

*St. Mary's, Inverness*

30 Huntly Street, Inverness, IV3 5PR.

Tel: 01463 233519

[www.stmarysinverness.co.uk](http://www.stmarysinverness.co.uk)

Email: [stmarysinverness@btinternet.com](mailto:stmarysinverness@btinternet.com)



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Ave atque Vale,

But rather inversely 'Farewell and Hail'.

We said good-bye, giving thanks to God for the life and achievements of Baxter Murray last Tuesday morning. The Funeral Mass was well attended by parishioners, by choristers and singers from various Inverness Choirs and Opera groups. Our own singers led by Eddie and accompanied on the organ by Gordon Tocher ensured that our late Choirmaster was given a musically appropriate Funeral. The Mass celebrated by Fr Domenico Zanre was a moving celebration of a richly talented life, and a tender commendation to God of Baxter. To Joan, Malcolm, Andrew and Carolyn and all the family we extend our warmest condolences and the assurance of our prayers. May he rest in peace.

On that same Tuesday evening we had the beginning of two days of particular celebration : the Ordination, and the First Mass of Thanksgiving of Fr Dominic Nwaigwe.



Bishop Hugh Gilbert OSB, presided over a very traditional Ordination Mass, with the Diocesan Choir with Liz Meiklejohn its Director adding some swell to our own dedicated choir with Eddie, and Ronald Leith from Aberdeen at the Organ. The Greek and Latin of the Missa de Angelis was haunting in its traditional beauty.



Similarly the monastic chanting of the Litany of the Saints, in Latin, by Fr Benedict Hardy OSB, of Pluscarden Abbey, brought the sanctity of the Communion of Saints very much into our presence.

All so very formal and normal, then there was the African eruption – challenging, arresting, praises to God in the Igbo language led by the Aberdeen African Choir. Soon all the Nigerians in the body of the kirk were swaying and crooning.



At the Offertory procession, there was a swarm of Nigerians, holding aloft of baskets of fruit, gifts for the Bishop and the priests. They made a swaying dance down the aisle, bringing a zest and lively reminder of just how much we owe to the Nigerians in our midst. Not only the talented priests among us, but also those who work in our hospitals in a wide range of

professions. We are truly blessed. It was touching for us all to have a glimpse of the optimism and joy of African worship.

And so, Fr Dominic was duly ordained, vested, anointed and made welcome by all of his brother priests.



Next day we had a little more of the same, a genuine contribution of Fr Dominic's fellow country men and women as we celebrated with him in his first Mass. Afterwards, thanking the Parish for the gifts of a chasuble and Oil Stocks, Fr Dominic was profound and generous in his thanks to everyone at St Mary's for the welcome he has received in the



Highlands. We would reciprocate those feelings: he is at home here, especially when he will return on 30 September to work as an assistant priest [after his celebratory tour of his home parish near Okigwe in Imo State, Nigeria.]



We congratulate him, wish him well and we will continue to pray for him and his family.



Bouquets !!

The celebrations, liturgical, choral and social could never have been the success that they were without the hard work of many. Marvia, and others in the Sacristy, Eddie with the Choir, Rupert on the organ, all our well trained and smart servers, Heather with the Flowers and so much catering and more besides, Evelyn and all who cleaned and prepared the Church, these, with PJ and Carol in the Office bore the brunt of the work. It was back-breaking at times for some of them as occasionally there were slight crises, and so much more the stress. For all of these good people, 'many thanks': we owe you so much. Again, let me express the appreciation of Fr Dominic for all who helped. The priests are also thankful for all the marvellous support that we have been given.

So we move on : I will be back, God willing, to more or less full time duty in mid to late September, but I will be fitting in as much as I am able. It has been good to be back in the midst of things, and my thanks to all of you who are encouraging me in my recovery.

We are to lose Fr Piotr in October when he will take up an appointment as Parish Priest at Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Banff. We will make his last days among us as busy and happy as we can, and at some date yet to be fixed we will be able to take our farewells of this most loyal and hardworking priest who has the respect of the whole parish. I will miss him, his collegial friendliness in the Presbytery and his completely trustworthy discretion. There will not be a direct replacement in Polish ministry, as these duties are being shared by Fr Andrew Harden and Fr Andrew Niski.

I am glad that Fr Balaraj will continue here for some time, as over the next few weeks there will be a need for continuity as others are on holiday, retreat or convalescence. Fr Balaraj's cheerful presence, his thoughtful homilies, and his ready availability for pastoral visiting are all much appreciated by the parishioners and clergy.

So, ave atque vale : hail and farewell,

Every Blessing

Aye

Fr James Bell

