



# St. Columba's, Culloden

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Parish Priest: Fr Domenico Zanrè



## ~ PARISH NEWSLETTER ~

**16 DECEMBER 2018:**  
**THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**  
**('GAUDETE SUNDAY')**

## Mass Readings

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: Zephaniah 3: 14-18

Psalm: Isaiah 12

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: Philippians 4: 4-7

Gospel: Luke 3: 10-18

Date	Details	Service	Time
<b>Sunday 16 December</b>	<b>THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT</b> <b>(No Second Collection)</b>	<b>Sacrament of Confession</b> <b>Mass</b>	<b>9.00 am</b> <b>9.30 am</b>
Tuesday 18 December	Advent Feria – of the day Mass Intention: Donor's Intention	Sacrament of Confession Evening Prayer Mass	6.30 pm 7.00 pm 7.30 pm
Wednesday 19 December	Advent Feria – of the day Mass Intention: Donor's Intention	Sacrament of Confession Mass Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament	10.30 am 11.00 am 11.30 am
Thursday 20 December	Advent Feria – of the day Mass Intention: Donor's Intention	<b>Sacrament of Confession</b> <b>Mass</b>	<b>7.00 pm</b> <b>7.30 pm</b>
<b>Sunday 23 December</b>	<b>FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT</b> <b>(No Second Collection)</b>	<b>Sacrament of Confession</b> <b>Mass</b>	<b>9.00 am</b> <b>9.30 am</b>

**The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available 30 minutes before EVERY Mass during Advent and Christmas.**

### Third Sunday of Advent: "What Must We Do?"

In today's Gospel, a question is posed three times: "What must we do?" (Lk 3:10, 12, 14). It is raised to John the Baptist by three categories of people: First, the crowd in general; second, the publicans or tax collectors; and, third, some soldiers. Each of these groups questions the prophet on what must be done to implement the conversion that he is preaching. John's reply to the question of the crowd is sharing essential goods. He told the first group, the crowd, to share basic necessities, and therefore says: "He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise" (v. 11). Then, he tells the second group, the tax collectors, to collect no more than the amount owed. What does this mean? No taking 'bribes', John the Baptist is clear. And he tells the third group, the soldiers, not to extort anything from anyone and to be content with their wages (cf. v. 14). There are three answers to the three questions of these groups. Three answers for an identical path of repentance, which is manifested in concrete commitments to justice and solidarity. It is the path that Jesus points to in all his preaching: the path of diligent love for neighbour.

From John the Baptist's admonitions, we understand the general tendencies of those who at that time held power, in various forms. Things have not changed very much. However, no category of people is excluded from following the path of repentance to obtain salvation, not even the tax collectors, considered sinners by definition: not even they are excluded from salvation. God does not preclude anyone from the opportunity to be saved. He is — so to speak — anxious to show mercy, to show it towards everyone, and to

welcome each one into the tender embrace of reconciliation and forgiveness.

We feel that this question — "*What must we do?*" — is ours also. Today's liturgy tells us, in the words of John, that it is necessary to repent, to change direction and take the path of justice, solidarity, sobriety: these are the essential values of a fully human and genuinely Christian life. *Repent!* It sums up the message of the Baptist. And the Liturgy of this Third Sunday of Advent helps us to rediscover a special dimension of repentance: *joy*. Whoever repents and approaches the Lord, feels joy. The prophet Zephaniah says to us today: "Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion!", addressing Jerusalem (Zeph 3:14); and the apostle Paul exhorts the Christians of Philippi: "Rejoice in the Lord always" (Phil 4:4). Today, it takes courage to speak of joy, which, above all, requires faith! The world is beset by many problems, the future is burdened by uncertainties and fears. Yet, Christians are a joyful people, and their joy is not something superficial and ephemeral, but deep and stable, because it is a gift from the Lord that fills life. Our joy comes from the certainty that "the Lord is at hand" (Phil 4:5): he is close with his tenderness, his mercy, his forgiveness and his love.

May the Virgin Mary help us to strengthen our faith, so that we are able to welcome the God of joy, the God of mercy, who always wants to live in the midst of his children. May our Mother teach us to share tears with those who weep, in order to be able to also share a smile.

(Pope Francis, Angelus Address, 13 December 2015).

## PARISH NEWS

**TODAY: 'Bambinelli Sunday'** – Each year on Gaudete Sunday, the Third Sunday of Advent, children in Rome bring their Baby Jesus figures from the cribs in their homes to St. Peter's Square where the Pope blesses both them and the figurines during the Angelus. I will bless our own 'Bambinelli' and cribs today, at the end of Mass. 'This beautiful tradition helps to focus children's minds on the real reason for Christmas: the birth of our Lord Jesus.'

### **TIMES OF MASSES IN THE CHRISTMAS SEASON:**

Monday 24 December: Christmas Eve

Carols at 11.00pm; Christmas Vigil Mass at 11.30pm.

