



Columcille

**The Bishop of Argyll
And The Isles' Newsletter. No 38**

March 2009

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Dear Friends,

In the "Dialogues" of Plato there is a debate on the subject of power and revolution. The debate of course is between Socrates and some of his fellow philosophy students. One of the triggers of revolution he points out is the rise of Oligarchy. This is the accruing of vast financial resources in the hands of very few people. Eventually those with that power become so few and so wealthy that societies rebel. It is difficult not to see the same process happening in our own time. However finding someone to blame will eventually only lead to chaos. How we take personal responsibility in these times is crucial. Perhaps one of our Lenten disciplines might be to ask questions and do some basic learning about financial matters. This includes the Bishop! Most congregations in this Diocese have at least one or two experienced men and women who work or have worked in financial services. We are all so dependent on the banking system and it is our duty therefore to rebuild confidence on the basis of being informed otherwise Plato's predictions are likely to come about in our own time.

September 2009

Recently I sent a letter to the Clergy and Charge secretaries about my retirement from being your Bishop at the end of September this year. This is what I wrote:

This year marks the 40th anniversary of my being ordained to the priesthood. Also, in September, I shall be 65. I have decided, after much thought and prayer with Elspeth, that I shall retire following my birthday on 22nd September.

To have had the opportunity of serving in this part of Scotland has brought me experience of incomparable beauty and wonder. To have touched the soil and waters on which the Celtic Saints and their successors have travelled and lived Christ's mission, has been a gift that I will always treasure. This has been possible for Elspeth and me, through the generous hospitality of all the charges throughout the Diocese, from St Moluag's Eoropaidh to St Kieran's, Campbeltown. Thank you.

To celebrate and preach in each charge has, I hope, been an encouragement, based on the heart-warming commitment of the little congregations. Accompanying those experiences, have been the occasions when together we have explored new models of mission and ministry, which will, of necessity, continue to be the major challenges to the Diocese. These have provided exciting and hopeful moments. Thank you.

Of course, from a personal perspective, both Elspeth and I have renewed old friendships and begun new ones. This has been and will, we hope, continue to be enriching. Thank you.

Shortly, at our Diocesan Synod, the Dean, The Very Reverend Norman MacCallum will be introducing the Synod briefly to the process of election of a new Diocesan Bishop. That process will begin following my departure, but it will be important for Synod representatives to be aware of and prepared for their key role in the overall process.

Some two years ago, I was asked if I would write a 'Diocesan Prayer' which not only caught the atmosphere of our Diocese, but held before God our desire to follow Christ in vision and mission. I hope that this offering remains part of the Diocesan common responsibility to pray at depth.

THE ARGYLL AND THE ISLES PRAYER

Christ of The Word,
You draw us to you
In the Compassion and the Love of God.
You come to us
In the ancient and ever present
Beauty of this Land and its people.
You breathe on us
The strength and confidence of The Spirit.
You renew us
In the vision and holiness
Of the Island Saints.
In the Sacrament of Your Presence,
We open ourselves to live
Your Life amongst others
With generosity and courage.
Come to us Christ of the Word.
Amen.

In the meanwhile, I assure you of my commitment to God's call to me in the work of the Diocese.

+Martin

*****The Diocesan Festival – The Year of Homecoming. Sunday 7th June 2009 at St John's Cathedral, Oban 12noon-4.30pm** -We have changed the timings of

the day to make it easier for people to get to the festival from distant parts of the Diocese: 12noon – Lunch, 1.15pm – rehearsal for everybody! 3pm – Festival Eucharist, 4.30pm – Depart.

Homecoming Scotland 2009 celebrates the 250th anniversary of Robert Burns' birth with a year-long programme of events across the country. The date I have chosen is the nearest Sunday to the Feast of Saint Columba. So I hope that you and your charge will support this event. The preacher will be The Right Reverend Richard Holloway. The Sunday schools and junior churches of the Diocese will be involved. Please put the dates in your diaries.

