

# The NET

Sharing fruits of faith in Derry Diocese

ISSUE 94. MARCH 2024

No Fixed Charge. Donations welcome.

See inside...



Altar servers to the fore – Carndonagh



Birthday surprise - Greencastle



Lenten reflection – Maghera



Lenten Rosary & Cuppa – Dregish



Clonleigh Parish celebrates witness to Gospel message over last 60 years, handing on the faith from one generation to the next. (see p11)

St Patrick's Church, Clonleigh Parish, Lifford.



Sacrament Thanksgiving – Bellaghy & Greenlough



Volunteer 'Thank you' – Long Tower



YOUCAT study – Creggan

People in focus



David Hurst - Corrick, Co Tyrone



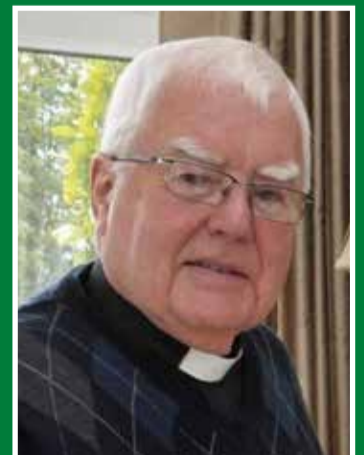
Erin O'Hagan - Gortin



Fr Daniel McFaul - PP Creggan



Fr Gerry White - Long Tower-Creggan



The late Fr George McLaughlin - Moville

Also featuring: 'Spark' youth group; Anam Og Easter trip; St Eugene's Choral Scholar Scheme; Carndonagh Confirmation; Greencastle St Brigid Cross making; Cumber Upper & Learmount Dominican Mission; Young Writers' feature; Children's Catechism Club; Creggan prayer focus; Killyclogher World Day of Prayer celebration; Ugandan choir in Moville; 'Leading God's People in Prayer' training; Moneyneena fundraiser; Omagh Day of Prayer & Praise; Vocations News; Irish Page; Diary Dates; Quiz and much more...

# Contents

We need new outpouring of Holy Spirit to enable us to go beyond our fears  
– Reflection by Bishop Donal ..... p2  
Gortin dentistry student seeks funding for Tanzania dental mission..... p2

Fun youth weekend to help ignite spark of faith  
by Elaine Noonan..... p3  
St Eugene's Choral Scholar Scheme enhancing music skills..... p3  
Families welcome to join Anam Og for Easter trip ..... p3

Over 40 young people on altar server rota for Carndonagh Church..... p4  
Beautiful celebration of Confirmation in Carndonagh ..... p4-5  
Greencastle community enjoy St Brigid Cross making ..... p5

Cumber Upper & Learmount...  
Dominican Mission a blessed time..... p6  
Young people hear relevance of faith in their lives..... p7

Young Writers share thoughts on...  
\*St Patrick  
\*Christianity in Pre-Patrician Ireland  
\*Easter as a time to become aware of God's love in our lives  
\*Holy Week and Easter in Syro Malabar Church  
\*Our Lady as a role model  
\*The Rosary  
\*Irish Catholic Bishops' Referendum success  
\*St Joseph  
\*Changing lives for the better, like Jesus  
\*Restoring our relationship with God..... p8-11

St Patrick's Day launch of Clonleith Jubilee celebrations..... p11

Creggan Parish feature ..... p12-14  
\*Prayer and witness of praying community sustain me in my priesthood – Fr Daniel McFaul  
\*Creggan pupils join in St Brigid Cross making session  
\*Pastoral Bereavement Support Group launched in Creggan  
\*Rosary Group a blessing on the Parish  
\*Men's lives changed through Divine Mercy prayer  
\*Creggan YUOCAT study deepening understanding of Catholic faith  
\*Inspired by faith and devotion of people in Creggan – Fr Ignacy Saniuta  
\*Hearing Confessions is what fulfils me nowadays – Fr Gerry White

"Thank you" lunch & talk for Long Tower volunteers ..... p15  
Moving World Day of Prayer Service hosted in St Mary's Killyclogher  
by Bernie Doody ..... p15  
Dregish Lenten Rosary & Cuppa ..... p15

Encouraging response to 'Leading God's People in Prayer' training..... p16  
Prayer leadership training challenging and refreshing by Jane Lagan..... p16

Irish section by Déaglán Ó Laithheartaigh...  
\*Pádraig, Aspal Éireann (Patrick, Apostle of Ireland)  
\*Chun cead a gcós a fhógairt do phríosúnaigh (To proclaim liberty to captives)..... p17

No Greater Love – Maghera video prayer meetings  
by Julie Zeoli..... p18  
Birthday surprise for Fr Devine at Greencastle volunteer gathering..... p18  
Warm Moville welcome for Ugandan Choir ..... p18  
Bellaghy & Greenlough thanksgiving for marriages and baptisms since Covid start..... p18

The Catholic Mass is very beautiful – David Hurst shares his conversion story..... p19  
Moneyneena Cowboys night draws funds for Church repairs..... p19

Omagh Day of Prayer & Praise a powerful experience..... p20-21

To the Resurrection through the Cross – Holy Week reflection by Fr Peter O'Kane ..... p21

Vocations begin in the mind of God – Fr Pat O'Hagan reports on northern region Vocations' weekend ..... p22

Remembering the late Fr George McLaughlin ..... p23  
Prayer for Priests..... p23  
Pope's prayer intention for March..... p23

The Divine Mercy Image explained...  
The Inscription: Jesus I Trust in You  
by Sr Benedetta Hutnikiewicz ZSJM..... p24

Derriana – The Journal of the Derry Diocesan Historical Society  
by Dr Seán Beattie ..... p25

New book on the spiritual journey of St Patrick  
by Martina Purdy..... p25

Trust  
by Fr John McLaughlin ssc..... p26-27

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

Diocesan Diary..... p29  
...other Diary Dates..... p29

Authentic Catholic joy  
by Regina Deighan ..... p30  
Wise Up!  
by Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR..... p30

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

## Bishop Donal reflects on the Pope's prayer intention for March...

*"For the new martyrs: We pray that those who risk their lives for the Gospel in various parts of the world inflame the Church with their courage and missionary enthusiasm."*

# We need a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit to enable us to go beyond our fears

WE sometimes think of missionaries being in danger as referring to the past. But there are many places in the world where Christians are under threat, either because Christianity is unwelcome or banned, or because the message of working with the needy and the marginalised is uncomfortable for those in power.

Preaching the Gospel has always come with a risk. The authorities wanted to silence Jesus. St Stephen was the first Christian martyr (Acts of the Apostles ch6-7). Most of the apostles were persecuted and killed. But the early Christian writer, Tertullian wrote something to the effect that 'the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church.' Suffering persecution and martyrdom have always been powerful signs of faith. After all, the word martyr means

'witness'. But much has changed in Ireland.

I was speaking recently with the Sisters of the Home of the Mother, the community to which Sr Clare Crockett belonged. One of the sisters had mentioned in a national school about trying to raise some small amount of money for the Sisters' missions in Latin America. Most of the children had no idea what 'the Missions' meant! Fifty years ago, every parish knew someone who was working 'on the Missions.'

In today's realities, Pope Francis knows that we face two challenges in the church.

Firstly, he wants us to move away from being preoccupied about ourselves and about the problems to be faced in the church. He warns us about being full of self-pity. Jesus was always focused on the needs of the weak

– and never on feeling sorry for Himself.

Like the church in every generation, we face enormous challenges. But we need prayer so that we will rediscover the courage and missionary enthusiasm that inspired so many Irish to go away and work among the poorest of the earth – for love of Jesus. Sour-faced pessimism does not proclaim Jesus.

Secondly, we seem to have lost confidence in the power and wisdom of the Gospel. We need a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit to enable us to go beyond our fears – and to speak with courage about who God is and what Jesus has done for us.

That will be very unwelcome in some quarters. Many of our political leaders would want to ensure that young people could not hear the Gospel message

in schools. In the name of recognising diversity, they would want to insist that nobody would hear any worldview other than their secular one.

St Patrick is a model of missionary zeal for us.

He overcame his pain at what had happened to him as a slave in Ireland – and came back to us out of love for the Irish.

He faced much opposition, both from the pagan religious and secular leaders, and from some within the continental church, over his determination and enthusiasm for Christ. Missionary zeal can make some feel uncomfortable as it underlines their comfortable convictions about the way forward.

Despite the enormity of the task in converting Ireland, he sowed seeds that bore much fruit over the following decades and



Bishop Donal

centuries.

This month, we pray for missionaries all around the world who are actively promoting the message of Jesus. And we pray that we in Ireland will be inspired by the Holy Spirit to rediscover the missionary side of being Jesus' followers.

And that is what the synodal conversations are all about!

## Gortin dentistry student seeks funding for Tanzania dental mission



Dentistry student, Erin O'Hagan, Gortin, Co Tyrone, second on right

GREETINGS from Gortin, Co Tyrone! My name is Erin O'Hagan, and I'm delighted to share with you my passion for dentistry and my upcoming adventure in global health.

As a fourth-year dentistry student at Trinity College Dublin, I've been fortunate to learn about oral health care while nurturing a profound desire to make a difference in underserved communities worldwide.

Growing up in the landscapes of Co Tyrone instilled in me a strong sense of community and empathy. These values led me to pursue dentistry, a field where I could blend science with compassion to transform lives, one smile at a time.

At Trinity, I've been privileged to learn from professors and alongside talented peers who share my passion for improving oral health outcomes. Each day in the clinic is a new opportunity to improve my skills and cultivate a deeper understanding of the diverse needs of patients.

However, my journey extends beyond the confines of the dental chair. This summer,

I'll be embarking on a life-changing experience through the Dental Overseas Elective (DOVE) program. Joining a team of fellow dental students, I'll travel to Tanzania to provide essential dental treatments to communities where access to care is limited.

In Tanzania, the scope of our work will be broad, encompassing procedures ranging from extractions to restorations. In order to make my participation in the Dental Overseas Elective (DOVE) programme a reality, and to maximize the impact of our mission in Tanzania, I've launched a GoFundMe campaign.

Every contribution, no matter the size, will directly fund travel expenses, necessary supplies, and local outreach efforts, ensuring that we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of those in need.

Thank you for your generosity and for being a part of this journey.

To donate visit [gofund.me/c726de23](https://gofund.me/c726de23) and select 'Referred by Erin O'Hagan'

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](mailto: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.

