

The Parish of St Mary, Inverness 30
Huntly Street, Inverness, IV3 5PR



A Winter Letter

Dear Friends

23 Jan 18

St Agnes Eve – this was last Saturday, 20 Jan- it was, as in the poem of John Keats,

“St. Agnes' Eve--Ah, bitter chill it was!”

In the poem, lovely and tender, Keats deliberately emphasizes the bitterly cold weather of St. Agnes' Eve in contrast to the delightful warmth of happy love.

Kingussie was bitterly cold on the Saturday, and on the Sunday, yet within the Church there was delightful warmth and happiness, a community of Love at Mass. All over the Highlands congregations, large and small, have been meeting, despite the hard weather, to celebrate the Love Divine which comes to us in the Sacraments.

The Royal priesthood – Our Common Life in the Body of Christ:

The priests who are resident at St Mary's have been involved in the Liturgical round in Inverness, Fortrose, Dingwall, and Brora. Fortunately we have all been moderately well, coughs and splutters apart, and all of which we hope are now behind us.

The privilege of priestly ministry is sustained by the warmth and encouragement of many men, women and children. We who are priests value your many kindnesses, and the support that you give. It is a thing most wonderful when we are all 'singing the Lord's song', thinking and praying with the Church that we may witness to God in Christ.

Seminarrians:

Over the Christmas and New Year period we have all been encouraged by the visits, and the presence of some of our seminarrians.

Dominic has been in residence, as well as leaving us for a few weeks on placement at St Peter's, Aberdeen. He is thriving on his formation period at Oscott Seminary- an attachment to a parish in Birmingham is proving

successful, with opportunities for pastoral work and teaching. He is a familiar face around Inverness-‘my Highland home’. Thanks be to God for him- light a candle!

Malachy has been on a three-week placement with us, and has already been visiting some of your homes, nursing homes, and he has been much involved in our liturgies. You will have already discovered his friendliness, and, today in the Presbytery, we discovered another accomplishment. He is very useful in the kitchen: his chicken Jollof Rice (a great favourite at Nigerian parties) was wonderfully received by us all. You can ‘google’ the recipe!” Pray for him- light a candle!

Lent is approaching: we would encourage you to sign up for the **Faith Café Course** which is provided under the aegis of **The Gabriel Society**. Forms available at the Church, or from the Office.

The course is limited to forty participants (£1 per person to pay for the Course Book).

Every Tuesday from 20 Feb until 27 Mar we meet in The Marian Room at 7.00 pm

“Let it be done unto me according to your word” – how Mary helps us to be filled with God.

Please encourage one another to attend, and support this exercise in prayer and faith formation.

There will be DVD presentations, a course work-book, and refreshments.

The Lent Station Masses: Every Friday of Lent at 7.00 pm

16 Feb : St Mary’s, Inverness

23 Feb : St Mary’s, Nairn

2 Mar : St Aidan’s, Aviemore (with Bishop Hugh)

9 Mar : St Lawrence’s, Dingwall

16 Mar : Christ the King, Brora (with Bishop Hugh)

23 Mar : St Duthac’s, Dornie

Please put these dates in your diaries. Notices will be posted, and arrangements put in place for buses and car-sharing.

The Diocesan Chrism Mass : St Peter's, Buckie :

Thursday 22 March 18 at 6.00 pm

You are encouraged to attend this important Mass, when the clergy renew their commitment to service, and when the Sacred Oils are consecrated by the Bishop.

Again, notices will be posted, and travel arrangements put in place as required.

First Fridays : Night Lights – 7.00 pm until 9.00 pm

The next **Mass for All the Nations is on Fri 2 Feb 18**

This is also **Candlemas: (Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple).**

You are encouraged to come to Mass, and to share in the Candle-lit period of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. This is an opportunity for reflective prayer, holding ourselves, and our concerns before the Lord. We can light candles to express our prayerful dedication of the time. Reflect on the words of the Jesuit poet, **Fr Gerard Manley Hopkins SJ :**

***“Come you indoors, come home; your fading fire
Mend first and vital candle in close heart's vault;
You there are master, do you own desire;”***

So, **‘come home’**, be at Mass on First Fridays with the Night Lights.

The Icon : The Annunciation written by Basia Mindewicz

We are most fortunate that the new Icon of the Annunciation will be ready for mounting within the next few weeks. It is likely that the Icon will be dedicated for our use on the Solemnity of the Annunciation which is deferred this year (25 March is Palm Sunday), and will be celebrated on Monday 9 April 2018. We are proposing that Mass will be at 7.00 pm with a Parish Reception afterwards in the Hall. Fr Tony Nye SJ will be with us at this time.

The Bequest of the late Mrs Mary MacInnes

Many of you will remember Mary MacInnes, who died last year. Her love of St Mary's, and the people here, where she was sustained in her faith was expressed in a generous benefaction in her Will. The parish inherited just

over £14,000. This has been placed in the Endowment Fund, so that we will benefit from the twice yearly disbursement of dividends.

Generosity such as this, and that of the late Dame Pat Smith, has enabled us to complete some necessary repairs, and refurbishment. It is a laudable and much appreciated custom that Catholics should make some provision for the on-going work of the Church. In a separate letter to be circulated in March about the financial situation, details will be available as to how this generous provision might be made in donations or bequests.

Thanks be to God for all our benefactors – light a candle!

The St Mary's Fund-raising Group (SMFRG)

We are indebted to the magnificent contributions to our Parish life made by 'The Brothers', and other members of SMFRG. These Polish men, by organizing social events in the Hall since 26 May 2012, have generated over £11,500. These funds have gone into our parish accounts, paying for repairs, for other charitable purposes, and increasing our funds. We all need to support and appreciate their labours. It's not all hard-work (but it is certainly that), for the music and social side of these events have a benefit beyond compare. These parties enable us all to get to know each other better. The Hogmanay Party resulted in a generous donation to the Church funds of £1000. This will help with our fabric repairs, and work among young people.

Thank you PJ, Mateusz, Leszek and all your collaborators- we are so grateful- Light a candle for them all!

Our separated brothers and sisters- those of our own community who have cut themselves off. Please encourage the lapsed, the aggrieved, the forlorn Catholics to become 'returning Catholics', assured of a warm welcome, and our prayerful support. Where have they gone! We miss them- please encourage them by the integrity of your lives, and the quite perseverance of prayerful faith. Light a candle for them all!

Every Blessing for the Spring and the approach of Lent!

Aye

Fr James