



St. Columba's, Culloden

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~ PARISH NEWSLETTER ~

**26 MARCH 2017:
FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT
YEAR A**

Sunday Mass Readings

1st Reading: 1 Samuel 16: 1, 6-7, 10-13

Psalm: Ps 22

2nd Reading: Ephesians 5: 8-14

Gospel: John 9: 1-41

Date	Details	Service	Time
Sunday 26 March	FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT Second Collection: SCIAF	Sacrament of Reconciliation Mass	9.00 am 9.30 am
Tuesday 28 March	Tuesday of the Fourth Week of Lent	Evening Prayer Mass	7.00 pm 7.30 pm
Wednesday 29 March	Wednesday of the Fourth Week of Lent	* Service of the Word and Holy Communion * Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament	11.00 am 11.30 am
Thursday 30 March	Thursday of the Fourth Week of Lent	* Stations of the Cross * Mass	7.00 pm 7.30 pm
Sunday 2 April	FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT Second Collection: Building Fund	Sacrament of Reconciliation Mass	9.00 am 9.30 am

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) is available 30 minutes before EVERY Mass.

Fourth Sunday of Lent: Moving Towards the Light (Pope Francis)

Today's Gospel sets before us the story of the man born blind, to whom Jesus gives sight. The lengthy account opens with a blind man who begins to see and it closes — and this is curious — with the alleged seers who remain blind in soul. The miracle is narrated by John in just two verses, because the Evangelist does not want to draw attention to the miracle itself, but rather to what follows, to the discussions it arouses, also to the gossip. So many times a good work, a work of charity arouses gossip and discussion, because there are some who do not want to see the truth. The Evangelist John wants to draw attention to something that also occurs in our own day when a good work is performed. The blind man who is healed is first interrogated by the astonished crowd — they saw the miracle and they interrogated him —, then by the doctors of the law who also interrogate his parents. In the end the blind man who was healed attains to faith, and this is the greatest grace that Jesus grants him: not only to see, but also to know Him, to see in Him “the light of the world” (Jn 9:5).

While the blind man gradually draws near to the light, the doctors of the law on the contrary sink deeper and deeper into their inner blindness. Locked in their presumption, they believe that they already have the light, therefore, they do not open themselves to the truth of Jesus. They do everything to deny the evidence. They cast doubt on the identity of the man who was healed, they then deny God's action in the healing, taking as an excuse that God does not work on the Sabbath; they even doubt that the man was born blind. Their closure to the light becomes aggressive and leads to the expulsion from the temple of the man who was healed.

The blind man's journey on the contrary is a journey in stages that begins with the knowledge of Jesus' name. He does not know anything else about him; in fact, he says: “The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes”

(v. 11). Following the pressing questions of the lawyers, he first considers him a prophet (v. 17) and then a man who is close to God (v. 31). Once he has been banished from the temple, expelled from society, Jesus finds him again and “opens his eyes” for the second time, by revealing his own identity to him: “I am the Messiah”, he tells him. At this point the man who had been blind exclaims: “Lord, I believe!” (v. 38), and he prostrates himself before Jesus. This is a passage of the Gospel that makes evident the drama of the inner blindness of so many people, also our own for sometimes we have moments of inner blindness.

Our lives are sometimes similar to that of the blind man who opened himself to the light, who opened himself to God, who opened himself to his grace. Sometimes unfortunately they are similar to that of the doctors of the law: from the height of our pride we judge others, and even the Lord! Today, we are invited to open ourselves to the light of Christ in order to bear fruit in our lives, to eliminate unchristian behaviours; we are all Christians but we all, everyone sometimes has unchristian behaviours, behaviours that are sins. We must repent of this, eliminate these behaviours in order to journey well along the way of holiness, which has its origin in baptism. We, too, have been “enlightened” by Christ in baptism, so that, as St Paul reminds us, we may act as “children of light” (Eph 5:8), with humility, patience and mercy.

[...] Let us ask ourselves about the state of our own heart? Do I have an open heart or a closed heart? It is opened or closed to God? Open or closed to my neighbour? We are always closed to some degree which comes from original sin, from mistakes, from errors. We need not be afraid! [...] Let us entrust this Lenten journey to the Virgin Mary, so that we too, like the blind man who was healed, by the grace of Christ may “come to the light”, go forward towards the light and be reborn to new life. (Angelus, 30 March 2014)

GENERAL NEWS

Lent Station Masses 2017 (Fridays, at 7.00pm)

31 March **St Columba's, Culloden**
7 April St Anne's, Thurso

Tuesday 28 March, 7.00pm: The Gabriel Society – Fr Tony Nye SJ will give a talk on **“Ignatian Perspectives: Prayers and People”**. At 9.00pm, there will be buns, tea, and other refreshments. Join us!

