



**R.C. DIOCESE OF ARGYLL AND THE ISLES  
NEWSLETTER    DECEMBER 2006**

**Bishop Ian introduces our first newsletter**

At both the Diocesan Assemblies that we have held, last year in Oban and this year in Kinnoull, there was a general feeling that one great benefit was that people from every corner of the Diocese were getting to know each other. The question then arose as to how we could maintain and build up this sense of community.

Ours is a very scattered and very diverse community made up of three very different Deaneries. It was therefore suggested that we establish some form of communication for

keeping in touch and sharing our news and views. This Diocesan Newsletter is our attempt to respond to that need.

We want to hear your views and read reports of what is going on in your Parish. At our first Diocesan Assembly I think we were all surprised to learn of so many good things that were happening in different parts of the Diocese. Sharing our experience and our expertise is essential if we are to build up active Catholic Christian communities in our corner of God's vineyard.

We look forward to receiving reports from young people, from catechists and teachers. It would be interesting also to share the memories of older parishioners and so pass on the great traditions of Argyll and the Isles. We welcome any ideas you may have and wish to share with the rest of us for the promotion of the Faith and the up building of the community.

The future of the Church (and this Newsletter) is in your hands.

**Diocesan Pastoral Assembly 2006: Nourishing our Faith Community**

Representatives from many parts of the diocese met in Kinnoull to experience our faith community through shared prayer, discussion and recreation. We also reflected on ways of growing in faith as communities of the diocese.

There was input on how we pray as church, on the importance of the Scriptures and on ways of building up our faith communities. Tony Ford, a permanent deacon in the Diocese of Shrewsbury, inspired us with his vision of the parish as faith community.

Fr. Tom Kilbride, lecturer in Sacred Scripture at Scotus College, opened our minds and hearts to a new appreciation of the gift of scripture and introduced us to the ancient practice of Lectio Divina. Our own Fr. Michael Hutson enlivened and enriched our understanding of the liturgy as the source and summit of the life of the Church.



***Bishop Ian with Assembly participants***

**IN MEMORIAM**  
**CANON JOHN ANGUS GALBRAITH**  
**1945—2006**

Taken from the homily given by  
 Monsignor Donald MacKinnon  
 at the Requiem Mass for Canon  
 Galbraith in Daliburgh  
 4 October 2006

An image comes to mind, the image of a day in Oban thirty-five and a half years ago. Two young men lie prostrate in prayer before the altar in St. Columba's Cathedral. Around them the clergy and the Faithful of the Diocese respond to the Litany of Saints. One young man is John Angus; the other is myself. We went our different ways; his initially far more pastoral than mine. Over the years we met from time to time, and now, on behalf of the bishop and my brother priests, it is my duty and my privilege to preach at his Funeral Mass.

In his will, Father John Angus requested that this Mass be simple, that the hymns be the familiar hymns you know so well, and that the homily be on the priesthood and vocations to the priesthood. What can I say about priesthood? Will I go once more to the documents of the Second Vatican Council? Will I give an abstract reflection on the Catholic priesthood? How can I be abstract when we lay a good and faithful priest to rest?

Another image comes to mind. It is of John Angus standing alongside his fellow priests at the Chrism Mass in Oban. So often he was there, answering the questions put to us by the bishop, questions directed at the heart of every priest as we prepared to enter the paschal mystery of Christ's death and resurrection. Let us remind ourselves of these questions:

*At your ordination you accepted the responsibilities of the priesthood out of love for the Lord Jesus and his Church.*

*Are you resolved to unite yourselves more closely to Christ and try to become more like him in*

*joyfully sacrificing your own pleasure and ambition to bring his peace and love to your brothers and sisters?*

*To which Father John Angus answered: "I AM"*

*Are you resolved to be faithful ministers of the mysteries of God, to celebrate the Eucharist and the other liturgical services with sincere devotion?*

*Are you resolved to imitate Jesus Christ, the head and shepherd of the Church, by teaching the Christian faith without thinking of your own profit, solely for the well-being of the people you were sent to serve?*

*To which John Angus answered: "I AM".*

Such is priesthood, and I entrust to you, the People of God, the recognition of Father John Angus in these words and in the faithful self-offering of his response: I AM. But today he would ask you to remember him in all the frailty of his humanity, the humanity he shared with you and me. Like any other faithful Catholic, John Angus often knelt before a priest and, in humility and truth, confessed his sins. Today he would ask you to call upon God's mercy and pray for the eternal peace of his soul. He had been close to death once before and had experienced an extraordinary peace. Pray that that be simply the foretaste of his eternal peace.