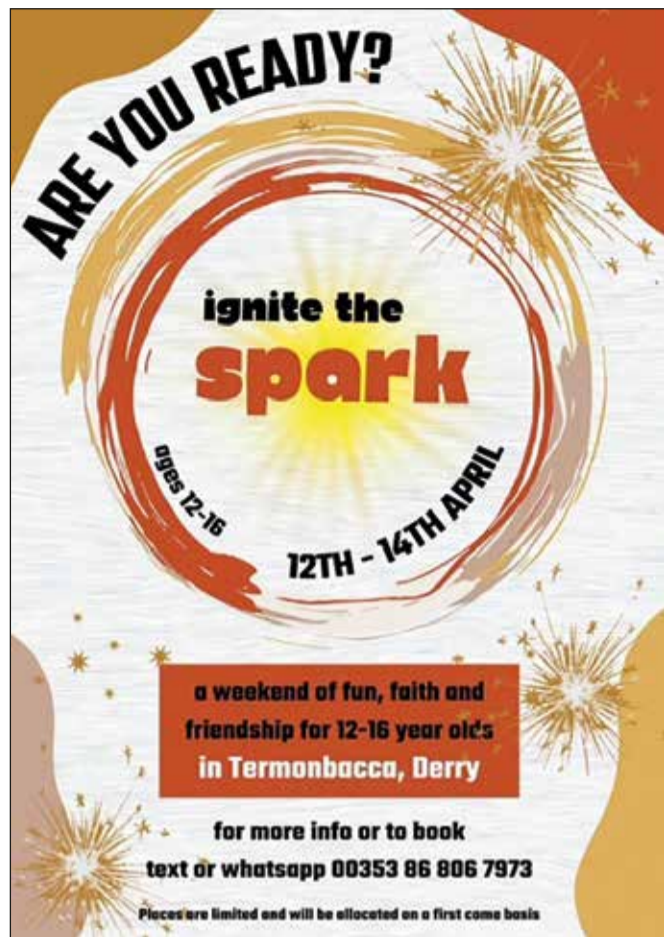
## Donating

**Bank Transfer**  
**A/C Name:** The NET  
**A/C No:** 90071099  
**Sort Code:** 950679  
**IBAN:** GB91 DABA 9506 7990 0710 99 – THE NET  
**SWIFT-BIC:** DABAGB2B  
**Reference:** Your Name  
**Via PayPal:** [paypal.me/thenetderry](https://paypal.me/thenetderry) (clicking friends/family)  
**By Cheque:** Payable to 'The NET'  
 Send cheques: The NET, via Bishop Donal McKeown, Diocesan Offices, St Eugene's Cathedral, Francis Street, Derry, BT48 9AP

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.



**ARE YOU READY?**

**ignite the spark**

12TH - 14TH APRIL

**a weekend of fun, faith and friendship for 12-16 year olds in Termonbacca, Derry**

**for more info or to book text or whatsapp 00353 86 806 7973**

Pieces are limited and will be allocated on a first come basis

## Fun youth weekend to help ignite spark of faith

SPARK is a brand new fun-filled weekend experience for 12-16 year olds. The weekend promises to be full of fun and surprises, as well as taking young people on a journey of faith.

The programme was created right here in Derry, with the support of local priests, Fr Sean O'Donnell and Fr Malachy Gallagher, and with the full support of Bishop Donal.

Spark follows themes from the YouCat, as well as stories of inspiring young people and much more. The aim is to meet our young people where they are at, and help show them how faith matters and how it can fit into their lives, busy as we all are. And of course, there will be great craic to be had along the way!

The first Spark weekend will take place in Termonbacca Retreat Centre from April 12-14. The weekend will be followed by regular monthly meetings, so the group can stay connected with their new

friends and can continue to discuss themes around their faith (as well as having plenty of fun, of course!)

A wonderful team of young people and adults has been working hard to get Spark ready, and we can't wait to welcome our first group of teenagers in April!

If you know a young person, aged 12-16 years, who has made their Confirmation and would like to join us for Spark, please text or WhatsApp Brendan on 00353 86 8043065 for more information and to book.

We do have to charge a fee to cover costs of food, light and heat, but we have worked to keep this to an absolute minimum at £70/€80 per person.

All Spark volunteers are fully vetted and we take safeguarding very seriously.

Please note that places are limited and will be allocated on a first come basis.



## St Eugene's Choral Scholar Scheme enhancing music skills

THE director of music at St Eugene's Cathedral, in Derry, Maghnus Monaghan is leading a Choral Scholar Scheme which has been greatly enhancing music skills of participants, since it first started two years ago.

Open to people aged over 16 years old and in full-time education, so including mature students, there are currently seven scholars taking part, and applications will be opening again in mid-April to give others an opportunity.

"The scholars get choral training, and sing some of the great historic music that the Church sings," explained Maghnus.

He continued: "They also get the opportunity to sing solo parts for special events, such as at Easter. Last year, we sang 'The Messiah' with the Altnagelvin Hospital Choir for a musical celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Cathedral, and the Choral Scholars sang the solo parts. There is an opportunity to study in Master Classes as well."

"We currently have seven scholars, who are all sixth formers at Foyle, Lumen, St Columba's and St Cecilia's colleges," said Maghnus, adding: "Last year, we had members who were in third level education and some of them have gone on to study music."

Delighted that the Scheme has got off to a very good start, Maghnus commented on the notable contribution of the scholars to the Cathedral Choir: "They are contributing a lot to the sound of the Choir, with the younger and older voices together being the ideal."

The scholars meet with Maghnus on Wednesdays at 8 pm, upstairs in the Cathedral Choir Room, and sing at the 12.30 pm Sunday Mass.



St Eugene's Cathedral director of music, Maghnus Monaghan with some of the current choral scholars

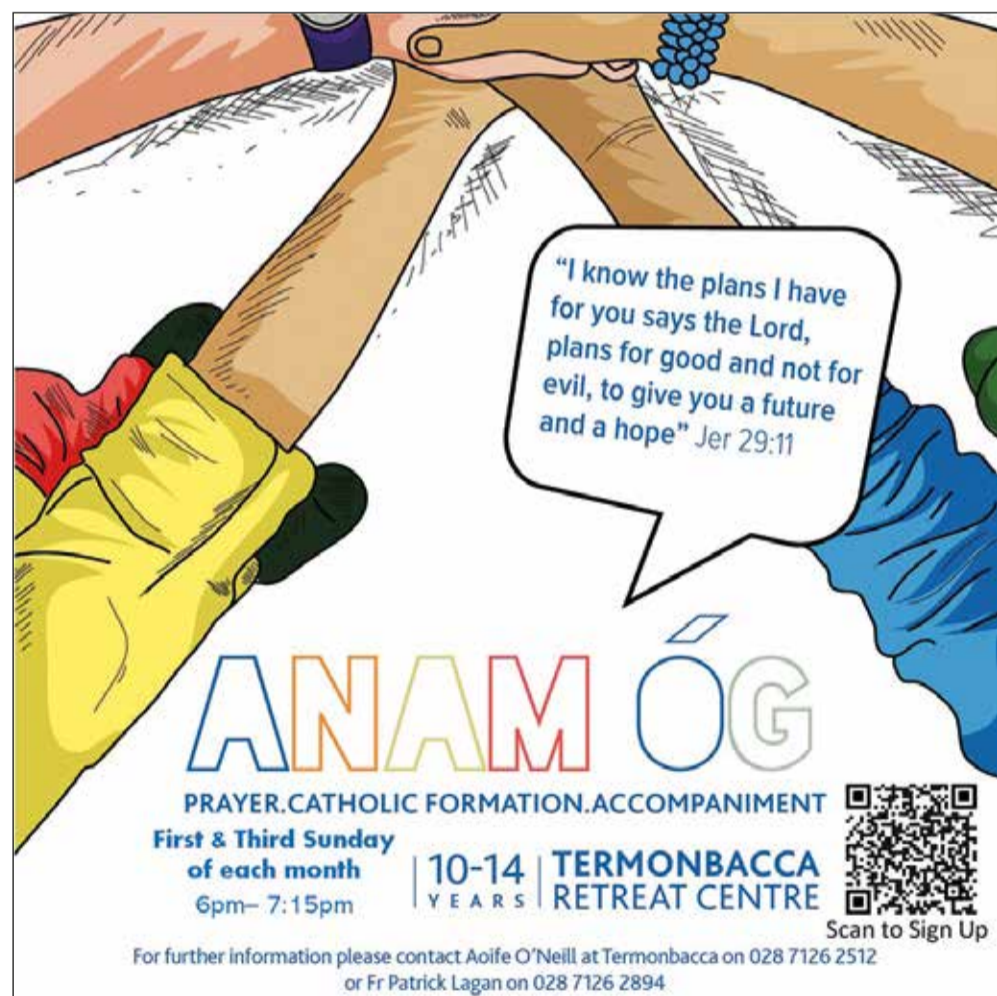
Singing the praises of the scheme, current scholar, Zoe Murphy told 'The Net': "It has been a privilege to be a choral scholar. My two years' experience working with the choir has enhanced my music skills in so many ways, such as aural perception, sight singing and musicality in an ensemble."

"Learning new songs every week with such an amazing group, has helped me to make new friends from various backgrounds. Being committed to the choir has also strengthened my faith. I'm so thankful for the knowledge,

experience and skills I've learned from Maghnus and the choir so far."

Sophia Mason expressed similar sentiments: "My experience as a choral scholar over the course of two years has vastly helped with my sight reading and how I perform music. It has greatly contributed to my contribution at Mass, my confidence in performing and interpreting music, and is a great way of meeting new people!"

Applications open on April 15 and close on April 30, and involve auditions. To apply email: maghnusmonaghan@hotmail.com



**"I know the plans I have for you says the Lord, plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" Jer 29:11**

**ANAM ÓG**

PRAYER.CATHOLIC FORMATION.ACCOMPANIMENT

First & Third Sunday of each month 6pm-7:15pm

10-14 YEARS TERMONBACCA RETREAT CENTRE

Scan to Sign Up

For further information please contact Aoife O'Neill at Termonbacca on 028 7126 2512 or Fr Patrick Lagan on 028 7126 2894

## Families welcome to join Anam Og for Easter trip

by Aoife O'Neill

ANAM OG is a faith-based youth group based at Termonbacca, in Derry City, where we come together to enjoy fun, friendship and explore the faith.

Once again, this year the young people from Anam Og will lead the Stations of the Cross outdoors at Termonbacca at 7 pm on Good Friday, March 29.

This evening is suitable for all ages and you are all welcome to

come along and be led through the journey of Jesus to the Cross with the young people.

On Saturday, April 6, we will then have our next family fun day out. We will travel to Rossnowlagh Franciscan Friary to see this beautiful place and speak to the friars there.

