

A very warm welcome to all visitors.

Parish News

Mgr. MacKinnon

As many of you will know, Mgr. MacKinnon has moved into his new home. He has helped in the parish of Ballachulish for some three and a half months and it would be good if we had a collection to buy him something for his new home.

Advent Group

The Taynuilt group, following an Advent prayer and discussion programme, will be meeting on Tuesday evening at 7.30 p.m.

For further details please text Ros on 07913 233 329.

General Election

The Catholic Bishops of Scotland have written and circulated a letter concerning the General Election. The letter touches on such subjects as; human life, Marriage and the Family, Poverty, Freedom of Religion and Conscience, Nuclear Weapons and the Arms Trade.

A copy of the letter is available at the back of the church.

Christmas Plays

The Primary Schools at Duror and at St Bride's are holding their Christmas Plays this week. Please remember our young parishioners, their parents and teachers at this festive, but often anxious time of year.

Taynuilt Parish Meeting

There will be a meeting for parishioners after Mass next Sunday. This will allow you the opportunity to voice any concerns that you may have.

Tuesday

My apologies for there being no Mass on Tuesday, I have a Finance Board Meeting in Oban.

Advent – preparing the church for Christmas

In both Taynuilt and Ballachulish, there are Cribs and other preparations to make for the coming of the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord. I do appreciate any help that can be given.

Collection

Ballachulish – The collection raised £196.09 of which £131.00 was gift aid + £376.00 from Direct Debits, giving a total of £572.09

Taynuilt – The collection raised £148.49 + £680.00 from Direct Debits, giving a total of £828.49. There was also £3.00 for the building fund.

Many thanks to you.

The Visitation, Taynuilt and St Mun's, Ballachulish & The Good Shepherd, Kinlochleven 2nd Sunday of Advent (A) 8th December 2019

Mass times for the coming week

Monday	10.00 a.m.	Ballachulish – Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Tuesday	No Mass	Finance Board Meeting in Oban
Wednesday	10.00 a.m.	Ballachulish – In the 2 nd Week of Advent
Thursday	10.00 a.m.	Taynuilt – In the 2 nd Week of Advent
	12.15 p.m.	Craig Lodge
Friday	10.00 a.m.	Ballachulish – St Lucy - Memorial
Saturday	10.00 a.m.	Taynuilt – St John of the Cross - Memorial
	6.00 p.m.	Vigil Mass – Kinlochleven
Sunday	10.00 a.m.	Ballachulish – 3 rd Sunday of Advent
	12.30 p.m.	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. Week 2 with proper of season

Weekday readings: for the 2nd week of Advent

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.



The God who is Revealed in Christmas

Christmas is God's answer to human longing, God's response to the centuries of prayers that lay hidden in our groaning, in our sighs, our frustrations, and our religious efforts, each of them a plea, mostly silent, for a divine intervention, all of them asking God to come and rid the world of injustice and our hearts of loneliness and heartache.

But God's answer didn't exactly meet our expectations even as it surpassed them. What was born with Jesus' birth and what still lies seemingly helpless in mangers all around the world wasn't exactly what the world expected.

What the world expected was a superstar, someone with the talent, sharpness, and raw muscle-power to out-gun everything that's bad on this planet, someone charismatic enough to make everyone who opposes him slink away in defeat. God's answer to that: A baby lying helpless in the straw!

Why?

Why would God choose to be born into the world in this way?

Because you can't argue with a baby! Babies don't try to compete, don't stand up to you, don't try to best you in an argument, and don't try to impress you with their answers. Indeed, they can't speak at all. You, on your part, have to coax everything out of them, be it a smile or a word, and that effort, which demands great patience, usually draws out what's best in you. Moreover, you can't push at a baby too hard, it will begin to cry and the session is over.

And that is the Savior who was born in Bethlehem, and that is how God is still basically in the world. Like a baby. God does not outgun anyone, out-muscle anyone, threaten anyone, or overpower anyone. The power of God revealed in Christmas is the power of a baby, nothing more, nothing less: innocence, gentleness, helplessness, a vulnerability that can soften hearts, invite in, have us hush our voices, teach us patience, and call forth what's best in us. We watch our language around a baby in the same way as we watch our language in a church, with good reason.

The power of Christmas is like the power of a baby, it underwhelms in such a way as to eventually overwhelm. There is a greater power than muscle, speed, charism, unstoppable force: if you were to put a baby into a room with the heavy-weight boxing champion of the world, who ultimately would be the stronger? The boxer could kill the baby, but, no doubt, wouldn't, precisely because something inside the baby's powerlessness would overwhelm the boxer. Such is the way of God, the message of Christmas.

Even John the Baptist expected the messiah to come with that kind of power. His concern was justice, repentance, asceticism. He warned people of an approaching time of reckoning and expected the longed-for messiah to come precisely as a violent fire, a winnowing fan that would separate the bad from the good and burn up the former with a righteousness that came straight from God.

When he heard reports of Jesus gently inviting sinners in rather than casting them off, John was scandalized. That kind of a messiah didn't fit his expectations, or his preaching. That's why Jesus, in sending a response to him, invited John not to be scandalized in him. John hadn't wanted a gentle, vulnerable, peace-preaching messiah. He wanted bad people punished, not converted. But, to his credit, once he saw how Jesus' power worked, he understood, accepted a deeper truth, stepped back in self-effacement, and pointed people in Jesus' direction with the words: He must increase and I must decrease. I'm not even worthy to untie his scandal strap!

But that's not the Christmas story, nor the power revealed in it. An infant lying in the straw in Bethlehem didn't outgun anyone. He just lay there, waiting for anyone good or bad to come to him, see his helplessness, feel a tug at his or her heart strings, and then gently try to coax a smile or a word out of him.

That's still how God meets us.

Ron Rolheiser

Liturgy.slu.edu/2AdvA120819/reflections_rolheiser.html