

The NET

Sharing fruits of faith in Derry Diocese

ISSUE 89, OCTOBER 2023

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See inside...



150th Anniversary – Lavey



Well Pilgrimage – Iskaheen



Holy Family Retreat – Ballymagroarty



“When you come to know Jesus you will experience great joy.”
– Archbishop Domenico Sorrentino, Assisi. (See p4-5)

Blessed Carlo Acutis relic visit to packed St Eugene’s Cathedral. Photograph by Stephen Latimer.



Lough Derg pilgrimage – Urney & Castlefinn



Season of Creation – Steelstown & Culmore



Dominican Mission – Faughanvale



Pet Blessings – Drumragh, Omagh

People in focus



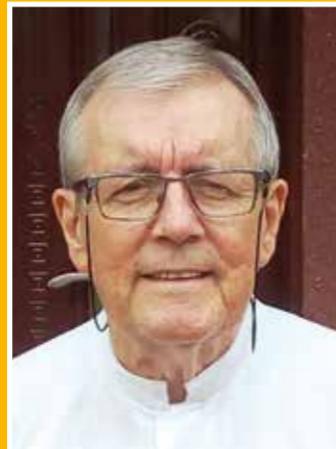
Blessed Carlo Acutis



Fr Charles Reche cfr



Fr Peter Devlin – Drumsurn/Malin



Fr Peter McCawille SMA – Dregish



Fr Stephen Ward – Omagh/Long Tower

Also featuring: Clonmany School-bag Blessing; Templemore LIFE Camp; HOPE Camps Limavady, Banagher, Dungiven & Claudy-Craigbane; Young Writers share thoughts; Youth 2000 news; Pet Blessings in Clonmany, Drumragh, Ballymagroarty & Long Tower; Omagh Churches Forum celebrate Good Relations; Coleraine mark Season of Creation; Bellaghy & Coleraine SVP events; Derry Legionaries Knock Pilgrimage; Maghera Lough Derg & Knock pilgrimages; Omagh Life in the Spirit seminars; Children’s Catechism Club; Quiz; Features... and much more...

Contents

Welcoming the challenge to change
- Reflection by Fr Peter McCawille SMA p2
Trocaire 'Gifts of Love' life-changing
for people in developing world..... p2
Supporting The Net..... p2

Clonmany children enjoy hearing story of a school-bag... p3
Beautiful friendships formed and faith celebrated
at Templemore LIFE Camp 2023
by Anne Marie Hickey..... p3

Visit of Blessed Carlo Acutis relic...
*Life & early death of Blessed Carlo speaks to new
generation seeking hope & joy - Bishop Donal
*When you come to know Jesus you will experience
great joy - Archbishop Sorrentino..... p4-5

Helping Our Parishes Evolve...
*HOPE Limavady celebrates 10-year milestone
*Banagher HOPE Camp II a week to remember
*Dungiven's first HOPE Camp an outstanding success
*HOPE Claudy-Craigbaine fantastic week
of faith, fun & friendship..... p6-9

Young Writers share thoughts on...
*Example of Blessed Carlo Acutis for young people
*Realisation that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist
*The power of patience
*Promoting faith in children
*Faith & Science..... p10-11

Youth 2000 news..... p11

Pet blessings to celebrate Feast of St Francis of Assisi
in Drumragh, Clonmany, Ballymagroarty & Long Towerp12-13

Marking the Season of Creation
in Culmore & Steelstown by Patricia McCormack p13
Loreto thanks for Coleraine support in South Sudan Mission
by Sr Rosemary Gallagher..... p13

Faughanvale Mission a source of great grace
and many blessings - Fr Noel McDermott PP p14
Omagh Churches Forum celebrate
Good Relations Week..... p14

Holy Family Parish to build on grace-filled retreat
so all feel belong to God's Family..... p15
St Pio Novena a powerful gift and grace for Creggan..... p15

Good turnout for Iskaheen Well Pilgrimage
by Maura McColgan..... p16
River Bann setting for Coleraine Season of Creation
prayer service p16
Season of Creation Prayer..... p16

Coleraine Seniors enjoy lovely night out with SVP..... p17
Urney & Castlefinn pilgrimage to Lough Derg
a very spiritual experience..... p17

Bellaghy SVP trip back in time
at Ulster American Folk Park..... p18
Maghera pilgrims enjoy oasis of calm
on Lough Derg one-day retreat..... p18
New pinnacle crosses for 152-year-old
Glenock Stations by Fr Roland Colhoun..... p18
Rouskey blessing for new ciborium veils..... p18

Newly ordained Fr Stephen Ward
reflects on first weeks of priesthood..... p19

Lavey community celebrate 150th anniversary
of Our Lady of Mercy Church..... p20-21

Malin Ruby Jubilee celebration for Fr Peter Devlin..... p22-23

Pray the Lord will send many into harvest of Diocese
by Fr Pat O'Hagan p23
Prayer for Priests..... p23
Pope's Prayer Intention..... p23

French Friar, Fr Charles sad to leave
his special Derry friends..... p24-25

The Divine Mercy Image explained: The Rays (Part I)
by Sr Benedetta Hutnikiewicz ZSJM..... p25

The Sounds of Silence
by Fr John McLaughlin ssc..... p26

The Power of Truth
by Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR..... p27
Omagh Life in Spirit seminars
an inspiring weekend of fellowship..... p27

Parish Post-its..... p28-29

Diocesan Diary..... p29
...other Diary Dates.....
Eternal Echoes...
Praying the Rosary with our hearts by Regina Deighan...p30
Derry Legionaries amongst large turnout for Knock
Legion of Mary Pilgrimage.....p30
Maghera Legion of Mary on Knock Pilgrimage.....p30
The Seven Joys of Mary reflection in Maghera
by Julie Zeoli.....p30

Children's Catechism Club - C3
by Veronica Harley..... p31
Quiz Time with Lawrence..... p31

Fr Peter McCawille SMA reflects on the Pope's prayer intention for October...
"We pray for the Church, that she may adopt listening and dialogue as a lifestyle at every level,
and allow herself to be guided by the Holy Spirit towards the peripheries of the world".

Welcoming the challenge to change

IN October 2021, during a Mass at St Peter's Basilica, Pope Francis formally launched a two-year global consultation process offering every member of the worshipping communities an opportunity to make their views known, with a call to "look others in the eye and listen to what they have to say".

He emphasised that listening was an essential feature of any genuine encounter with others and learning to listen was "a slow and perhaps tiring exercise for bishops, priests, religious and laity". He added that we should not "soundproof our hearts or remain barricaded in our certainties".

That consultation process involved the organisation of meetings in parishes all over the world over the past two years. Two years later the suggestions/comments have been presented, collated, sifted and assessed in preparation for the first session of the global Synod, which runs from October 4-29, 2023, and the second session will be held in October 2024.

Pope Francis' prayer petition for October 2023 clearly feeds into the agenda of the first

session. There are many people who might be surprised to hear the Pope talking about a Church (for too long seen exclusively in terms of the hierarchy!) that is expected to listen and should be interested in dialogue. I think that over the years it was assumed that it was the people of God who were expected to listen and it was the hierarchical Church that rarely, if ever, listened to the opinions of lay people. It was generally accepted that it was also the hierarchical Church's exclusive right to teach and the duty of the congregation was characterised as having to 'pray, pay and obey'.

In the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council, which ended on December 8, 1965, the Church has been very gradually making it clearer that as believers and worshippers (all the baptised), we are expected to see ourselves less as spectators and more as active participants, inside and outside the church building, beginning with us listening to the Word as proclaimed in the Mass and seeing that Word as "a lamp that guides our steps and a light that shows the path we should take." (Psalm 119:105) in

our daily lives. Leaving the Synod aside for a moment, this October prayer petition has a particular appropriateness at a time when we are constantly bombarded by an avalanche of frequently ill-thought-out and often hostile opinions at every level of public discourse.

The words of St Paul to Timothy during this past week (Week 25) are particularly pertinent in these days of endless speculation, when it appears that opinions are revered and facts are almost resented: "Anyone who does not keep to the sound teaching which is that of our Lord Jesus Christ is proud and has no understanding, but rather a craze for questioning everything and arguing about words. All that can come of this is jealousy, abuse and evil mistrust." (1 Timothy 6:3-5).

Pope Francis' October prayer petition implies that while it is an essential part of our Catholic faith that the Church has to exercise a teaching role in interpreting the faith, it is equally essential that the teaching Church must be obedient to the Word. If the Church (all the baptised) is first

and foremost the people of God, then she must be prepared to be a listening Church, listening to the Word and listening to each other, as Jesus reminded His disciples that "my mother and my brothers are those who listen to the word of God and put it into practice" (Luke 8:21).

Hot on the heels of the need for mutual listening is the need for dialogue, which implies speaking and listening, giving and receiving, accepting and handing on to others. Pope Francis, over the past 10 years of his papacy, has been endeavouring to change the Church by encouraging all the baptised to see themselves as having some responsibility to engage in the mission of the Church, ie, to make disciples by bearing witness by word and by deed to Jesus Christ.

If the Church is to have more credibility in today's world she must be prepared to listen, if she hopes to speak and to be heard. This is not to say that the Church must agree with and affirm everything she hears, but she must be prepared to, at least, allow those who make suggestions, particularly



Fr Peter McCawille SMA

contentious ones, to feel that what they are saying has been heard and understood.

At an ecumenical prayer vigil in St Peter's on Saturday, September 30, 2023, in preparation for the first session, Pope Francis prayed that the Synod would be "a propitious time of unity and fraternity and not cause further polarisation in the Catholic Church... a place where the Holy Spirit will purify the Church from gossip, ideologies and polarisation."

If we join Pope Francis by daily repeating his prayer petition for October, we will be making a major contribution to a successful outcome of the Synod.

Trocaire 'Gifts of Love' life-changing for people in developing world

TROCAIRE'S 'Gift of Love' is a Christmas gift option embraced by many as a way of sending love to those in need in the developing world, and is a much appreciated source of funding for the Irish Bishop's charity in its life-changing work.

Established over 50 years ago, in February 1973, Archbishop Eamon Martin reflects here on what he has learned about Trocaire since he first heard of it as a P7 pupil in St Patrick's, Pennyburn, Derry.

"I have always associated Trocaire," he said, "with the call to be a follower of Jesus Christ, who called His disciples to love one another, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to care for the sick and for anyone who is suffering or in need.

"Over the past 50 years, I've

learned that Trocaire is not simply a fund, but is a family of carers - at home and abroad - who are the eyes, the ears, the hands, the feet, the heart of the people of Ireland. The Trocaire family reaches out in love and generosity towards our brothers and sisters who struggle to cope: to those who go to bed hungry at night; to children and grown adults who cannot read or write; to whole communities displaced from their homes by war and violence or environmental destruction; to our fellow human beings who cannot find clean water to drink, or a safe shelter for themselves and their children.

"At a deeper level, Trocaire has also introduced and explored for us over the years the underlying reasons for much of the poverty and the root causes of discrimination, exploitation and injustice."

He added: "As an adult I've come to appreciate Trocaire's ethos which is very much in line with the social teaching of the Catholic Church. Perhaps more than any other agency or instrument within the Catholic Church in Ireland, Trocaire has helped to expose the reality of violence towards the vulnerable; the plight of women and children around the world who are used and abused as weapons of war; the disproportionate impact of climate change and environmental destruction on the world's poorest and most defenceless peoples; the exploitation of natural resources, the land grabbing, the discrimination, threats, and

intimidation, the trafficking manipulation and exclusion of those whom Jesus once described as 'the least of our brothers and sisters'.

"Trocaire's approach over fifty years has been not only to provide much needed resources and humanitarian help to those areas of greatest need, but also to educate and raise awareness of the reasons behind that need, and to empower those on the ground to change the reality of their situation for the better."

Thanking God for Trocaire's work over 50 years in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and the work of justice, Archbishop Eamon remarked: "The work of Trocaire is the work of Mercy; it is the work of God."

When you buy a Trocaire Gift, your money goes to the

developing world - buying life-changing gifts for people who really need them as well as funding critical work in Trocaire's justice, resource rights and women's empowerment programmes.

When you buy online, you can choose either a traditional gift card or an e-card.

- The traditional card will be posted out to your address within 7 working days.
- The e-card will be emailed to your chosen recipient immediately or at a time you schedule. You will be able to enter a personal greeting in the e-card, and send it to anyone you choose - a friend, family member or client.

Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

Contacting us:

If you have a story that you would like to share or an event you would like covered by The Net, just drop an email to editorthenet15@gmail.com or ring/text 07809292852

Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

Supporting us:

The mission of 'The NET' is to share the fruits of the faith in homes, parishes and schools across the Diocese of Derry, and be a source of hope and encouragement in living our Catholic faith each day.

'The NET' is a Lay Apostolate that has the blessing of our Bishop, Most Rev Donal McKeown.

With no fixed charge to read this publication, donations would be most welcome to help cover costs. Annual accounts will be available to view on request.

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The ministry of

The NET

was dedicated to Our Lady, through the intercession of St Maximilian Kolbe, in a ceremony celebrated by Bishop Donal McKeown on August 14, 2019.

During a special blessing for the start of a new school year...

Clonmany children enjoy hearing the story of a schoolbag



THE newly appointed administrator for the parishes of Clonmany and Culdaff, Fr Kevin Doherty, has been getting to know the children and staff in the schools as the new academic year gets underway, by gathering them together in their assembly halls for a special blessing for the year ahead.

'The Net' went along for the ceremony in Cloontagh NS, Clonmany, where the principal, Mrs Grace McCarron and staff warmly welcomed Fr Kevin, who led a lively interaction with the children, welcoming them back to school for another year of fun and learning.

After a resounding rendition of 'Give Me Joy in My Heart' from all gathered, Fr Kevin spoke to the children about one of their best friends that they might not think of

as "a friend" – their schoolbags! Having a selection of schoolbags to hand, he noted the name on one of them and spoke to the children about the significance of names, telling them the story of how Simon, the fisherman in the Gospels, was given a new name by Jesus, that of Peter, meaning 'rock'. He went on to explain that Jesus had told Simon that he was giving him this new name because he was the 'rock' on which he was going to build his Church.

Suggesting that the children might enjoy finding out what their own names meant, Fr Kevin led them in a prayer of thanksgiving to God for their names, telling them: "God will always call your name with great love".

Asking the children if they liked stories and if they would like to see

the best story book in the world, he lifted up a children's Bible that he had secretly placed in one of their schoolbags at the start of the ceremony. He told them that it was the best storybook in the world because it is about God, and led the children in a prayer of thanksgiving for it, adding that he was looking forward to going into their classrooms at times throughout the year to look at some of these stories.

Next, Fr Kevin brought a candle out of one of the schoolbags, asking the children what they would use it for, before telling them a story about a candle and that each person has "their own special light" inside of them. Thanking God for light, he led the children in thanking God for the light that they shine for others.

Pulling out a lunchbox from one

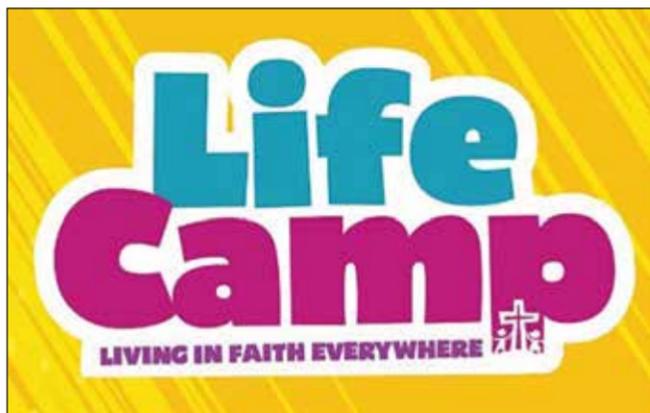
of the schoolbags, Fr Kevin had a conversation with the children about the care put into preparing a lunchbox for someone, telling them that their lunchbox showed that the person who prepared it loved them very much. He also noted that lunch-time was an opportunity to gather together and that not all boys and girls around the world were able to do this, or had enough food, and so they prayed about this.

Lastly, he held up a Teddy Bear, telling the children that it didn't yet have a name but that they would think about this during the year and name it later.

Finishing off with a prayer of thanksgiving for school bags, which Fr Kevin said were "like a friend that never lets you down", everyone then happily sang the hymn, 'Praise Him'.



Beautiful friendships formed and faith celebrated at LIFE Camp 2023 *by Anne Marie Hickey*



A wonderful time in LIFE (Living Everywhere in Faith) Camp was had this year again, in the Templemore Parish, Derry City. The Camp is open to children from the parishes of St Eugene's Cathedral and St Columba's Long Tower, however, more and more each year we are seeing children from various parishes throughout the city enjoying their time together.

The first week of July seen 150 young people, aged 7-14 years, come together for a week of prayer, play and learning. We had experienced coaches who made

the children very welcome and made sure they had fun each day. From cake decorating to football, dodge ball to gymnastics we had it all.

Fr Shaun Doherty celebrated our closing Mass for the first week of Camp. It was Fr Shaun's first Mass for Youth since his ordination the previous Sunday, so it was a memorable time for both Fr Shaun and the Campers. The families of the children all came to Mass to celebrate with them.

St Mary's College, with its excellent facilities, was once again

the venue for the LIFE Camp. Working with Mr Brendan McGinn, principal, and Mrs Roisin Rice, vice-principal, along with the manager, Colleen Canning, the school was well prepared for the two weeks of camp.

As the week progressed, the children grew to know each other more and friendships were formed. It was lovely to see them all together as friends at the Closing Mass each week. Each day, the children spent time in Faith Formation delivered by the Diocesan Youth Coordinator, Niamh McLaughlin.

The second week of Camp saw some new children come for the first time. They had fun together at arts and crafts, bench ball, dance, and, not to forget, the bouncy castle! The scouts of the parish came to deliver training to the young people each week on Ultimate Survival skills!

The closing Mass for the second week was celebrated by Fr Paul Farren, ADM of St Eugene's Cathedral. Again, families celebrated Mass with us all. The

Sacrament of Reconciliation was also available to the children and it was a beautiful sight to see so many taking part.

The leaders formed beautiful friendships with the young people and, no doubt will be delighted to see some of them back again next year.



Prayer Chain



Moved at the turnout of the faithful to venerate 21st century Italian teenager's relic, Bishop Donal told 'The Net'...

Life and early death of Blessed Carlo speaks to a new generation seeking hope and joy



MOVED at the great number of people who had been attracted to come along to St Eugene's Cathedral to welcome and venerate the holy relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis that had been brought from the Sanctuary of the Renunciation in Assisi for a pilgrimage around the Dioceses of Ireland, Bishop Donal remarked afterwards that the life and early death of the 21st century teenager spoke to "a new generation who are seeking hope and joy".

"Blessed Carlo, with his computer skills, would tell us that the Church exists not merely to bring people into our buildings," he remarked, "but to bring Jesus out to the street where life can be very challenging."

He went on to express the hope that "we can learn about Blessed Carlo but, more importantly, learn from him, about how each of us can discover our personal

way to becoming a saint." Pastoral Co-ordinator for the Cathedral Parish, Anne Marie Hickey commented on the September 14 visit, which began with the fragment of the pericardium relic of Blessed Carlo (the membrane that protected his heart) being brought into the Cathedral by Archbishop Domenico Sorrentino and Mons Anthony Figueiredo of the Archdiocese of Assisi, Italy.

"The school children of our Diocese welcomed the relic with a Guard of Honour to its resting place at the foot of the Sanctuary," recalled Anne Marie, adding that this was followed with the concelebration of Mass by Bishop Donal, Archbishop Sorrentino, Mons Figueiredo, and Frs Paul Farren, Shaun Doherty and Frank McLaughlin.

During the ceremony, St Eugene's Primary School Choir

provided the music, while pupils from St Mary's College and St Joseph's Boys' School read the Prayer of the Faithful, and the Offertory gifts were presented by pupils from St Anne's PS and Rosemount PS.

Describing it as "a Parish Celebration Day," Anne Marie went on to say: "After Mass, there was a stream of people waiting to venerate the relic, and this continued all day until 4pm. It was wonderful to see such reverence and to feel such a prayerful atmosphere in the Cathedral.

"The Angelus and Rosary were recited at noon as the stream of the faithful continued. At 3 pm the Divine Mercy Chaplet was prayed, followed by a closing ceremony of Benediction and farewell. A song especially written for the visit by John Emmanuel and Matthew Larkin, called 'The Living Bread', was performed on entry and exit of the Cathedral."

Noting that there had also been an exhibition on Blessed Carlo's life in the Cathedral Hall, where refreshments were served all day, Anne Marie added: "It was truly a blessed day and, as a Parish, it was an honour to host the relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis."

She also recalled that Bishop Donal had unveiled and blessed a new statue to Blessed Carlo earlier in the year, on May 3, which sits beside the Baptismal font in the

Cathedral, saying: "Visitors to the Cathedral ask about Blessed Carlo and we have beautiful prayer cards for all to take home. Everyone is very welcome to come and pray at the statue of Blessed Carlo Acutis in St Eugene's Cathedral".

Archbishop Sorrentino, who is the Bishop of Assisi, Nocera Umbra, Gualdo Tadino and Foligno, expressed delight at being able to take the Blessed Carlo relic around the Irish Dioceses, saying: "We are convinced, given previous experiences, that devotion to this young man, who lived according to the Gospel, is an example and a help to the Church and to the many young people who are seeking points of reference to grasp the beauty of faith."

The first millennial to be beatified, Blessed Carlo, who died of leukaemia aged 15 years old, is known 'as the kid in jeans and sneakers'. With a passion for holiness, he focussed his life on the Eucharist in order to grow in his relationship with Jesus, and is quoted as saying: "The more we receive the Eucharist, the more we will become like Jesus."

The teenager had tried to attend Mass every day and spend time in prayer at Eucharistic Adoration, believing that "when we put ourselves before Jesus in the Eucharist, we become saints."



Sharing the secret of the joy of Blessed Carlo and St Francis, Bishop of Assisi tells packed Cathedral...

When you come to know Jesus you will experience great joy



ST Eugene's Cathedral was filled to overflowing when parishioners, and people from other parishes, were joined by school children and staff from various parts of the Diocese for a special Mass not only to welcome the relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis from Assisi, but to celebrate in prayer the beginning of another school year.

Delivering the homily for the Mass, Archbishop Domenico Sorrentino, the Bishop of Assisi who accompanied the relic for the visit around Ireland, told those gathered that he had a message from Blessed Carlo to them all, especially the young people, and that it could be said in one word - Joy!

"This is what every one of us seeks...isn't it?" he asked, adding: "We want to be happy. This is what our life needs and we do everything to receive this gift, but it is so difficult. We have sometimes moments of joy, moments of happiness, but we want a life full of joy! We want a joy that remains for an eternity. We need eternity! This is what our

heart needs and desires.

"Carlo has come here with a little part of his heart to say to each of you, and especially to the young people like him, 'I found the secret of this joy'."

Noting that Carlo had found this secret in the story of St Francis of Assisi, whose conversion began when he was 23 and who died from illness aged 44, on October 2, 1226, Archbishop Sorrentino added: "What is that joy? That joy has a name. That joy is Jesus. This is the message of Carlo. This was and remains the message of Francis of Assisi."

