

July 13, 2008

Dear Parishioners,

This Sunday evening, July 13th, I leave for Scotland and will spend one week there with friends. I return to the U.S. on July 22nd.

Why Scotland? In 1979, I spent my summer in Edinburgh, ministering as a Deacon at St. Paul's Parish which is located in the Muirhouse section of Edinburgh. It's an area not frequented by tourists. It's the poorer section of Edinburgh and alcoholism was an ongoing struggle in a number of families while I was there. The Catholics living in this area came to Scotland from Ireland during the famines. I haven't been back since leaving Scotland to return to Rome in September 1979. So, it will be good to be back there again. It's a very beautiful country with a fascinating history.

I loved my summer there as a Deacon and found the people to be so hospitable to this "Yank" as I stumbled through my first homilies. I celebrated a number of other firsts there as well: first baptism, first wedding, and first funeral. So I look forward to visiting the parish while in Edinburgh.

Also, I will be going to the isle of Iona, the Highlands, and Glasgow. Additionally, I plan to visit the Cistercian monastery where my desire for monasticism came to life during a retreat there in 1979. And since "all work and no play make Jack a dull boy" I plan to visit a number of pubs too, and enjoy a pint of Guinness while listening to some Scottish fiddling!

I will be back before you know it...perhaps with a kilt, no less!

Fa. Tim Clark