Afterwards, we will enjoy lunch together, followed by fun and games on the beach.

We welcome all families to join us for this day of faith-filled family fun.

Anam Og meets on the first and third Sunday each month, from 6-7:15 pm, and we always welcome new members.

For queries or information contact Aoife on 028 71262512 or email: termonbaccaderry@gmail.com.

Example of other family members helping out in the Church the inspiration behind...

# Over 40 young people on altar server rota for Carndonagh Church

YOUNG people in the Parish of Carndonagh, in Co Donegal, are experiencing the joy of being actively involved in ceremonies in the Church of the Sacred Heart through their roles as altar servers, and the hope is that the memory of their happy sense of fulfilment will help to nourish the seeds sown and keep them close to their Catholic roots.

Delighted to have around 40 on the rota for altar servers, the parish priest, Fr Con McLaughlin remarked: "The number of altar servers has been building up since I arrived in the Parish in 2008. I encourage our young people to get involved in this role as it is an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the Mass and the Sacraments.

"They are the mothers and fathers of tomorrow, so hopefully this experience will bear fruit in their lives that will last and that they can pass on to their children."

"They are always very enthusiastic," said Fr Con, adding: "We make significant efforts to ensure that their role is choreographed, particularly for special occasions like Confirmation, which adds significantly to each celebration.

"For big celebrations, we would have about 20 serving, and for other occasions we have four, six or eight."

Keen to involve children from all areas of the Parish, Fr Con said: "Quite a number of our altar servers attend schools in the town, but we have some from our rural schools too. They come from 4th-6th class, and we also have about three who attend the Community school."

In the interests of all involved, Child Protection guidelines are carefully adhered to, with the Parish Child Protection Liaison Person, Bernadette McElhinney on hand to help sacristan, Celia McLaughlin with the management of the altar servers on duty.

"There are always two adults on Sacristy duty to look after the young people," noted Fr Con, "and every area of the Church, including the Sacristy, is covered by 24-hour CCTV."

'The Net' caught up with a

number of the altar servers following the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation by Fr Con on Saturday, March 2, and they were happy to comment on their experience of being on the altar server rota once every two or three weeks. Some of those confirmed are also on the current altar server rota.

Lochlainn, who is 11 years old and an altar server for a year now, said: "I became an altar server because my brother did it. It's very good and I enjoy doing it."

Eleven-year-old Aidan joined six months ago and is also enjoying his role, and explained that he wanted to become an altar server because he "wanted to work for God".

Eibhlin (11), who has been serving on the altar for two years, said: "I wanted to be an altar server because my granny, Bernadette McElhinney, helps in the chapel. I really like doing my jobs on the altar."

Ruby, another 11-year-old, said that she began serving on the altar a year ago because her older siblings and cousins were altar servers.

Grace (10) is relatively new to the role, having started a few months ago. Explaining what had prompted her to become an altar server, she said: "Granny Bernadette helps in the church, and my cousins were altar servers."

Amelie, who is 11 years old and joined the altar servers a year ago, remarked: "I always wanted to be an altar server."

Charley (10), has been serving on the altar for a few months, and wanted to do the role as his older sister was an altar server.

Beth (13) has been an altar server since she was 10 years old and joined because both of her older siblings were altar servers.

Darragh (10), who has been in the role for three months, wanted to help out on the altar because an older cousin was an altar server.

On the altar for a year, 11-year-old Eanna was inspired to join because both of her older sisters were altar servers.

Saoirse (11) has also been serving on the altar for a year, and said that she wanted to join because her older brother was an altar server.

Thirteen-year-olds, Aoife and

Annie have each served four years on the altar to date, and both were inspired and encouraged by their respective grandmothers,

Bernadette and Celia, who are devoted to helping out in the church.



Bernadette McElhinney, Carndonagh Parish Child Protection Liaison Person, and Celia McLaughlin, sacristan, who oversee the young people.



Carndonagh altar servers helping Fr Con during the recent celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation



A great turnout of Church of the Sacred Heart's altar servers for the celebration of Fr Con's Golden Jubilee last year



Some of the Carndonagh altar servers with Fr Con following the recent Confirmation ceremony in Church of the Sacred Heart.



## Beautiful celebration of Confirmation in Carndonagh





# Greencastle community enjoy St Brigid cross-making



# Dominican Mission a blessed time for Cumber Upper & Learmount



Fr Colm Mannion OP, Fr Philip Mulryne OP, and Fr Damian Polly OP

THE Parish of Cumber Upper & Learmount experienced 'the transforming fire of God's love' during an inspiring Mission week of talks and prayer led by three Dominican friars, in early March.

Frs Damian Polly OP, Philip Mulryne OP, and Colm Mannion OP received a warm welcome from the congregations that gathered in St Patrick's Church, in the village of Claudy, and St Joseph's Church, Craighane, for the morning Masses and evening services, and the 'Meet & Greet' sessions over a cuppa.

And they were greatly encouraged by the numbers that attended the various ceremonies, particularly the 6.30 am Masses, and availed of the Sacrament of Confession. They were also impressed by the twice weekly opportunities in the Parish for day-long Eucharistic Adoration, as well as public prayer of the Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet.

Blessed with a dry spell of weather for the duration of the Mission, the trio were joined by around 80 parishioners and a group of

students from the local St Patrick's & St Brigid's College for a Rosary Walk around Cumber Country Park. The turnout was typical of that during the Mission, with a good mix of children, teenagers and adults. Impressed, Fr Damian remarked: "It is great to see so much inter-generational participation."

The programme included visitations to the Sick and to the three schools in the area attended by children from the Parish: St Patrick's & St Brigid's College; St Colmcille's PS, Claudy; and St Mary's PS, Altinure.

Organised by the Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Faith co-ordinator, Charlotte Deeny, with the support of parish priest, Fr David O'Kane, the Mission theme was 'Were not our hearts burning within us' (Luke 24:32) - 'The Transforming Fire of God's Love. Throughout the week there were talks on a deeper encounter with Christ, healing, mercy, witnesses for Christ, Our Lady and the Rosary, and death and the goal of Heaven.

Some snippets from the talks include Fr Damian, in speaking on the theme of Witnesses for Christ, pointing out: "It is only because we have had witnesses in our life that we are here today."

Explaining that 'martyr' is the Greek word for 'witness', he remarked: "We know that there are Christians still dying for their faith in the world today. Christianity is the most persecuted faith in the world."

Reflecting on why Christian martyrs were willing to die for their faith, he said: "I think it is because they knew that God is real, and that He loved them and had died for them."

Fr Damian went on to quote Jesus as saying: "Whoever denies me before others, I will also deny before My Father in Heaven." He pointed out that it was the gift of the Holy Spirit that had given martyrs of the faith the supernatural courage not to run away, but to stand firm.

"We live in a Christian land, but it is quickly becoming post-Christian, as is most of the West," noted Fr Damian, adding: "There are generations coming through that know nothing about Christ. So, we might be the first witnesses for Christ that they come across. We, as Christians, are supposed to spread the Good News of the Gospel; the story of God's love for us, and how we are not to go around carrying the burden of our sins, but to hand them over to God, who is merciful."

Asking, "Do we live as Christ has asked us to live?" he went on to say: "Living our faith publicly and unashamedly today in a hostile atmosphere is not easy. We need the courage to stand firm. We need to ask the Holy Spirit for that courage and to trust Jesus, and with our joy we will help bring others to Him."

Speaking on the theme of Death and the Goal of Heaven, Fr Philip said: "It is a wonderful privilege as a priest to be with people at this time

in their lives. Sometimes, you can almost see the soul leaving the body when you see someone embracing that moment with faith and grace.

"If you take away our Catholic faith, you would be staring into nothing. If this life is it, then where is your hope? So, as Catholics, we can be grateful that our faith is not meaningless but has hope."

He added: "Someone whose goal is Heaven, God will bless them and their life will have meaning and purpose. But, if your goal is only this life, you will lose Heaven and also this life, as there will be something lacking there."

"Those who are gone from this life and are with The Lord are more alive than us; they are fully alive with God."

"While we are not ready to go yet," continued Fr Philip, "we should always keep that end in view, and ask The Lord that we may live life well here and never lose sight of the end goal of Eternal Life."

Other highlights of the Mission were the blessing of Roses, for people to bring to those who are sick in their families and neighbourhoods, and the blessing of Memorial Cards and graves.

As the week came to a close, there was a sense of sadness amongst many who had enjoyed, and felt energised by, the time of frequent togetherness in prayer and interacting with the Dominican friars, who had given plenty of food for thought, stirring the powerful fire of God's love within the hearts of their attentive listeners and helping them to appreciate their faith more.

The Cumber Upper & Learmount Mission is the fifth in the Derry Diocese to be led by the Dominicans since the easing of Covid restrictions, with the Banagher Mission in October 2022 having been the first. The others were in the Parishes of Limavady, Dungiven and Faughanvale.



Listening to vocation stories of Dominican friars during Mission focus on youth...

## Young people hear relevance of faith in their lives

THE young people of the Cumber Upper & Learmount Parish enjoyed encounters with the Dominican friars during the Mission week, with an encouraging number of them turning out for the early morning Mass before going on to school, and returning for the evening service.

The friars also appreciated the opportunity to visit the schools to speak to the young people there about the Dominican Order in Ireland and vocations, as well as about the Christian Church, the Sacraments and healing, and to answer any questions they had.

They explained that they had decided to join the Dominicans, who first came to Ireland 800 years ago, because they wanted to dedicate their lives to prayer and living in community in a monastery, while also travelling all over the island leading Parish Missions and Retreats, as well as teaching and writing books.

Fr Colm Mannion OP, from Birr, in Co Offaly, while the youngest of the trio has been ordained the longest. Aged 44 years old, he was ordained in 2014 and is currently part of the Dominican Community in Newbridge College. He works as the promoter of the Rosary Apostolate and promoter of Vocations for the Irish Dominican Province.

After six years as Vocations' Director, Fr Colm remarked: "It has got its challenges, but it is not as tough as people might think. There are vocations out there and young people are interested. It's a matter of getting out there and meeting them where they are at."

He told the young people that he hadn't known what he wanted to be in life when he was younger, though he had loved serving at Mass and had thought at one stage that maybe he would be a priest when he got older.

"However, when I went to secondary school my faith quickly evaporated," recalled Fr Colm, "I wasn't very religious as a teenager. It didn't seem very important to me and I drifted away from going to Mass. When I left school, I started working at Dublin airport and then, to fill up time, I started volunteering in a hospice for homeless men. It was run by lay people as a service in the Church by helping those in need, and it was really enjoyable work."