He continued: "When you come to know Jesus, you will experience a great joy. Francis of Assisi used to speak of a perfect joy, and Carlo, with his perfect smile, speaks of joy. We are in a world full of sadness. We don't need wars any more. We don't need hunger any more. We don't need sadness any more. We need joy. Carlo tells us that Jesus is the secret of our joy."

Noting that the Mass was being celebrated on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Archbishop Sorrentino remarked: "This seems a contradiction. I say that Jesus is joy and then I speak of the Cross. When we think of a cross, we think of pain and suffering, that is not so. We have in the Gospel that our Heavenly Father sent His Son not to condemn us but to save us. The Cross is not a sign of suffering; it is a sign of love.

"When can we express our love...when we give ourselves to others, like a father or mother who gives themselves every day with their work and care of

their children. The Cross in the Christian sense is the most true and deep expression of love. We don't need pain or suffering. We need joy through love. This is the message of this Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross; the exaltation of love of God in Jesus. This message is for each of us. Jesus says, '(name), I love you'."

Jesus

Recalling having knelt before Jesus in the sanctuary before leaving Assisi, to ask what he should say to the people he met in Ireland, Archbishop Sorrentino shared: "Jesus said to me, 'Please don't go to Ireland. Stay here. I will go to Ireland'. He wanted me to be 'Jesus' for you. The goal of the Gospel is for each of us to be Jesus. Jesus gave Himself for us so that we can be Jesus for others.

"We and Jesus are one. As we receive Jesus, all of us are together Jesus as one Body, as one family. This is the reason why Jesus said to Carlo when he was only 15 years old, 'Carlo, do you want to love me? You can do many things for me by remaining on Earth.'"

"Carlo use to join in Mass every day. He had a family, but at the time of Mass he would say to his mum, this is the time of Jesus; it is my joy and I want to participate in the Mass. Like St Francis of Assisi, he had many things, but he knew that Jesus was the secret of our joy."

He went on to note that St Francis of Assisi used to say that every time we celebrate Mass, from His Kingdom in Heaven, Jesus comes down on our altar, and that Carlo said that every time we are at Mass, the Eucharist

becomes our highway to Heaven.

And so, he told those gathered: "We have here, on the altar, the secret of our joy. Let's take this secret and announce it in our hearts, homes, families, schools, streets and places of work. Jesus is really what we need to be in a fraternal society.

"We do not need a world where people are killed. We need a world where all people are safe and where all children are welcome in their mother's womb and grow up in the joy and love of Jesus. This is the world that we need.

"I brought the relic of Carlo here to bring this message to you. My wish and prayer is that Jesus speaks to each one of joy deep in your heart, especially each young person."

Giving an assurance that sainthood is possible for all, Archbishop Sorrentino concluded: "We can become saints like Carlo, not out of our faults or strengths, but out of the strength of Jesus. If we receive His Body like Carlo and Francis of Assisi, we can become saints. We are already saints in our Baptism, but we need to become saints in our lives as well."

The congregation burst out in a long, spontaneous applause as a sign of their deep appreciation of the powerful words spoken by the Archbishop in his homily, and Bishop Donal added his appreciation, saying: "We want our young people to become saints. We want to be a city of joy."

At the end of Mass, the young people got an opportunity to venerate the Blessed Carlo relic before returning to school.



HOPE Limavady celebrates 10-year milestone with another golden quality camp



HOPE Limavady this year celebrated 10 years of the annual summer camp that has been offering young parishioners the opportunity of a week of faith, fun and friendship over the last decade, in the hope of helping the parish to evolve as a faith community.

Such has been the success of HOPE, founded by Fr James Devine while he was curate in Limavady and Leo McCloskey, St Canice's PS, that it has spread into the neighbouring parishes of Claudy, Banagher and Dungiven, which have experienced the same huge interest for their parish camps.

This year, Limavady's online system crashed when over 1,500 devices logged on to the site for registration for the 300 places on the camp, which caters for children aged 9-16 years of age.

There were over 40 sporting, artistic and cultural activities on the Limavady 2023 programme and excellent faith formation opportunities, with inspiring talks by ex-gangster and now international speaker and author, John Pridmore, and Dominican Bro Benedict McGlinchey, and 10 priests coming along to hear the confessions of over 400 people.

Despite the escalating cost of living, the fee for the camp has remained at £10 down the years, in an effort to make it affordable to all, while providing quality tops, activities and speakers. In return, the people of the parish, including businesses, have happily supported HOPE events, such as this year's 'Cushy Glen' pantomime, a parish breakfast, table quiz, and online Ricketty Wheel Raffle, or through Friends of HOPE.

Central to the ethos of HOPE Camp is that everyone involved is special, including the dedicated volunteers, many of whom sacrifice a week's work or holidays to help make the camp the great success that it is. Limavady benefits from the help of 90 volunteers, aged 16+ years, from all denominations and backgrounds. Over the past 10 years, HOPE Limavady has seen year on year, those who were camp participants return as volunteers when they reach the age to do so, and also joining the organising committee. Prayer is also very much in the mix for the success of the camp, with parishioners keeping it in their prayers in the lead-up to and during the week itself.



Banagher HOPE Camp II a week to remember!



big thanks must go to Cora and Gerard Kerlin at Burkes Chippy, who very generously fed all the children and volunteers on the Wednesday of the Camp, which we are extremely grateful for. As a result of all the funding and sponsorship, we were able to feed the children lunch every day, taking some pressure off families during this difficult time.

It is hard to believe that another year of HOPE is over, but we look forward to next year to bring bigger and better things to the young people in Banagher for HOPE camp 2024!

HOPE camp returned to Banagher for a week of fun, faith and friendship for the youth of the parish during the first week of August.

Over 150 children were able to enjoy a week of exciting activities, including Ninja Warriors, Cupcake decorating, Zumba, art, a variety of sports, life-saving skills and lots more, including two very exciting days away to Foyle Arena and The Lake in Kilrea.

Richard Moore, from Children in Crossfire, came to speak to the Camp about his life story and captured the children and adults' attention with what he had to

say! Charlotte Deeney and Karen Feeney led other faith formation activities, including guided meditation and Adoration.

Newly ordained Fr Shaun Doherty celebrated the closing Mass with Fr Micheál on the Friday, for our final day at camp.

Over 50 volunteers took time out of their busy schedules for the week to make it one the children would be sure to remember.

This was Banagher's second year running the HOPE Camp and it was made possible through all the fundraising efforts of the community. A special word of thanks must go to the O'Kane/Murphy family, who donated

money from a fundraiser for 'Toby', and we are very grateful that they chose us to share it with.

Another special thanks must be given to Sean and Pauline McGrellis for their organisation of a Golf Day in aid of HOPE camp.

The main sponsor of the jersey this year was SPAR Feeny and the HOPE committee in Banagher really appreciated this, and the funding from other sponsors, including Carnanbane Building Contractors Ltd, Eamonn Feeney Roofing, Signature Tiles, Serendipity and ALPS, and also Coastal Core providing medical cover for the week. A



HOPE Camp Claudy-Craigbane 2023 – another fantastic week of faith, fun & friendship



Launch guest speaker, Martina Davidson, Head of RE at St Cecilia's College, Derry.

HOPE Camp Claudy-Craigbane 2023 was another fantastic week in helping our parish evolve through times of fun activities, faith formation and building friendships enjoyed by over 100 children and 40 volunteers.

With faith a key element of the Limavady-founded HOPE Camp ethos, the Claudy-Craigbane Camp is dedicated to young Italian, St Dominic Savio, who often prayed before the Tabernacle and was studying to be a priest under Salesian, St John Bosco, when he became ill and died aged 14.

The Camp's St Dominic Savio Perpetual Cup is presented to the Camp House of the Week, with the Houses named after the Parish Patron Saints, Patrick, Brigid and Joseph, as well as St Dominic Savio, St Bernadette, St Therese of Lisieux, St Francesco, St Jacinta, St Francis of Assisi and Blessed Carlo Acutis. The 2023 winning House was St Francesco, Team 7.

The guest speaker at this year's launch night was Martina Davidson, Head of RE at St Cecilia's College in Derry, who is passionate about spreading the Word of God, especially to young people.

Lighting the HOPE candle



for the intentions of the Camp, Martina went on to speak to those gathered in St Patrick's Church, Claudy, for the launch ceremony, encouraging the young people to find out what they were good at and to focus on it.

She told them: "There is something that you are really good at, that you have been created to do and which will bring you joy and peace. All you have to do is trust God. He tells us in the Bible that He has a plan for us to prosper.

"I have a prayer that I say to God before doing anything, 'Not what I want but what You want'. This is what Jesus said in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. God will take you by the hand and you will be doing something in your life that will bring joy and a sense of purpose."

Quoting Blessed Carlo Acutis saying that God does not make photocopies, only originals, Martina continued: "You are completely unique. There is no one who has ever lived or ever will live in the future exactly like you. God wants you not to be like everyone else, but to be a true image of yourself. You are created to act and look like God. You have a spark of divinity in you."

Mentioning St Therese of Lisieux's 'Little Way' philosophy, of doing things little things with great love, Martina pointed out: "The little things you do every day matter, as they matter to God. For example, how you treat people; you have the power to create heaven or hell in the lives of people around you. Young people want to change the world, start today with St Therese's 'Little Way'; wash dishes without being asked, say 'sorry' and 'thank you'...this will all change the world."

She added: "If you want to live a life of love and service, you are going to need Jesus. Holy Communion is the heart of Jesus.

He gives you His heart so that your heart will become like His heart and you will love like Jesus."

Explaining that Jesus can be encountered in the Mass and in prayer, Martina encouraged the young people take make prayer a part of their busy days, even when brushing their teeth, reminding them of God's message, that He is always with us.

Faith formation during the week of the Camp included Confessions, Eucharistic Adoration, a Q&A session with Fr Charles Reche, cfr, Fr Stephen Quinn, ocd, and Search youth leaders, a visit to the IOSAS Centre, and the Closing Mass concelebrated by Bishop Donal and Fr David O'Kane, PP.

Highlighting the potential of HOPE Camp to help young people in parishes to light the fire of faith, Bishop Donal shared his recent experience of being in Portugal for World Youth Day with around a million-and-a-half young people from all over the world, who were "shouting and cheering for Pope Francis".

He went on to speak about the three key messages that Pope Francis had given to those gathered in Lisbon for WYD: to go out to the world and shine; to make space in the midst of the constant noise of the world to listen; and to not be afraid.

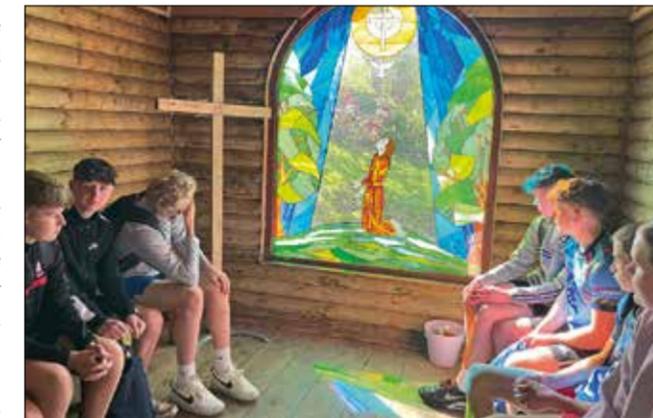
Camp 2023 came to a close

leaving all involved with wonderful memories of the experiences shared, in trying out such activities as Zumba, Ceili dancing, Nerf Wars, Laser Quest, art, baking, and a variety of sports, including football, rounders, volleyball, basketball shoot-out, wheelbarrow races, and water games, not to mention trips to Lake Kilrea water park, Oakfire Adventure, and the IOSAS Centre.

Central to the success of HOPE are the many generous volunteers, with the young leaders being the life and soul of the Camp, and this year, as a token of thanks, they were treated to a personal development session followed by a fun time at Splash, Magherafelt.

Funding is another essential element to make up the shortfall, with the Camp registration fee only £10, and all are extremely grateful to the Camp's main funders, Euro Meat Link Ltd, Clarendon Chiropractic, MiDD Electrical, M Kelly Construction Ltd, All State NI and Derry Credit Union, as well as the Friends of HOPE donors, which mainly consists of local businesses, and the many others who supported fundraising events.

As Bishop Donal remarked at the closing Mass, the HOPE Camp is the parish's gift to its precious young people. Long may it continue to reap the rewards.



Winners of the St Dominic Savio Perpetual Cup.

Dungiven's first HOPE Camp an outstanding success



THIS year, Dungiven Parish ran its first parish summer scheme, following the ethos and chartership of HOPE Summer Camps (Help Our Parish Evolve). HOPE Catholic Summer Camp first started in Limavady in 2013. The ethos of HOPE is summarised in the HOPE slogan: Faith, Fun & Friendship. HOPE summer camps aim to revive the Catholic faith of the young people living within our parish.

Back in November 2022, a group of local volunteers formed the HOPE Summer Camp Dungiven committee, with aspirations to encourage the young people in the parish to come together through their faith. After months of planning, fundraising and seeking support from local businesses and companies, we were able to achieve our goal.

HOPE Dungiven began

on Sunday, July 30, with a community Mass. A total of 123 young people joined Fr Seamus Kelly and Fr Joseph Varghese to celebrate the opening of the HOPE Summer Camp, alongside their families, the committee and numerous volunteers. This was the beginning of a fun packed week for all 124 young people registered.

Faith Formation was a huge part of the week for all involved in the Camp. The young people had the opportunity to reconnect and strengthen their faith. We heard about forgiveness from Richard Moore, Children of Crossfire. Richard told the young people his story about how, at the age of 10, he was shot by a British soldier during the Troubles in Derry City, which resulted in him losing his sight. He talked to the young people about forgiveness and how

his faith gave him the strength to face his trauma, accept it and live his life to the full.

The young people also had the opportunity to meet ex-London gangster, John Pridmore. John told them about his past life and how he turned his life around once he found his faith. He explained to the young people how his journey was a difficult one, but with God's guidance he swapped his gun for his Rosary beads.

We learnt about Carlo Acutis too and his short but faith-filled life. We learnt about the strength that he gained from his faith after being diagnosed with a terminal illness at the young age of 15, and how his courage, journey and faith is still inspiring many across the world. In addition, we celebrated the Blessed Sacrament and attended confessions.

Each day, the young people were encouraged to challenge themselves through a variety of educational, interactive, intergenerational and fun activities. These included Cookery, Sports, Circus Skills, Dancing, Ninja Assault Courses, Skate Boarding, Arts, Woodwork, Online Safety, Virtual Gaming Bus and much more.

Through the generosity of our parish, community and local businesses, the young people were also able to attend two trips during the summer camp. We spent a day in Gortin Outdoor Activity Centre, where we completed combat archery, bush craft activities, team building activities and river gorging. The young people also had the opportunity to complete a zipline course, one of which was 500 metres long and followed the scenic River Faughan.

The week was a huge success and the young people thoroughly enjoyed the wide range of

activities scheduled. The feedback from the parents and young people made all the hard work very worthwhile. One parent commented: "Passing on our thanks for a fabulous week of varied religious, educational, fun and sporting activities. The week was extremely well organised and ran like clockwork. My young person had an absolute ball. I am so glad that she was able to experience this week. It was lovely to see so many young people in the chapel as well."

Other parents commented on how the variety of activities on offer was an opportunity for their young person to get involved, as the majority of local summer camps were mainly sports orientated, and some mentioned how their young people benefited from meeting new peers and making new friends, and how the week had a positive impact on so many, including their emotional wellbeing.

The committee would like to take this opportunity to thank our Parish, Fr Seamus and Fr Joseph, for their support and prayers. We would like to thank our volunteers, who gave up their time to help ensure the camp ran smoothly and help ensure the young people's safety. The committee express their most heartfelt appreciation to the whole community of Dungiven, Gortnaghey and Drumsurn for their support, to all those who attended our Big Breakfast, our Quiz Night and donated to our street collection.

Lastly, without the generosity of our local businesses we would not have been able to offer the young people such a fun-packed week. The HOPE Summer Camp, Dungiven Parish would not have been possible without the backing of our entire community.



THIS month, Bronagh reflects on Pope Francis' announcement about meeting with young children from different continents in November and her 'take aways' from the Diocesan Religious Education Conference that she attended as a volunteer.

James shares his experience of the visit of the Blessed Carlo Acutis relic to the Cathedral and his thoughts on the draw of the Italian teenager, while Shea reflects on the impact on his faith life in realising that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist.

Appreciating the patience of his parents in his development, Sean writes about the importance of this virtue for helping others reach their potential, and John highlights that there is no conflict between faith and science, citing the example of astrophysicist, Mgrs Georges Lemaître.



Hollie Frystal,
Co Tyrone
Deanery.



Bronagh
Doherty,
Co Derry
Deanery



Peter Grant,
Inishowen
Deanery.



John Augustine
Joseph, Derry
City Deanery.



James Tourish,
Derry City
Deanery.



Shea Doherty,
Derry City
Deanery



Evan Curran,
Derry City
Deanery



Seán
McLaughlin,
Co Tyrone
Deanery

The realisation that Jesus is truly present with us in the Eucharist was amazing by Shea

THIS month, I am writing about the Eucharist and how I feel that it has impacted me on my faith journey.

To start with, I didn't really understand the Eucharist, or even know that there were Eucharistic miracles at all. I never really heard of them until I began to go to Adoration more regularly and began to really prepare my heart for Jesus in the Mass, for example, to fast an hour before Mass starts or receive the Sacrament of Confession beforehand if needed, so that I can receive the Eucharist with a pure heart.

My favourite encounters with the Blessed Sacrament have to be during the Healing Services in the White Chapel, at Galliagh, normally run by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal (CFRs). These nights are so incredibly graced by God, I feel like my soul is cleansed every time I attend. It is truly an unbelievable evening, especially when first discovering your faith. For me, it is a time of personal prayer, just me and Jesus, with me trying to develop a relationship with Him. Sometimes, there may also be praise and worship music playing, which is great to have to help connect to Jesus in the Eucharist.

When I began my faith journey,



I never really understood that the Eucharist is actually Jesus present in the Monstrance, or even in the Holy Communion I received. It took me a while to understand that it really is Christ and not a symbol, and when I found this out it really was a game changer. The realisation that it is truly Jesus present with us was truly amazing.

Sadly, I have never actually witnessed any Eucharistic miracles, but I have read about them on the Internet and have done a bit of research into them. It blew my mind reading about the scientific details showing proof of Jesus truly being present in the Monstrance. This is a miracle that strengthens my faith every time it crosses my mind.

What can young Catholics learn from the life of Carlo Acutis? by James

ON September 14, a Relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis arrived at St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry. A moving experience for many, the story of Carlo Acutis' life is one of devotion to Christ, love of neighbour and perseverance through hardship. Attendance at the Mass for the Relic's arrival was tremendous, not a single space at any pew was free, and so, many took to standing throughout the Mass, with members of the faithful even having to stand in the Narthex due to the amount of people present at the Mass.

With this description, a question may arise for some, "What is it about a young Italian teenager that is so compelling that it induces so many to attend a Mass for the visitation of his Relic?" Well, the answer isn't all too complicated, Carlo's life epitomised what a young Catholic's values and principles should be, and it is this, as well as the many anecdotal stories about Carlo that have made him so admired and loved by Catholics throughout the world.

Born in 1991 to Italian parents in London, neither of his parents were religious but, even from a young age, Carlo possessed a strong faith. While in nursery, he was hassled by other children at times, causing his Polish baby-sitter to advise him to set boundaries so that the other children would not steal his toys. However, Carlo's response was simple, "Jesus would not be happy if I lost my temper".

Even during summer, while staying with his maternal grandparents, he would join a group of elderly women to pray the Rosary after a day at the beach. He worried about the well-being of his peers and friends too, inviting friends whose parents were going through divorce to his house so that he could support them. He also defended students in school who were targeted by

bullies.

Carlo would also intervene when he witnessed misogyny, as when girls would be whistled at or harassed, he would step in and tell the boys doing so to stop. Many stories like these exist about Carlo and there is no doubt he would lead a holy and dignified life, however, in early October 2006, at the age of 15 he was diagnosed with acute promyelocytic leukaemia. His health quickly deteriorated, but his faith remained steadfast as he offered his suffering for the Church and the Pope, Benedict XVI. Acutis fell into a coma and suffered a cerebral haemorrhage, dying on October 12, 2006.

Throughout his life, Carlo displayed the values of love, kindness, forgiveness and courage. He put his faith in God and did not worry about things he could not control. In a world that has been corrupted in various ways by so many influences and powers, Carlo enjoyed the simple things in life and knew that as long as God was in control, he could feel safe and comfortable.

In the Gospels, Jesus talks about something that has been interpreted as having 'childlike faith', as He says in Matthew 18:3-4, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Humility

Jesus calls us not to have the maturity or understanding of the faith similar to a child, but he commands us to have the humility of a child. Children understand that they are dependent, that they need to rely on their families/guardians in order for them to survive and grow up fruitfully, and it is in this way that God desires us to have faith in Him, knowing that



we truly rely on His love and His plan for us. Carlo knew this, and even when experiencing the worst pain he would ever endure, he understood that while he remained humble and strong in faith, God would, indeed, be his protector and his loving Father.

Youth today face many challenges, in both a personal and societal aspect. Studies indicate that greater amounts of young people experience loneliness than ever before, despite living in an interconnected digital world. Anxiety and depression are seemingly on the rise for young people too, but where does all of this come from?

There is a true lack of purpose and direction amongst youth. We hear about awful and tragic cases of deaths due to drug and alcohol abuse, as well as the issues that arise from gambling from a young age. These activities are seen as outlets, as ways of expressing one's youthful nature, but what are the fruits of these things? They do not put money in your pocket, bread on your table or wisdom in your humanly arsenal of experience. Instead, they manifest and embed themselves into the lives of people, corrupting both the mind and the heart, until their indulgence is seen as accepted by many in society, otherwise known as 'becoming normal'.

Pope John Paul II's use of the phrase 'Culture of Death' can

also be applied when talking about these practices, as although they may not always cause the physical death of the user, they most certainly harm one's own spiritual health. St Augustine once wrote, "Take care of your body as if you were going to live forever; and take care of your soul as if you were going to die tomorrow." It is important that we recognise that both the body and the soul are affected by sin, and that even the effects may not always be so apparent.

Young Catholics must remain faithful and strong, even in the face of adversity, pressure and seclusion. We must never change our values and principles to suit the worldview of certain groups or individuals that are contrary to our beliefs. We must not appease the immoral desires of society and we must always maintain a firm commitment to the guidance of the Church.

But as Venerable Bishop Fulton J Sheen once said, "Can you build anything down? You cannot!" We must not just reject what is wrong, but support what is good, and righteous. The core fundamental Christian values of love, forgiveness and the pursuit of justice for all should be ever-present in our lives, and luckily for us, the life of Carlo Acutis serves as an example of how we should act and live, as young Catholics, in this world.

Pope Francis announces meeting with children for November 2023...

Promoting faith in children by Bronagh

POPE Francis appeared for the usual Sunday Angelus on the balcony of St Peter's Square and announced that, on November 6, he will meet with children from five different continents in Paul VI Hall. Before he announced his upcoming event, he prayed the Rosary with five children, a representative for the five continents, with October the month of the Rosary.

The Pope has launched this event as part of the theme, "Let's learn from boys and girls". This is an event set to spread the word of God to more children across the world. Children are the future of

the world, and most importantly the Catholic Church, so Pope Francis aims to get children involved in the church from a young age, so that they grow up as the church is also growing older.