He would ask you to remember him above all at the altar of God, the altar where he led you in worship, the altar where he, too, was nourished by his Saviour, the Bread of Life, where he too received the promise of this morning's Gospel: "Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day." (John6:54) Remember him you will. Pray for him you will. And let thanksgiving always be part of that prayer. Give thanks for wherever he served; give thanks especially for his years here in the parishes of Daliburgh, Garrnamonie and Eriskay. In his own inimitable way, he loved this



community. It was here among your loved ones that he wanted to be laid to rest. What more beautiful compliment could a priest give a parish community? And give thanks for the very special contentment in the final years of his life.

Finally, he asks us to pray for vocations to the priesthood. A last image comes to mind, an image for the future. It is of a young man lying prostrate before the altar of St. Peter's in Daliburgh. It is the day of his ordination to the priesthood. Is that young man or that boy among you today? Is he here in your parish, about to hear the call of God?

He is the only posterity that John Angus can have. By the grace of God, will you grant him that? Amen.

*"Today, Father John Angus will be taken across the western sea, far from the centres of spiritual and secular power, to the furthest shore of Christendom, to a people rich in ancient faith, who will lay him to rest among their Faithful Departed. His grave will be a place of prayer and will be bright with the memory of service fulfilled and with the promise of resurrection."*

*Homily, Oban Cathedral  
 3 October 2006*

### 3 FROM BARRA TO CAPE BRETON

On 7 October 2006 the largest contingent of Scots since the Highland Clearances landed in Nova Scotia from the Isle of Barra. Each day had its own special highlight as the Cape Breton pilgrimage unfolded. There were shared meals, shared joy and laughter, a feast of music and dancing and ties of kinship were renewed and strengthened. Faith too was shared as local people came from far and wide to take part in celebrations of the Mass.

Fr. Bernie MacDonald writes:

*"On Sunday morning we gathered in St. John the Baptist Church to celebrate Mass in Gaelic. The church was full to overflowing. Canon Angus MacQueen presided, with Fr. Allan MacMillan and myself concelebrating. Sineag MacKinnon led the choir from Barra, Archie MacLean sang the psalm and the offertory gifts were presented by four little girls dressed in Irish, Scottish, Dutch and Mic Mac costumes, representing the ethnic groups of the area. The Mic Mac belong to the First Nation people of Canada. After Communion, Canon MacQueen made a presentation to their Grand Chief as a token of appreciation for the welcome and help his people had given the first settlers from Barra over 200 years ago. The whole Mass was a prayerful and moving experience.*

*Equally prayerful and moving was the visit to the cemetery in Halifax where Mass was celebrated for*

*the five Barra merchant seamen who died in the Halifax Explosion of 1917. It was entirely appropriate that the people of Barra should gather around the final resting place of the mortal remains of five of their own. In a very real way it was the perfect end to a trip that had been filled with laughter and joy and love, a trip that had become a pilgrimage of love to honour five young men who had died so far from home.*

*Speaking for everyone in Cape Breton, our hope is that the group enjoyed being with us as much as we enjoyed being with them. Will ye no' come back again?"*



**Presentation to the Grand Chief**

## Cape Breton Reflections

Before leaving I reflected on what was to be the overarching purpose of the trip. For some it was a search for ancestors long ago exiled by poverty to the shores of the maritime provinces of Canada. For others it would simply be an escape in order to see something new, or a chance to travel with a convivial group. Few would have realised the profound impact of heart and soul that the trip was to have on us all.....

In a week that was packed with touring and gatherings it is difficult to pick out any one high spot. Everywhere we were welcomed, fed, entertained and drawn into the circle of Gaeldom's peripheral family. But amid the joy there was a moment of quiet reflection by the shores of St. Andrew's Channel at the Pioneer Monument. Quietly and with great feeling we sang "do Làmh a Chrìosda bi leinn an Còmhnaidh" - a haunting appeal that Christ will be with us in all that we do and in all our hopes. A tribute too in memory of our ancestors who left their own shores full of trepidation but carrying the light of their faith in the hope of making a new life in a better world.....

