

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

22nd December 2013

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

Charity No. SC002876

www.stmarysfortwilliam.org



The Dream of St. Joseph

Noticeboard

<u>Monday</u>	Funeral Mass at 12 noon (<i>Rose Ann McTaggart RIP</i>) Confessions, 7-8 p.m. (<i>Fr. Wood</i>)
<u>Tuesday</u>	Advent Mass at 10.15 a.m. Confessions, 4 to 5 p.m. THE MASS OF CHRISTMAS NIGHT at 10 p.m. (<i>Short Carol Service at 9.45 p.m.</i>)
<u>Wednesday</u>	THE MASS OF CHRISTMAS MORNING at 10.30 a.m.
<u>Thursday and Friday</u>	Mass at 12 noon
<u>Saturday</u>	Mass at 10.15 a.m.

*Thursday is the Feast of St. Stephen; Friday, the Feast of St. John;
Saturday, the Feast of the Holy Innocents.*

Fr. MacKinnon will be absent on Wednesday night and back in time for the mid-day Mass on Thursday. Please note our schedule for this week, very different from the usual. **The Blessing of the Crib and the Children** will take place after the 10.30 Mass this Sunday. Our thanks to all who gave of their time in setting up the Crib and the Christmas tree!

Please remember that we have a special collection at our Christmas Masses for **SCIAF's work in the Philippines**. Meanwhile, the situation in and around Syria becomes all the more desperate. Various charities are making appeals, and many of you will no doubt respond as individuals and as families.

We pray for our Faithful Departed. We remember those whose anniversaries are about this Christmas time: **Chrissie MacIntyre, Maureen Thompson, Jack Cronin, Mary MacDonald, Thomas MacLean, Nell Holness, Hugh MacNeil, Alex MacDonald, Ritu McLaughlin, Anthony Adams, Angus Ogilvy, Charles McLaughlin, Jan Wegner, Margaret Wardrop and Margaret Pryce (MacFarlane)** We remember also **Janet, daughter of Kenny and Tina Jones**, who has died recently after a brave struggle with cancer. We extend our heartfelt sympathy and prayer to all who are grieved by the passing of one they loved so deeply. May all our Faithful Departed rest in the peace of the Saviour born for them in Bethlehem.

Please note that **Fr. Tony Wood**, the priest in Arisaig, is our visiting confessor on Monday, from 7 to 8 p.m. We thank Fr. Tony for putting time aside for the parish. He can hear confessions in Polish as well as in English. And please note the Christmas Eve confessions on Tuesday, from 4 to 5 p.m.

The CTS edition of Pope Francis's *The Joy of the Gospel* has been ordered and our copies should be here shortly after Christmas. The Diocese has been given the number of orders for John Watt's **history of the Diocese**, and they should be with us fairly soon.



As we prepare for our traditional celebrations, let us remember those who will not be looking forward to this festival. Let us remember too how Jesus identified with the oppressed and the homeless. Let the joy of the festival touch more of the people of our world this year than ever before. May God be glorified and may people of good will once again experience His peace.
(*Denzil John*)

If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it. If He had a wallet, your photo would be in it. He sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning. Whenever you want to talk, He'll listen. He could live anywhere in the universe, and He chose your heart. What about the Christmas gift He sent you in Bethlehem; not to mention that Friday at Calvary?

(*Joe Gatuslao*)

For quite a few years now, our parish has celebrated the Blessing of the Crib and the Children on the Fourth Sunday of Advent. As part of our little service, the children are blessed with olive oil from Bethlehem. The Baby Jesus is not put in the manger until the Mass of Christmas Night. And the only carol sung before Christmas is the children's "Away in a Manger"! Parishioners who have never attended this service may be interested in its blessings and short reflections.

The Blessing of the Crib

Lord God of every nation and people,
from the very beginning of creation
you have shown your love.
When our need of a Saviour was great,
you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary.
To our lives he brings joy and peace,
justice, mercy, and love.

Lord,
bless all who look upon this manger.
May it remind them of the humble birth of Jesus,
and raise their thoughts to him,
who is God-with-us and Saviour of all,
and who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

The Shepherds

In the cold night they have watched over their sheep.
They are the poor of Bethlehem,
unimportant in the eyes of the rich and the powerful.
But it is to them that the angels have come
with the joyful news
that the Saviour has been born.
And now they come to adore the Baby
who one day will be our Shepherd King.

The Ox

The ox, too, rests after his day of work in the fields.
Peacefully he lies,
this strong beast who is the patient servant of man.
He warms the stable in which Christ will be born.



Native American Nativity

The Blessing of the Christmas Tree

Lord our God,
we praise you for the light of creation:
the sun, the moon, and the stars of the night.
We praise you for Jesus Christ, your Son:
he is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace
who fills us with the wonder of your love.

Lord God,
let your blessing come upon us as we illuminate this tree
May the light and cheer it gives
be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts.
May all who delight in this tree
come to the knowledge and the love of you,
the God who is our Creator and Father,
the God who gave us his Beloved Son in Bethlehem.

The Donkey

The humble donkey rests after her long day
carrying the burdens placed upon her by man.
One day, she will carry Jesus
as King into Jerusalem.
For her this will be no burden,
but a joyful task
given to her by God.

St. Joseph

Joseph keeps watch,
his heart filled with protective love.
God has given him this task:
to look after Mother and Child.
And this he will faithfully do for the rest of his days.
May he now pray for us all in heaven.

The Mother

All honour to you, Mary,
Mother of our Lord and Saviour.
May we love you all our days,
and may your prayer and tender love bless us
on our journey through life,
until we are with you in heaven.

"Hail Mary.."



African Nativity