Faith is taught to many children at home and school. Catholic schools in Northern Ireland have a strong religious curriculum which ensures that children in CCMS maintained schools are taught about faith in a way children can understand.

CCMS state: "Schools must provide Religious Education in line with this syllabus, which at Key Stages 1 and 2 includes the



Revelation of God, the Christian Church and Morality." This ensures that children learn about

morals, including right vs wrong, through stories of the Bible and Jesus' teachings. This ensures that

The great Mgrs Lemaître! *by John*

IN modern society, there is often a dichotomy between faith and science. It is often said that they are irreconcilable, and that faith fails to hold up in a world where science provides answers to our burning questions about our origin and about how we can progress as a society. However, this has not always been the case historically. From St Albert the Great to Gregor Mendel, many great Catholics, whether they were priests or lay people, have been prominent scientists and devout Catholics simultaneously.

This month, I attended a Thomistic Institute lecture about Mgrs Georges Lemaître by Prof Jonathan Lunine from Cornell University. Lemaître is a very underappreciated astrophysicist, however, despite knowing this to some extent, I was quite surprised at how underappreciated he actually was and how much pushback he got for his theory of the primeval atom in 1931 (what would eventually become the Big Bang Theory), not due to any inaccuracy in his theory but simply due to the aversion of certain astrophysicists at that time, to the idea of a beginning to the Universe (which was what

Lemaître proposed and what the data at that time showed).

Though his theory was not entirely correct in some respects (Lemaître predicted a cold start to the universe whereas in fact there was a hot beginning to the universe), his idea would eventually be vindicated in 1964, just before he died, with the discovery of the Cosmic Microwave Background. He also theorised and formulated many other things as well!

Even though Lemaître's theory stated that the Universe had a beginning, he never said that it was a proof for God's existence. Though he was a priest, he didn't conflate his theological ideas with his scientific ideas so as to state that they were one. However, that doesn't mean that his theological and philosophical formation did not influence him at all in his thinking.

The lecturer at the talk stated that in an early draft of his 1931 paper on the primeval atom, Lemaître wrote: "I think that every one who believes in a supreme being supporting every being and every acting [sic.], believes also that God is essentially hidden and may be glad to see how present

physics provides a veil hiding the creation." [1] Though he cut this out of his final version, this sentence clearly showed that Lemaître thought that God was hidden in the laws of physics. He clearly shows that there doesn't need to be a dichotomy between faith and science.

One of the things that I found interesting in the lecture was that the second paragraph of his 1931 paper (published on Nature) was very similar to some writings of St Augustine of the nature of time.

Lemaître wrote: "If the world has begun with a single quantum, the notions of space and time would altogether fail to have any meaning at the beginning; they would only being to have a sensible meaning when the original quantum had been divided into a sufficient number of quanta".

Augustine also said something similar in the City of God: "For if eternity and time are rightly distinguished by this, that time does not exist without some movement and transition, while in eternity there is no change, who does not see that there could have been no time had not some creature been made, by which

some motion could give birth to change?"

The lecturer pointed out that if creature is defined as some 'thing' that interacts with other things in the cosmos, then both Lemaître and Augustine were saying the same thing [2]. They both conclude their points the same way as well, which in the words of Lemaître was, "If this suggestion is correct, the beginning of the world happened a little before the beginning of space and time". The lecturer noted that Lemaître didn't cite St Augustine, but that Augustine must have had a "big impression" on him (ibid).

Lemaître is not the only example of a great scientist who was a devout Catholic. There are countless other examples, like Copernicus, who theorised the model of heliocentrism, and Gregor Mendel, who made the rules of heredity and was posthumously referred to as the father of genetics. These scientists showed in their time and for us now that there is no conflict between faith and science but rather, they were able to make scientific discoveries whilst being devout and sincere in their faith.

Lemaître put it the best in



Lemaître with Pope Pius XII

a speech he gave at the 1936 Catholic Congress in Malines, when he said that, the Christian scientist "knows that everything has been made by God, but he also knows that God does not replace his creatures...The supreme Being can never be reduced to a scientific hypothesis. Divine revelation has not taught us what we were capable of discovering for ourselves, at least when these natural truths are not indispensable for understanding supernatural truth. Therefore, the Christian scientist goes forward freely, secure in the knowledge that his research cannot conflict with his faith" [3].

[1] Georges Lemaître, "The beginning of the world from the point of view of quantum theory", *Nature*, Vol. 127, 1931, 706.

[2] Jonathan Lunine, "Faith and the Expanding Universe of Georges Lemaître", <https://churchlifejournal.nd.edu/articles/faith-and-the-expanding-universe-of-georges-lemaître/> Accessed: 12/10/2023

[3] Mariano Artigas, "Science and faith: the origin of the universe. Georges Lemaître: the father of the big bang", <https://en.unav.edu/web/ciencia-razon-y-fe/ciencia-y-fe-el-origen-del-universo-georges-lemaître-el-padre-del-big-bang> Accessed: 12/10/2023

Patience is required for developing people's potential *by Seán*

IT has often occurred to me throughout my 16 years that for humanity to be successful, patience is required. Patience with those who need it all the time, and patience with those who do not need it all the time. Also, there are times when some people need patience when they are unfocused and troubled, and when their mind is far from their task.

Patience is a concept more

complex than it seems at first sight. It has sub-levels – restraint, kindness, respect, calmness, and creativity. Some people are hard to talk to, but they need to be spoken to for their own good. I have met many patient people in my life, the most notable being my mother and father because I am the one who is subject to their patience.

Patient people learn to recognise someone who can learn to work

hard and productively, and they learn to take hold of this potential and draw it out, however long it takes and however difficult it is to help that person see their own potential or skill in something. Also, it is not only good to help people discover their potential or skill that they have in any field, but also to help people to rediscover it.

I previously mentioned that patience is also necessary for those who are having a bad day, when they are not able to concentrate on their task. In circumstances like these a person must be reminded of their abilities, shown how to uncover talent, confidence and skill, maybe even shown how to be patient with themselves. This patience will let them realise that whatever they are trying to do will work out in the long run. Those who can work hard but have lost their ability to balance themselves deserve to be encouraged with patience, so that they can regain the composure that they require.

I believe that every person deserves to be given the best opportunity that they can to achieve their goals in life. Goals are harder for a person to achieve when they are not patient with themselves, and others are not patient with them.

Too much patience can lead to none or very little inspiration and very little discipline, but some patience is absolutely required to build a successful human being, who can function and have vision for what is achievable and what is not.

It is put most clearly in 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14: "Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone."

These short few lines seem basic, yet they hold such a large part of the way Jesus instructed us to live our lives. We see so many times throughout the New Testament just how patient Jesus was during his time amongst humans here on Earth. In my opinion, the most notable of these instances is the Lord's words on the Cross as he slowly died in agony after torture and crucifixion. Luke 23:34 records Him saying: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

Jesus spoke with great patience and understanding, even as the Romans below Him divided up His clothing amongst themselves by bidding. This is such a significant example of how understanding is required before judgement. Jesus did not hold the Romans responsible for His suffering and execution. He was aware that they were humans who knew no better; they grew up in a place where the morality that He sought to cast upon the world was yet to be known, and that they couldn't have understood their actions. Jesus taught peace and restraint where necessary, patience with those who required

it, to make them a better person.

As I quoted previously, from 1 Thessalonians, "help the weak" signifies the requirement for identifying the people who need that patience, the people who are weak in mind, weak in body, weak in their comprehension of the world. They cannot be judged for it because there is a reason that they cannot reach their potential independently.

Primarily, we must allow others to see what they were doing wrong for themselves, provide opportunities for reflection before rushing to punishment. Redirecting people to the correct path or method is the most patient and kindest route to rehabilitation.

From 1 Thessalonians 5, like before, in verse 15 it is stated, "Always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else."



Kindness and patience must be given back and forth between each other, and then it will be embedded. After that it can be spread further.

I've learned that patience is required when interacting with people, for developing people's potential. Being patient and allowing others to discover how they can best excel is more effective, in the same way that Jesus understood the narrow view of those who troubled Him.

continued from page 10

religion is rooted in children's lives from a young age.

Children have such a bright outlook, and Pope Francis has remarked that we all could learn from children and their childhood outlook on faith. He said the desire is to go back to having pure, childlike feelings because the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like little children.

I recently attended the Religious Education Conference held in St Columb's College, Derry, as a volunteer. This event was held over two days and saw hundreds of teachers and other staff members from Catholic schools attend each day. This shows the work that is done within schools, with the help of many external bodies such as Derry Youth Ministry and Derry Catechetical Centre, is forefront and vital to children's learning.

The conference had talks from many inspiring people about

how turning to God and relying on faith helped them, as well as guiding teachers on resources and activities to help children in both primary and post-primary education settings.

"Children teach us the pureness of relationships and the spontaneous acceptance of the stranger and respect for all creation. Dear children, I too am waiting for you all to learn from you," said Pope Francis (Vatican News, Sep23).

Pope Francis has called us all to "learn from our boys and girls" (Vatican News, Sep23). By learning from children, adults in the Catholic Church will see faith from a different angle; a simplified and positive view, one that may help many adults integrate God into their daily lives and understand him better. Children do not know racism or hatred, and Pope Francis calls us to be like them, to love one another as Jesus taught us.

Youth 2000 Prayer Groups

VISIT the Youth 2000 website to find your nearest Youth 2000 prayer group or get in touch by emailing prayergroups@youth2000.ie

for help to start a new Youth 2000 prayer group in your area!

Youth 2000 'Franciscan at Home'

Are you curious to know more about the Holy Spirit? Have you ever considered your relationship in prayer with the Holy Spirit? Would you like to learn more about the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church, especially in the sacraments?

Why not join Youth 2000 via

zoom on Thursdays at 8pm during the month of October to learn more from Franciscan at Home.

The sessions consist of watching a few short videos and discussing the content together.

For more information contact Eithne Nic Giolla Cathain at formation@youth2000.ie.

Pet blessings to celebrate Feast of St Francis of Assisi

Ballymagroarty



Drumragh



Long Tower



Clonmany



Marking the Season of Creation in Culmore & Steelstown

by Patricia McCormack

WITH the liturgical Season of Creation having come to an end on October 4, the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, we reflect on how it was celebrated in Our Lady of Lourdes, Steelstown.

It was a special time to contemplate and give thanks for the beauty of Creation.

It was also a time to become painfully aware of how the way we live today is changing the climate, polluting the seas, disordering the balance of life and dispossessing the poor and future generations. It was a time to commit to living more thoughtfully and sustainably.

This year, we began the Season of Creation with the images of severe heat waves, droughts and wildfires fresh in our minds. Mid-September, the devastating floods in Libya shocked us. Closer to home, we had the initial inconvenience of algae polluted northern beaches... a danger to dogs and swimmers. Later, there was the growing

revelation of the critical state of Lough Neagh, where excessive nutrients from farming discharge and sewage, along with higher water temperatures, have produced deadly bacteria killing fish, birds and posing concern about drinking water.

To heighten awareness of 'The Season of Creation', we had posters in the Church foyer and a large 'Renew the Face of the Earth' banner on the back wall. In the sanctuary, the banner on the ambo announced this year's logo of a mighty river and the theme - 'Let Justice and Peace Flow' (Amos 5.24). The floral displays were designed to also reflect the theme, and appropriate hymns were included by musicians and choirs.

The Season of Creation was highlighted by Fr McDevitt and Mon Donnelly in the welcome at all vigil and Sunday Masses. The Penitential Rite confessed our failings in the proper stewardship

of the Earth. Homilies helped us to see care of the Earth in the light of Gospel values, and Prayers of the Faithful encouraged us to respond to the cry of the earth and those most impacted by the climate crisis. 'A Prayer for Our Earth' (Pope Francis, Laudato Si') was prayed post-Communion, aided by a visual presentation. Printed prayer cards were also provided.

Parishioners responded very generously to an appeal by the Parish Eco Group for surplus 'new or nearly' items and a sale was held on Sunday, September 24 in the adjoining Conference Room, raising £650 for Trocaire.

In the coming months, the Parish Eco Group will continue to explore practical ways in which we can respond. Together our individual actions can form a great river.

"Indeed, there is much to be done." (Pope Francis)



Loreto thanks for Coleraine support in South Sudan Mission

by Sr Rosemary Gallagher

ON the weekend of September 30, Sr Orla Treacey, Loreto Order, spoke at all four Masses in St John's Parish, Coleraine, to thank all who have generously supported the work in Rumbek, South Sudan, over the past number of years.

The Loreto Mission in Rumbek started in 2008 with a secondary school for girls. So far, more than 290 students have graduated from the school. This is a remarkable achievement in the context where girls are more likely to die in childbirth than to complete second-level education, and where

53% of girls are married before their 18th birthday.

The realisation that the local children had no access to primary education led to the opening of a primary school, which now has over 1,000 students, both boys and girls. These children benefit from the School Feeding Programme and the care offered by Mary Ward Primary Health Care Clinic.

The Mary Ward Health Clinic provides medical care for students at both primary and secondary level, as well as for the local community, with special emphasis

on the most vulnerable, those suffering from Epilepsy, which is a common illness in the area and where those suffering from it face stigma, isolation and neglect.

The Nutrition Programme provides 60,000 meals annually to about 400 people, which includes children, babies and their carers.

Pope Francis visited South Sudan in February, and in preparation for the visit Sr Orla organised a Peace Walk. She and about 80 young people walked 150 kilometers (93 miles) from Rumbek to Juba, the capital of the

country to greet the Pope.

Each evening, some members of the 'Walking for Peace' pilgrimage performed a play which delivered a message of peace, compassion and forgiveness. A message of profound significance in a country where revenge is part of the culture and 400,000 people have been killed, and more than 2,000 million displaced since independence in 2011.

Pope Francis arrived on Sr Orla's 50th birthday, so all in Rumbek are convinced that was why he came to South Sudan!



Fr Neil Farren, PP Coleraine, with Loreto Sisters, Sr Orla Treacey and Sr Rosemary Gallagher.

Faughanvale Mission a source of great grace and many blessings

THE week of Mission in the parish of Faughanvale with the Dominicans, in the latter half of September, was a grace-filled time, when God touched hearts, changed lives and encouraged the living out of the precious gift of the Catholic faith.

This was how parish priest, Fr Noel McDermott summed up the special time of prayer with Frs Damian and Brian, and Bro Ruaidhri, from Dungiven, who has since been ordained.

The Mission theme was 'Behold, I am making all things new' (Rev 21:5), and it opened with an invitation to 'Freedom in Christ' at the Saturday Vigil and Sunday Masses. The themes for the talks during the week were: Mercy; Our Lady and the Rosary; Witnesses for Christ; Healing, Sacrament

of the Sick; and Death, Eucharist and the Goal of Heaven. The week of prayer ended on Saturday, September 23, with 10 am Mass in both churches, followed by Blessing of the Graves.

During the week, the missionaries did parish visitations, including visiting the schools and holding 'meet and greets', prayed the Rosary with parishioners at the old graveyard, and had a Blessing of Roses.

Thanking God for "these days of grace, blessing and conversion in our parish", Fr Noel added that it had truly been "a week of grace and graces for many hearts, souls and lives".

Paying tribute to the three missionaries "for their zeal, their hard work, their explaining of the Catholic faith to us in a reassuring,

challenging, sometimes amusing but always thought-provoking way", Fr Noel said: "I deeply appreciate all that they have done for every person in this parish, including myself, through their ministry.

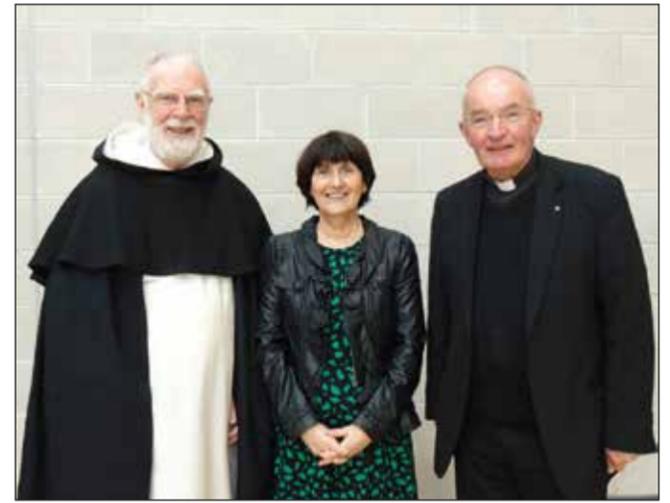
"I hope that they will continue to pray for us and assure them that we will pray for them in their Dominican vocation and for the continuing success of their ministry throughout Ireland."

He also expressed deep appreciation of the effort made by parishioners to come along each day for the 6.30 am 10 am Masses and the 7.30 pm services in Star of The Sea and St Mary's Churches, saying: "It was wonderful to see so many in attendance at all the Masses and services during this Mission. I know that God, in His

own time and in His own way, has blessed each one for their generosity and the sacrifices made during this week."

Fr Noel went on to pay tribute to the three parish primary schools "for their warm welcome and wonderful hospitality", and to the Folk Group at St Mary's, the choir at Star of the Sea and "all who sang so beautifully at the Masses and liturgies during Mission Week", and to the sacristans and parish secretary and all who helped out in any way.

Saying that the Mission week "will live long in the memory of our parish as one of great grace and many blessings," he hopefully added: "If God spares us all 'til 2026, we will gladly do it again."



Faughanvale



Star of the Sea



Omagh Churches Forum celebrate Good Relations Week



TO mark Good Relations Week in Omagh, the Churches Forum joined with members of the community on a 'Churches Together' Walk on Tuesday, September 19.

More than 40 people gathered at Trinity Presbyterian Church, then walked to St Columba's, Church of Ireland, followed by Sacred Heart, Roman Catholic Church, and

finished at Omagh Methodist.

At each church there was information on the history of the church, followed by a time of reflection in song, Bible readings and Prayers for Creation, Community, World Needs and Health.

The evening finished with a time to mingle with each other and share refreshments.



Holy Family Parish to build on grace-filled retreat so all feel belong to God's Family

'WE belong to God's Family' was the theme for the Ballymagroarty, Holy Family Parish retreat in the last week of September and, heartened by the steady turnout for the early and mid-morning Masses and evening prayer and talks, Fr Joe Gormley, PP, expressed the hope of building on the graces received "to ensure that Holy Family is a place where all who come can experience belonging to God's Family".

Thanking God for "the grace-filled" retreat as a celebration of the 40th anniversary of Holy Family Church, Fr Joe spoke of the Parish's gratitude for the time and effort of the speakers and all who were involved in preparing the church, providing music, providing hospitality to the speakers, and making ready the literature for the retreat.

There was a warm welcome for the first speaker, Fr Pat Collins CM, who had preached at the first Holy Family retreat 40 years ago. He spoke on "The Need to Belong can only be satisfied truly by belonging to God's family", and talked about the role of the Holy Spirit in helping people to see who

they really are.

Fr La Flynn, the Prior of Lough Derg and Pettigo PP, in Co Donegal, spoke on "Experiencing belonging to God through Prayer in our Family", and talked about daily and family prayer, and the idea of pilgrimage and prayer. There was also a testimony given by a married couple regarding family prayer with their children.

Newly ordained, Fr Shaun Doherty, CC St Eugene's, spoke on "The Eucharist - the summit and source of our belonging to God", and talked about Adoration and the power of the Eucharist in his life and journey to priesthood. Cursillista, Nic Young gave a testimony on the power of the Eucharist in his life.

Fr Stephen Quinn ocd, Prior of the Discalced Carmelite Monastery at Termonbacca, Derry, spoke on "If we belong To God why do we experience sickness, suffering and death?", and shared his own struggle with ill health and how he found peace through his faith, and how God sustained him in dark moments. A couple who had lost a child last year gave a testimony on how their

faith helped them to know that Jesus was with them through their child's sickness and death, and in the time since.

Ms Marguerite Hamilton, Columba Community leader and director of White Oaks Rehabilitation Centre, spoke on "Discovering we belong to God through facing the darkness of addiction." Marguerite was accompanied by Fr Michael Sweeney for a period of prayer ministry.

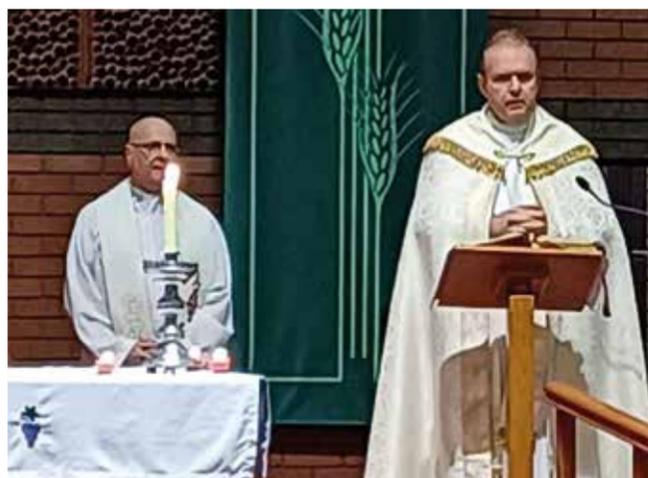
Friday night was Youth Night, and Joe Culby, a musician and songwriter from Omagh, spoke on "The future belongs with our youth who belong to God", and shared his struggle in life with alcohol and ways of living that did not bring peace, and how he discovered that the only way to find true peace is through God. Young people from the Ballymagroarty Youth Club were in attendance, along with members of the Search

Youth Group, who helped to lead the prayers. Afterwards, while enjoying some food together, the young people expressed a desire to have more parish youth nights.

The Retreat came to a close with the Anointing of the Sick led by Fr Daniel McFaul, Creggan, and the Consecration of the Parish to Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Heartened by the response to the Retreat, Fr Joe remarked: "Like every parish, we are trying to renew and rebuild, and the only way to do that is through people coming together to pray and to let the Holy Spirit lead. It has to be the work of the Holy Spirit."

The week of prayer will be followed by a Parish Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help on the nine Tuesdays leading up to Christmas, which starts on Tuesday, October 24, at 7.15 pm in Holy Family Church. The parish's new icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help will be used during this time.



St Pio Novena a powerful gift and grace for Creggan

THE recent Novena of Healing to St Pio of Pietrelcina in Creggan was a "powerful gift and grace" for the parish, in response to the theme, 'O Lord, Come to my rescue'.

Starting on the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows on September 15, it ended on the Feast of St Pio on September 23 with the Blessing of the Sick. During the week, Mass was celebrated at 7 am and again at 10 am, with Confessions at 5 pm and Devotions at 7.30 pm.

Reflecting on the week of prayer, Fr Daniel McFaul, PP, said: "Many, many people came here to pray in the midst of St Pio and his mitt

and Jesus in the Eucharist, and many experienced peace and healing in these days of prayer for healing in our hearts and parish, and in a special way for the sick in our families and community."

Fr Daniel spoke to the congregation gathered for the closing ceremony about the power of the Mass, which Padre Pio had a deep love for.

He said: "The Mass was an important aspect of Padre Pio's life. He knew that without the Eucharist we are empty vessels. It is only through the redemptive Cross on Calvary that we receive healing.

"The Mass is when Heaven and Earth meet; when the sacrifice on Calvary mystically becomes present on this altar. The same victim that died on Calvary becomes present for us on the altar. Think about that. How blessed are we as Catholics. The bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus.