DIOCESAN CHRISM MASS: Thursday 6 April at 6.30pm, at St Mary's Inverness. Principal Celebrant: Bishop Hugh Gilbert, OSB.

PARISH NEWS

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!! A prayer for Mums:

All-loving God, we give you thanks and praise for mothers young and old.

We pray for young mothers, who give life and tend to our every need; may they be blessed with patience and tenderness to care for their families and themselves with great joy.

We pray for our own mothers who have nurtured and cared for us; may they continue to guide us in strong and gentle ways.

We remember mothers who are separated from their children because of war, poverty, or conflict; may they feel the loving embrace of our God who wipes every tear away.

We pray for women who are not mothers but still love and shape us with motherly care and compassion.

We remember mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers who are no longer with us but who live forever in our memory and nourish us with their love. Amen.

TODAY IS SCIAF SUNDAY: The Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund is our own national Catholic charity set up to combat poverty throughout the world. SCIAF works in some of the poorest countries, and is guided by 4 key themes: Farming and Livelihoods, Peacebuilding, Education, and Emergency Relief. For more details, see the SCIAF website (<http://www.sciaf.org.uk/>). Please do support their vital work in our Second Collection.

HOLY WEEK MASS TIMES: please see the leaflets in the foyer, and the parish website.

CATHOLICISM – Wednesday 29 March, from 7.00pm – “Word Made Flesh, True Bread Of Heaven: The Mystery of The Liturgy and The Eucharist”. Bishop Barron explores the ancient practices of the Church's worship that endure to this very day, and the notion that “all value is summed up in the liturgy, the supreme act by which we commune with God.” Considered by the Catholic Faith to be “the source and summit” of its identity and mission, the Eucharist is the central practice of the Church's culture. Bishop Barron describes all the parts of the Mass, and shows how the Sacred Liturgy embodies the whole of the Faith in diverse places as Jerusalem, Rome, Chicago, Orvieto, Mexico City.

STATION MASS AT ST COLUMBA'S – Friday 31 March: this year, we will be hosting one of the Lenten Station Masses here at St Columba's. We will need assistance in the following areas: welcome and hospitality; setting up and clearing away; catering. **Please do consider volunteering to help: there is a sign-up sheet in the entrance foyer.** Help us to make this a truly special evening in the parish!

“Behold the Lamb of God: Reflections for Holy Week”: Join us for a Day of Recollection at St Columba's, **on Saturday 8 April, from 10.30am-4.00pm.** The programme is as follows:

10.30am:	Welcome and Introduction
10.45am:	First Presentation
11.30am:	Quiet Time for Reflection
11.45am:	Rosary and Angelus
12 noon:	Holy Mass
12.45pm:	'Pot Luck Lunch' (bring something to share with others!)
2.00pm:	Second Presentation
2.45pm:	Quiet Time for Reflection
3.00pm:	Penitential Service with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and opportunities for Confession.
	Benediction and the Divine Praises.

The ideal preparation for Holy Week! All welcome!

Weekly Offertory Envelopes: there are still some envelopes for the new financial year (April onwards) to be picked up in the entrance foyer. Make sure you collect yours now!

Cleaning Team: Mary and Marie.

GRAND EASTER RAFFLE! – Drawn on Easter Sunday. £1.00 for a strip of five tickets. Please include your name and phone number on the back! Come and have a go!

“90 Club” – DRAW TODAY AFTER MASS! Good luck to everyone who has a ticket. There are a few still left; only £2 per month! 3 prizes to be won. See Don for details.

NEXT PRIZE BINGO: 28 APRIL! Eyes down at 7.00pm. A family fun night, with great company! Come and join us! All monies go towards our Building Fund. Items to give as prizes are always needed. Many thanks for your continued support – it is greatly appreciated!

FOR YOUR PRAYERS

Sick: Anna Black + Audrey O'Connell + Amelia Drew + John Drew + Leslie Murray + Frances Boyle + Ewen Macdonald Snr + Brian Murray + Lachlan MacNeil + Louisa and Suzanne Williams + Cath Maclean + Eilidh McPherson + Morag Macintyre

R.I.P.: Jane Green + Nancy McRae + Morag Nicholson + Jacquie Condon + Stephen Macintyre

Anniversaries: + Edward Lafferty + Margaret Hodgekins + Mary MacCormick