



24th December, 2023.

Fourth Sunday of Advent, B

RC Diocese of Argyll and the Isles

Fr Roddy McAuley, Parish Priest

Our Lady and St. Mun's, Dunoon. Tel: 01369 702125.

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Charity registration number - SC002876

Masses during the Week:

Sunday: Christmas Eve: Midnight Mass preceded by Carols at 11.30pm.

Monday: Christmas Day: 10am.

Tuesday: No Mass.

Wednesday: No Mass.

Thursday: 10am. Feast of the Holy Innocents.

Friday: 10am.

Saturday: 6pm. Vigil Mass.

Sunday: 9am. and 11am.

Confessions: Saturday at 5.30pm.

Eucharistic Adoration: Wednesday after Mass.

Rosary: After Thursday morning Mass in our Lady's Chapel.

Introduction to the Scripture Readings

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16 — David is told it's not his job to build a temple for God. God will build a great house for all people. This plan took shape with the birth of Jesus, son of David.

Romans 16:25-27 — The mystery kept secret for ages is a secret no more, says Paul. The mystery is revealed in Jesus Christ.

Luke 1:26-38 — The story of the Annunciation is told again; Mary is shown as the model of faith for Christmastime.

As the birth of a child draws near, attention focuses on the mother. Since we are nearing the celebration of the birth of Christ, it is no surprise to find that Mary is at the centre of today's Gospel.

Christ came to share our lives, to help us to carry our burdens and to walk the road of life at our sides. If you are sad or lonely, or if you have lost a loved one, or are anxious or afraid, know that God is with you and shares your burden.

The **Crib collection** is dedicated to the Holy Childhood Association which provides missionaries with Christian formation and education resources. They depend greatly on our generosity. There is further interesting information about the Holy Childhood Association on its website.

The ministry of hospitality in the church hall is an invaluable one and so many people, visitors and parishioners alike, benefit from coming together after 11am Sunday Mass. In order for the provision of teas/coffees after Sunday 11.00a.m. Mass to continue in the hall after the new year, more volunteers are desperately needed. If any parishioner would like to volunteer to help, on a rota basis, please contact either Fr. Roddy or Jim MacLean.

Parish walking Group: Saturday morning at 11am, meeting in the church car-park. All welcome to come along and meet fellow parishioners and have tea/coffee/cake after the walk.

Teas/Coffee are available in the Church hall after 11a.m. Mass on Sunday. All welcome.

SCIAF Real Gifts. As well as continuing to provide aid for those most in need SCIAF has launched its 'Real Gifts' campaign. Have a look on their website for Christmas gifts that provide life changing benefits to others. <https://www.sciaf.org.uk/>

Reflection:

It's assumed that Mary rode on a donkey, but the Bible doesn't say she did. []

It's assumed there was an innkeeper, but it doesn't mention one anywhere. []

It's assumed there were three Magi, but it doesn't give a number of those who showed up. []

It's assumed there was a star overhead when Jesus was born, but it doesn't say that either. []

It's assumed that Jesus was born in a stable, but all it says is that He was laid in a manger - and that could've been any number of places. []

Christmas comes with many assumptions—some helpful, some not so much. []

Spirituality also comes with many assumptions, and the ones that fail us are the ones we make about what it's supposed to look like, who is worthy for it to happen to, and what kind of outcome it's supposed to have for us. Assumptions like . . . []

You should be more than you are now to be pleasing to God. []

Your weaknesses are in the way of God's plan for your life. []

Your lack of religious excitement disqualifies you from divine participation. []

You're probably not doing it right. []

Other spiritual people have something you don't have. []

Our assumptions hinder our spiritual journey in all kinds of ways, and the antidote to assumption is surprise.

The surprise of Christ's incarnation is that it happened in Mary's day as it is happening every day in your lack of resources, your overcrowded lodging, your unlit night sky, your humble surroundings. []

It's a surprise that life can come through barren places. []

It's a surprise that meek nobodies partake in divine plans. []

It's a surprise that messengers are sent all along the hidden journey of life to let you know you are not alone. []

It's a surprise that you will be given everything you need to accomplish what you've been asked to do. []

It's a surprise that nothing can separate you from the love of God. []

Nothing can separate you from love. Your assumptions believe there must be something that can . . . But surprise! []

Nothing can. []

May you thank God with joyful surprise at how much you have assumed incorrectly. []

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(Honest Advent).