"These are the realities that Padre Pio knew. He would stop and stare in amazement at the presence of Jesus. His eyes would fill with tears and heart with gratitude. He is an example of the love that we should celebrate the Mass with, and unite ourselves with the victim on the

altar through the words that we pray."

"Let us bring the sick to Jesus in the Eucharist," added Fr Daniel, "and let us enter more deeply into the Mass than we have done before, believing that the Divine Jesus is present on the altar. Yes, we have St Pio's mitt and the stories but, more importantly, we have the same Jesus who walked this earth 2000 years ago, here on the altar. Let us receive Jesus in the Eucharist with trust and love, and live by the motto of St Pio - Pray, Hope and Don't Worry."

River Bann setting for Coleraine prayer service to mark Season of Creation



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COLERAINE parishioners offered their 2023 Prayer Service on the Feast of St Francis of Assisi as part of the Season of Creation, which had as its theme this year, 'Let Justice and Peace Flow'.

The Service took place at Somerset Riverside Park, Castleroe, on Wednesday, October 4, at 6.15 pm. While it was a wet day, 24 hardy souls managed

to attend the open air Service beside the sculpture piece entitled 'Source', at the Riverside of the Bann.

Prayers were offered up for the health of the Bann River, as well as Lough Neagh and the waters of the North Coast, keeping the health and safety of humans and animals, as well as the fish in the waters, very much in mind.



'Season of Creation' prayer

Creator of all, from your communion of love life sprung like a mighty river and the whole cosmos came into being. On this Earth of overflowing love, The Word was made flesh and went forth with the life-giving waters proclaiming peace and justice for all creation.

You called human beings to till and keep your garden, You placed us into the right relationship with each creature, but we failed to listen to the cries of the Earth and the cries of the most vulnerable. We broke with the flowing communion of love and sinned against you by not safeguarding the conditions for life.

We lament the loss of our fellow species and their habitats, we grieve the loss of human cultures, along with the lives and livelihoods that have been displaced or perished, and we ache at the sight of an economy of death, war and violence That we have inflicted on ourselves and on the Earth.

Open our ears to your creative, reconciling and sustaining Word that calls to us through the book of Scripture and the book of Creation. Bless us, once again, with your life-giving waters so that the Creator Spirit may let justice and peace flow in our hearts and overflow into all creation.

Open our hearts to receive the living waters of God's justice and peace, and to share it with our suffering brothers and sisters, all creatures around us, and all creation.

In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation, Jesus Christ. Amen



Good turnout for Iskaheen Well Pilgrimage by Maura McColgan Photographs by Helen Grant.

OUR annual Iskaheen Pilgrimage to St Patrick's Well and Children's Graveyard, Three Trees, took place on Sunday, August 20, at 3 pm.

This pilgrimage was organised by 'The Being & Building a Community of Faith' Group, a sub group of the Iskaheen & Upper Moville Pastoral Council. It was very well attended and we were blessed with good weather for the walk.

The Rosary was recited during the pilgrimage. The first stop was at the Children's Graveyard, where we paused to remember the children who were buried there, in unconsecrated ground in times past. Fr Farren led a very moving prayer service and then blessed the grave.





Coleraine seniors enjoy lovely night out with SVP

THE senior parishioners of Dunboe, Macosquin and Aghadowey in the parish of Coleraine enjoyed their first night out together in a while at the St Vincent de Paul gathering in The Lodge Hotel. Following a sumptuous meal, they enjoyed a time of music provided by 'Nostalgia', and some left with prizes won in a draw.



Urney & Castlefinn pilgrimage to Lough Derg a very spiritual experience

A group of Urney & Castlefinn Donegal parish, some of whom parishioners enjoyed a one-day pilgrimage to Lough Derg on Sunday, September 17. The 18 pilgrims from the Co



Bellaghy SVP trip back in time at Ulster American Folk Park



Maghera pilgrims enjoy oasis of calm on Lough Derg one-day retreat by Maghera Pilgrim

“I cannot hide the gift of God, which He gave me in the land of my captivity. There, I sought Him and there I found Him”. (St Patrick, Confession n33)

ON Sunday, September 17, eighteen pilgrims from Maghera and neighbouring parishes stepped onto the unique St Patrick’s Island Sanctuary, made sacred by the thousands of pilgrims who have prayed there for generations.

We joined with 200 other pilgrims on the Island that day. Due to pandemic restrictions, the last pilgrimage from Maghera was in 2019. Welcome Tea/Coffee and scones were served on arrival at 10.20 am and, at 12.30 pm, we had very good lunch; soup and sandwiches at two sittings.

The popular One-Day Lough

Derg Retreat continues to offer an oasis of calm and peacefulness. The sound of a bell or lapping of lake water, and spaces in this living place of pilgrimage, offer sanctuary from the binds of having ‘to do’, and allows us time ‘to be’.

A pilgrim people journeying together in a contemplative tradition that links us with St Patrick, spiritually revived by reflection, prayer of intercession, with Rosary, Angelus, Celebration of God’s Mercy/Reconciliation, Contemplation of an Icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in the Basilica leading up to Liturgy

Rehearsal and Celebration of The Eucharist by the Prior, Rev Monsignor La Flynn, assisted by Deacon Martin Donnelly.

This was the sixth annual one-day retreat for St Patrick’s Parish, Glen, Maghera, on Lough Derg.



New pinnacle crosses for 152-year-old Glenock Stations



Newtownstewart craftsmen, Steven Moore and Kevin Kerrigan, who recently restored the antique Stations of the Cross at their parish church, St Eugene’s, Glenock. The two men donated the wood (Irish oak) and gave their time free of charge, and pictured here with Fr Roland Colhoun, Newtownstewart.

THE Stations of the Cross in St Eugene’s Church at Glenock, Newtownstewart, are 152 years old. The 14 frames have recently been restored. The images portray Christ on the way to Calvary and His Crucifixion on arrival.

‘Station’ comes from the Latin word ‘statio’, meaning ‘position’ or ‘location’. Like a train pulling in at a station, we pause in prayer at each of the 14 Stations of the Cross to honour the Passion of Christ.

In the life of the Church, this devotional practice dates from the end of the Middle Ages. The installation of Stations in churches had become common by the end of the 1600s. There is no other devotional prayer which enables us so literally to obey Christ’s injunction to take up our cross and follow Him.

The Newtownstewart Stations were produced in Paris in the 19th century. The French inscription is visible on each tableau. The oak frames were probably made

in Ireland. They were installed in January 1871. In the last 152 years, these Stations have seen several restorations. And this year, 2023, Kevin Kerrigan and Steven Moore crafted a complete set of new pinnacle crosses for the frames.

Most of the 1871 crosses had long since been replaced by plywood versions that had deteriorated beyond repair. Kevin and Steven made the new crosses in oak, an inch thick and 9 3/4 inches tall, one for the top of each Station. They are double-dowelled into the frames and secured with metal brackets at the rear. The two craftsmen lacquered the new crosses, matching them very successfully with the old frames. They added new Roman numerals to each cross. Furthermore, they donated the wood and did the work free of charge. It’s a high-class restoration of our antique Stations, and Kevin and Steven deserve all the praise the Parish can give them.

Rouskey blessing for new ciborium veils



Jacqueline Flanagan, assistant Sacristan, with Fr Roland Colhoun in St Mary’s Church, Rouskey, Gortin, Co Tyrone, after the blessing of new ciborium veils. The elegant veils were made by Kate Ward, of Plumbridge.

Newly ordained Fr Stephen Ward reflects on first weeks of priesthood

Delighted to be serving his first parish appointment in the Long Tower, newly ordained Fr Stephen Ward reflects here on his first weeks of priesthood, which began with a week of Masses celebrated in his home parish church in Killyclogher, Omagh, and parishes where he had served as a seminarian and a deacon, including St Columb's Waterside, St Patrick's Pennyburn, St Columba's Long Tower and St Mary's Creggan.

THERE are a number of takeaways from the experiences I have had over this past month as an ordained priest of Jesus Christ in the Diocese.

First is the amazing kindness, generosity and support of my fellow clergy, as well as the parishioners I encountered in each of the parishes that I had the privilege of celebrating Mass in over the past number of weeks.

I have also been really blown away at the overabundance and flow of graces from God in being able to celebrate the liturgy

reverently and prayerfully.

I am deeply grateful for the support of my family, who were present at quite a number of the first Masses during my first week of priesthood, and the hospitality that was shown to me in the parishes I was present in, from gifts to cups of tea and buns, and to those who provided Sacred Music for a number of the Masses.

It was clear that I was not only welcomed, but also that a lot of effort and planning had gone into the occasions from the parishes I visited.

Overall, I have to say that prior to, on the day of the Ordination, and after it, there were many moments whereby the Good Lord revealed His goodness to me in a continuous flow of graces.

At the moment of Ordination, which I still am unable to describe, I just knew and realised that the Lord was showing me that I am where He wants me to be. I just ask that I continue to always follow His will for my life, and to become the priest that He is calling me to be.

As for my appointment to the

Parish of Templemore (Long Tower), to say I was overjoyed is really something of an understatement. I am truly blessed to be here, assisting the Administrator, Fr Gerard Mongan, in the pastoral care of the parish, as well as experiencing the goodness, kindness and generosity of all those who are in the Parish Office, both employees and volunteers, as well as the parishioners who have already taken me in as one of their own and made me feel truly at home.

God is good, all the time!



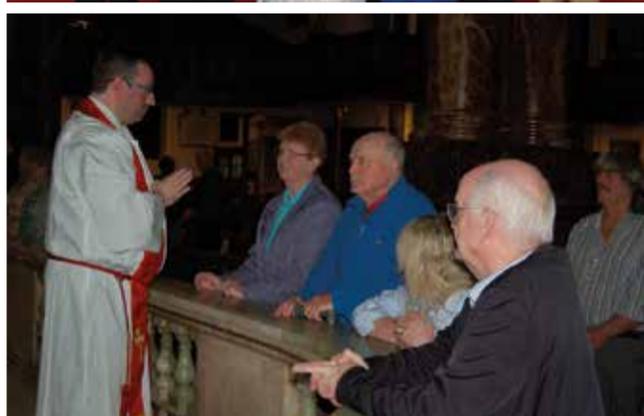
Killyclogher



St Columb's Waterside



Long Tower



Pennyburn



Lavey community celebrate 150th anniversary of Our Lady of Mercy Church

THE 150th anniversary Mass for the Church of Our Lady of Mercy in Lavey began with a beautiful presentation of the townlands, with some of the parish Pope John Paul II Award participants bringing forward six candles to be placed on the altar as the names of the townlands were read out.

The Mass was celebrated on the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Friday, September 8, with Bishop Donal the chief celebrant.

Noting that the Church had been dedicated to Our Lady of Mercy on July 6, 1873, the Bishop talked about how the Christian roots in the area went back a long way, with a smaller church built in the vicinity in 1802 replacing a Mass house going back to Penal Times.

He remarked: "In the wake of the Famine and mass emigration, and following centuries of discrimination and persecution, the people of this community were not discouraged, and they committed themselves to erecting a substantial and beautifully finished church...It is for that tough resilience and big expectations that we give thanks this evening."

Commending the parishioners for the great determination they too had shown in recently renovating the church inside and out, Bishop Donal told them: "You have demonstrated again that this is a community which always thinks big and has faith in the future; the building points both to the glory of God and to the human vision that comes from faith."

Going on to say that faith in God "does not merely offer us a way to escape from the realities of life", but "lifts our head from the grindstone and the rat race", he added: "It lifts us from the choking belief that life is meaningless, full of sound and fury but signifying nothing. It lifts young people from the idea that we can dream only of the 'good life' - whatever that might mean - and helps them believe that they can live a good

life. Faith helps us believe that we are called to be saints and not just consumers.

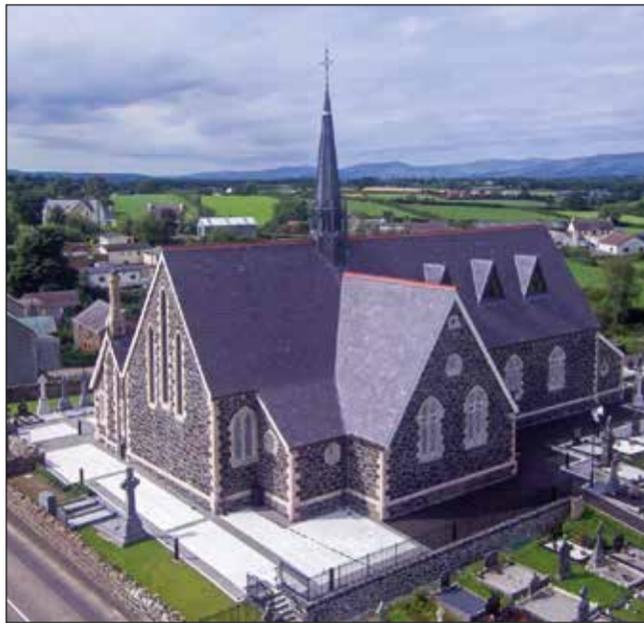
"Your faith community has come through many stresses and strains. But you still believe in a God who believes in us. That God tells us that there is truth to be found amid the messiness of life. Our popular culture, however, says that there is no truth. Or rather it says that each one of us is a little God who decides what is truth for me. But when I become a little god, community is shredded, and my own narrow and changing truth leaves me with no sense that my life is meaningful or valuable. We lose too many people for want of a reason for living."

Sharing his experience of World Youth Day in Lisbon at the start of August, when 1.5 million young people gathered to pray with Pope Francis, Bishop Donal remarked: "That vast crowd of young people spent nearly 24 hours in a huge park, camping out under the stars. At the final Mass, with the singing and cheering crowds, Pope Francis left them with three words - shine, listen and do not be afraid.

"Shine - so that you can bring unexpected hope and light to people. Listen - so that you can hear the important voices and not just the loud ones, so that you can become original saints and not just photocopies of someone else's fragile plans. Do not be afraid - so that you can be agents of change and channels of grace. Faith takes courage and determination, despite mockery and even aggression."

The Bishop then spoke of the situation of fewer clergy in the coming years, telling the parishioners that the challenge they now faced was not linked to the provision of buildings, but how they, like other parishes, were going to "equip our young people to cope with the dangers that they face."

He asked: "In a world of fickle role models, can we help them believe that they are precious



and not just valuable when they are successful? In a world of fragmenting and often violent relationships, can we help them believe in the power of God's love, forgiveness and faithfulness? In a world that is focused on me obeying my thirst, can we build outstanding examples of generosity and community? For that is how Jesus wants us to be salt to the earth and light to the world."

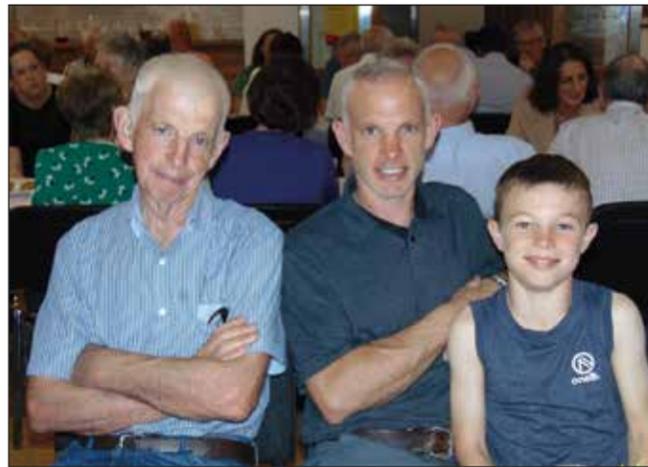
Expressing confidence that the parishioners of today "will be inspired by Mary, the Mother of Jesus, to do great things in our days", Bishop Donal said: "Mary, Our Lady of Mercy, when she heard that she was to be the

mother of the Saviour and that Elizabeth was expecting John the Baptist, made haste to visit her pregnant cousin. She would ask us to make haste to share the Gospel today. That would be the best way to celebrate the sesquicentennial of this beautiful church."

After Communion, Bishop Donal blessed two stained glass windows that had been gifted from the Sisters of Mercy, one featuring Our Lady and the other featuring the Sacred Heart, which had been framed and mounted on each side of the altar.

Refreshments were served afterwards in the Lavey/Termoneeny Centre, at Gulladuff.





Thanking Fr Peter Devlin for his 40 years of priestly ministry, Bishop Donal highlighted...

Still huge need for those who will bring God’s mercy and forgiveness to broken hearts

ST Patrick’s Church in the townland of Aughaclay, in the Parish of Malin, Co Donegal, was the setting for the Mass of thanksgiving for parish priest, Fr Peter Devlin’s 40 years of priesthood.

Presiding at the Mass concelebrated by Fr Peter and some of his brother priests, Bishop Donal thanked him for his four decades of ministry and for letting God use him.

“There is still a huge need for those who will bring God’s mercy and forgiveness to broken hearts,” remarked the Bishop, adding: “There is still a great hunger for those who will build communities of faith, hope and love that will be a blessing in a world of fickle relationships and much hurt.

“Continue to be a blessing on people by loving them and sharing their journey. Look back with gratitude – and forwards with hope. The God who has been faithful to you on this journey will continue to call you to Him. For that conviction is the rock on which Jesus builds His Church.”

Reflecting in his homily on how some wonder if they have the talents or grace to be ministers of Christ, Bishop Donal noted that, as the saints have so often shown, the real question is, “Are we weak enough to allow Christ to use us?”

He continued: “So many of those called in the scriptures protested their inadequacies before they could be used by grace. Think of Moses and his stammer, Gideon and the failures of his people, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos and Hosea. Think of unlikely candidates such as Mary and St Paul.

“Today it is important to repeat that message which you know so well. Confidence in self is a weakness for a priest. Confidence in God’s grace is the only rock on which you can be founded. That is why St Paul would write that he came among the Corinthians ‘full of fear and trembling’. It was to

shame the strong that God chose what is weak by human reckoning (1 Cor 1:27 and 2:3), and he wrote that ‘if I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weaknesses’ (2 Cor 11:30). Don’t be afraid of being afraid. Expect it. Do be afraid of ever getting too confident in your own abilities.”

Bishop Donal went on to highlight that Jesus’ use of the word ‘church’ was only found on two occasions in the Gospels, saying: “The word appears many times in the other writings of the New Testament but hardly ever in the teachings of Jesus. There is the Catholic temptation to see this commissioning of Peter as the rock on which the church is built in a very institutional light – as if the Church as a Peter-centred institution was the only way in which the early group of disciples understood themselves.

“We also have other great images from Jesus – I am the vine, and you are the branches, I am the Good Shepherd, you are salt to the earth and light to the world. And St Paul will write of us being the Body or the Bride of Christ, soldiers for Christ.”

He then told Fr Peter to be assured, as he continued on his journey of discipleship, of Christ’s promise to Peter, but to “never forget that there are so many more images and models of the church in the scriptures.”

“Be enriched by all of them,” said Bishop Donal, adding: “A one-dimensional model of church does not do justice to the full teaching of the New Testament. There will be renewal only if we are open to the richness of God’s vision for us.”

Mysteries

Commenting on the carrying out of ministry in the Diocese “at a time of renewal and re-imagining”, he pointed out: “We are not ecclesiastical civil servants but ministers of the mysteries of God whose motives and

methods we cannot penetrate or understand.

“Your personal prayer is a time when you make space for grace. Your celebration of the liturgy is not something that we do for God or even for people – but rather an invitation to the Lord to be at work in our lives. It is never about us. Keep using your skills to help people get a glimpse of the glory of God. Your ministry with young people is not just about getting them to go to Mass. It is an invitation to them to let the mystery of God’s love and mercy speak to their concrete situation in life, just as Jesus met people where they were in Galilee.

“When I was ordained in 1977 – and you in 1983 – the mission seemed to be how we help people grow in faith, on the assumption that they already had some faith. Your ministry over the next decades will involve a lot of evangelising, introducing people of all ages to who Jesus is. Thus, the core of your ministry in parish or elsewhere is not merely the provision of services for those who wish to avail of them. It also includes helping many people to hear the message of the Gospel for the first time. Many of those who are never in church have not rejected Christianity. They have never actually heard it or been invited to be intrigued by who Jesus is.”

During the ceremony, four symbols of Fr Peter’s life were brought forward – a shepherd’s crook, a photograph, a Bible, and an Islamic tile with the word ‘Allah’ inscribed on it – all of which had been given to him as

gifts on previous occasions.

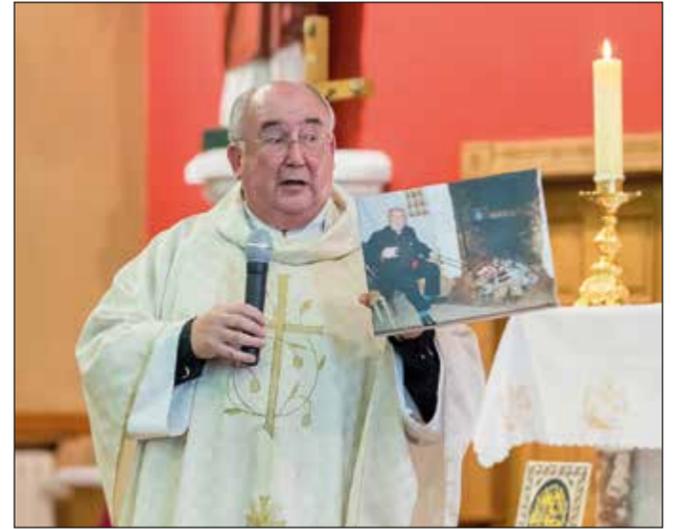
Recalling that he had received the shepherd’s crook from a parishioner when he was appointed parish priest of Malin, Fr Peter said: “I see it as a sign of the pastoral care that the Shepherd of the flock is meant to provide for the parishioners.”

The photograph, he explained was of him “relaxing after a Station Mass with parishioners”, which he felt “brings out the closeness that should exist between priest and people, along with the value of socialising and building community.”

Turning to the Bible, Fr Peter recalled: “I was given a Men’s Devotional Bible by friends in Boston, a city which has been a source of inspiration and renewed energy for me for many years. It symbolises for me the value of close friends and my need to be nourished constantly by the word of God.”

The fourth gift, an inscription on a beautiful Islamic tile of the word ‘Allah’ in Arabic from the Quoran, he explained had been given to him by a Muslim friend in Istanbul: “It reminds me that despite theological differences, we share the same essential foundation, as believers in the one God. It also expresses the importance I attach to having respect for other faith traditions and the need to constantly witness to tolerance and the acceptance of difference.”

In keeping with Fr Peter’s love of gatherings, the celebrations continued after Mass in the Ballyliffin Lodge Hotel.



Loving his vocation as a priest and looking forward with a hopeful heart...

Fr Peter Devlin thankful for Malin gathering to celebrate Ruby Jubilee

THE Ruby Jubilee of Fr Peter Devlin's ordination to priesthood not only gave the Drumsurn native a reason to celebrate his much-loved vocation with family, friends and parishioners of his current parish of Malin and previous parishes he had served in, but also an appreciated awareness of how time is passing so that he may cherish each day more.

Born on Christmas Eve 1956, Fr Peter was doubly blessed in growing up with a great sense of joy in celebrating his own birth and then that of our Saviour so close together, giving him a very positive outlook on life and an appreciation of the importance of joy in the celebration of our faith.