*****URGENT***PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE 2009 – “Living Well” – 2nd- 4th October, Aviemore.**

PLEASE REGISTER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

Theme: “*Living Well: Proclaim, Discover, Respond*” The underpinning Bible passage is St John 4: 3-43; the Woman at the Well narrative, which tells of the transformation in the woman by this encounter with Christ. The five Marks of Mission are also addressed and the speakers are The Right Rev'd Stephen Cottrell, Bishop of Reading; Annabel Goldie, MSP and The Rev'd Erik Cramb of The Church of Scotland.

Cost - £295 per person for single occupancy, £265 for double occupancy. The costs will be split three ways – between the participants, their vestry and the Diocese. If anyone is prevented from applying by their own or their vestry's financial difficulties they should contact the Diocesan secretary.

Registration Forms – These have been sent to the Clergy of each charge. It would be helpful if they could be returned to the Diocesan Office as soon as possible. For further information contact Margaret Dineley, The Coach House, Toward, Argyll, PA23 7UB, 01369 870073. Email margaret.dineley@googlemail.com

Lent Appeal – Zimbabwe Crisis

As you will be well aware, there is not only financial collapse, expanding poverty but also the spread of cholera in and beyond Zimbabwe. Christian Aid is one of the agencies drawing attention to the practical needs of communities in the country. The Bishops Lent Appeal will be for Christian Aid as it addresses the Zimbabwe Crisis. Whether in your congregation or personally please make sure as many people as possible know about this Lent appeal. If you are using a jam jar or tin please contact Sue Pollard at The Diocesan office for labels. Tel no 01631 570870 or

office@argyll.anglican.org

Lent Lunches

In aid of the Bishops Lent Appeal Lent Lunches will be held at The Pines, Ardconnel Road, Oban from 12.30pm-1.30pm on Friday 27th of February, Friday 6th March, Friday 13th March, Friday 20th March, Friday 27th March, and Friday 3rd April. If anyone needs transport "up the hill" to The Pines please give us a telephone call 01631 566912.

Companions Together Worldwide

A Day for exploring Companion Links –
Saturday March 21st 2009 at The Albany Centre, Glasgow G4

This day conference will be hosted by the Provincial Overseas Committee of The Scottish Episcopal Church, to explore International Companion links and to share experiences and information. For details of the day please contact

gill.young@ukonline.co.uk .More details about this event are also available on our Diocesan website.

THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE DIOCESAN MAGAZINE "ARGYLL AND THE ISLES"!

**Please send me articles and photographs
for the next magazine. Closing date –
Friday 13th March 2009.**

Lent -

The Bible Reading Fellowship have a simple course for individual use or for groups which you might like to consider for Lent. See the website www.foundations21.org.uk

Engaging with the Bible

Local churches in England of many denominations are coming together to rediscover their common mission using a website which gives assistance for simple prayer every day. You might either as a charge or as individuals be interested in using this site www.pray-as-you-go.org

A Conference on Homosexuality and The Scottish Episcopal Church – May 2nd 2009, Kemnay Church Centre, Aberdeenshire.

The Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney are organising a day of discussion and listening on this subject for that Diocese. It will be chaired by Bishop Bob Gillies and Bishop David Chillingworth will be the lead speaker. There are two places for people from this Diocese. If you would like to participate then please telephone the Aberdeen and Orkney Diocesan Office – 01224 662247.

Pilgrim Adventure –

This organisation is advertising pilgrim destinations throughout the UK. It was founded in 1987 to take folk off the beaten track to experience God in the wideness and intimacy of God's creation. If you are interested in knowing more the website is www.pilgrim-adventure.org.uk

Back to Church Sunday 27th Sept. 2009

For the last few years in England there has been a successful ecumenical process of inviting new people to come to church or indeed those who have left it for one reason or another. Some Diocese in Scotland have already participated. However every denomination in Scotland will be participating on the 27th September 2009. The basic idea is that each member of a congregation invites one friend to come to church on that Sunday. The service itself is not expected to be special. Our Diocesan Board of Mission and Ministry will be providing resources in preparation for Back to Church Sunday. Please put the date in your diaries.

