesus touches human misery and he asks us to join him in touching the suffering flesh of others. To proclaim our faith with our lips and our heart demands that we – like Peter – learn to recognize the "whisperings" of the evil one. It demands learning to discern and recognize those personal and communitarian "pretexts" that keep us far from real human dramas that preserve us from contact with other people's concrete existence and, in the end, from knowing the revolutionary power of God's tender love (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 270).

By not separating his glory from the cross, Jesus wants to liberate his disciples, his Church, from empty forms of triumphalism: forms empty of love, service, compassion, empty of people. He wants to set his Church free from grand illusions that fail to sink their roots in the life of God's faithful people or, still worse, believe that service to the Lord means turning aside from the dusty roads of history. To contemplate and follow Christ requires that we open our hearts to the Father and to all those with whom he has wished to identify (cf. SAINT JOHN PAUL II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 49), in the sure knowledge that he will never abandon his people.

Dear brothers and sisters, millions of people continue to ask the question: "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (Mt 11:3). Let us confess with our lips and heart that Jesus Christ is Lord (cf. *Phil* 2:11). This is the *cantus firmus* that we are called daily to intone. With the simplicity, the certainty and the joy of knowing that "the Church shines not with her own light, but with the light of Christ. Her light is drawn from the Sun of Justice, so that she can exclaim: 'It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me' (Gal 2:20)" (SAINT AMBROSE, *Hexaemeron*, IV, 8, 32).