And so, while at first hesitant about having a parish celebration for the 40th anniversary of his ordination when the Parish Committee approached him about it, he recognised it as an opportunity for people to come together for a joyous occasion and to highlight the priesthood in this Year of Vocations in the Irish Church.

Very much enjoying his life as a priest, Fr Peter happily shared his vocation story with 'The Net', recalling how it was first nurtured in the family home in Drumsurn, in a beautiful part of the countryside in the parish of Dungiven, where his parents, James and Sarah Anne were strong witnesses of the faith for him and his three older brothers.

"My parents were devoted Catholics and so faith was very important in our family," he said, adding: "We prayed the Rosary and went to Mass every weekend and sometimes during the week as well. I went to the local Catholic primary school and then the mixed-faith Limavady Grammar School, and enjoyed my time at both very much. There were many teachers there who impressed me both for their enthusiasm for education and for the quality of care that they gave us, so I grew up in a caring atmosphere at home and school."

He continued: "My brothers and I were altar servers and I remember Fr Art O'Reilly having a great knack of being able to relate to us. He had a great way of making you feel good about yourself. He would stop for a chat when he met us on the road, and he encouraged my brother and I to get involved with the local Credit Union, which was only being set up, and we did, even though we were only in primary school! He had that vision."

"Another priest that made a great impression on me when I

was much younger was Fr James McKee, who was in Drumsurn for my First Communion and I still remember that, so I was very blessed. It shows the impact that a priest can have on the ground, unknown to themselves, and it is good for the rest of us to be aware of that.

"I was greatly impressed also by Fr P J McGuigan. I talked to him about a possible priestly vocation for quite a long time, off and on. There was a lot of talking and thinking. He was so wise and such a source of understanding. He had great respect for my freedom of decision, so there was no pressure. He knew where I was coming from and was very supportive. He was very wise in the biblical sense and a great spiritual guide. He was a quiet-natured man and had a very simple lifestyle, with no extra possessions, which was impressive."

Reflecting on his call to priesthood, Fr Peter said: "I am sure when I was an altar server that the notion of being a priest would have been there in some kind of way, as something that I might consider later in life, but it wasn't something that I gave much importance to just then."

"And, it was there as an option towards the end of secondary school, when I was thinking about what to do. I had thought about studying Law at Queen's but then, towards the end of that year, I decided to go to the seminary in Maynooth and I enjoyed it very much."

Ordained on June 12, 1983, by Bishop Edward Daly in St Matthew's Church, Drumsurn, he then returned to Maynooth to continue his study for a licentiate in Moral Theology. It was a two-year course, the first of which he had undertaken before his ordination.

Baptism of fire

Fr Peter's first parish appointment in the Diocese was to Creggan, which he described as "a baptism of fire for a country boy from Drumsurn", saying: "It shocked me amazingly".

This was followed by a move to England to do further studies in Theology, and he taught there for a while too, before coming back to the Derry Diocese to take up an appointment in the Glendermott Parish, in the Waterside. This was followed by being appointed to Clonmany, in Co Donegal, where he ministered for nine years until he was appointed parish priest of Malin in September 2008.

Fr Peter is also the Diocesan Education Secretary (ROI) for the Catholic National schools of

Derry diocese in Co Donegal.

He explained: "That means I am the link person between the Boards of Management of our 36 Catholic schools, in the nine Co Donegal parishes in the Diocese, and their Patron, the Bishop."

"The role keeps me busy and involves me advising and supporting our school boards of management regarding such issues as problems in schools between parents and staff, or principals and teachers, legal issues, school closures, new schools, creating new Boards of Management, etc. I have to make sure that all is done in line with Departmental and Patron requirements."

Appreciating time to unwind, Fr Peter enjoys watching films, listening to music, reading, keeping up with current affairs, travelling, photography, and socialising.

He remarked: "I enjoy people and being with parishioners, and so I like celebrations such as weddings, baptisms etc."

Finding it hard to believe that it is 40 years since he was ordained, Fr Peter remarked: "One of the many positives of my Ruby celebration is that it has made me reflect on how I spend my time and the importance of time. Times pass so quickly, so it has brought to my mind the importance of prioritising what is important and what is passing, and what needs to be seen as unimportant. I am conscious now that I am at the twilight of my life. I have two-thirds of my life lived, so time is even more precious as there is less of it available to me. And it is good to be aware of that."

Saying that he has very much enjoyed his priesthood so far, and is looking forward to the future,

he remarked: "I love it...even the challenges! There is a part of me that loves the challenges."

Expressing deep gratitude to the Parish Committee who organised his 40th anniversary celebration, Fr Peter said: "I am very grateful for the people of the Parish, and their kindness and generosity. I am a great believer that an important part of our faith is expressing joy and celebrating. Especially in this Year of Vocations, when we want people to be thinking about priesthood."

Commenting on what stands out for him in reflecting on his 40 years as a priest, Fr Peter said: "Obviously the major changes in Ireland regarding the practice of and commitment to the faith, and the challenges in these areas, but also the resilience of those who continue to live the faith in an unsupportive culture."

"Despite the challenges and sense of loss that might be felt in some quarters of the Church, we should be facing the future as people of hope. I think it would be a great mistake to let present issues set the agenda. I feel that Ireland needs to look outwards, and see the worldwide picture... recognise those areas in the world where the faith is growing and the Gospel is bringing a message of hope."

"In the midst of numerical decline there are always people who live the faith. There is a core goodness in people that we need to be able to see to counter any depression or disappointment. The bulk of people are living the faith and practising Christian values, striving for goodness even though they may not be practising the faith as regularly as we might hope for."

dialogue as a lifestyle at every level, and allow herself to be guided by the Holy Spirit towards the peripheries of the world.

Prayer for Priests

Heavenly Father, I ask you to bless our bishops and priests and to confirm them in their vocation of service.

As they stand before us as ministers of Your Sacraments, may they be channels of the love and compassion of the Good Shepherd, who came not to be served but to serve.

Give them the grace they need to respond generously to you, and the courage to proclaim your Word of justice, love and truth.



IS GOD CALLING YOU?

DERRYVOCATIONS.ORG

If this is of interest to you, please contact the Diocesan Vocations Director, Fr Pat O'Hagan on (+44) 07703444280 or (028) 7938 6452

Pray the Lord will send many into harvest of Diocese

by Fr Pat O'Hagan

Diocesan Vocations' Director

AS we approach the end of a year which saw the ordinations of three new priests for the Diocese of Derry, we pray God's blessing on Frs Michael McCaul, Shaun Doherty, and Stephen Ward, and their ministry in their respective parishes.

We pray too for our three current seminarians, Stephen Baxter and David Stott at the Pontifical Beda College in Rome, and Lexie Morrison at St Patrick's College, Maynooth.

Four men have applied to begin their formal studies in January,

and an increasing number of men are discerning their vocation under the guidance and accompaniment of a priest-mentor.

During this Year of Prayer for Vocations to the Diocesan Priesthood, we are all encouraged to pray that the Lord will send many into the harvest of this Diocese.

The theme of the Year of Prayer is: 'Take the Risk for Christ.' May many more find the courage to take that much needed leap of faith.



Pope's monthly intention

The Holy Father has asked for prayer during October for:

For the Synod: We pray for the Church, that she may adopt listening and

Bless, in a special way, Your servant Father, Send your Spirit upon him So that he may always walk in the path of faith, hope and love, in the footsteps of Christ, the eternal priest, who offered Himself on the cross for the life of the world. Amen.

Remember in prayer during October:

Fr Colum Clerkin (Oct 1st)
Fr Roland Colhoun (2nd)
Fr Michael Collins (3rd)
Fr Oliver Crilly (4th)
Fr Patrick Crilly (5th)
Fr Brendan Crowley (6th)
All priests (7th)
All priests (8th)
All priests (9th)
All priests (10th)

Fr James Devine (11th)
Fr Peter Devlin (12th)
Fr Fintan Diggin (13th)
Fr Brendan Doherty (14th)
All priests (15th)
Fr Shaun Doherty (16th)
Fr John Doherty (17th)
All priests (18th)
Fr Michael Doherty (19th)
Fr Patrick Doherty (20th)
Mgr Andrew Dolan (21st)
Fr Brian Donnelly (22nd)
Msgr Joseph Donnelly (23rd)
Fr Liam Donnelly (24th)
All priests (25th)
All priests (26th)
All priests (27th)
All priests (28th)
Fr Jack Farrell (29th)
All priests (30th)
Fr John Farren (31st)

Winning hearts with his delicious baking and gift of inner healing...

French Friar, Fr Charles sad to leave his special Derry friends

FINDING some Derry folk guarded because of years of 'The Troubles', Fr Charles Reche, a Franciscan Friar of the Renewal, discovered a way of winning the hearts of visitors to St Pio House cafe, near the Friary in Galliagh, when they found that the taste of his baking more than matched the mouth-watering smell wafting through the air as they walked in.

Nicknamed for his cuteness during his youth as 'Benichou', meaning 'blessed cabbage' or 'puff cream', the tall French Friar is the fifth generation of a family of bakers, and as he prepared to leave to join the Order's London community, he took time to share the secrets to making such delicious pizzas, brioche and bread rolls by training up local man, Martin Gallagher.

It was during one of these training sessions, in the kitchen of St Pio House, that Fr Charles shared his vocation story with 'The Net', and reflected on the three-and-a-half years since joining the Derry CFR community back in Christmas 2019.

Christened Benoit (Benedict), the 52-year-old is the only boy in the family of four born to the late Rene and Marie-Claude Reche. He and his twin sister are the eldest in the family, who were recently bereaved when their father died on June 17.

Grateful for the faith passed on to him as a child by both of his parents, Fr Charles spoke of how the death of his father's parents a year-and-a-half before he and his mother got married had been a key moment in his father's life, adding: "My father had a very deep faith that helped him, and so does my mum, and so they were the first witnesses of the faith for me. We had family prayer every night, even when visiting cousins. We did night prayer after a wee story and a litany of the Saints of all those present."

Born 15 km west of Paris, in Maisons Laffitte, the family moved from a tiny home to live in Normandy when Fr Charles was seven years old, which he later discovered had been traumatic for him: "I didn't want to make new friends, so when I was asked my name I said both so quickly in the hope that they wouldn't catch it."

His father had bought a bakery in Normandy, following the sale of the one started by his great-grandfather, and with it being a family business the children helped out. As well as this, and his education, he recalled being regularly involved in Church activities.

"I was part of a youth group and an altar server at the Benedictine

Abbey in town, so Church and faith was part of our life," remarked Fr Charles, adding: "I received what I call a faith of tradition, that is, I believed because I trusted those that told me about Jesus. It was all in the head, but not necessarily in the heart.

"When I was 14, I attended a Vocations' Day organised by the Vocations' Officer for the Diocese. This was not only for people discerning a religious vocation but all kinds of vocations. Married people and doctors were amongst those who shared their stories with us on the residential weekend, during which we also grew in our prayer life."

Fr Charles went on to share a happening in his life as a 14-year-old that had brought him to the brink of despair, and how his faith had helped him through: "My parents realised that I did not have my own friends. I was hanging around with my sisters because I was very shy. In a subconscious reaction to the move to Normandy, I was not willing to make new friends.

"I had a very low self-esteem from hearing in the bakery, 'Oh, you have done it that way...' etc. I came to believe that nothing I would do was going to be good enough for dad, and that lie translated into an identity statement, 'I'm not good enough'."

"This was confirmed for me," he said, "when I was sent to school 20 km away. I commuted every day, leaving at 6.30 am and back at 6.30 pm. I took it as telling me, 'You are the black sheep of the family. We don't want you. Go away.'"

"As I wasn't a boarder, I didn't belong there either because I wasn't part of the afterschool life. Added to that, my legs had grown up but not my torso, so imagine that in a school where athletics was very important. So, I am familiar with bullying, having been on the receiving end of it in primary school when I first arrived in Normandy, and it went on for my whole time in school there.

"That led me to wonder what life is about; if it was to be rejected at every direction, I decided that I didn't want to live. I was 14. The day I stopped complaining to myself, I decided that I was going to take my life, and that is when two things happened to me."

"The first," he recalled, "was that I realised the impact it would have on my family, particularly though my twin sister and my mom. That revealed to me that I was loved more than I had perceived.

"And something else happened. I experienced something that I

had never experienced before. I felt immersed in a massive bear-hug from the Father, which I had never felt before, and the despair and fear that I had was replaced by a peace and joy that I can't explain. That is really the event in which my vocation is rooted. From that moment, I wanted to share the joy of the Good News I had just received, that my life was worth living because He had given His for me. I had met Him and experienced His love.

"But when you are 14, at least in France at the time, you didn't go to the seminary straight away. My circumstances did not change; my difficult relationship with my father was the same and the bullying was still there, but I was not alone any more to face it. I carried on. By the end of secondary school, I would have openly said that I wanted to be a priest. I was 18 at that stage."

Advised by his parents to get a diploma before he went to the seminary, to have something to fall back on if it turned out that the Lord was calling him to something different, he did an Association Degree in Mechanical Engineering.

Temptations

"This was the first time I was not living at home during the week and the first time I was not in a Catholic school," remarked Fr Charles, adding: "The temptations that students can encounter were there. I fell in some of them but not all of them, and because of that I felt that I was not worthy any more to be a priest. So, I settled down to sharing the Good News as a lay man through my work.

"After I graduated, I did my military service and that is when the bakery was sold as none of us were interested. I did military service in the Navy and during this I came to Ireland for the first time, towards the end of 1993. We did an international exercise and the ship that I was on put out there to refuel. So, I had a few days in Dublin and did the pilgrimage to St James' Gate...the brewery!

"After my military service, I worked for five years as a draughtsman designing roundabouts in the Paris region, but most of my free time was spent as a boy scout leader, helping my little brothers grow in understanding what their gifts were and the gifts they were to others. In the scout order that I belonged to, you couldn't progress unless you progressed in your faith as well."

He explained: "It is a preparation for the adult commitment, where

you declare that you want to put Jesus at the heart of your life. It takes about one-and-a-half years to prepare for the commitment, with a sponsor and a spiritual director.

"My sponsor wanted me to read a book that my twin had tried to get me to read many times but failed, entitled 'The Story of a Soul', which is the autobiography of St Therese of Lisieux. The first few chapters are very challenging because she describes how naughty and spoiled she was, but then came the change in her after her encounter with the Lord, so the rest is 'Whoa!'

"There was something that she said in it that really touched me – something to the effect 'God does not choose those who are worthy but makes worthy those He chooses'. In other words, it is not because you are superman that He invites you to be a priest, but He will give you what you need to fulfil the mission He will give you. Immediately, St Augustine, St Francis and Charles de Foucauld came to my mind; wild youth who had become saints. That is when I realised that the question of being worthy or not worthy was not the right question."

He went on to recall going on a weekend retreat around this time: "I went to Confession, which I did regularly with a shopping list. But on that occasion, I just opened my heart and told it as it was. I experienced something similar to what I experienced when I was 14, but at that time I was the one turning my back on Him, but still He received me and loved me. It was at this stage that I picked up the question of vocation again. That was 1999, when I was 28."

"I was working in the Paris area," continued Fr Charles, "but every weekend I would be in Normandy, either preparing or leading activities for the Boy Scouts. I did not have any strong relationship with a priest. Weekends were busy and there was no priest where I was living. I went to Mass in Normandy, so I asked the Lord to show me what door to knock on. That Sunday, I stayed and went to the parish Mass and it happened that the Vocations director was the celebrant. It was once every four years that he visited, because he had to go around all the parishes.

"After speaking to him, I spent the following nine months working but living in community with four other young men who were discerning religious vocations. It became clear that the Lord was calling me, but at that point I wasn't sure if that was to be a Diocesan priest or religious."



continued from page 24

He added: "At the end of the nine months, I did a week's silent retreat and I read three books. The first one was 'Wisdom of the Povorello' (the poor one). It is about St Francis. This book revealed to me that I had a Franciscan heart. I discovered St Francis' spirituality, which is a joyous witness of God's love for each one of us. Whether Diocesan priest or religious, I knew I would be connected with St Francis.

"I was registered to go to the Diocesan seminary from my home Diocese where I grew up. I figured it was a good place to continue the discernment. During my time there I was always pushing for more communal activities, and another seminarian sat me down and said that he was enduring communal life for the formation, but that he wasn't called to it, and told me to calm down as we had more than enough as it was. I am grateful that he did that because it helped me to realise that I had a strong desire for it. That is one of many signs that confirmed that I was called to religious life, and that is when I went to visit the Franciscans and Capuchins.

"The third book that I read was about the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal (CFR) community. I remembered this book and that is why I contacted the friary in

London, where I am moving to now from Derry. It was Pentecost the weekend that I was there and right away I felt at home. When I left, I understood for the first time the expression 'to have a knot in the stomach'. When I returned to the seminary to finish my Philosophy Degree, three seminarians asked me where I went when I was in England, because I was there with them in body but not in mind. That confirmed what I had experienced was deeper."

Home

When he later visited the CFR community in New York, he felt the same: "I felt at home right away. The brothers realised my English was more than decent and I joined that September, 2002, with my two years in seminary over. I did my postulancy, which was six months, and then a novitiate year in New York. Out of the 17 who joined the postulancy, 14 of us started the novitiate and 12 made our first vows on March 1, 2004. I was assigned to Our Lady of the Angels Friary in New York, and my apostolate was working with kids of the neighbourhood, so I felt at home here, in Galliagh, with all the kids around.

"After two-and-a-half years, I went to St Joseph's Seminary, in New York, to do Theology. I was ordained on May 15, 2010,

and that is when I was shipped to Ireland. I was nine years in Limerick and the last six years of those I was the local servant there. I had a six-month sabbatical before I came to Derry for Christmas 2019...just in time for the Covid lockdown!

"It was so funny because many people got to know me through the webcam for 'Living Disciples', and through following the daily Mass on it as well. They were able to name me, without me getting to know them or even see their faces, but since that I have got to know a lot of people very well."

Since becoming a priest, Fr Charles said that he has discovered the Lord wants him to be happy not only in the next life but now, and that He wants to be involved in all aspects of our lives.

Saying that this discovery led to him responding to people seeking inner healing, he remarked: "I had to look at my own life first, and identify the wounds and the lies. In trying to help others, I had to do work on myself, and I am still working on that.

"As a result of inner healing, I experienced physical healing in others. One example, from when I was in Limerick, is a man in his late 20s who was in a wheelchair, as he couldn't feel anything from the knee down. While I was leading him to forgive and renounce the lies that he had accepted, he said

that he had a strange feeling of pins and needles in his legs, and the next day he could walk again. We are not compartmentalised; the physical, psychological and spiritual are all connected (soul, spirit and body).

"So, I was well ready when I arrived here in Derry for the First Friday healing nights. I also helped out in the 12-Step Programme group and learnt a lot through that. The need to be honest with self is very important. This is not always easy, as we do not want to face hurts at times.

"I also came to realise that in order for a lot of people to come out of a victim mentality, they just need to be heard. They just need someone to listen and not to give them advice or anything like that, but just acknowledge that must have hurt, and that, in itself, is healing. But first they have to acknowledge that they are hurt, so that is where the honesty is."

Finding that many people were guarded because of what happened in Derry, Fr Charles said: "They protect their heart by not showing emotions and because of that there is a lack of real bond, real community. That is what we are trying to do with the St Pio House Café, providing a place where people can feel comfortable, welcome and create that sense of community.

"This is where I have been



sharing my family inheritance, through making pizzas, brioche and bread rolls. Just stepping into the place when you are baking, there is a certain smell that creates atmosphere. It is homely. New people coming have said, 'Whoa, there is a great sense of community here', or, 'There is a great sense of joy here.' These are the two elements that we are looking for; that is our goal."

Saying that joy is an indicator of inner peace, Fr Charles continued: "That is what I want to do, to bring joy, which goes back to what I was saying about being a joyful witness. Boy, can you see smiles when the pizza comes out of the oven!"

Having now moved to London, he will continue to use his family inheritance when helping out in the CFR soup kitchen for the

homeless in Canning Town.

Closed to making friendships in his childhood, Fr Charles remarked that while he had started to open up before coming to Derry, it was here that he had become more open to making friends.

"I am now allowing the emotions to flow more than I did 45 years ago, thanks to the people I met here," he said, "so that makes it even harder to leave."

And the feeling is mutual regarding those who have come to know and love the French Friar, which was reflected in the gathering in St Brigid's Church, Galliagh, for a Mass of Thanksgiving for his ministry towards the end of the summer, which was followed by refreshments in St Pio House, and a number of other gatherings.

The Divine Mercy Image explained... The Rays (Part 1)

by Sr Benedetta Hutnikiewicz ZSJM, Sisters of Merciful Jesus, Letterkenny

WELCOME back to our reflections upon the Divine Mercy Image. Since last month we spent some time looking at the Sacred Heart, a natural thing would be to focus this month on the rays that come from that Heart.

So first, let us hear how Jesus explained their meaning to Sr Faustina: "When, on one occasion, my confessor told me to ask the Lord Jesus the meaning of the two rays in the image, I answered, 'Very well, I will ask the Lord'. During prayer I heard these words within me: 'The two rays denote Blood and Water. The pale ray stands for the Water which makes souls righteous. The red ray stands for the Blood which is the life of souls...These two rays issued forth from the very depths of My tender mercy when My agonized Heart was opened by a lance on the Cross. These rays shield souls from the wrath of My Father. Happy is the one who will dwell in their shelter, for the just hand of God shall not lay hold of him.'" (Diary, 299)

This text is dense, so let's unpack it bit by bit. First of all, Jesus points out what the rays stand for; they are to be for us a reminder of the Blood and Water that poured out from His Sacred Heart on the Cross. And then He goes on to explain the significance of each. The pale ray is the Water, which makes souls righteous. The red ray is Blood, which is the life of

the souls.

Bl Michael Sopocko, the spiritual director and confessor of St Faustina, would further clarify that the rays are a symbol of the sacraments: The pale ray of the Sacrament of Baptism and the Sacrament of Reconciliation; and the red ray is chiefly the Eucharist, but also all the other sacraments that sustain our life of grace.

Jesus says that the rays are a shield and a shelter. It's nice to think of the Sacraments as a place of refuge, after all, where would we be without them? They sustain us on the journey, they allow us to come back to God when we fall, and they help us live out our particular vocation. Through them we receive the Holy Spirit and all His gifts and grace needed to grow in our life of faith.

To come into the Church, we need the sacrament of Baptism. It opens up for us the way to all the other sacraments. Moreover, in this sacrament we are united with Jesus in His death and raised to life in Him, we receive a new birth of water and the Spirit! We are born to new life in Christ. Baptism is so much more, we are washed of original sin and every other sin ever committed in life. Every sin and its punishment are forgiven. In that way, we become children of light instead of children of darkness. We receive sanctifying grace; we now share in the life of God Himself, carrying eternal life

within us.

In Baptism, we are given the light of faith. And that is no small thing! We need that grace every step of the way, but especially in moments when we are tempted to doubt and despair. In Baptism too, we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. We become His temple. When we are anointed with chrism, together with Christ we become king, priest and prophet. We come into the Church as God's beloved children, members of His own family. And even though we have, for the most part anyway, been baptised in our infancy, Baptism is not just a past event. We are called to live out its grace in everyday life, to live it out more and more fully.