"I was meeting Catholics who were very sincere and devout, and I wondered at this. Seeing how important the Catholic faith was to these men in helping to turn their lives around, turned me back to prayer. I could see that they had a friendship with God. For me, this was an eye-opener. I began to see that God was real and could make a difference. I thought I was there helping these men, but it was they who were teaching me about faith."

He continued: "I decided to leave my job at the airport and work full-time as a volunteer at the hospice. I was living with the poor and

helping them to turn their lives around through the power of faith.

"I was very happy and, after a couple of years doing this, I thought if I am this happy working in the Church, maybe I should become a priest. I wasn't sure that I was smart enough, good enough or holy enough, but I decided to give it a go and started studying for the priesthood in my 20s and loved it."

### Rewarding

"It's a great joy and blessing to do what I do," said Fr Colm, "helping people to know more about God. It is a very fulfilling and rewarding life."

Musically gifted, Fr Colm, whose main instruments are piano and fiddle, has a particular love for traditional Irish music that has led to him and fellow traditional musician, Trian O'Riordan, setting up 'TrAdoration'.

He explained: "We play traditional Irish music for prayer during Eucharistic Adoration, and came up with the name TrAdoration. We have recorded a couple of CDs and are working on our third. The first one has traditional Irish music for prayer and adoration and is on YouTube, and the second one is called 'TrAdoration with a Father's Heart' and is on Spotify. They can also be ordered through [stmartin.ie](http://stmartin.ie)."

A gifted writer too, Fr Colm has written a book entitled, 'The Boy with the Small Face'. An uplifting, easy read, the story leads the reader on an adventure with the boy, who finally discovers that "the purpose of every person's adventure is to find love and to be found by love." The book can also be ordered through [stmartin.ie](http://stmartin.ie).

Fr Damian Polly OP, from Swords, in Dublin, was ordained in 2016, and is the Prior of the Dominican Community in Kilkenny. The 46-year-old also holds the position of Director of Preaching for the Irish Dominican Province, and organises and delivers parish missions throughout Ireland.

Involved in many sports when he was younger, Fr Damian recalled that his faith had been important to him before his teenage years, saying: "I remember preparing for my First Holy Communion and Jesus was my best friend. Then, as a teenager, I began to think about things like why we went to Mass, and started to drift away from my faith as other things became more important to me. I wasn't as sure if God was real anymore."

He told the young people that he had been a DJ on a pirate radio station when he was 16 years old, and had gone on to manage the radio station and a night club.

"That was my life," he said, "along with college and studying for a Masters. Then I ended up going on a pilgrimage with my parents to Medjugorje. I was going there for a sun holiday, as it was near Croatia, while my parents did the pilgrimage, but when we got there the weather was miserable. And, I was miserable, until God revealed

Himself to me mid-week. He let me know that He really exists in the Eucharist, that it is not just a piece of bread. When you understand that you are actually receiving God in Holy Communion it puts a whole different perspective on it.

"When I went to Medjugorje, I was barely going to Mass, but by the end of the week I loved Mass as it had become real to me. Seven years later, I started working in the catering industry. I was praying again and back attending Mass. I was asking God how I was supposed to use the gifts and talents He had given me.

### Relationship

"I was happy in my faith but I had no interest in priesthood. I was in a relationship with a girl and wanted to get married. Eventually, God spoke to my heart and I felt called to priesthood."

"A religious vocation would never have entered my head when I was your age," Fr Damian told the young people, "I thought being a DJ was my passion, but now I feel even more fulfilled. I love my vocation."

"God has a plan for your life. I do not know what it is and you probably don't either, but keep asking Him what it is that He wants you to do, because He wants you to be really happy. You have nothing to lose."

Fr Philip Mulryne OP, from Belfast, was ordained in 2017, five years after swapping his seminarian study for Diocesan priesthood to join the Dominicans. Spending his first two years after ordination as chaplain at the Newbridge College, in Kildare, the 46-year-old has been Novice Master in the Dominican Novitiate Community in St Mary's, Cork, since 2019.

In charge of the formation, for the first year, of those brothers who enter the Order for the Irish Dominican Province, the Cumber Upper & Learmount Parish Mission was the first Fr Philip has been part of because of the nature of his role as Novice Master.

Loving the experience, he remarked: "Being from the North, I know that there are pockets of deep faith to be found here, and I could see that deeper faith in the people of this parish, particularly with the turnout at the early morning Masses. That is a great source of encouragement to us, especially to see the faith being passed on through the schools too."

Fr Philip told the young people that he had been 29 years old when he started studying for the priesthood. Comparing his life as a priest to the highs and lows of life as a professional footballer, he remarked that he had a constant peace and joy since returning to practising his faith and felt well suited to the community life of the Dominicans, and their focus on study, preaching and teaching.

Feeling blessed with a talent for playing soccer, Fr Philip spoke about being selected to play for Manchester United when he was 14 years old, and staying with the Club

for six years.

He recalled: "I played about seven games for the first team. I was a Man Utd fan, so I was living my dream. After that, I was with Norwich City for six years. I got my leg broken in a tackle when I was 21, and the doctor said that I might not ever play football again.

"We all have pressures and anxieties. How you respond to adversity can form your character. After 14 months of really hard training, I was determined to get back playing. During that time, I came back to my faith. I turned to God for that year and I really believe that He helped me. However, when I got back playing football, I got back into all the trappings of the footballer lifestyle.

### Emptiness

"In time, I came to discover that that lifestyle wasn't sustaining me. I felt deeply unhappy and realised that there was something really lacking in my life. At some point in your life, if you are not feeding the soul, then you feel that there is emptiness.

"I came back to Belfast and worked in a hostel for homeless men, run by the same lay organisation as the one Fr Colm worked in, and I went back to attending Mass. During that time I felt a desire to be a priest. One night I prayed, 'God you gave me everything I wanted, to be a footballer, what do you want me to do for the rest of my life?'"

"The next day at Mass, I felt that I wanted to do what the priest was doing. So, I contacted the Football Association and told them that I was retiring from football, and I joined the Dominicans."

After sharing their stories with the students of St Patrick's & St Brigid's College, the Dominicans were asked by the principal, Mr Philip McCullagh, to comment on how faith can be relevant to young people.

Responding, Fr Damian said: "There is a lot of pressure on you, through social media, etc, and that can be hard to deal with, so faith gives a foundation to stand on, telling you how unique and special you are. Young people can tend to forget to be just themselves.

"Young people today also have much less self-worth, with many suffering from mental health illness. Faith helps to give your life meaning, when it can be chaotic at times."

Fr Colm commented: "You have access to so much information on your phones, but these things that are meant to make us so much more connected, end up not doing that. We also live in a noisy world, so we have to make room for silence as well. Don't be afraid to take a break from your phone, etc, even just to read a book or be with your friends."

Anyone discerning a vocation who would like to find out more about the Dominicans can email Fr Colm at [colm.mannion@dominicans.ie](mailto:colm.mannion@dominicans.ie).



Visit to St Patrick's & St Brigid's College, Claudy.



Visit to St Colmcille's PS, Claudy.



Visit to St Mary's PS Altinure



Students from St Patrick's & St Brigid's College took part in the Rosary Walk in Cumber Country Park.



*IN this month of March, two of the young writers focus on one of Ireland's Patron Saints, Patrick. Bronagh reflects on how his drawing closer to God during a time of trial in his life, led him on a Divine mission that met with such success it is still celebrated today, while Luke notes that St Patrick wasn't actually the first to bring Christianity to Ireland, though his mission was the most successful.*

*We also celebrate the Feast of St Joseph in March, and Evan shares his growing devotion to this humble and obedient man of God, while Cara-leigh and Niamh reflect on Our Lady, as a perfect role model, and the power of the Rosary.*

*James writes about the great response to the Irish Catholic Bishops urging 'No' votes in the recent referendums that targeted the make-up of a family and the role of mothers.*

*Seán shares his childhood memories of Easter, from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, as an altar boy, and how he has grown to appreciate that great act of love in Jesus' suffering and death so that we might have Eternal Life. John also reflects on this great time in the Church calendar, from his experience within the Syro Malabar Church.*

*As the Lenten season draws to a close, Cadhla shares her thoughts on one of the most notable aspects of Jesus' ministry being His amazing impact on the lives of those He encountered, transforming them through His healing love and compassion.*

*On a similar theme, Erin writes about Jesus' healing power in the Sacrament of Confession, which she is becoming more appreciative of through her Lenten reading of a book called 'Restore', a guided journal for prayer and meditation.*



Cara-leigh Doherty - Derry City Deanery, Bronagh Doherty, Co Derry Deanery, Peter Grant, Inishowen Deanery, John Augustine Joseph, Derry City Deanery, James Tourish, Derry City Deanery, Erin Whoriskey, Derry City Deanery



Shea Doherty, Derry City Deanery, Evan Curran, Derry City Deanery, Seán McLaughlin, Co Tyrone Deanery, Niamh Sharkey, Derry City Deanery, Cadhla Shivers, Co Derry Deanery, Luke Doherty, Inishowen Deanery

## Our Lady an inspirational role model for young women by Cara-leigh



WITH March 8 marking International Women's Day, it got me thinking more about our Blessed Mother Mary.

St Pope John Paul II said "In the light of Mary, the Church sees in the face of women the reflection of a beauty which mirrors the loftiest sentiments which the human heart is capable."

This really resonated with me, as I have always marvelled at Mary's willingness for God. She was a young girl when the angel came to her and said she was going to give birth to Jesus. This would have been so overwhelming, but she did it for God.

Mary's love for her Son, Jesus extends to us, and we see this through the amazing gifts and miracles she has interceded for us. Mary gave us the gift of the Rosary as a way to grow closer to her Son, by meditating on His life

## St Patrick – Patron Saint of Ireland by Bronagh

MARCH 17 marks the Feast day of St Patrick, one of the three Patron Saints of Ireland, alongside St Brigid and St Columba. St Patrick is a prominent figure in Irish history and culture and is credited for bringing Christianity to Ireland.

It is believed that at 16 years old, St Patrick was brought to Ireland to herd and tend sheep. Ireland, at the time, was very different from the country we know today. It was a land of Druids and Pagans.

St Patrick lived in poverty and struggled to survive, so he turned to God and began to pray during his time in captivity, and was later inclined to study for religious life. This may inspire many young people considering a vocation, and we are reminded of this as Pope Francis referred to a vocation as "making God's dream come true", on May 8, 2022, at the 59th World Day of Prayer for Vocations (CNA,2022).

This also shows that everyone can make a difference. Spreading the Word of God and incorporating the teachings of Jesus into our daily lives, we can help keep the Christianity that St Patrick brought to Ireland alive.

