

A very warm welcome to all visitors.

Parish News

Taynuilt Parish Meeting

My thanks to all parishioners who came to last week's meeting. It was very helpful.

Advent – Preparing the Church for Christmas

My thanks, too, to all who have helped to decorate our churches in preparation for the Christmas Season.

Holidays

The School holidays have started and it's that time of year when most people have at least a few days away from work. I do wish you all a very blessed time.

Please do remember all those who have to work over the Christmas period.

Collection

Ballachulish – The collection raised £282.80 of which £106.50 was gift aid + £5.00 from Direct Debits, giving a total of £287.80. We also raised £95.50 from the Quarterly Collection.

Taynuilt – The collection raised £122.50 of which £45.00 was gift aid + £75.00 from Direct Debits, giving a total of £197.50. There was also £29.00 for the building fund. And £5.00 for the Sick & Retired Priests Fund.

Many thanks to you.

Pope Francis

Pope Francis has spoken of the need for the world not to close its eyes or look the other way in the face of the many woes, pain and wounds afflicting mankind but to unite and work to build a peaceful world; saying 'what really counts is love.'

Merry
Christmas

The Visitation, Taynuilt and St Mun's, Ballachulish & The Good Shepherd, Kinlochleven

4th Sunday of Advent (A)
22nd December 2019

Mass times for the coming week

Monday	10.00 a.m.	Ballachulish – Feria by date
Tuesday	10.00 a.m. 12.15 p.m.	Taynuilt – Feria by date Craig Lodge
Christmas Eve	6.30 p.m. 11.30 p.m.	Kinlochleven - Carol Service and Vigil Mass Taynuilt – Carol Service and Midnight Mass
Christmas Day	10.00 a.m. 12.30 p.m.	Ballachulish – Christmas Day Taynuilt – Christmas Day
Thursday	10.00 a.m.	Taynuilt – St Stephen - Feast
Friday	10.00 a.m.	Ballachulish – St John - Feast
Saturday	10.00 a.m.	Taynuilt – Holy Innocents - Feast
	6.00 p.m.	Vigil Mass – Kinlochleven
Sunday	10.00 a.m. 12.30 p.m.	Ballachulish – Holy Family Taynuilt

Confession

Taynuilt – before Mass on Saturday, or Sunday
Ballachulish – 9.30 – 9.50 a.m. on Sundays
and at any other time on request.

Divine Office – Vol 1. As there indicated

Weekday readings: for the 4th Week of Advent and then by date.

Please remember the sick of the parish in your prayers.

We remember all the faithful departed in our prayers. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace.



A dream changed Joseph's life and ours. A mere dream, like what you and I have at night.
How trustworthy could this be?

And yet the safety of Mary and the child Jesus depended on it. In his dream (Gospel), an angel told him that Mary's pregnancy was from the Holy Spirit of God. Mary had accepted readily but without really understanding. This angel of the Lord told him in the dream that he should not be afraid of the pregnancy, even though he was not yet married to this woman.

The message fit right into the design of Joseph's life with God.

Not be afraid? Already everyone could see that Joseph's fiancé was "in a family way." USA culture might applaud this fact, as it does when movie stars have children with whomever they please whenever they please. In Biblical culture marriage was a sacred act [and not too long ago in our own], a participation in God's own fidelity. It seemed that Mary had broken with that fidelity, at least as far as the townspeople could see. The Blessed Mother a public sinner! No wonder Joseph was making arrangements for a "quiet divorce."

So why in the world would Joseph reverse himself and trust a dream? Do you trust dreams? A friend of mine had one about a kangaroo sitting on the roof in a rocking chair smoking a pipe! Should my friend check the roof for rocking chairs or pipe smoke, just in case? Of course not. We take a dream for what it is, a mechanism of our psyche that somehow processes our experience but does not give us literal truth. We do not usually rely on them for life-changing messages.

Joseph did. Why? I think the answer has to do with something St. Ignatius of Loyola calls "discernment."

In general, discernment is an examination of one's internal reactions ("movements of spirit"), especially in prayer. Of course, there are many different movements, but there is one that may describe Joseph's dream: sometimes, rarely, grace is so gently strong that the person praying has an inner assurance that the experience did not come from imagination but from God. Somehow it is impossible to doubt it.

You and I have to be careful not to get carried away by this notion. Probably many of us could convince ourselves that God or an angel spoke to us this morning. But we need to "discern" which experiences are from God and which are not. Are they quiet? Do they lead toward God or away? What is the long-term result? A spiritual director could help us sort through such questions.

That said, I suspect Joseph's dream might have entailed a movement of this kind. It contained—not a kangaroo, but—a quiet certainty of the presence of God. No doubts followed it, though they would surely seem warranted. Joseph's dream was like the face of mother to a child. Home. It was like the voice of a close friend.

Joseph did not experience his faith as broken into, shattered or pulled to pieces by the dream. Instead the message fit right into the design of Joseph's life with God.

And so he followed.

What is your internal sense of the Christmas story? Is the birth of God an impossible tale reserved for children? Or do you find the roots of trust within yourself as Joseph did?

John Foley, SJ

Liturgy.slu.edu/4AdvA122219/reflections_foley.html