Remedy

If through our human weakness we fall into sin, God has given us a great remedy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I can't tell you enough about the beauty of this sacrament, and I do plan to write a separate article about it some other time. For now, let me quote what Jesus said to St Faustina about Confession: "Write, speak of My mercy. Tell souls where they are to look for solace; that is, in the Tribunal of Mercy [the Sacrament of Reconciliation]. There the greatest miracles take place [and] are incessantly repeated. To avail oneself of this miracle, it is not necessary to go on a great

pilgrimage or to carry out some external ceremony; it suffices to come with faith to the feet of My representative and to reveal to him one's misery, and the miracle of Divine Mercy will be fully demonstrated. Were a soul like a decaying corpse so that from a human standpoint, there would be no [hope of] restoration and everything would already be lost, it is not so with God. The miracle of Divine Mercy restores that soul in full. Oh, how miserable are those who do not take advantage of the miracle of God's mercy! You will call out in vain, but it will be too late." (Diary, 1448)

We can clearly see how God's Mercy is at work in Baptism and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Though so unworthy of His love and grace, though so sinful and many times driven so far away from Him, we receive so much.

The red ray stands first of all for the Eucharist. And the Eucharist, too, is such a great sacrament of Mercy, though in a different way than the ones we have just spoken of. Jesus said: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever;...he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and...abides in me, and I in him" (John 6:51, 54, 56).

In the Blessed Sacrament, God gives us His very self. He can't give us more than that. When

we participate in the Holy Mass through the wondrous working of God's grace, we are present at Calvary and at the Resurrection. Why then is the Eucharist a sacrament of Mercy? We are fragile, sinful human beings and yet, thanks to God's immeasurable goodness, we can receive His very self! We can be present at Christ's sacrifice and participate in it, joining our own lives to it. We give glory to God in the very best way, by joining ourselves to that perfect fulfilment of the Father's will which is present in Christ's paschal mysteries (His life, death and resurrection).

St Faustina, as a mystic, experienced Christ's presence in the Eucharist in a special way. She writes: "I often feel God's presence after Holy Communion in a special and tangible way. I know God is in my heart. And the fact that I feel Him in my heart does not interfere with my duties. Even when I am dealing with very important matters which require attention, I do not lose the presence of God in my soul, and I am closely united with Him. With Him I go to work, with Him I go for recreation, with Him I suffer, with Him I rejoice; I live in Him and He in me. I am never alone, because He is my constant companion. He is present to me at every moment. Our intimacy is very close, through a union of blood and of life."



We might not have tangible experiences like Faustina, but the very same thing happens to us, though through the veil of faith.

There's more to say about the rays in the Divine Mercy Image, but let this suffice for now. I will continue this topic in the next article. In the meantime, I would encourage you to spend some time looking at the Image, especially at the rays. Look and see what God wants to tell you today through them. Maybe He will want to reassure you of His love; maybe to pour it out upon you in a new and fresh way. Maybe call you to something? Don't be afraid to look, listen and respond.

The Sounds of Silence by Fr John McLaughlin ssc

Melancholy by Albert Gyorgy

"I have come to know you, Sister Silence in these the autumn years of my life, and you gently come to the fore.

You, The Sister who has shadowed me through all these years, known me, challenged me, tempered me, from just behind my left shoulder it often now seems, called me out on my prudence or was it my fear? me encandilabas a veces con una ternura entrañable in moments of sudden radiance and clarity, making it all so simple, yet, as a wise Sister, you let me know it was not to be the norm, there were those despedidas that called for fortitude and patience, where words would never ever unbind me, but You were there as I came to grow into new phases and epocas in my timeline.

Sister and brother, we grew into each other, in all the altibajos and with those gentle and knowing Silent - abrazos - which you could administer con un tino supersensible...."

EARLY on in my life in Chile under dictatorship, I was learning about 'Sapos' and those silent people who could not be trusted around us. It might have been a fixation, but people just would not open up, use certain phrases of 'solidarity', 'option for the Poor', without looking around the room first.

And it is happening today in places that people hardly acknowledge: Nicaragua, where Daniel Ortega, for instance, has done a 180 degree circle turnabout and Church, Jesuits, bishops and people are expelled or denounced by a new brand of informers. Having spent a weekend there years back, and a day with a young Dublin priest working there, called John Ledwidge, I share the indignation and anxiety felt over this new 'Silenced' State. Maybe I rather resent also the silence of our President, who was amongst those who feted him personally on his grand visit to the National Concert Hall, and in his own Galway home during those days, when wearing the shirt of a great liberator! An t-Uachtaran is not normally known for his silence on such important oppressions!

We are also aware of the other Big Powers, like Russia and China, North Korea, The West Bank and some of the Arab States, all living through even harsher degrees of totalitarian control than the Chile of those days of Pinochet, where 'Silence' was the first reflex for many of us, till we intuited in what company we had found ourselves in.

Anti-semitism

On anti-semitism: "Anti-Semitism is always a means rather than an end; it is a measure of the contradictions yet to be resolved. It is a mirror for the failings of individuals, social structures and State systems. Tell me what you accuse the Jews of - I'll tell you what you're guilty of. Even

Oleinichuk, the peasant fighter for freedom who was imprisoned in Schlüsselburg, somehow expressed his hatred for serfdom as a hatred for Poles and Yids. Even a genius like Dostoyevsky saw a Jewish usurer where he should have seen the pitiless eyes of a Russian serf-owner, industrialist or contractor. And in accusing the Jews of racism, a desire for world domination and a cosmopolitan indifference towards the German fatherland, National Socialism was merely describing its own features.

"Anti-Semitism is also an expression of a lack of talent, an inability to win a contest on equal terms - in science or in commerce, in craftsmanship or in painting. States look to the imaginary intrigues of World Jewry for explanation of their own failure. At the same time anti-Semitism is an expression of the lack of consciousness of the masses, of their inability to understand the true reason for their own sufferings. Ignorant people blame the Jews for their troubles when they should blame the social structure of the State itself. Anti-Semitism is also, of course, a measure of the religious prejudices smouldering in the lower levels of a society.

"An aversion for the physical appearance of a Jew, for his way of speaking and eating, is certainly not a genuine cause of anti-Semitism. The same man who speaks with disgust of a Jew's curly hair or the way that he waves his arms about, will gaze admiringly at the black curly hair of children in paintings by Murillo, will be quite undisturbed by the gesticulating and the guttural speech of Armenians..." (Vasily Grossman, 'Life and Fate').

Groups there had sprung up to face down the edicts of silence being imposed on the Press and Radio and The Church refused to stay silent on torture and the clandestine assassinations carried out by right-wing groups, such as that on the Degollados, three professors who were activists in those denunciations. The ecumenical group of sisters, religious, and laity, known as 'Sebastian Acevedo' (name of a victim who in despair burned himself alive in the public square), refused to keep silent and mounted lightening demonstrations before places of torture, of a prejudiced or deafened-out Press or Radio, and brought hope and courage to a people who might have felt crushed or downtrodden in their own indignation.

In time, of course, these outrages were brought into the light of public justice, (The 'Retting Report') but the darkness and terror of many had to be brought through this refusal to be silent, on the part of more courageous Radio outlets like Cooperativa, Chilena. And to them we turned when we had to make our own denunciations at parochial and local level; the most outstanding

being the Ecumenical Vicaria de Solidaridad, led by Cardinal Raul Silva and other Christian leaders, and supported internationally in its funding of competent lawyers and well-formed laity from across the religious and social spectrum. A prophetic Church led to a community living out its Baptism as prophet and priest and king, knowing when to denounce, announce and invoke in song the mission in the words of Jeremiah in his vocation.

Fear and Revolution

On Fear and the Revolution: (p.512) "People are able to overcome fear: children pluck up their courage and enter a dark room, soldiers go in to battle, a young man can leap into an abyss with only a parachute to save him. But what about this other fear, this fear that millions of people find insuperable, this fear written up in crimson letters over the leaden sky of Moscow - this terrible fear of the State?"

"No, no! In the name of morality, that justified today's pharisees, hypocrites and writers of denunciations in the name of the future, that explained why it was right to elbow the innocent man into the ditch in the name of the happiness of the people. This was what enables you to turn away from children whose parents had been sent to camps. This was why it was right for a woman - because she had failed to denounce an innocent husband - to be torn away from her children and sent for ten years to a concentration camp.

"The magic of the Revolution had joined with people's fear of death, their horror of torture, their anguish when the first breath of the camps blew on their faces.

"Once, when you took up the cause of the Revolution, you could expect prison, forced labour, years of homelessness, the scaffold. But now - and this was the most terrible thing of all - the Revolution paid those who were still faithful to its great ideal with supplementary rations, with dinners in the Kremlin canteen, with special food parcels, with private cars, trips to holiday resorts and tickets for first-class coaches..." ('Life and Fate'...Vasily Grossman)

We came to know, search out and interrogate the Press too, in their ambivalences and their embargos when under a so-called Government 'banda'. Years later, when we were in another public space, the Press would not always be there at our side, when the Church had its own internal or external scandals, and we would have to face that one down on our own territories. Silvia Pelegrini (a sister, indeed, of the celebrated football manager and a qualified engineer, Manuel, of former Man City victories!) spoke to an in-house symposium of the clergy of the Diocese of Valparaiso on that subject. A long-time professor of communications in the Catholic

University of Valparaiso, she was eminently qualified to speak and expound on the theme of the Press and its freedoms. "Say only what you want to say and should say", she advised us, "and do not allow yourselves to be hassled into territory beyond your own knowledge and competence. Remember," she summed up for us in a pithy phrase, "the Press are not your Friends".

I think today of what Pope Francis calls the 'Culture of Indifference'. Maybe he recalls the Peruvian and Latin American song/hymn, 'Solo pido a Dios... que la guerra, cultura...no me sea indiferente', which I recently heard sung in a Vatican concert in his presence, and which I have dared to intone in the Men's Shed from time to time, here in Merville!

On another level, Silence must operate and fruitfully at the interior and fruitful level. Henry Nouwen author of the book, 'The Return of the Prodigal Son', in another of his works, 'Reaching Out', wrote of a spiritual infilling of a Silence that opens itself in three levels and enriches our lives...The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life 'In Reaching Out': "The 'Three Movements of the Spiritual Life', Henri Nouwen offers a model for understanding a central dynamic in the spiritual life. The quotes in this reading are from 'Reaching Out' unless otherwise noted. Our shorthand for understanding what he's getting at is this: Loneliness and illusion will bring hostility, solitude and prayer will bring hospitality". Reading it again after all those years in this summary, I can appreciate what it must have meant to me: "The more we come to the painful confession of our loneliness, hostility and illusions, the more we are able to see solitude, hospitality and prayer as part of the vision of our life. Loneliness - Solitude, Hostility - Hospitality, Illusion - Prayer. As the person, or parish, increases a capacity for solitude, what Kenneth Leech called "an inner core of silence," that provides a base for growth in hospitality. And as our hospitality increases, that provides a base for deeper prayer (and connection with more reality). That foundation allows for our encounter with 'Reality': It is the 'path to our deepest self and our most profound connection with God in community'."

Chapter 51 of the book 'Life and Fate' by Vasily Grossman (p201): "An electronic machine can carry out mathematical calculations, remember historical facts, play chess and translate books from one language to another. It is able to solve mathematical problems more quickly than man and its memory is faultless. Is there any limit to progress, to its ability to create machines in the image and likeness of man? It seems that the answer is no.

"It is not impossible to imagine the machine of future ages and millennia. It will be able to listen

to music and appreciate art; it will even be able to compose melodies, paint pictures and write poems. Is there a limit to its perfection? Can it be compared to man? Will it surpass him?"

"Childhood memories...tears of happiness...the bitterness of parting...Love of freedom...feelings of pity for a sick puppy...nervousness...a mother's tenderness...thoughts of death...sadness...a friendship...love of the weak...sudden hope...a fortunate guess...melancholy...unreasoning joy... sudden embarrassment.

"The machine will be able to recreate all of this! But the surface of the whole earth will be too small to accommodate this machine - this machine whose dimensions and weight will continually increase as it attempts to reproduce the peculiarities of mind and soul of an average, inconspicuous human being.

"Fascism annihilated tens of millions of people"...

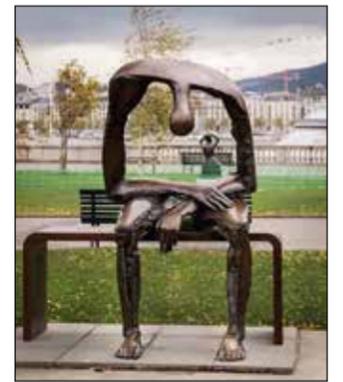
Reflection

Overnight reflection upon all this has opened up a much wider and personal vista. Works like the Confessions of St Augustine, The Journey of a Soul of St Theresa of Liseux, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and A Hundred Years of Solitude, Chronicle of a Death Announced, Solzenitzen and The Gulag Archipelago, Thomas Merton and The Seven Storey Mountain, these amongst many others marked my own initiation into those processes! So also did the great films like Pasolini and The Gospel of St Matthew, The Song of Bernadette, Franz Werfel, The ICTUS group in Santiago and the Teatro Comedia during the dictatorship of Pinochet and the fear of scrutiny from above, and other dramas in the Santiago and Valparaiso of that time, defiantly presented! There were the biographies read over a lifetime, Thomas Merton, Seeds of Contemplation, N T Wilson (Confessions of a Sinner - who evokes other figures and writers of the time like John Betjamen), C S Lewis and The Screwtape Letters, A Grief Observed, Mere Christianity - all formative for me!

As a personal testimony to that sort of passion, I include in this essay some texts assiduously transcribed from Vasily Grossman's epic novel, 'Life and Fate' - in the days before Alexa, YouTube and other modern resources! They touch upon Fear, Antisemitism and The Machine, which are today more than relevant (like George Orwell '1984', and Aldous Huxley 'Brave New World'...books which also figured in my formation!)

In his Instruction 'Verbum Domini', based on a Synod of Bishops and consideration of the Word of God, Pope Benedict insisted that a fruitful hearing and reception of the Word, needs an active Silence... The word and silence...

66. "In their interventions, a good number of Synod Fathers insisted on the importance of



silence in relation to the word of God and its reception in the lives of the faithful.[231] The word, in fact, can only be spoken and heard in silence, outward and inward. Ours is not an age which fosters recollection; at times one has the impression that people are afraid of detaching themselves, even for a moment, from the mass media. For this reason, it is necessary nowadays that the People of God be educated in the value of silence. Rediscovering the centrality of God's word in the life of the Church also means rediscovering a sense of recollection and inner repose. The great patristic tradition teaches us that the mysteries of Christ all involve silence.[232] Only in silence can the word of God find a home in us, as it did in Mary, woman of the word and, inseparably, woman of silence. Our liturgies must facilitate this attitude of authentic listening: Verbo crescente, verba deficiunt. [233] The importance of all this is particularly evident in the Liturgy of the Word, "which should be celebrated in a way that favours meditation".[234] Silence, when called for, should be considered "a part of the celebration".[235] Hence I encourage Pastors to foster moments of recollection whereby, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the word of God can find a welcome in our hearts."

In some of my Masses in Valparaiso, aided and supported by married deacon, Gustavo Rubio, I had the practice of a minute of silence after each of the Readings of the Word, and the congregation, surrounded by noise in their departamentos, willingly took it on board.

As an active member for some years of the De Foucaul Fraternidad of priests, I often sallied forth on the 'Day in the Desert' where no one intruded; on a river bank, open terrain and solitude. In our experiences, as we shared later, we came to face some of our fears and hesitations, many other distractions and temptations.

Finally, and for those who have stuck with me, I have to include the reflection from Chilean Poet, Pablo Neruda: "Lentamente voy cruzando el silencio, y parece que nadie me acompaña, Ah viajero, no es la neblina, ni la muerte que viaja contigo, sino tu mismo y con muchas vidas" ("Slowly I advance across the silence, and it seems like no one is accompanying me. Ah but, Pilgrim, it is not the fog nor death that walks beside you, but your very own self, and with many many lives!")

Come Follow Me **The power of truth** *Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR*



Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR

IF anyone ever says to you: "I want to tell you the truth about yourself", stand well back. More than likely you are going to hear about all that is wrong with you! Even when someone is praising you they often include a 'but' into their remarks and then go on to point out some of the things that are wrong with you.

Of course, we do the same thing to ourselves. I have often asked groups of people to write out a list of the things they like about themselves. When that is finished I would then ask them to write a list of the things that they dislike about themselves. This second list is almost always easier for people to write.

An injustice to the truth

We have done a terrible injustice to the whole notion of truth in our world today. There is so much fake news, so many conspiracy theories, so much negative criticism of people and groups that is claimed to be the truth. It is difficult to trust anyone anymore. Some people are

even talking about this as the post-truth era, when the truth is not what is important but one's own opinion is what counts, whatever that might be. This is even called personal truth, 'the way I see it!'

The facts and the truth

We can know a lot of the facts about other people by what we observe ourselves, as well as what we hear from others. We can make judgements on them and often these judgements are unjust or unfair. We can know a lot about the world we live in from reading about it, hearing about it on radio, TV, podcasts, etc. And we form judgements that are less than the truth.

As Catholics, most of us know some, or even much, of the teaching of the Church on certain issues of faith or morals. But very often we think that what we know is all there is to know and make judgements about others in the light of that.

Just today for example, as I was writing this, I met a person who was told by a very good living Catholic that because she was divorced she was living in sin for all the years of her divorce. That simply is not true. It is a fact that we do not recognise divorce. But there are times when it is not only not wrong to divorce but it is the right thing to do for the protection of oneself and of the children. That is clearly the teaching of the Church and needs to be made clear to everyone, so that people who have suffered from abuse are not subjected to further trauma by a lack of knowledge of the truth.

Three sources of truth

The Catholic Church recognises and is formed by three sources of the truth: The Scriptures, called by us the Word of God; The teaching and tradition of the Church; The world in which we live.

1. The Scriptures give us the story of creation and of humanity as seen through the eyes of God, God who is the ultimate truth. It is a story of God constantly searching for the hearts and the affection of humanity until finally Christ, the Son of God, became flesh and lived among us.

In Christ, then, we have the story of God proving His love for us through the death and resurrection of Christ, leading us into the fullness of life here on earth and into eternal life.

The Scriptures are like a limitless reservoir of knowledge and truth. For 2,000 years we have had Scripture scholars studying the Scriptures and passing on their knowledge to us. We need to listen to the experts in order to find out what is in the Scriptures for us. Private interpretation is not what it is about. This can only lead to fundamentalism and 'private revelations'.

2. The teaching and tradition of the Church. We come to the Scriptures, not only to discover what is in them, but to come to a knowledge of what is in us, individually and as a community. Again, from the beginning of the Church, there have been many women and men who have dedicated their lives as theologians

to constantly think through what God's Word is saying to us about how we are called to live our lives as God's people.

The teaching authority of the Church, in the person of the Pope and the Bishops, then pass on this teaching to us. This teaching is at two levels: Faith, the truths that we believe; and Morals, the ways we are called to live these truths.

A good example of this is that, as Catholics, we believe in the dignity of every human person from the moment of conception to the time of death and beyond into eternal life. Because of this belief we are called to live as a pro-life people at every stage. Of course, not every Catholic accepts this teaching, including some very high profile people, as we know. But the teaching remains there as a clear call to what we are about as followers of Christ.

3. The world in which we live. One of the great dangers of what is called organised religion is that we can easily reduce our faith to manageable, well contained truths. And then we can point out that we have the truth and everyone else is wrong. The world in which we live very often challenges us on this. And those challenges are often God's call to open up to the full truth of God and of ourselves and our world.

The Joy of Love

For example, today's world holds great challenges for all of us around the questions of sexuality. The teaching of the Catholic Church about sexuality is clear

and beautiful. Our understanding of that teaching is very often minimalist.

A number of years ago, Pope Francis initiated a worldwide survey of the Catholic Church about our attitudes towards marriage and family life, and the challenges to these of the world we live in. This was followed up with two sessions of a Synod of Bishops, with many lay people present to study the responses and address them.

In 2016, Pope Francis then issued a document entitled 'Amoris Laetitia - The Joy of Love'. This outlines for us the teaching of the Catholic Church on Marriage and Family Life for today. Unfortunately, most Catholics probably will not read this marvellous document. The result is that they will continue to respond to difficulties with a very limited knowledge of the truth.

All are welcome

While holding fast to the teaching of the Church, Pope Francis is also exercising another very important truth, that all are welcome! How can we welcome those who are LGBTQ+ as part of our Community? How can we be advocates for their rights? How can they be advocates for the Sacramental Marriage of heterosexual couples? This is the challenge of the Holy Spirit for us today.

Care for our Common Home

Another very good example of how the world of today is calling us to a deeper and richer living of our faith is the Climate Crisis that we

are in. In 2015, Pope Francis issued a most important document called 'Laudato Si - Care for our Common Home'. This is an extraordinary and timely contribution to the Church and the world.

Many Catholics probably think that this has nothing to do with faith or morals. The truth is that it has everything to do with us. We have just had the Season of Creation, September 1- October 4, in which we have prayed for a change of heart in the world about the vital importance of creation, not just for our survival but for the glory of God. 'Laudato Si', which Pope Francis is updating at present, is our inspiration for our faith in this regard. Do we know what is in it? Do we even care about what is in it?

Conclusion

In the Gospels, Jesus tells us: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." That is very central to how we see ourselves as Catholics. As followers of Christ, in union with the Church, we are called to be witnesses in word and in deed to Christ - to where He is taking us and all of humanity and creation, to the Truth as found in Him, and to the fullness of life which He brings.

Christ also tells us "the truth will set you free". That is our message for ourselves and for the world we live in. But we have to be faithful to the truth that Christ reveals about God and about creation and humanity; so that we can offer the life that He has won for us by His death and resurrection.

Omagh Life in Spirit seminars an inspiring weekend of fellowship, peace & joy by *Evelyn Heaney*



OMAGH Charismatic Prayer Group held Life in the Spirit Seminars in St Joseph's Hall, Omagh on Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 September. This very blessed event was led by Deacons Pat Butterly and John Taaffe and their team from Apostles of Love Ireland, based at Mellifont Abbey in Collon, Co Louth.

In the first seminar, Deacon Pat highlighted the great Love God has for each individual, no matter how unworthy we may feel. He reminded us that like a good parent loving a child, God cannot love us any less no matter how far we stray from Him, and that He is not a heavenly warden eager to punish us for doing wrong.

Deacon Pat emphasized the importance of forgiveness of ourselves and others, and the redeeming power of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The Prayer Group is grateful to Fr Michael McCaul and Fr Declan McGeehan for taking time out of their busy schedule to hear Confessions.

In seminar two, on 'Salvation', Deacon John explained that we don't have to wait until we die to get salvation, that salvation is available for us today and every day, and that we need the wisdom and power of God to live in a new way.

We can live this 'New Life', seminar three, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but we must seek the help of the Holy Spirit on a daily basis and several times each day. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we will know God in a new way as we are equipped with the gifts of the Spirit, become closer to God ourselves and be able to do His work and serve others.

In seminar four, 'Receiving God's Gifts', we were told that we can't earn or even deserve God's gifts, that new life in the Spirit is a gift, but that we must turn to Jesus to receive it. We must make time in our lives for Prayer, Holy Mass as often as possible, Scripture reading and Adoration, so we have

to sacrifice something, maybe a TV programme or less screen time. We need God's protection against Satan, who will try to discourage us and place many obstacles in our paths.