There was poignancy about our visit... and there was a recognition of the thread of human identity which links us as much to each other as do the ties of blood and family. These are important elements to trace but we share also a need to bond together in joy and song and even, at times, in sadness. The emigrant songwriter Micheal Mòr MacDonald said of Cape Breton "fair is the place" but I think we can add with sincerity, having experienced their hospitality at first hand, fairer still are the people.

(With thanks to Marion Fiona Morrison)

*From the lone shieling of the misty island,  
Mountains divide us,  
And the waste of seas,  
Yet still the blood is strong,  
The heart is Highland,  
And we in dreams behold the Hebrides.*

*(Canadian Boat Song)*



### A GOLDEN DAY

This year, Christina Paddock, of St. Margaret's, Lochgilphead, (pictured left

with Fr. William Maclean) celebrated 50 years as a lay Dominican. She renewed her commitment at a special Mass in the parish, supported by a large congregation.

Christina's comment: "It has truly been a most joyous, momentous and unforgettable evening for me personally, and, I think, for all who came to share it with me. My heartfelt thanks go to all who made it possible, not least, perhaps, Saint Dominic himself!"

The Mthunzi Centre, on the outskirts of Lusaka, Zambia is a project caring for some 60 former street children. Over the past few years strong bonds have been formed between the children of Mthunzi and the parishioners of St. Margaret's Lochgilphead, some of whom have visited the Centre and many of whom have helped to provide school fees for the children. These bonds have been extended to include the wider Mid Argyll community.



Connie Docherty with Chiselwa Piri

In 2005 a group from Mid Argyll went off to visit the Zambian project and this summer, after much planning and fundraising, fourteen boys and two staff members paid a reciprocal visit to Scotland as guests of the parishioners of St. Margaret's.

Their musical programme included participation in the Aberdeen International Youth Festival and at Masses in Aberdeen, Greenock and Troon. There were also school visits, football matches and a barbecue.

The group was given a civic reception by Argyll and Bute Council in Kilmory Castle and provided a wonderful concert in Lochgilphead Community Hall. For the parishioners of St. Margaret's the highlight of the boys' visit was their music during daily Mass and especially during Mass on their last Sunday when they sang and drummed in every part of the liturgy.

St. Margaret's are now looking at ways of developing and strengthening their bonds with Mthunzi. Meanwhile, through their concerts, the boys have raised enough money to pay the school fees of all the boys at the Centre for the next year.

### Congratulations...

To the people of St. Barr's, Northbay who celebrated their parish centenary in August. Don't miss the wonderful commemorative booklet, available from Voluntary Action Barra (01871 810401) price £5

### A Christmas Thought

A light will shine on us this day, the Lord is born for us; he shall be called Wonderful God, Prince of Peace, Father of the world to come; and his kingship will never end.

*Entrance antiphon, Christmas Day Mass at dawn.*



The next newsletter will appear in March. Please share your parish stories (maximum 250 words!). Send text and photos to Sr. Mary Jo McCallum by email if possible (srmjmcclum@aol.com) or c/o the Diocesan Office, Bishop's House, Esplanade, Oban not later than 24 February.

### A Look at Rothesay

Meet the members of St. Andrew's Ladies' Group.



The 20 strong group (formerly the Women's Guild) meets twice a month under the able leadership of Margaret McMillan and engages in a huge range of activities such as hobby crafts and flower-arranging. They organise quizzes and bingo evenings and invite speakers to their gatherings. As well as shopping trips, they also have short holidays together. Destinations have included York, London, Dublin, Knock, Amsterdam and Stratford-upon-Avon. In between trips they organise coffee mornings to raise funds for their school and are always on hand when their legendary tea-making skills are required.

### Diocesan Events in 2007

#### 14 April in Oban

Spring Conference: the Gift of Scripture

Speaker: Fr. Michael McMahon

#### 4-6 May and 31 August-2 September at Kinnoull

Pastoral Music Weekends



#### October: Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes

Dates to be announced

#### And in July 2008.....

#### World Youth Day, Sydney

For information contact Fr. John Paul McKinnon

#### THANK YOU...

to all who contributed to our first newsletter, especially Bishop Ian Murray, Mgr Donald MacKinnon, Jane MacKinnon, Margaret McMillan, Fr. William Maclean, Marian Pallister, Marion Fiona Morrison and Fr. Bernie MacDonald (Cape Breton).