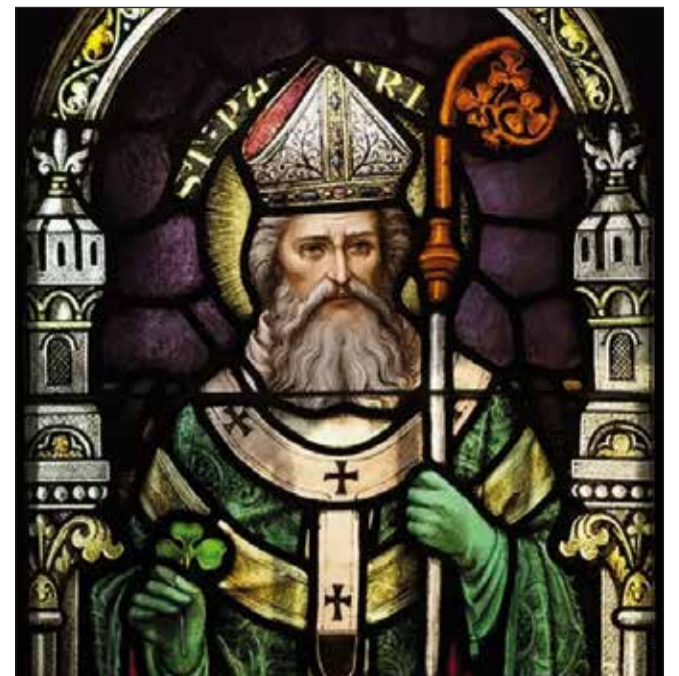
On the night St Patrick prayed to God, a Divine voice came to him; showing him the way home. God offered refuge to St Patrick in his toughest days, just like He

can in ours. We too, as Catholics, turn to God in times of distress and worry, seeking refuge just as St Patrick did.

St Patrick's strength, determination, and perseverance whilst on the mountain should act as inspiration to us in today's world, to not give up when the going gets tough but to look for the opportunities in every scenario.

Patrick was ordained by St Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, and was later ordained a Bishop and given the task of taking the Word of the Gospel to Ireland, a land of druids and pagans. March 25, 433, in Slane, saw the arrival of St Patrick, much to the dislike of the Druid Chieftain who plotted to kill him (Catholic Online, nd). After a holy intervention from God, the chieftain was converted by St Patrick, and this was the start of one of the most successful Christian missionaries in history. (World History, 2015). This could offer some comfort to those in war-torn countries, showing the power of prayer in times of conflict and tension.

St Patrick then began teaching and preaching the Gospel throughout Ireland, converting thousands to Christianity. He also built many churches in Ireland - a place for Christians to pray. Through his 40 years of teaching



and converting Ireland, he taught many people and worked many miracles. One of the symbols of St Patrick, the shamrock, relates to his teaching of the Holy Trinity, explaining that God is three-in-one, just as the shamrock is one leaf with three parts, representing the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. "The Father gave the Son, the Son offered Himself on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit brings us to Jesus." (Community Christian Church, 2022).

the Irish, celebrate St Patrick. It is celebrated in many ways, such as going to Mass, praying, and celebrating his life with a selection of songs and hymns. Many people flock to the sights and scenery around Ireland that corresponds to St Patrick's life - such as Croagh Patrick and Mount Slemish, where it is believed that St Patrick spent some time.

Lá Fhéile Pádraig sona daoibh!

Many Christians, particularly

## Like Jesus, we can reach out with love and change a life for the better by Cadhla

MANY times, throughout our lives we will stop and think, "I don't like the way my life is going, it is not what I thought it would be. I am not where I want to be. Things should be different". Exam results may not go the way we hoped. Friendships can breakdown. Illness and the death of loved ones can have a massive impact on our lives and how we feel. At times, we may feel completely hopeless, that our life is now less than what we expected.

One of the most extraordinary features of Jesus' ministry is how He transformed the endings of everyone that He encountered, regardless of societal labels. People came to Him, searching for something - healing, forgiveness, a new purpose in life. They opened their hearts to Him and were transformed.

Throughout Jesus' ministry, time and time again, we see people who had no hope, who felt their life was worthless and

without purpose, encounter the compassionate and transformative healing powers of Jesus.

Consider the man possessed with the legion of demons, who lived in the tombs among the dead. He was isolated, feared, ridiculed, and treated worse than an animal. He may as well have been dead, and no doubt believed that his life would never be any different. However, his meeting with Jesus changed his ending, his humanity was restored. He was able to return home to his family and "tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed".

It is important to remember that it is never too late to ask Jesus to change our ending. Reflecting on the thief crucified alongside Jesus who, at the very last moments of his life, reached out, received redemption, and was lovingly told, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me



in paradise." His life finishing in a way he could never have imagined...at peace.

This Lenten season, may we be open to asking Jesus to change our story. To ask God, is it possible that I have a better ending? May we also always endeavour to help others in our

community, especially those who are struggling and finding their life difficult at this time.

Like Jesus, we can reach out with love, compassion and kindness and, perhaps, just change the course of someone's life for the better.

with the Mysteries.

The 15 promises of the Rosary were revealed to St Dominic and Blessed Alan de la Roche. One of which being: "All who recite the Rosary are my sons and daughters, and brothers and sisters of my only Son Jesus Christ."

Mary has appeared in many places all over the world, such as Lourdes, Guadalupe, Fatima, Knock, and the list just goes on. My personal favourite story of Mary's apparitions is Fatima, mainly because she appeared to three children, showing that

anyone of any age can have a true devotion to Our Blessed Mother! Mary is a symbol of true femininity and grace. Mary has many different titles that show us the type of person she is, such as: Our Lady of Charity, Mother of Mercy, and Seat of Wisdom.

On International Women's Day, people look to inspirational women and what we can learn from them, and I think that we should be looking to Mary, especially young women, to lead a more faith-filled life.



## Restore by Erin

EVER since my First Confession, I have always struggled with knowing what to say in Confessions, how much detail I should go into, and nervousness about Confessions in general.

This Lent, I have been working my way through a book called 'Restore' by Sr Miriam James Heidland, who is a Sister in the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity (SOLT). She was adopted as a child and raised by Catholic parents, but she doesn't remember having a personal relationship with Jesus growing up. In her college years, she put all her focus on volleyball. The student party lifestyle gradually led her to fall into alcoholism and her life spiralled out of control. Through speaking to a holy priest, who helped awaken faith in her, she changed her life and chose the path of religious life. She is now a very popular Catholic speaker and author.

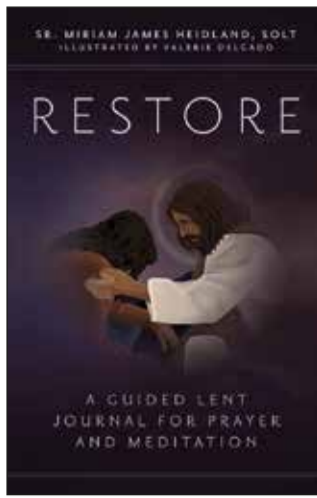
The book 'Restore' is a guided journal for prayer and meditation, and in it Sr Miriam invites you to meet the tenderness of God's mercy, the power of His love, and the restoration of your heart as you practice prayer, fasting and

almsgiving.

The theme for Week One was the desert and, through each daily meditation, we were invited to be led by the Spirit and to go into the desert with Jesus on this journey of Lent. Sr Miriam invited us to look at the parts of our hearts that we wanted to heal or change. These daily meditations have helped me to understand more about my idols and allowed me to trust God to see these places in my heart. Sister taught that through prayer, real prayer not just meaningless words, we can heal our relationship with God.

In Week Two, she looked at the subject of fasting as a way of healing our relationship with ourselves. The daily meditations this week pointed out the importance of freedom of heart. If we cannot say 'no' to something in our life, how can we really say 'yes'? Each day, we were invited to look at the desires of our hearts, identifying the good, true, and beautiful and knowing what needs corrected or purified.

The third week explored the theme of the roots of sin. These meditations helped me to look at some situations in my life and see how sin often comes from an



unmet need or unhealed wound. Through prayer each day I was able to invite Jesus into these parts of my heart to heal them.

I am halfway through this 'Restore' journey and already I am much more self-aware. I can now see the things that I should be taking to Confession for healing and no longer feel so nervous at the thought of going, as I know what I need to bring to the Lord.

I am looking forward to completing this Lenten challenge and discovering what the Lord has in store for me.

## St Joseph by Evan

THERE isn't a lot said about St Joseph, the foster father of Jesus, however, the month of March is dedicated to him and many have deep devotion to him, including myself.

We know Joseph as the man who was the spouse of the Virgin Mary, and the foster father of Jesus Christ Our Lord. But that is about it, no matter where you search there is very little on him, however there is a great beauty in his silence.

As we know the life of Our Lord and His Blessed Mother, we are able to fill in the story of St Joseph in a few ways. We know that the foster father of Jesus was a hard working carpenter, who worked hard to provide for his family, and that Our Lady and him were very religious people, hence the reason they were chosen by God the Father to raise His only begotten Son.

We also gather that the both of them were descendants of David, The King of Israel. We are aware that Joseph and Mary were just ordinary citizens of Israel, therefore, we have an idea that they were quite poor, like the majority at that time.

Joseph was a good-hearted man,

as although he felt Mary had been 'unfaithful' to him, he had a very strong willingness to protect the Blessed Virgin. Before he could divorce her, the Angel of God appeared to him in his sleep and explained to him the nature of Mary's pregnancy and how it was an act of God. We know this as the Gospel says: "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid. You must take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit". Due to biblical knowledge, we are aware that Joseph did exactly what the Angel told him and took Mary as his wife.

St Joseph is a very relatable person. We are made to believe that he was a born worrier, and that is why I would encourage young people to turn to him, for his intercession and to cast all their worries before him, as he knows what it's like for our minds

to work overtime and to only think the worst.

He is truly remarkable. He did what God commanded him to do and he did it to the full. He loved and cared for Our Lord, and we can only imagine how beautiful their relationship was. It must have been very special for him to watch Jesus grow from infancy to boyhood, and from boyhood to manhood.

The most beautiful thing out of it all is that Joseph trusted in Him from the very beginning to the very end in his silence. He died in the way we all hope to, in the loving embrace of Christ and Mary.

Jesus loved him, Our Lady loved him, and therefore, that is why I honour St Joseph as a Spiritual guardian. I have grown a devotion to him, especially through the publication of 'Sleeping St Joseph'.

St Joseph, pray for us.



## Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference Referendum success by James

ON Friday, March 8, two Referenda were held, in which the people of the Republic of Ireland were asked to vote on Amendments to the Irish Constitution.

The 39th Amendment would have included new wording on how the family unit can be based on 'durable relationships', and would have altered the text found in Article 41.3.1, that states: "The State pledges itself to guard with special care the institution of Marriage, on which the Family is founded, and to protect it against attack", by removing the sentence 'on which the family is founded'.

The 40th Amendment sought to delete Article 41.2, which states: "1° In particular, the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved."

"2° The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home."

The Bishops' Conference stated its reservations about the proposed Amendments, claiming:

• The proposed Family amendment to the Constitution diminishes the unique importance of the relationship between marriage and family in the eyes of Society and State and



is likely to lead to a weakening of the incentive for young people to marry.

• The Care amendment would have the effect of abolishing all reference to motherhood in the Constitution and leave unacknowledged the particular and incalculable societal contribution that mothers in the home have made and continue to make in Ireland...The role of mothers should continue to be cherished in our Constitution.

Furthermore, the Bishops said: "While 'Marriage' entails a public and legal commitment, the term 'durable relationship' is shrouded in legal uncertainty and is open to wide interpretation. It does not make sense that such an ambiguous reality would be considered 'antecedent and

superior to all positive law' and acquire the same 'inalienable and imprescriptible' rights as those ascribed to the 'family founded on marriage'."

And so, on March 9, contrary to all polling data conducted beforehand on the Referendum Amendments, a resounding 68% of the electorate rejected the 39th Amendment on the Family, with an even more convincing rejection of the 40th Amendment at a 74% 'No' vote – the largest defeat of a constitutional amendment in Ireland's history.

Pope John Paul II said, while visiting Ireland in 1979, "The family is the true measure of the greatness of a nation", and, without a doubt, that remains true today.

## Christianity in Pre-Patrician Ireland by Luke

WITH St Patrick's Day celebrated this month, I thought it was an excellent time to look at the history of Christianity in Ireland.

Most people in Ireland have heard the story of St Patrick in some form or other. While the details may vary, it is widely accepted that St Patrick was brought to Ireland as a prisoner during his teenage years. He turned to religion for comfort during this captivity. After six years, St Patrick managed to escape from his captors and return to where he was born, in Britain.

During this time, he found that he had a vocation to return to Ireland and educate the Irish about Christianity. After going through religious education, he fulfilled this dream and converted a large number of Irish. Part of his success could be attributed to the way he utilised his knowledge of existing Irish culture and incorporated it into his teachings, the most famous example being the shamrock as a symbol of the Holy Trinity.

Contrary to popular belief, St Patrick was not the first to bring Christianity to Ireland. He holds that reputation because of the amount of work he did in God's name on this island, but there were at least a small number of Christians before him. The precise origin of Christianity in Ireland is unknown. The earliest confirmed record of Irish Christianity was in 431 AD, only a year before St Patrick returned.

St Palladius was sent to Ireland

to minister to the Irish Christians as the first bishop on the island, according to the Prosper of Aquitaine's Chronicle. This implies that there were Christians already, as St Palladius' primary goal was to minister, not to convert. There is some confusion around these two figures, with some people speculating that some of Palladius' actions were credited to St Patrick.

St Palladius' influence was far less far-reaching than St Patrick's, part of the reason he is such an esoteric figure. He was primarily active in Leinster. Unfortunately, the king of Leinster banished St Palladius, so he returned to Britain and began preaching in Scotland.

Other bishops were said to have worked in Ireland around this time, including St Ibar, St Declan and St Ailbe. Interestingly, they too were mostly restricted to Leicester and the south-east.

Christianity may have come to Ireland through the Roman Empire. Some archaeological evidence suggests that there was trade between these two nations, which could have led to the religion spreading sometime after the early third century, when

the Roman Empire officially converted to Christianity. However, that is just speculation. All we know is that Christianity existed in Ireland even before St Palladius and St Patrick.

This is not to belittle the contribution that St Patrick made. Without him, paganism may have continued in Ireland for many more years. St Patrick did not introduce Christianity to Ireland, however, he is responsible for it flourishing.

1. St Patrick "Confessio" [https://www.confessio.ie/etexts/confessio\\_english#](https://www.confessio.ie/etexts/confessio_english#)

2. The Irish News "Christianity in Ireland before Patrick" <https://www.irishnews.com/lifestyle/faithmatters/2021/11/01/news/christianity-in-ireland-before-patrick-2124940/>

3. Robert Vermaat "Prosper of Aquitaine - Epitoma Chronicon" <http://www.vortigernstudies.org.uk/artsou/prosp.htm>

4. Rev. Alban Butler "St. Palladius, Bishop and Confessor, Apostle of the Scots" <https://www.bartleby.com/lit-hub/lives-of-the-saints/volume-vii-july/st-palladius-bishop-and-confessor-apostle-of-the-scots/#note061.2>



## Oriente Lumen – The Light of the East by John

IN the ancient church and even now, the early church would worship facing East (as it was from the East that the Sun rose), in anticipation of the second coming of the Lord. In a similar way, Pope John Paul II wrote an encyclical called 'Oriente Lumen', that is, the Light of the East, to emphasise another metaphor.

To quote him, "The light of the East has illumined the universal Church, from the moment when 'a rising sun' appeared above us (Lk 1:78): Jesus Christ, our Lord, whom all Christians invoke as the Redeemer of man and the hope of the world [1]". I write this article with the hope of presenting to you some of the treasures of the East, so that we can see how the church breathes with her two lungs: the East and the West. The weeks leading up to the Resurrection of our Lord have some of the most beautiful traditions in many cultures and ecclesial traditions. It is not too dissimilar for the Syro Malabar Church.

The Friday before Palm Sunday, is called 'nalpathamveli', or the 40th Friday, and signifies the beginning of 10 days of intense prayer, fasting and almsgiving before Easter. In the evening before Palm Sunday, small

steamed dumplings, called 'Kozhukatta', are made from water, rice flour, jaggery (a type of brown sugar), coconut and other spices. The dough made of rice flour and hot water that is left over from making the dumplings is used to make 'Peechampidy'.

The Gospel for that day similar to Lazarus Saturday in the Latin Church, this day is called 'Kozhukatta Saturday', or 'Kozhukatta Perunnal' (Perunnal means feast), and like the Gospel that is said on the day, it emphasises the anointing of Jesus at Lazarus' house by Mary. The dumplings represent the alabaster jar that Mary used, and the sweet fragrance of the dumplings is likened to the fragrance of the perfume of pure nard. The 'Peechampidy' lacks the filling (therefore the fragrance) and is supposed to represent the silver coin purse of Judas; it should be noted that Judas argued for the perfume to be sold instead of anointing our Lord, hence the significance. Moreover, the Kozhukatta and Peechampidy are shared with neighbours and friends as well! [1]

Palm Sunday is known as 'Oshana' – Hosanna Sunday. Similar to the Latin Church,

processions are held, and people bring back coconut palms that were blessed in the church to their homes. These palms are then used in 'Pesaha' (Passover) Thursday. Pesaha is of great significance to Syro Malabar Catholics as similar to Jewish practice, families would prepare unleavened bread (made from rice flour and steamed), with a cross made of the palms put on top, with cloves on the sides of the cross to represent the nails that Our Lord was crucified with. This was known as the 'kurisappam' (Cross-bread) and represented the bread used at the Last Supper, as well as the unleavened bread made by the Israelites before fleeing from Egypt.

In the evening, after having come back from Church, all the extended family would gather, and the eldest male of the family would lead the prayer in psalms and readings from the Bible. After removing the cross, he would break the bread and distribute it to the other family members, from the oldest to the youngest. The bread was received in a similar fashion to receiving Holy Communion, with your hands forming a throne for the bread to be placed in. This bread was given with a drink (named pal – literally

meaning milk) made from rice flour, coconut milk and jiggery, and thus represented the wine given at the Last Supper. These were consumed then and there, with nothing being wasted.

During the breaking of the bread, a long poem called the 'Puthen Pana' is sung – this poem was written by a German Jesuit called Arnos Pathiri (Ernst Hanxleden), in Malayalam, who lived in Kerala and tries to portray the life of Our Lord from the beginning of Salvation history till the Resurrection. Also, another bread called the 'inriappam' is made from the same mixture as the kurisappam, but without the cross and usually in banana leaves, instead of a container. The 'inri' in inriappam stands for 'INRI – Iesus Nazarenus rex Iudaeorum', and possibly came about because of the Portuguese influence amongst Syro Malabar Catholics [3]. This bread doesn't have to be fully consumed within the ceremony itself, unlike the Kurisappam.

Passion Friday in many Syro Malabar households is a day of absolute fasting and mourning, with no music or TV or recreation being done. Usually, the entire day is spent in the Church, from

praying the Liturgy of Hours to doing the Stations of the Cross by going up a hill [3]. The final service of the day is done with Ramsa (Evening Prayer) and is when the Passion narrative is read, and the Cross is venerated. No Qurbana (Mass) is held on this day, like in the Latin Church. The Cross that is to be venerated is processed around the church and is ceremoniously wrapped and placed at the altar (as a symbol of the burial of Jesus).

After this service, a bitter juice made from bitter gourd is given to the faithful as the leave the church. This symbolises the vinegar that Jesus was given when He asked for water. Bitter gourd was most likely used as vinegar and was not a thing that was easily available in Kerala. It is usually after this service that many would break the fast with a simple meal, often consisting of rice porridge and lentils.

Holy Saturday is known as the Great Saturday in the Syro Malabar Church. The ceremonies of blessing the new fire and lighting the Paschal candle take place in the morning of Holy Saturday; it can also be done in the evening together with Ramsa (Evening Prayer). Unlike

in the Latin Church, a Qurbana is celebrated on this day for this service, and the Baptism of the catechumens occur during this Qurbana, as well as the renewal of the Baptismal Promises. Traditionally, there would have been strict fasting and abstinence before this service [3].

Finally, the Easter Vigil usually starts at 3 am on Sunday morning (in many diaspora communities it is celebrated earlier). And with the end of the 2-3 hour Divine Liturgy, the faithful can break the fast that they began 50 days before on Ash Monday and celebrate the resurrection of Our Lord. With the end of the Season of the Great Fast, the new Season of Qyamtha (the Resurrection) begins.

