

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

10th February 2013

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

Charity No. SC002876



Noticeboard

Sunday Masses: Vigil Mass, Saturday, 6 p.m.
Sunday Morning Mass 10.30 a.m.

Weekday Masses: 10.15 a.m.

Wednesday is Ash Wednesday. Masses will be at 10.15 a.m., 1.15 p.m. and 7 p.m. *Ash Day is a Day of Fast and Abstinence.*
The 10.15 Mass on Thursday will be the Funeral Mass of Liz Jackson RIP

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Saturday : 9.45 to 10 a.m.;
4 to 4.30 p.m.;
5.30 to 5.50 p.m.

Monday is the Optional Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes (We will celebrate this Memorial). Thursday is the Feast of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Co-Patrons of Europe.

We wish you every blessing in the **coming season of Lent!** The ashes we receive on Wednesday are a reminder of our mortality. That realisation makes the gift of life all the more precious. Lent invites us to become all the more alive: it is a spring time of the soul. Self-denial confers freedom; perseverance in prayer opens our heart all the more to God and neighbour; almsgiving is love in action, giving new beginnings and hope to those whose life is blighted by poverty and injustice.

This year's **SCIAF Boxes** are now available for collection at the back of the church. We know that you will be as thoughtfully generous as always.

As this is the Sunday nearest the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, we will, as in previous years, have the **Sacrament of the Sick** after the Vigil Mass and our Sunday Morning Mass. Parishioners who are not taking part are asked to leave the church very quietly out of respect for this simple and beautiful sacrament which gives healing and strength to body, mind and soul.

We pray for our Faithful Departed. We remember especially **Liz Jackson**, whose funeral will take place on Thursday. Liz and her husband Alan were from Yorkshire and came to love Scotland and Lochaber in particular, so much so that they decided to settle here. They married late in life, and we support Alan with a special sympathy and prayer as he carries the cross of sudden bereavement. May Liz now rest in the peace of her Saviour. We pray also for those whose anniversaries are about this time: **Ewen MacDonald, Willie Kennedy, Margaret Barr, Cyril Buchanan, Neil Campbell, Peggy Campbell and Margaret MacDougall.** May their souls and the souls of all the Faithful Departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

Our first **Way of the Cross** will be on Wednesday, 20th February, at 7 p.m. It will be preceded by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, beginning at 6.30 p.m.

Deacon Stanislaw will be spending more time in Ballachulish and Kinlochleven, attending in different ways to the pastoral and spiritual needs of that community, now without a permanent priest. This experience will be part of his formation and should give some reassurance to the local Catholics.

Bishop Toal has had his operation and has an appointment with the surgeon on the 21st February, to see how successful surgery has been. Meanwhile, he is unable to fly and will be absent from the diocese for the time being. Please keep the prayers coming! The Bishop remains in touch through e-mail and Mgr. James MacNeil, the Vicar General, is available if needed.

Please keep a special place in your prayers for the St. Margaret's Children and Family Care Society. The National Secular Society has lodged a complaint with the Scottish Charity Regulator, accusing this Glasgow-based charity of discrimination because of its policy of placing children with couples who have been married for at least two years. The NSS maintains that this violates the rights of same-sex couples. The charity may now lose its charitable status. Will it be forced to compromise or will it follow principle and conscience? For decades, the culture of Britain and Europe has insisted more and more on the rights of the individual, hence the laws regarding equality. This has led to the sort of imbalance that could see the demise of a well-respected and successful adoption agency. The National Secular Society – a group of militant atheists - has an obvious and pitiless agenda, and will use every law passed to try to remove religion from the public forum. If we lose the St. Margaret's Society, they have little to be proud of.

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With Lent drawing near, why not decide on some **spiritual reading** in the coming weeks? There is no shortage of books in the parish library. Best of all are the Gospels. Why not choose one of them, read a little every day, then spend a moment or two in silence, letting God speak to our heart?

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Aid to the Church in Need has written twice in recent weeks, thanking you for your support at Christmas time. Its recent literature reminds us of the close bonds of friendship between the ACN and the Orthodox churches, especially in Russia. It is very moving to read of such contacts. We are familiar with the division between Christians that followed the Reformation in Western Europe. Perhaps we know less about an older division: that between the Christianity of the West, centred on Rome, and that of Eastern Europe, centred on Christian Constantinople (Now Istanbul in Turkey). If a date can be attached to that division it is the 16th July, 1054, when papal legates and the Patriarch of Constantinople excommunicated each other. But the reasons for schism were far older and more complex: for example, the difference in language, in liturgy, in different ways of explaining doctrine, in the tension between papal authority and the Eastern practice of Church governance.

The French and Norman crusaders, along with the Venetians, did not help when they sacked Constantinople in 1204 and imposed Latin power on different parts of the Eastern Empire. There are painful historical memories that have still to be healed. There is also the Orthodox rejection of the Latin Church's addition of "filioque" to the ancient Creed.

In the 10th Century, Christianity was established in Kiev by Prince Vladimir I. He chose not the Roman Rite but that of Constantinople, and so Russia would become part of the Orthodox family of Churches. The Feast of Sts. Cyril and Methodius on Thursday should be for us a day of prayer for continued dialogue, for healing and the sort of friendship fostered by the ACN. These saints are venerated by both East and West as the Apostles of the Slavic peoples.

Potpourri

If we idolize wealth, then we create poverty;
If we idolize success, we create the inadequate;
If we idolize power, we create powerlessness.
And these processes are inevitable. *Thomas Cullinan OSB*

The highest privilege there is, is the privilege of being allowed to share another's pain. You talk about your pleasures to your acquaintances ; you talk about your troubles to your friends
Fr. Andrew SDC

Judgement is whispering into the ear of a merciful and compassionate God the story of my life which I had never been able to tell. *Quoted by Cardinal Basil Hume*

When a man closes his lips, God begins to speak.
Hazrai Inayat Khan

Remember this: All suffering comes to an end. And whatever you suffer authentically, God has suffered it first.
Meister Eckhart

There is nothing quite so exquisite as the shadow of God in the desert. *Fr. Cesar Jerez SJ*

You are indeed charitable when you give, and while giving, turn your face away so that you may not see the shyness of the receiver. *Kahlil Gibran*

Where you find no love, put in love and you will draw out love.
St. John of the Cross

The spiritual life of the Christian Church is not a set of duets: it is a great symphony, in which every person has a part, and no person is independent of the rest. *Evelyn Underhill*

Silence is the language of God; it is also the language of the heart. *Swami Sivananda*

Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is a daily admission of one's weakness. It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart. *Gandhi*

No one ever says "It's only a game!" when their team is winning. *Anon*

Properly trained, a man can be a dog's best friend. *Corey Ford*

If you think dogs can't count, try putting three dog biscuits in your pocket and then giving Fido only two of them.
Phil Pastoret

Thousands of years ago, cats were worshipped as gods. Cats have never forgotten this. *Anon*

When people are free to do as they please, they usually imitate each other. *Eric Hoffer*

Conversation would be vastly improved by the constant use of four simple words: 'I do not know'. *Andre Maurois*