Tuesday 25 December: Christmas Day

Christmas Day Mass at 10.30am (NOTE the time).

Sunday 30 December: The Holy Family

Mass at 9.30am.

1 January 2019: Mary Mother of God

Mass at 10.30am (NOTE the time).

**Parish House 'Wedding List':** various parishioners have asked if they could contribute in any way to the new Parish House. Accordingly, Fr. Domenico has prepared a basic 'wedding list' of items that would be most useful – and gratefully appreciated! There is absolutely no obligation to contribute – it is entirely up to you! If you would like to do so, the 'wedding list' is in the Sacristy. Many thanks!

### **Parish House: 'Through The Keyhole' on 23 December!**

Next Sunday, 23 December, there will be an opportunity for you all to step inside the new Parish House and to have a look at it! This project has been a real 'labour of love', and has not been without its fair share of stress, anxiety, and exasperation! However, it has all been worth it. Why not pop in after Mass and judge for yourselves?

**This year's Crib Appeal: The Bethlehem Crèche** - Since 1885, the Sisters of Charity, otherwise known as the Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul, settled in different locations in the country to tend to the destitute, in homes and under tents. The Crèche of Bethlehem was created some years later with the mission of tending to abandoned children. Today, three Religious Sisters, together with various volunteers, care for approximately 100 poor and orphaned children, of which 40 are live-in, and 70 are in day-care. During our recent Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, we visited the Crèche, and were moved by the marvellous work of the Sisters, who offer these children a future. Please do give generously to this wonderful charity, by contributing to our crib, or handing in donations to the Sacristy, in an envelope clearly marked 'Bethlehem Crèche'. Thank you.

**The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)** is available at St Columba's before EVERY Mass in this Advent Season. Just come along to the Lady Chapel, or ask/contact Fr. Domenico at any time. Remember the words of Pope Francis: "The true door of mercy, which is the heart of Christ, always remains open wide for us". Deo gratias!

**Preparing for the Birth of Christ:** if you have not already done so, why not sign up for Bishop Robert Barron's **FREE daily Advent Reflections**, delivered straight to your inbox? Simply include your e-mail address in the appropriate box on the following webpage: <https://adventreflections.com/>

**"The Bible and the Virgin Mary": FREE video course** to stream, in the comfort of your own home, throughout the Advent and Christmas seasons! – There's no one who can teach us to prepare for Christ's coming better than Mary,

whose faithful anticipation of His birth is the perfect model for how we should anticipate Christmas. To take advantage of this free online course, enter your e-mail address here: <https://stpaulcenter.com/streaming/>

**Preparation for First Holy Communion in 2018:** if your child is of approximately P3 age at Primary School, and you would like to discuss the possibility of him/her being prepared to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and of Holy Communion in Summer 2018, please see Fr. Domenico.

### **Highland Foodbank – December and January:**

Your donations help to provide emergency food and support to local people in crisis. During these winter months, we would be grateful for the following items: \* Jars of Coffee \* Packets of Oatcakes \* Tins of Corned Beef \* Cartons of Long Life Fruit Juice \* Tins of Ham. Please leave them in the plastic box at the front door of the church. During the recent Highland Foodbank Harvest Appeal, St. Columba's Culloden donated 71kgs of food. Thank you for your generosity!

**BABY AND TODDLERS' GROUP** – The group will resume its weekly meetings after the Christmas holidays.

**Flowers/Preparing the church:** is there a budding (pun intended!) flower arranger in the congregation who would like to take on the task of looking after the flowers, or even just help with decorating the church for Christmas? Please speak to Fr. Domenico, or Mary Munro in the sacristy, if you would like to help with the flowers, or provide an arrangement or to contribute holly, etc. from your garden.

**Cleaning Team:** Mary and Don – to be arranged. Can you help? Helping just one hour a month would lighten the load of others who do assist to keep the church nice and clean. See Don for details.

**CHRISTMAS HAMPER RAFFLE** – Tickets now on sale! Only £1 per strip (please write your name, address, contact number on the back of the tickets). The draw will be held on Christmas morning, after Mass. **A share of the proceeds goes to Mary's Meals.**

**Next 90 Club Draw – Sunday 30 December:** Are you paid up to date? There are still some numbers available. Only £2 a month! Please speak to Don.

**PRIZE BINGO: FRIDAY 25 JANUARY 2019** (thereafter the last Friday of the month until June) – 'EYES DOWN' AT 7.00PM! – Why not join us for our fun-filled Bingo evening?! A sincere 'thank you' for all of the items that have been handed in; these are very important to us, and are much appreciated. Your support is instrumental in making the Bingo such a success for the parish!

## FOR YOUR PRAYERS

**Sick:** + Anna Black + Audrey O'Connell + Morag MacIntyre + Angus Johnson + Johnny Gallagher + Ellen Williams + Eva Zandre + Vinnie Walton + Laura Johnstone +

**Anniversaries:** + Joe George Smith + Kerry Green + George Innes +