[1] [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paulii/en/apost\\_letters/1995/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apl\\_19950502\\_orientale-lumen.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paulii/en/apost_letters/1995/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19950502_orientale-lumen.html) [2] [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jpii\\_enc\\_25051995\\_ut-unum-sint.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jpii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint.html) [3] [https://kalyancatechism.in/catechism/lesson18/IDENTITY\\_AND\\_TRADITIONS\\_OF\\_ST\\_THOMAS\\_CATHOLIC\\_FAMILIES\\_Final\\_Paper.pdf](https://kalyancatechism.in/catechism/lesson18/IDENTITY_AND_TRADITIONS_OF_ST_THOMAS_CATHOLIC_FAMILIES_Final_Paper.pdf)



Pope John Paul II greeting crowds in Kottayam, Kerala. Source: [https://www.instagram.com/syromalabarusa/p/CytA-fMOsqH/?img\\_index=1](https://www.instagram.com/syromalabarusa/p/CytA-fMOsqH/?img_index=1)



Kozhukatta dumplings. Source: <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kozhukatta>



The bishop is knocking the door of the church with the processional cross. Source: <https://www.facebook.com/SyroMalabarUSA/posts/our-auxiliary-bishop-mar-joy-alappat-celebrating-palmsunday-with-our-stthomas-sy/2143517055732674/>



The Kurisappam and Pal. Source: <https://www.zoomtventertainment.com/lifestyle/article/pesaha-appam-recipe-what-is-pesaha-appam-and-how-to-make-it/576510>

## The Rosary – Our Lady wants us to pray it regularly by Niamh

THE word 'Rosary' comes from the Latin for garland of roses, the rose being one of the flowers used to symbolise Mary. Praying the Rosary has a long history in the Catholic Church, as Catholics have a great devotion to Mary.

Mary described the Rosary to St Dominic in the 13th century, during a miraculous apparition in Toulouse, France, telling him, "I want you to preach my Rosary."

Prior to that time, Orthodox Christians had already been using ropes to help them keep track of groups of prayers. They had an ancient practice of saying a prayer and then tying a knot in a rope afterward to remember where they were in a prayer sequence.

By reflecting on the Mysteries of the Rosary, Catholics are able to connect emotionally with the lives of Jesus and Mary. Catholics

also see the Rosary as a way to ask for Mary's intercession for them with God, as we, as Catholics, believe that She has a special role in bringing our prayers to God.

The repetition of the prayers can help to create a sense of calm and focus, allowing the person praying to experience a peaceful state of mind, and enter into a state of prayer and meditation.

In addition, Catholics often use the Rosary as a prayer in their community. Many Catholics pray the Rosary together as a group, either in a church setting or in a more informal setting, such as a family gathering.

Praying the Rosary as a group can create a sense of unity, as well as providing an opportunity for people to support one another in prayer. When we come together to pray the Rosary, we are united in a shared experience of praying

and meditating. This sense of unity can be a powerful reminder of how faith can bring people together.

As a young person of faith, the Rosary is very important to me because you don't need to pray the whole Rosary to make it work. You can pray a decade and think about a moment in Jesus' life. Also, having a physical reminder to pray helps me to stop during a busy day and spend time with God.

Praying the Rosary daily also promises you 15 things, including Mary's special protection and greatest graces, that those who are devout to the Rosary may never be conquered by misfortune and the faithful children of the Rosary shall merit a high degree of glory in Heaven.

The Rosary is a highly regarded prayer by many Catholics, for



example, Pope St John Paul II called The Rosary "an exquisitely contemplative prayer". And said: "How beautiful is the family that recites the Rosary every evening." The Rosary is a beautiful prayer that should be implemented into every Catholic's life. After all, it is a request from Our Mother in Heaven, to pray it faithfully.



# Memories of Easter...a time to become aware of God's loving influence

## on our lives by Seán

EASTER is the most significant Christian celebration in the year by far. Beginning this year on March 24, it documents Christ's triumphant arrival in Jerusalem the Sunday before His joyous rise from the dead to ascend to Heaven, after suffering for us.

From Palm Sunday, featuring Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem, the Books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John provide us with the account of His last intense week, living the painful life of a human being. However, the deeper meaning of this final and most extensive stretch of suffering is not so openly provided at first glance.

Since I was a small boy, I always found Easter to be a very fascinating holiday in the Catholic Church. I have a very clear memory of the bright, sunny, and warm Good Friday afternoons that we so rarely are gifted with now. It was most likely 2015 or 2016. Good Friday is the important day on which Christ was crucified by the Romans, after betrayal by His own people. I had spent the entire morning of Good Friday on the patio in my back garden, absorbing the

nourishing sunlight and carrying out my annual read of the story of Easter week in the children's Bible that belonged to my mother in her own childhood.

It was something of a habit at that point, and it still is; only now I don't read the children's Bible. I remember the atmosphere perfectly, the sun not roasting the vibrantly green grass, but evaporating all the dew and providing a clear and fresh aura. I could hear the soft repetitive whir of the huge windmill two fields up the hill behind my house. After having finished my annual read, I went searching in the garden for straight twigs to make small crosses from, which I embedded on a bare patch of the banking between the fence and the flowerbed. At three in the afternoon my mother called me inside to pray, as we always do at that time on Good Friday. Even at that age, I formed lasting memories of Easter week.

It isn't a very significant story, really. A nice memory for me. The following day was Holy Saturday and I altar served in my first late night Mass. I remember specifically the long, staggered

walk from the back of the chapel to the altar itself, the only thing in sight the fiery stick that the Priest held, and the only sound was his voice in the darkness. It is certainly an eerie feeling when you know that there are dozens of people standing around you, but you cannot see them. But you can feel their presence. Such a moment reminds me of how we have to perceive Christ. We cannot see him, but we know He is there.

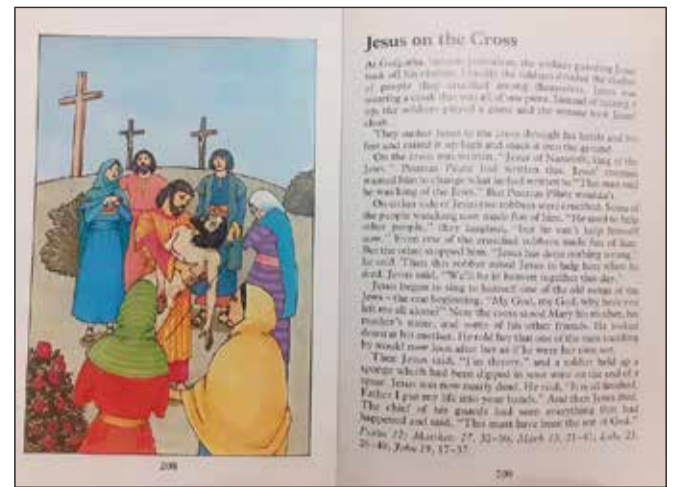
### Peace

In Luke 24:36, "Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.'" The disciples were startled at seeing Jesus because He had died and they thought that they were seeing a ghost, in complete disbelief at His appearance. The atmosphere of that Holy Saturday allows me to perfectly comprehend the presence of God in our lives; we cannot see Him, but He is there watching over us.

I was also serving on the altar on the Easter Sunday morning, the day after. I was there for every Mass that week, including a Stations of the Cross service one afternoon during the week,

although I am not sure which day. Easter Sunday has always presented itself as bright and renewing to me. Its warmth rarely ever felt as intense as Good Friday, more refreshing and cooler. It reminds me of dew on grass. In Mark 16:2, it says, "Very early on the first day of the week (Sunday was the first day of the week for the Hebrews), just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, 'Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?'"

I always awake early on Easter Sunday, but not exactly from excitement. I don't sleep extensively anyway. That atmosphere of sunrise is a memorable feature of my Easter Sundays, the bright rays coming through the curtains and landing on the wall above my bed. In the Book of Mark, the two Mary's wonder who will roll the stone away from the entrance to Jesus' tomb to anoint His body with spices. They find that the stone has already been rolled away. This is a beautifully symbolic moment considering that Jesus' mission on Earth was to suffer and die like a human once, so that until His



second coming all humans could have the chance to be forgiven for their wrongdoings and go through minimal suffering as a result of them - not that everyone jumps at the opportunity to pass on eternal suffering. Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James, Joses, and Salome worried without need about how they would shift that heavy rock so that they could achieve their goal. Only they found that Jesus had done so for them already.

Easter week has always taught me that, at the end of the day,

even if we choose to not really pay attention to it, Jesus Christ suffered and died like us humans so that we could have a chance at eternal life. We don't literally see Jesus, but if we pay attention, we can see His subtle messages and interpret their meaning.

Easter is a time to become aware of God's loving influence on our life and what is beyond it - we should come to understand the pain that He put Himself through as a human so that we earn our happiness.

## St Patrick's Day launch of Clonleigh Jubilee celebrations

TO mark the launch of a Year of Jubilee for the Parish of Clonleigh, the Saint Patrick's Day Sunday Mass was the occasion chosen for the beginning of the programme of celebrations for the months ahead.

Fr Colm O'Doherty PP reminded the congregation of the role that the parish has played over the years, in witnessing to the Gospel message and handing on the faith from one generation to the next.

"This year, 2024, is the chance for us, as a parish, to celebrate our beautiful church building, which will be open 60 years in May," said Fr Colm, adding: "2024 also marks 50 years since Clonleigh became an independent parish. It had previously been part of the Parish of Camus and Clonleigh."

As part of the celebrations, the congregation was joined by some members of the Porter School of Dance, who delighted the congregation with dancing before Mass, and the Sion Mills Pipe

Band played after Mass.

A new parish flag was raised by parishioner, Paddy McKinney and the church was decorated inside and out for the occasion.

There will be further events taking place in the months ahead.



# Prayer and witness of praying community sustain me in my priesthood – Fr Daniel McFaul

IN this Year of Prayer, called for by Pope Francis in preparation for the 2025 Jubilee Year ‘Pilgrims of Hope’, Fr Daniel McFaul reflects on the importance of prayer in his own life as a priest and how the witness of the praying people of the Parish of Creggan, and other parishes he has ministered in, sustains him.

Appointed as Parish Priest of the Creggan almost two years ago, Fr Daniel has been ministering there since 2019, and he also had a short three-month stint there 10 years ago, in the earlier years of his priesthood.

The middle child of three born to James and Eileen McFaul, from the Parish of Iskaheen & Upper Merville, the 48-year-old was the last priest ordained by the late Bishop Seamus Hegarty, on July 6, 2008, in St Eugene’s Cathedral.

His first appointment was to the Cathedral, where he ministered from 2008-14, with three months in the Creggan before being next appointed to the Parish of Cappagh, Omagh, in 2014. After five years there, he returned as curate to the Creggan Parish in 2019 and was delighted when he was appointed as Parish Priest there in 2022.