International Christian College Library

The Theological Library which used to be held in Edinburgh has now been moved to a site in Glasgow. The ICC Library site is www.icc.ac.uk/library.php/

Those of you who are involved in courses of study or are interested in extending your reading may care to have a look at the site.

“Fragments of Love”

Mike Perks is a Quaker and a poet and has produced a book of his poems entitled “Fragments of Love” to help Scottish Churches Housing Action raise vital funds for the homeless. If you are interested in buying a copy please contact michaelperks@phonecoop.coop

Request for Scottish Prayer Books

St Columba’s Portree is short of copies of the 1929 Scottish Prayer Book. Robert Breaden, the Priest with Charge is looking for 100 copies. If you have any spare which are not in use please contact him. Email ateallach@aol.com Tel no. 01478 613135

The Society of St Francis

As far as I am aware I am the only member of The Third Order of the SFF in this Diocese. Many people feel the call to commit their lives more deeply to a daily discipline of prayer and action but don’t know how to set about responding. The Third Order offers such a way. Obviously following the inspiration of St Francis of Assisi is crucial. Given the crisis that we all now face the Franciscan perspective on spirituality has a vital and inspiring approach to a hopeful way of living. If you are interested in more information on this then please do get in touch with me.

The Cathedral of The Isles, Cumbrae - Retreat, Music and Conference Programme 2009

Sat 14th March: “Handel’s Messiah” – Come and sing! Rehearsal 11am, performance 3.30pm. For further details and to register call 01475 530353

For further information see

www.island-retreats.org

Film – “Lumo” – One woman’s search for healing in a nation beset by war

The Goma film project will be screening this film at Salen School Hall, Island of Mull on Saturday 14th March at 7.30pm. In Eastern Congo, vying militias, armies and bandits use rape as a weapon of terror. Luma Sinai a 22 year old woman tells her extraordinary story. This film is unsuitable for children under the age of 15.

THE BISHOP’S March Diary

Sunday 1st – St John’s Cathedral, Oban

Tuesday 3rd-Thursday 5th – Synod Days

Friday 6th – Glenalmond Council

Saturday 7th & Sunday 8th – St Kieran’s, Campbeltown – confirmation and blessing of the new organ

Monday 9th-Friday 13th Clergy & Spouses Reflection Week, Iona

Sunday 15th – St Andrew’s, Fort William

Monday 16th & Tuesday 17th Faith & Order Board, Cumbrae

Wednesday 18th – Lunchtime Lent group, St John’s Cathedral, Oban

Sunday 22nd – All Saints, Inveraray

Monday 23rd-Wednesday 25th – Island of Eigg

Thursday 26th – Oban FM

Friday 27th – College of Bishop’s meeting, Edinburgh

Sunday 29th – Confirmation at St Peter’s, Stornoway

Tuesday 31st – Diocesan Finance Committee – 10.30am, Diocesan Centre

Reflection

Humility

Anthony Kenny. The Tablet 3.1.04

“...the raging tempest of self-love: our inclination to overvalue our own gifts, over-estimate our own opinions and place excessive importance on getting our own way. Humility is the virtue that counteracts this prejudice. It does so by making the presumption that others’ talents are greater, others’ opinions more likely to be right. But only by approaching each conflict of interest and opinion with this presumption can one hope to escape the myopia that magnifies everything to do with oneself by comparison with everything to do with others...If a person has humility, it often takes an effort for others to realise this...It takes a certain humility to be willing to stick one’s neck out and place oneself in a position to make a public fool of oneself...It is one of the greatest gifts of Christianity to the human race to have identified and exalted this virtue. It has done so by presenting heroes and patterns of imitation who were humbly placed and degraded in the eyes of the world....

The April Newsletter – material to be received by Wednesday 18th March 2009

In the Love of God, +Martin, Oban

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