We had Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament as the prayer teams prayed for each person for the 'Baptism in the Spirit'. Deacons Pat and John encouraged everyone to be open to the Gifts of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom; Understanding; Prophecy; Healing; Word of Knowledge; Miracles; Tongues; interpretation of tongues; and to not limit God's mighty power. Everyone found this a very powerful experience.

During the sixth seminar, 'Growth', Mary Brennan, a member of the Apostles of Love team, gave a very practical and encouraging outline on how we might grow, emphasizing that being Baptized in the Spirit is just the beginning, that the seed has now been sown and we need to nurture that seed with prayer, study of Scripture and the lives of saints, attending retreats or a local prayer meeting, but to take our growth slowly and avoid expecting too much of ourselves and so becoming discouraged.

Involvement in serving our Church and community are also important as methods of ensuring

our growth as we progress our faith journey. We make the effort and the growth comes from God.

In seminar seven, 'Transformation', we were told that we can rely on the Holy Spirit to help us change and so achieve a transformation in our lives. In most people this may be a very gradual growth as our faith journey progresses.

Fr Eugene Hasson, Drumragh Parish Priest, welcomed and expressed his gratitude to Bishop Michael Router, Auxiliary Bishop of Armagh, who celebrated Holy Mass on Sunday afternoon. Fr Hasson also welcomed newly ordained Fr Stephen Ward, who was delighted to concelebrate Mass with Bishop Michael, who congratulated him on his ordination and encouraged us to pray for Fr Stephen as he takes on the role of curate in the Long Tower Parish, in Derry, and to pray for all our priests and for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

In his homily, Bishop Michael referred to the importance of forgiveness of others and of ourselves as well, saying that this is an important ingredient for growing in our faith, which has been enriched by attending the seminars. He thanked the team from Apostles of Love Ireland



for leading the seminars and congratulated them on the work that they do, and thanked Omagh Charismatic Prayer group for inviting him to be with them.

The weekend was greatly enhanced by the music ministry and choir raising our spirits and souls as they led us in hymns of praise and worship throughout the weekend.

There was a very positive feedback from the weekend, including: "Full of the Holy Spirit and just wonderful"; "I came away feeling spiritually uplifted, the two deacons reached out to us all with ease and I found the whole experience to be inspirational and very thought provoking. It was lovely to conclude with a very beautiful Holy Mass"; "Wonderful two days of prayer all led by the Holy Spirit"; "Wonderful weekend

of fellowship, peace and joy"; "Very special and very blessed weekend"; and "Wonderful, inspiring, renewed my faith in the Holy Spirit".

Omagh Charismatic Prayer Group meets on Thursdays at 7.40 pm for the Rosary, with the Prayer meeting at 8 pm in the Pastoral Centre, Brook Street, Omagh. Prayer Ministry is available after the meeting. Everyone is welcome and people can send petitions to any prayer group member and these will be shared on the prayer network.

A Day of Prayer and Healing will take place on Sunday, November 19, in the Mellon Country Hotel, hosted by the Prayer group, and it will be led by Fr Brendan Walsh. (See poster on Diary page for booking details).

Parish Post-its

Ardstraw East

(Newtownstewart)

YOUCAT Study: A one-hour interactive YOUCAT programme, for those aged 16+ years, takes place on Thursdays in the Oratory, at 7 Main Street, Newtownstewart, starting at 6.30 pm. For further information contact 028 81661445 or email ardstraweast@derrydiocese.org. This may be of particular interest to those undertaking the Pope John Paul II Award.

Badoney Lower

(Gortin-Rouskey)

October Devotions: Devotions will take place every Sunday during October in St Patrick's Church, Gortin, starting at 6.30 pm.

Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Sundays in St Patrick's Church, Gortin, from 3.30-5.30 pm.

Ballinascreen/

Desertmartin

St Pio Mass: Mass in honour of St Pio of Pietrelcina is celebrated on the first Monday of each month at 7.30 pm, in Holy Rosary Church. The Novena prayers and Rosary are recited at 7.10 pm.

Ballymagroarty

Fr Paddy Poetry: A small number of 'In Sunshine and In Shadow', a book of poetry written by the late Fr Paddy O'Kane, have been reprinted and are available at the parish office any morning, Monday-Friday. Cost £10. All proceeds will go the Foyle Hospice.

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in Holy Family Church, Ballymagroarty, every Sunday, from 1.30 - 6 pm.

Padre Pio Prayer: The Holy Family Padre Pio Prayer Group meets on the first Tuesday each month at Holy Family Chapel, Ballymagroarty, Derry. It starts with the Rosary at 6.45 pm, followed by Mass at 7.15pm, and Novena to St Pio directly afterwards. There will be a first class relic available for veneration.

Banagher

Adoration & Chaplet: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Divine Mercy Chaplet take place in St Mary's Church, Altinure, on Thursdays 10.30 am - 11.30 am, and in the Grotto Chapel, Fincairn, on Fridays, 10-11 am.

Bellaghy

Community Café: The Open Door Community Café is

open on the last Sunday of each month, from 11.30 am until 1 pm.

Buncrana

Parish Novena: The nine-Sundays Parish Novena in St Mary's Church, Cockhill, with the theme 'Throwing open the doors to Christ', starts on Mission Sunday at 7 pm. The novena is in honour of Pope St John Paul II for a renewal of faith and has guest speakers each evening, including Fr Shaun Doherty, Mgr Bryan McCanny, PP Limavady, Geraldine Mullan, Eoin Mulhern and Euan O'Brien, Fr John Joe Duffy, Patricia Friel, Mary's Meals, Fr Paul Fraser, PP Castlederg, Aghyaran & Drumquin, Sr Mary, Home of the Mother, and Fr Bradley.

Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament now takes place in St Mary's Oratory every Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday, beginning at 6 am and closing at 10 pm.

Rosary: The Rosary is prayed each weekday at 9.30 am in St Mary's Oratory, prior to 10 am Mass.

Guided Holy Hour: A Guided Holy Hour of Adoration in Honour of the Holy Face of Jesus takes place on Sundays, 6-7 pm in St Mary's Oratory. All welcome.

Rosary for Priests: Three Rosaries are prayed each Tuesday, between 1-2 pm, in the Oratory for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

AA: Alcoholics Anonymous Amazing Grace Group, Buncrana, has five meetings per week: Sundays - 8 pm, Tuesdays - 8.30 pm, Thursdays - 11.30 am, Fridays 8.30 pm, and Saturdays at 11.30 am. If you think you may have a problem with alcohol, please come along. Venue for all meetings is St Teresa's Room.

Al-Anon: The Al-Anon Group, for anyone whose life is or has been affected by someone else's drinking, meets in St Teresa's Room on Thursdays at 6:45 pm.

Burt, Inch & Fahán

Adoration: Adoration in St Mura's Parish Church, Fahán, takes place each Friday after 10 am Mass.

Cappagh

Rosary: The Rosary is prayed in St Mary's Church, Killyclogher every Monday-Sunday after 10 am Mass, and in Corpus Christi, Mountfield every Thursday evening at 8 pm.

Castlederg & Ardstraw

West

Prayer: The Rosary and

Angelus are prayed in St Patrick's Church, Castlederg on Tuesdays at 2 pm, led by the Legion of Mary, during the month of October.

Adoration: Adoration takes place following 10 am Mass in St Patrick's Church on Fridays, until 12 noon.

Claudy

Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place from after the 10 am Mass until 8 pm on Tuesdays in St Patrick's Church, Claudy, and on Wednesdays in St Joseph's Church, Craigbane.

Children's Rosary: Children's Rosary continues in St Patrick's Church, Claudy on the first Saturday of each month, at 2 pm. All are welcome.

Coleraine

Taize Evening: An evening of Taize Chants, Scripture readings and prayer will be held at St John's Church on Wednesday, October 25, at 7 pm. St John's Choir will assist with the chants.

SJYP Meet: St Joseph's Young Priests' Society meets on the last Monday of each month at St John's Church Sacristy, after the 10 am morning Mass, and is open to everyone. New members are welcome at any of the meetings, which support praying for and assisting to support the vocation to priesthood and the religious life.

Exposition: St John's Church Monday Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Wednesdays in St John's Church, from 2-4 pm, with Rosary at 3:45 pm.

Lectio Divina: The Lectio Divina Group meet on Wednesdays, from 7.30 - 9.00 pm, in the Committee Room.

Prayer Group: The St Canice's Prayer Group meets each Thursday in the Conference Room at 7 pm, and invites anyone who wishes to deepen their faith through shared Scripture, Prayer and Praise.

Errigal Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Mondays after the morning Mass in St Mary's Church, Ballerin, until 2.30 pm.

Rosary & Chaplet: The Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet are prayed in St Joseph's Church, Glenullin, every Wednesday evening at 6.30 pm.

Social Gathering: Tea and scones are available in Glenullin Social Club after the Wednesday morning Mass, offering an opportunity to have 'a cuppa and a natter' after the prayers are said! Everyone welcome.

Dunamanagh

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place in St Patrick's Church after 10 am Mass on Saturdays, until 12 noon, and on Mondays from 7-8 pm.

Drumragh (Omagh)

Devotions: There will be Devotions in honour of Mary, Our Lady of the Rosary in The Sacred Heart Church at 6 pm on Sunday evenings during the month of October.

Prayer Group: The Charismatic Prayer Group meetings take place in The Pastoral Centre on Thursday evenings, with Rosary at 7.40 pm and prayer meeting at 8 pm. All welcome to come and pray.

Legion of Mary: The Legion of Mary Men's meetings take place on the first, second and last Monday, and third Tuesday of each month at 7.30 pm, in St Vincent's Hall (beneath Sacred Heart Church Sacristy). Contact: Sean on 07730671370.

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in Sacred Heart Church on Wednesdays following morning Mass until 6 pm.

Rosary of Reparation: On the first Saturday of each month, a Rosary of Reparation will be prayed at 1pm on Main Street, Omagh. All welcome to join.

Drumquin

Grotto Rosary: The Rosary is recited at Our Lady's Grotto at St Patrick's Church, Drumquin, on Monday evenings, at 8 pm.

Dungiven

Healing Mass: A St Pio Healing Mass takes place on the first Tuesday of each month at 7 pm in St Patrick's. Rosary: The Rosary is prayed at 9.35 am in St Patrick's Church from Monday-Friday.

Lectio Divina: The Lectio Divina Group meet on Wednesdays, from 7.30 - 9.00 pm, in the Committee Room.

Prayer Group: The St Canice's Prayer Group meets each Thursday in the Conference Room at 7 pm, and invites anyone who wishes to deepen their faith through shared Scripture, Prayer and Praise.

Errigal

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Mondays after the morning Mass in St Mary's Church, Ballerin, until 2.30 pm.

Rosary & Chaplet: The Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet are prayed in St Joseph's Church, Glenullin, every Wednesday evening at 6.30 pm.

Social Gathering: Tea and scones are available in Glenullin Social Club after the Wednesday morning Mass, offering an opportunity to have 'a cuppa and a natter' after the prayers are said! Everyone welcome.

Fahan

Adoration: Adoration takes place in St Mura's Parish Church each Friday after the 10 am Mass.

Faughanvale

Rosary: The Rosary is prayed every Friday at 7 pm in Star of the Sea Church.

Greencastle

Divine Mercy: The Divine Mercy Chaplet is prayed on the First Tuesday of every month at 12.15 pm before Mass in St Patrick's Church, Greencastle.

Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in St Patrick's Church after 12.30 pm Mass on Tuesdays until 5 pm.

Iskaheen, Drung & Muff

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Tuesdays after 10 am Mass in St Patrick's Church, Iskaheen.

Divine Mercy: Divine Mercy Devotions take place on Wednesdays after 10 am Mass in Sacred Heart Church, Muff.

St Peregrine: The St Peregrine Novena Prayer and veneration of relic takes place in St Columba's Church, Drung, after the 10.15 am Mass on the first Sunday of each month.

Lavey

Youth 2000: Youth 2000 Prayer Group, for 16-35 year olds, meets in Lavey Parochial House, opposite the chapel, on Friday evenings at 7.30 pm.

Leckpatrick

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesdays after 10 am Mass until 5.30 pm.

Limavady

Children's Liturgy: Children's Liturgy for children in P1-P3 takes place every Sunday at the 12 noon Mass in Christ the King Church.

Maghera

Seven Joys of Mary: A series of five meetings on the Seven Joys of Mary is underway on Monday nights during October in the Pastoral Centre, at 7.30 pm.

Pray & Play: The Maghera Parish Pray and Play for Parents, Grandparents & Tots (three years old and younger) meets every Friday, in the Fairhill Youth Centre, after the 10 am Mass. It runs from 10.30 am until 12 noon.

Malin

Celebration Concert: Celebration Country and Gospel Concert in Aughaclay

Chapel on Wednesday, November 22, featuring Mick Flavin, The Henry Girls, Ryan Turner, Matthew and Shunie Crampsey, and Patsy Cavanagh. Tickets available from Seamus 0877635011, Fr Devlin, 0868914232, Patrick 086061557, Gerard 0868704255, email pnd7889@gmail.com and on Eventbrite.ie Limited tickets so book early.

Melmount

Remembrance Service: The Annual Service in remembrance of deceased members of families and parish will take place on Sunday, November 5, at 6 pm. Families who have suffered a bereavement since November 2022 are asked to nominate a representative to carry a candle to the altar in commemoration of their dead. (Candles will be provided)

Exposition: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in the church on Mondays after 10 am Mass until 6 pm.

Prayer: The Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet will be recited in St Pius X Church, Merville, at 7.30 pm every day, from Sunday - Friday.

Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Mondays, from 2-9 pm, and Wednesdays, 6-9 pm, in St Pius X Church.

Moville

Prayer: The Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet will be recited in St Pius X Church, Moville, at 7.30 pm every day, from Sunday - Friday.

Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Mondays, from 2-9 pm, and Wednesdays, 6-9 pm, in St Pius X Church.

Sion Mills

Annual Service for the Dead: The Annual Service in remembrance of deceased members of parish and families will take place on Sunday, November 12, at 6 pm. Families who have suffered a bereavement since November 2022 are asked to nominate a representative to carry a candle to the altar in commemoration of their dead. (Candles will be provided.)

Legion of Mary: The Legion of Mary meets in the Green Room, behind the church, each Monday evening at 7.30 pm. This is open not only to members of the Legion but to anyone interested in joining. Anyone can come along to the start of the meeting for the Rosary.

Steelstown & Culmore

Lectio Divina: Lectio Divina is a way of praying the Scriptures together and takes place every Wednesday after 10 am Mass, in the Parish Conference Room. All welcome.

Adoration: Spend some quiet time before the Lord Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament each Friday after 10 am Mass to 6.50 pm.

Stations of the Cross: Come

along to reflect on the Way of the Cross on Fridays at 7.30 pm.

Strabane (Camus)

Mass for Dead: The annual Mass for the Dead will be celebrated on Friday, November 3 at 7.30 pm.

Graves' Blessing 2024: The annual ceremony of the blessing of graves for the parish will be held on Sunday, May 26, 2024, at 3 pm.

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place all day in the Adoration Chapel (Oasis of Peace), which is situated at the back of the Church.

Prayer Group: The Contemplative Prayer Group meets on Mondays at 8 pm in the Prayer Room in the Parochial House. All welcome. Entry by Parish Priest's front door.

SJYP Society: The St John Vianney branch of the St Joseph's Young Priests' Society (the three combined Strabane parishes) meets on the first Tuesday of the month, excluding January, July and August, with Rosary in the church after 10 am Mass and continues in St Patrick's Hall. More people are encouraged to join in this prayer for new students to join the priesthood. The Society assists Irish and overseas student. Please contact Margaret Harte on 028 71 883159.

Padre Pio Mass: The Padre Pio Mass takes place in the Church on the first Wednesday of the month at 7 pm, with Rosary beforehand at 6.40 pm.

Grotto Rosary: The Rosary is recited at the Grotto on the last Sunday of each month. Everyone welcome.

Templemore - Long Tower

Mother of Perpetual Help Novena: The Long Tower annual Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Mother of Priests, on the nine Sundays before Christmas, runs from Sunday, October 22 until December 17, starting at 6 pm. This year's theme is that of the Year of Vocations to Diocesan Priesthood, 'Take the Risk for Christ'. Each night will comprise of the Rosary, Novena prayer and petitions, a talk, and Eucharistic Healing ceremony, with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

On October 22, Bishop Phonsie Cullinan, chair of Irish Bishops' Council for Year of Vocations, will speak on 'Why a Year of Vocations to Diocesan Priesthood'. Martina Purdy and Elaine Kelly will speak on 'St Patrick and Vocations' on October 29. Aoife O'Neill, Youth Coordinator, Termonbacca

Continued on p29

and one of the original 'Derry Girls', will speak on 'Nurturing seeds of vocations' on November 5. Fr John Joe Duffy, Creeslough, Co Donegal, will speak on 'Priests serving People' on November 12. Séanan Zaltron (née Cregan), Apostolate of Prayer for Priests, will speak on 'Praying for Priests' on November 19. Dana Rosemary Scallon will speak on 'Light the Fire' of Vocations on November 26, and sing her new song. Fr Pat O'Hagan, Derry Diocesan Vocations Director, will speak on 'To the future - vocations in Derry Diocese' on December 3. Fr Stephen Ward, CC Long Tower, will speak on 'The Journey to Priesthood' on December 10. The Novena will close on December 17 with a 'Mary, Mother of Priests' Christmas Reflection, with Carols by Candlelight.

Padre Pio Mass: A Padre Pio Mass for healing in mind and body takes place on the first Monday of each month at 7.30 pm, in Long Tower Church. It is hoped at the end of each Mass to give a Blessing using a First Class Relic of Padre Pio. The Mass will be streamed via the parish website: www.longtowerchurch.org then click on the link for the webcam or alternatively by logging on to www.churchmedia.tv. The next Padre Pio Mass will take place on Monday, September 4.

PATH Mass: The next PATH Mass (Parish Action Towards Health) will take place in the Long Tower on Thursday, September 7, at 7.30 pm, followed by Adoration until midnight.

Templemore - St Eugene's Our Lady Untier of Knots Novena: Our Lady Untier of Knots Novena is taking place after 7.30 pm Mass on Thursdays at St Eugene's Cathedral, and finishes on November 30.

Matt Talbot Mass: The Matt Talbot, Freedom from addiction Mass takes place on the first Monday of each month at 7.30 pm in St Eugene's Cathedral.

Cathedral Voices: Cathedral Voices is a singing group for people living with dementia and older members of the community. The singing club takes place every Thursday from

1.30-3 pm, and is a great chance to socialise, listen to music, have a cup of tea and a chat and a bit of craic. If you are interested in attending, please contact the parish office on 028 71262894.

Three Patrons

God Club: The Saturday morning God Club is an opportunity for 16-30 year olds to learn together about their faith. It takes place in the Kildare Room at 11.30 am, following the 11 am Mass in St Brigid's Chapel, Carnhill.

Family/Youth Mass: A Family/Youth Mass is celebrated every Sunday at 6.30 pm in St Joseph's Church, Galliagh. Everyone is welcome.

Be Still: Be Still is a Men's Prayer and Friendship Group that meets every Thursday night from 8-9.15 pm in Our Lady's Chapel, within St Joseph's Church building, Galliagh. Its mission as a group is to provide a safe place where men can pray and share in a confidential and supportive setting. All men are welcome.

Holy Hour: A Holy Hour for the Unborn & Expectant Mothers takes place on Thursdays at 7 pm in Our Lady's Chapel, St Joseph's Church, Galliagh. All welcome.

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place in Our Lady's Chapel, St Joseph's Church,

Galliagh, on Mondays after 11 am Mass, concluding with a Youth 2000 Holy Hour from 7-8 pm. It also takes place seven days a week in the Adoration Room in St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, from 8 am until 6 pm, and in St Patrick's Church, Pennyburn, on Wednesdays from 10.45 am - 6.45 pm.

First Saturday: On the First Saturday of each month, after 11 am Mass in St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, there is Adoration and Rosary, ending with Divine Mercy and Benediction at 3 pm.

Living Disciples: Living Disciples meet on Tuesdays at 7.30 pm in St Pio House, St Joseph's Church grounds, for Praise & Worship, friendship and a cup of tea. All welcome.

St Pio Mass: A monthly Mass in honour of St Pio takes place on the first Monday at 7 pm in St Patrick's Church, Pennyburn.

Healing Night: A Healing Night with the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal takes place monthly on the first Friday, at 7 pm in St Joseph's Church, Galliagh. Everyone welcome.

Holy Souls Prayer: Praying for the Holy Souls, Our Lady of Montligeon Prayer Group meets on Wednesdays after 9.15 am Mass in the room adjacent to St

Brigid's Parochial House, Carnhill, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. The group also meets in Termonbacca every Monday at 7.30 pm. All welcome.

Urney & Castlefinn

First Saturdays: The First Saturday Devotion and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament will take place in St Columba's Church, Doneyloop, from 12 noon until 1 pm on the First Saturday of each month.

Adoration: Weekly Eucharistic Adoration takes place in St Anthony's Chapel every Tuesday, from 12 noon until 8 pm.

Cenacle: The Cenacle for Priests takes place every Tuesday in St Anthony's Chapel immediately after the 7 pm Mass.

Waterside & Strathfoyle

Vocations Holy Hour: A Holy Hour for Vocations will take place in St Columba's Church, Chapel Road, Waterside, at 8 pm on Friday, October 27, following 7.30 pm Mass. This is part of the National Year of Prayer for Vocations to Diocesan Priesthood.

Lectio Divina: Reflect on the Scriptures with Lectio Divina in the Church of the Immaculate Conception on Thursday nights, starting at 8.15 pm.

...Other Diary Dates

Servant Sisters: The Sisters of the Home of the Mother are back hosting weekly formation meetings on Tuesdays, at 7.30 pm, in the Parochial House at Cross, Killygordon, (F93PN0X), and the weekly Holy Hours on Thursdays at 7 pm.

Cursillo Weekends: Derry Cursillo will hold their next weekends on October 26-29 for ladies and November 2-5 for men. Cursillo is a lay movement within the Catholic Church. It was founded in Spain in the early 40's by a group of men concerned about the disinterest and disaffection shown by many people within their Church and the growing secularisation of society. After much prayer, reflection and deliberation and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Cursillo as a lay movement was formed. You can only ever do a Cursillo weekend once in a lifetime. Cursillo is not a retreat but an encounter. During the weekend you will encounter yourself, Christ and others. It is an encounter that can last for the rest of your life.

Any adult aged 21 and over who wants to improve their life, their relationship with God and others can do a Cursillo weekend. Cursillo does not, and cannot, solve your problems but it has been shown to give people the strength, support and encouragement to do that themselves. Further information regarding the upcoming weekends can be obtained by contacting Aoife on 02871262512 or emailing termonbaccaderry@gmail.com

Men's Day of Prayer: The organisers of the very successful 500 Men's Day of Prayer in the Long Tower are now calling for 2,000 men to answer the call to prayer and Adoration in St Columba's Church on November 25, from 2-5 pm. Dana will be present to sing her new song, 'Light the Fire'.

All Saints Party: The Catholic Mothers' Group is hosting an 'All Saints Party' in Killyclogher Hall on Saturday, October 28, after Mass in St Mary's Church at 12 noon.

There will also be an 'All Saints Party' in St Pio House, Galliagh, on the same date, at 3.30 pm.

Irish Pilgrimage Trust: The Irish Pilgrimage Trust Group 190 of Irish Pilgrimage Trust are looking for Male carers, around age of 18 up to 45, to travel to Lourdes

Diocesan Diary

Vocations Holy Hour: at 8 pm on Friday, A A Holy Hour for Vocations will take place in St Columba's Church, Chapel Road, Waterside,

at Easter from March 31 until April 6, 2024. All Carers are to pay their own fare, which is as follows: €495 for 3rd Level Students; €750 for any other persons. If anyone is interested in volunteering, or if you know of a child or young person who would like to go on the pilgrimage, please contact Margaret Rose Gormley on 07922237986.

Termonbacca Faith Talks:

The Carmelite Retreat Centre in Derry is hosting monthly talks on different elements of the faith, with the aim of leading participants towards personal development through meditative prayer and convivial discussions of the Church doctrines.

The talks are held on Thursdays, from 7.30-8.30 pm, as follows: October 19, 'God, One and Triune - The source of human communion and companionship' (Jn 17:20-26); November 16, 'I came that they may have Life and have it in full' - Understanding God's providence in the world (Jn 10:10); December 14, 'God wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth' - The relationship between truth and salvation (1 Tim 2:4). More information can be obtained by contacting Fr Cajetan on 0044 (0)28 7126 2512 or 0044 (0)79 3312 3633.

Holy Souls Prayer: Under The Gaze of Our Lady of Montligeon, the Holy Souls of Purgatory Prayer Meeting takes place every Monday night in Termonbacca, from 7.30-8.30 pm sharp. It also meets on Wednesdays after 9.15 am Mass in the room adjacent to St Brigid's Parochial House, Carnhill, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

Polish Mass: Mass for the Polish community will be celebrated at 9.30 am every second and fourth Sunday of the month in the Divine Mercy Chapel, at St Mary's Church, Creggan, in Derry City.

Stations of Cross: On the First Friday of each month, after 10 am Mass

in St Eugene's, there is a silent procession from the Cathedral to St Columba's Church, Long Tower, meditating on the Stations of the Cross.

Coastal Rosary: Rosary on the Coast for world peace and the protection of unborn babies takes place at Lisfannon Beach, Buncrana, on the first Sunday of every month at 3 pm, and at Benone Strand on the third Sunday of every month, at 3 pm.

Men's Rosary: The Men's Rosary takes place on the first Saturday of every month in Market Street, Omagh (opposite Primark) at 1 pm. All Welcome!

Sr Clare Mass: Mass in honour of Sr Clare Crockett is celebrated on the second Sunday of each month, at 7 pm, in Termonbacca. All welcome. The Mass is streamed live via Termonbacca YouTube channel.

Reading with the Carmelites: The Carmelite Fathers at Termonbacca hold a monthly session of 'Reading with the Carmelite Saints', to explore learning friendship with Christ through the example of the Carmelite Saints. It takes place on the third Thursday of the month at 7.30 pm.

Healing Night: The monthly Healing Night with the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal in St Joseph's Church, Galliagh, in Derry, takes place on the First Friday of each month, at 7 pm.

Sr Clare Rosary: The Sr Clare Rosary continues every Monday night, at 8.30 pm, in St Joseph's Room, at the Carmelite Retreat Centre, Termonbacca.

Matt Talbot Society: The Matt Talbot Society Mass, praying for those suffering from addiction, is offered for those enrolled on the first Monday of every month in St Eugene's Cathedral, at 7.30 pm.

Diocesan Priesthood. 9.30 pm, on Monday and Tuesday, November 6 and 7, and 27 and 28, and December 11 and 12. Couples should book online at www.accordni.com

Marriage Preparation: ACCORD Derry will be facilitating Marriage Preparation Workshops via Zoom, between 6.30-

Omagh Charismatic Prayer Group
Day of Prayer,
Praise and Healing

Mellon Country Hotel,
Omagh, BT78 5RA
Sunday 19th November 2023

Registration from 9.30am
Holy Mass in the afternoon

"As fragile clay jars, we rejoice In Gods power."
Cf 2. Cor 4.7

Speaker Fr Brendan Walsh SAC

Lunch, tea & coffee will be available.
Booking by Friday 10th November is essential for catering purposes, indicate any dietary requirements.

Mob: 07876411435
07596609041

Eternal Echoes... Timeless Truth for today's hearts by Regina Deighan

Praying the Rosary with our hearts

"Do you have your beads on you?" The beads. Rosary beads - perhaps the most comfortable, familiar sacramental in the lives of Cradle Catholics.

HOW many times have you turned to the Rosary as a source of comfort? How often has its prayers been the words you uttered when you didn't have any others? The Rosary is a reliable boon that can sustain us in moments of heartbreak, joy, fear, peace, and everything in between.

I think so many of us find comfort in the Rosary because of its connection to family and home. It consists of prayers that we likely learned as small children. In fact, can you even recall when you first learned these prayers? Probably not! Furthermore, it enfolds us into the loving embrace of a mother, our Heavenly Mother. Most of us know the love of a mother in some capacity - biological or not - and we know that she is someone reliable, to whom we can bring our needs and concerns. This is all the truer of Mary.

Yet, the Rosary is so much more than words we mumble in ordinary prayer or whisper in desperation in our deepest need; they are words that, over time, become written in our hearts. While it is not a sacrament, faithful recitation of the Rosary has supernatural power because it invokes the assistance of our Blessed Mother. If we enter into the prayers in a particular, fruitful manner it can draw us ever deeper into the mysteries of Christ. However, if we only ever see the Rosary as a simple, pietistic devotion, we are missing out on the

great potential and power behind this gift of our Blessed Mother.

The Rosary developed out of the desire for the laity to pray the 150 Psalms with the monastic orders. Since the vast majority of lay people could not read, praying one Hail Mary for each Psalm allowed them to maintain this habit of praying 150 times a day - equivalent to the 15 decades (the Luminous mysteries were added later by Pope Saint John Paul II).

Along with this practice, Mary revealed the specifics of the Rosary to St Dominic Guzman in the early 1200s in a vision. This month of October is dedicated to the Rosary because of the success of the Battle of Lepanto, which took place about 300 years later. This conflict between the Catholic Holy League and the Muslim Ottoman Empire in 1571 demonstrates the power of the Rosary and Mary's maternal intercession.

The unexpected Catholic victory at Lepanto has always been attributed to Mary's intercession through the collective prayers, civilians and soldiers alike, who were encouraged by Pope St Pius V to pray the Rosary before and throughout the duration of the conflict. In fact, when the Pope heard of the ensuing victory, he instituted October 7 to be the Feast of Our Lady of Victory. The faithful were absolutely convinced that Mary's intercession propelled the Catholics to victory

through the pious recitation of these familiar prayers of the Holy Rosary because the Holy League, by all accounts, should not have won. The Ottoman troops were far larger and more equipped for battle. Yet the people allowed their faith and devotion to bolster them, as they trusted wholeheartedly in Divine Intervention. In a world that often goads us to lose sight of the supernatural in everyday life, the all-too familiar Rosary provides us with an opportunity to trust that God can work miracles in our lives.

Perhaps your Rosary-praying needs a refresh! The risk of praying the Rosary often is that it can be too familiar. We get used to the prayers; we get used to the mysteries; we get used to the feeling of the beads. This might be true of any memorized prayer, really, but I think the Rosary runs an especially high risk because most of us have known it for so long, it's a go-to prayer, and it's repetitive. These are all positive qualities, however, when understood correctly and with devotion! We just have to know how to make the most of it and ensure that every time we dive into our Rosary, we are opening our hearts to the mysteries of Christ and allowing them to change us.

Below are some considerations in making the most of praying your Rosary. If prayed properly, it is never boring or something we want to rush through.

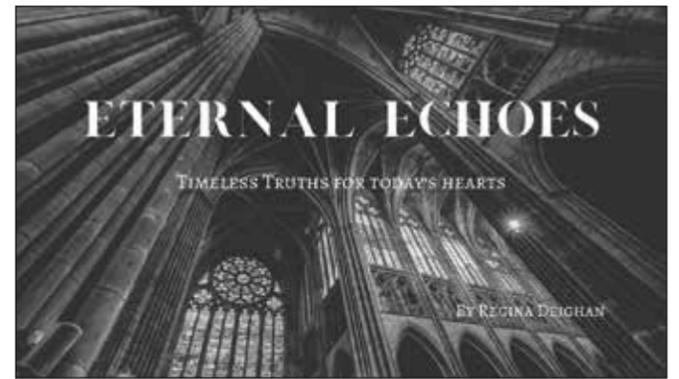
The Rosary is a gift built on three pillars: Scriptural (rooted in the written Word of God), Christological (relating to Christ), and a combination of vocal and

meditative prayer. This means that our Rosary recitation should not simply be words we utter, but also immerse us in the words of Scripture and welcome us to consider events in the life of Christ.

In a sense, the Scriptural aspect of the Rosary becomes a compendium of the Gospel. Every single event (save two) is explicitly described in Scripture. Furthermore, the words of the prayers come from Scripture: the Our Father (Matthew 6:9-15) is entirely scriptural and the first half of the Hail Mary comes from the accounts of the Annunciation and Visitation (Luke 1:26-45). By considering each mystery, we are invited to truly reflect on these stories and what they mean for our lives individually, and in the wider context of our faith and the pursuit of holiness in Christ.

If Scripture is a route you'd like to focus on, consider a Scriptural Rosary devotion. It contains passages from Scripture related to each mystery in order to more specifically draw us into the event and become more familiar with the written Word of God. You can access one here: <https://www.kofc.org/en/resources/faith-in-action-programs/faith/rosary-program/319-scriptural-rosary.pdf>.

The Christological aspect reminds us that Christ remains at the center of our prayer. Mary entered into the life of Christ, not the other way around. It is important to note that while the Rosary was a gift of Mary to St Dominic and invokes her intercession, it is Christ on whom we should focus. He is the one who ultimately answers our prayers and



whose life we are invited to dwell upon. Mary has the role of bringing us to her Son, but the prayers are never about her. She wouldn't want it that way. Everything about Mary points to Jesus and the Rosary is a way that she connects us lovingly to her Son. The Rosary becomes an invitation to imitate Mary as she walked with Christ as He followed the will of the Father. The Rosary, then, can be one of the means by which, imitating her immersion in the life of her Divine Son, we can pursue the 'Universal Call to Holiness' (cf. Vatican II, Lumen Gentium, Cap. V).

The manner in which we actually say the prayers is important to our prayer experience, as well. There are two aspects of praying the Rosary: the meditation on the mysteries and the recitation of the prayers. Ultimately, we are seeking to meditate on the events in the life of Christ in order to love and imitate Him more. Thus, the beads exist for the sake of the prayers and the prayers exist for the sake of the mysteries. Both the meditation and the recitation are important; they work together for the fullest prayer experience.

If we want to take our prayers a step further, the goal is to meditate on the mystery and allow it to change us. We can use the acronym

CAR to help us remember: Consider, Apply, and Resolve. First, we need to consider the mystery with love: think about the event; what it might be like to be there; what it means for our Church; what it says about God's love for humanity. Next, we seek to apply it to our lives. Answer the questions: What does this mystery have to do with me? How is it relevant to my life? Finally, we must consider a resolution; a practical resolve or change of life. Every time we encounter Christ, we are invited to change, to better conform ourselves to Him. This is still true of the Rosary, no matter how familiar it is. We must meet Him in the mystery and allow Him to transform our hearts in every decade.

With this new knowledge, invite your family, friends, or parish to pray the Rosary together, with a new context and meaning. Every moment of prayer is invitation to a deeper love and knowledge of Christ, including the Rosary. No matter how familiar or comfortable we are with these beloved and familiar prayers, it behooves us to make the most of our prayer time with our Lord and His Mother. Each recitation is an invitation to journey with Christ, holding Mary's hand in hopes that we might become more like them.

Derry Legionaries amongst large turnout for Knock Legion of Mary Pilgrimage



THE Legion of Mary Derry Comitium was delighted to take

a group of 47 pilgrims to the International Eucharistic and Marian Shrine of Knock for the annual Legion of Mary Pilgrimage on Sunday, September 24.

The heavy rain and windy conditions did not deter legionaries travelling from all over the island for the gathering at the Shrine in the little Co Mayo village, which was blessed with a heavenly visit on August 21, 1879, when The Lamb of God appeared on a gable wall of the Parish Church, standing on an altar in front of a cross, and accompanied by Our Lady, St

Joseph, St John the Apostle, and Angels.

Founded in Dublin by Servant of God, Frank Duff in 1921, the mission of the Legion of Mary, which is a lay apostolic association of Catholics, is to give glory to God through the holiness of its members, developed by prayer and active co-operation in the work of Our Lady and the Church, and is established in around 170 countries, with several million members worldwide.

The Legion is a fruit of the great inspiration Frank Duff drew from



St Louis Marie de Montfort's 'True Devotion to Mary'.

Archbishop of Tuam, Most Rev Francis Duffy was the main celebrant at the Mass.

Maghera Legion of Mary on Knock pilgrimage



Maghera October Prayer Meetings reflect on... The Seven Joys of Mary by Julie Zeoli

IN the parish of Glen, Maghera, a group of us are sharing five weekly prayer meetings based on the Seven Joys of Mary.

These meetings are spaced out during the month of October and focus on some of the great joys in Mary's life: the Annunciation and Visitation; the Birth of Jesus; the Adoration of the Magi; the Resurrection and the Ascension;

the Descent of the Holy Spirit and her Assumption and Coronation.

The material used at these meetings consists of excellent booklets prepared and distributed by the Living Church Office in Down and Connor Diocese. They give the opportunity for sharing and prayer based on scripture reading, reflection, learning about key historical facts and

consideration of art work.

There was a basic preparation given to lead these meetings at a training session in Belfast last February, in which over 100 people took part.

We find that the meetings bring joy, a great chance to enter more deeply into the teaching of these beloved Gospel stories and special Church teaching, all contributing

to a sense of togetherness and peace.

We thank all those who prepared the programme and all who take part.

The meetings take place in Maghera Pastoral Centre at 7.30 pm on Monday nights during October.



Children's Catechism Club - C3

by Veronica Harley

HELLO children. Welcome to the month of October. This month is dedicated to the Our Lady of the Rosary; October 7 is the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. The Rosary is a beautiful prayer which tells us the story of Jesus' life in four parts: The Joyful Mysteries; The Sorrowful Mysteries; The Glorious Mysteries; and The Luminous Mysteries. Every time we pray the Rosary we should focus on Jesus' life and remember a special intention that we want to pray for.



Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary

October 7 is the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. This Feast was introduced by Pope St Pius V (1504-1572) in 1571 to honour Mary for the Christian victory over the Turks at Lepanto on October 7, 1571. During the 16th Century, Pope St Pius V was having trouble with the Ottoman Turks, who were a danger to Christianity. Pope St Pius V and all Christians had prayed the Rosary for the victory of the Christians in battle. The Christians defeated the Turks in a magnificent victory and it was believed that their success came about through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin. Pope St Pius V dedicated this day as a day of thanksgiving to Our Lady of Victory. The name of the Feast was changed in later years by Pope Gregory XIII to our Lady of the Rosary (CCC 971).

The story of the Feast of our Lady of the Rosary is very important as it shows us that when we are in trouble, discouraged, or lonely, that we also can turn to Mary, who prays to her Son for us and with us (CCC 975). Mary, the Mother of God, never ceases to intercede for us in Heaven and, therefore, she is called in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress and Mediatrix (CCC 969). Every time Mary appeared on Earth, she encouraged us to pray the Rosary.

Rosary

1. When you pray the Joyful mysteries of the Rosary.
2. The Rosary consists of _____ mysteries altogether.
3. Each decade consists of this many Our Fathers.
4. When you pray the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary.
5. While holding the crucifix in the hand you do the _____ and recite the

Apostles' Creed.

6. You conclude the Holy Rosary by praying this.
7. Each mystery has ____ different themes to meditate on.
8. When you pray the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary.
9. Each decade consists of this many Hail Marys.
10. When you pray the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary

Word Bank

- A. Hail Holy Queen, B. 10, C. Tuesday and Friday, D. 5, E. Thursday, F. 1, G. Wednesday and Sunday, H. Monday and Saturday, I. Sign of the Cross, J. 20

Answers

- 1-H, 2-J, 3-F, 4-E, 5-I, 6-A, 7-D, 8-G, 9-B, 10-C

Saints of the Month

- October 1:** St Thérèse of the Child Jesus (the Little Flower)
October 4: St Francis of Assisi
October 15: St Teresa of Avila
October 18: St Luke



Guardian Angel

"See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in Heaven always see the face of My Father in Heaven." (Matthew 10:18)

Angels are servants and messengers of God (CCC 329).

Angels are signs of God's care and love and they remind us of how God knows each one of us.

God loves us so much that He gave each one of us our own Guardian angel as 'a protector and shepherd' (CCC 336) to watch over us.

We celebrate the Feast of the Guardian Angels on October 2. We honour our Guardian Angels on this day.



St Francis of Assisi

Saint Francis was born in Assisi, Italy, in 1182. His father was a wealthy cloth merchant who wanted his son to become a business man like himself. As a young boy, Francis was very interested in learning and singing songs, and later, in his youth, he had planned a career in the military.

Francis served in the war between Assisi and Perugia in 1202, during which he was captured and imprisoned. It was at this time that Francis had a conversion experience. He understood that Christ was telling him to give up his worldly possessions. After he was released from the military prison, Francis took his faith seriously. He gave up all his wealth, wore rough clothes, begged for food and preached peace and purity. His father did not approve of his new lifestyle, so he disinherited him from his wealth. Francis started to visit hospitals and care for the sick. This led people to follow his example and, in 1206, with a blessing from the Pope, he founded the Franciscan Order.

There are many stories told about St Francis and his preaching to animals. He is famous for his love of nature and wild life. One story tells



of the day that the young saint was talking to some birds, which began to sing together. It is then reported that all the birds flew up into the sky and formed the sign of a cross.

St Francis was a devout Catholic. He is almost unique because, two years before his death, he received the stigmata – the wounds on his body which Christ endured on the Cross. Francis is the first known person to set up a Nativity scene for Christmas. This was in the year 1220.

He grew blind and spent the last few years of his life in poor health. Francis died in 1226 while singing Psalm 141, and was declared a Saint of the Church just one year after his death. We celebrate the Feast of St Francis on October 4 every year. On this day, we ask his special intercession. St Francis of Assisi, pray for us.

Prayer to St Francis of Assisi

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
 Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
 where there is injury, pardon;
 where there is doubt, faith;
 where there is despair, hope;
 where there is darkness, light;
 and where there is sadness, joy.*

*O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
 to be consoled as to console;
 to be understood as to understand;
 to be loved as to love.
 For it is in giving that we receive;
 it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
 and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.*

Oct 31- All Hallows' Eve

October 31 is always a day that children and big people look forward to. They love to dress up and enjoy the fun of Halloween. So what is Halloween?

'All Hallows Eve' is where the word

Halloween comes from. Hallowed means 'holy'. For example, we say 'Hallowed be thy name' at the start of the Our Father. A hallowed person is a saint. October 31 is called All Hallows Eve because it is the eve of All Saints' Day (November 1).

The night before November 1 became known as All Hallowe'en, which was short for 'evening before All Hallows Day'. It was then shortened to what we know as Halloween.

The Mass which is celebrated by the Church on November 1 was called 'All Hallow Mass'. This meant the Mass of all hallowed, saintly people. November 1 was called All Hallows Day or All Saints Day.

Halloween traditions of dressing up with costumes and masks, and carving faces into turnips to make lanterns, are rooted in Celtic customs. The ancient Celts divided the year into two parts – summer and winter. It was believed that October 31 was the last day of summer, 'Samhain', and on this night, when the seasons changed, that the curtain which separated the living and dead was very thin. Therefore, spirits could rise up and roam the earth on that night. The Celts thought that if they dressed like the spirits and carried eerie lanterns, they would fool the wandering spirits into thinking that they were spirits too, so they would come to no harm.

In celebrating Halloween this year let's remind ourselves of its true good meaning and we pray that someday we also will be saints in heaven.



Quiz Time with Lawrence

1. By what geographical term are Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania collectively known?
2. What berry provides the unique flavouring for gin?
3. In which Irish county is William Butler Yeats buried?
4. Which artist painted the iconic 1930s masterpiece 'The Persistence of Memory'?
5. For what English football club does Irish striker, Evan Ferguson currently play?
6. Which country is the world's largest exporter of sugar?
7. Of which US state is Springfield the capital city?
8. Who played 'Doc Brown' in the 'Back to the Future' movies?
9. What date represents the halfway point of a regular year?
10. Which Radio DJ's morning news programme is also shown live on BBC2 each day?
11. Before Donald Trump, who was the last US President not to be re-elected for a second term?
12. Of which national football team is former English Premier Division manager, Marcello Bielsa currently the Head Coach?
13. Fred Jones is a fictional character in what children's cartoon series?
14. Who replaced Angela Merkel as German Chancellor?
15. The Ebro is the longest river of which European country?
16. For what TV comedy/drama title role did Jason Sudeikis recently shoot to fame?
17. What is the national flower of South Africa?
18. What was the character name of Basil's long-suffering wife in 'Fawlty Towers'?
19. What does OPEC stand for?
20. What Feast Day does the Catholic Church celebrate on October 7?
21. In what sport is Hollie Doyle one of Europe's leading lights?
22. What town is the administrative 'capital' of Donegal?
23. What is the middle colour of three on the Belgian national flag?
24. What popular TV character was played by George Wendt from 1982-1993?
25. What is the national currency of the United Arab Emirates?

Quiz Answers: 1, The Baltic States; 2, Juniper; 3, Sligo; 4, Salvador Dali; 5, Brighton; 6, Brazil; 7, Illinois; 8, Christopher Lloyd; 9, July 2; 10, Nicky Campbell; 11, George Bush senior; 12, Uruguay; 13, Scooby Doo; 14, Olaf Scholz; 15, Spain; 16, Ted Lasso; 17, The Protea; 18, Sybil; 19, Organization of the Petroleum Exportation Countries; 20, Our Lady of the Rosary; 21, Horse racing; 22, Lifford; 23, Yellow; 24, Norm Petersen (Cheers); 25, The Dirham.

Aghyaran, Ardmore, Ardstraw West & Castlederg, Ballinascreen, Ballymagroarty, Banagher, Bellaghy, Buncrana, Carndonagh, Claudy,

Let Your Light Shine!



*Limavady Parish celebrates 10 years of HOPE Camp...
...now helping other parishes evolve...*



Moville, Newtownstewart, Omagh, Plumbridge, Sion Mills, Steelestown, Strabane, Swatragh, Templemore - Long Tower and St Eugene's, Three Patrons, Waterside

Clonmany, Coleraine, Creggan, Culladuff, Culmore, Desertmartin, Donnyloop, Drumquin, Duramannagh, Dungiven, Fahan, Faughanvale, Garvagh, Gortin, Greencastle,

Greenlough, Iskaheen, Killyclogher, Killygordon, Kilrea, Lavey, Leckpatrick, Lifford, Limavady, Maghera, Magilligan, Malin, Melmount,