Reflecting on his priesthood, Fr Daniel told ‘The Net’: “One of the things that sustain me is prayer and the witness of people praying in the parish community that I work and minister in. This includes groups like the Legion of Mary, St Vincent de Paul, Eucharistic Adoration and the Divine Mercy group and the Rosary Group, and in particular people’s desire for the Sacraments, especially Confession. As a priest, I couldn’t do what I do today if I did not have the Lord’s Mercy in Confession, for me personally, I see such fruit and healing from this powerful sacrament.”

“During Covid,” he added,

“Confession was started at 5pm daily and that is still going, Monday-Friday and after the 10 am Mass on Saturdays, as well as from 5.30-6.20 pm on Saturday evenings, with great support from Fr Gerry White and his ministry in the Confessional. I see people from across the Diocese coming to Fr Gerry for Confession. He is here every Monday, Tuesday and on Saturday mornings.”

He went on to recall: “In 2014, all-day Eucharistic Adoration was started here, in Creggan, every Monday. There is also a group of lay people gathering every evening at 7 pm to pray the Rosary, and the fruit of their prayer is seen in the beautiful church we have today.”

He continued: “Ultimately, what we are about as priests and people is having a relationship with Jesus Christ and that can only be built on prayer. We have to get to know the Lord.

“As chaplain in the hospital, I can see the fruit of prayer when visiting those who are sick. Their faith sustains and helps them to journey through life, sickness, and death.

“The Lord is working in and through the people and me. I am carried by the faith of the people and their hunger for the Lord, and their need for the Sacraments. It is a privilege for me to be a priest, to be ‘a little pencil in God’s hands’, as Mother Teresa once said.”

Understanding

To help parishioners deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith, a 20-week study of the YOUCAT, which stands for Youth Catechism, was launched in the Parish back in September, using a programme compiled by Fr Daniel’s former Maynooth classmate, Fr Sean Corkery and Mairin Ni Shuilleabhain.

“I was familiar with the programme through Fr Sean and



the response from the participants has been very positive,” remarked Fr Daniel, adding: “My thinking is that in order for us to know our faith, we need to understand what the Church teaches, not what we think it teaches. Each of us has a duty to inform our conscience and to learn the beauty of the Church’s teaching.

“Archbishop Fulton Sheen said, ‘There are not 100 people in the United States who hate The Catholic Church, but there are millions who hate what they wrongly perceive the Catholic Church to be.’

“Hopefully, out of the YOUCAT course, we will grow in awareness of the beauty of our Catholic faith. We must have a relationship with God and the core part of that relationship is a conversation of prayer and spending time with the Lord in Adoration.

“As Mother Teresa said, ‘When you look at the crucifix, you understand how much Jesus loved you. When you look at the Sacred Host you understand how much Jesus loves you now.’”

Currently, Eucharistic Adoration in the Parish takes place on Mondays, from after 10 am Mass until 7 pm, and then from Tuesday to Saturday, 10.30 am until 12 noon, and after 12.15 pm Mass on Sunday, concluding at 6 pm with the Rosary.

As well as this, there is a Rosary Group that meets every night in the Divine Mercy Chapel to pray

the Rosary at 7 pm, and a Divine Mercy Men’s Prayer Group meets on Monday nights at 7.30 pm, in the Divine Mercy Chapel.

Fr Daniel is also greatly appreciative of the introduction of a Bereavement Support Group that meets monthly every second Sunday in the Parochial House Community Room at 3 pm.

He remarked: “With the drop in the number of priests in the Parish, the need for support for those bereaved was very evident, and through discussion with parishioner, Michael Lynch, a bereavement support group has been set up, which meets once a month.”

He went on to point out that the Parish was also very blessed to have two Catholic primary schools, Holy Child and St Johns, and one secondary school, St Cecilia’s, with St Joseph’s Boys’ School close by.

In conclusion, Fr Daniel said: “After 15 years of priesthood, and being moved from the Cathedral to the Creggan for three months, and then to Cappagh, and now back to Creggan, and doing Hospital ministry, I can see God’s hand leading me and Our Lady guiding me in being a priest in Derry today.

“I love what I do, and as the late Bishop Martin Drennan said to a friend of mine at his ordination, ‘If you love what you do, you will never have to work a day in your life.’”



### Creggan pupils join in St Brigid Cross making session



# Creggan YOUCAT study deepening understanding of Catholic faith

The Creggan YOUCAT course is facilitated by Eilish Friel, of the Cathedral Parish, who has been a good friend of Fr Daniel's for the last 15 years.

A trained facilitator, Eilish happily agreed to facilitate the YOUCAT study that Fr Daniel was launching in the Creggan Parish.

Commenting on the course, which is free apart from the cost of the participant's manual, she said: "I think it is absolutely brilliant. Every Catholic should study the Catechism. I have learned so much, and those participating are getting a lot out of it."

"There were about 20 people at the information night, and while not all could commit to the 20-week course, 12 have and it is a lovely mixture of people."

"I would love this study to be in every parish," added Eilish, saying: "Loads of people would have the talent to facilitate these sessions."

A mother of three adult children, aged 43-48 years, Eilish found herself more and more drawn to give something back to the community after her husband, Damien died 15 years ago.

She recalled: "After Damien died, I decided to retire early. I was a senior manager in a business community and part-time teacher in the Technical College. I wanted to give back to the community."

"I was brought up in a family of eight and my mother instilled us with great faith. I have never faltered from it, but have grown in it. I grew up in St Eugene's Parish, in Malborough Avenue, and we were sent down to the Cathedral every other week to Confessions."

"I had been thinking about different ways I could give back something to the community. When my husband passed away, I thought of how a lot of marriages were in trouble but we had had a very happy marriage. So, I decided to do a two-year course in Maynooth to facilitate pre-marriage courses and I did this with ACCORD, but I now help Fr Daniel with couples that he is preparing for marriage through his own programme."

## Creggan parishioners share thoughts on YouCat study...

"I always wanted to learn the Catechism and it is a great refresher of what I learnt when I was at school. I am really enjoying it." (Marie)

"Studying the Catechism of the Catholic faith is something that I have always wanted to do and

*I'm finding it very worthwhile and enjoyable." (Pauline)*

*"I saw the YouCat course advertised in the parish bulletin and wondered what this about, so I decided I would come and see. I never did anything like this at school and I am finding it very interesting. There are things that you think you know about the faith and now discovering that it's not what you thought." (Lisa)*

*"I hadn't studied the Catechism before and I am finding it very interesting. There is a lot that I didn't know." (Ronnie)*

*"I heard about the course at Mass and decided to come because I wanted to develop my faith and find out more about it. It is very good and I am finding out about some things that I didn't know." (Marie)*

*"I came along to see if I could get a better understanding of my faith. I enjoy the sharing and discussion. Some things are new but others I would have known, although not the logic behind it." (Margaret)*

*"I decided to come along to the course to get a bit of a refresher and get a proper explanation about things. I am really enjoying it. I have only missed two nights, so it must be good if I keep coming back!" (Gerry)*

*"There are things I thought I knew but realised that I didn't actually when I came here to the course. We are talking about the Commandments and I am finding that I didn't fully realise what all is involved regarding these." (Ann)*

*"Initially, I was motivated by curiosity to come along, and as the course went on I began to find it was elaborating and expanding on what I already knew. I find it challenging a times. It is quite stimulating when you hear the perspective of others." (Joseph)*

*"I came along to the course to try and develop my faith. I am getting to know more in depth about the teaching of the Church. I wasn't taught the Catechism at school and I think that is such a shame. I am really enjoying studying and discussing it with others." (Catherine)*



# Creggan Rosary Group a blessing for the Parish

ANOTHER powerful blessing on the Creggan Parish is the Rosary Group that gathers mostly in the Divine Mercy Chapel to pray this age-old prayer every night, Monday-Friday, at 7 pm, and Sundays at 6 pm.

Parishioner, Clare Tierney has been part of the Rosary Group for about 26 years and it is a very special time in her daily life.

"I only live about 10 minutes away from the chapel and love going to the Rosary Group every night," said Clare, adding: "I think it is good to be in the company of others while praying the Rosary. I get a lot out of it. I have a great devotion to Our Lady, and have had a lot of prayers answered through her intercession. I couldn't go a day without praying the Rosary. My day just wouldn't

be complete without it."

Speaking of her first encounter with the Rosary Group, which has been going for about 30 years now, Clare recalled: "When my daughter was seven, and had made her First Holy Communion, she wanted to become an altar server. In those days, Mass was celebrated in the chapel every night, so I went down with her every night."

"I didn't know that the Rosary was being prayed there nightly. I loved it and kept going even after my daughter had left the altar. A man went up on to the altar then and led the praying of it, and there would have been quite a few people there."

Praying for various intentions down the years, Clare said: "We have always prayed for



our own chapel and believe, through Mary's intercession, that God answered our prayers because when it came to it being renovated, and getting the Divine Mercy Chapel, everything just fell into place. It was unbelievable how the funding worked out with donations.

"We also pray for the Holy Souls, the Sick, against abortion, for vocations to the priesthood, for our youth, peace in the world, and any special intentions."

Saying that anyone was welcome to come along and join in the praying of the Rosary whenever it suited, Clare said: "We have up to 12 women and men aged between 40s-90s, including some of the original members, and it would be great to see more coming to pray along with us."

# Inspired by faith and devotion of people in Creggan

CHAPLAIN to the Polish Community in the Derry Diocese, Fr Ignacy Saniuta also ministers as curate in the Creggan Parish and shares his experience of serving amongst the people of the Creggan since his appointment there two years ago...

AS I reflect on my experience as a priest in Creggan over the past two years, I am humbled and deeply grateful for the journey I have had with this community. From the moment I arrived in Creggan, I was embraced by the warmth and resilience of its people.

Despite the hardships they've endured, there's a spirit of solidarity that runs through the streets, binding neighbours together as one family. The streets are alive with the laughter of children playing, and the chatter of neighbours catching up on the latest news.

In a place where history is marked by division and strife, the

church serves and gives of hope, a sanctuary where all are welcome regardless of background or belief.

In my role as a priest, I've had the privilege of walking alongside the people of Creggan in their joys and sorrows, their triumphs and struggles. Whether it's celebrating the sacraments, offering counsel and comfort, or simply sharing a cup of tea and a listening ear, every interaction is an opportunity to witness the grace of God at work in the lives of His people.

However, being a priest in Creggan is not without its challenges. Poverty, unemployment and social inequality have cast a shadow over the lives of many, and the scars of the Troubles remain a painful reminder of the community's turbulent past. As a priest, my role is not to have all the answers or to single-handedly solve every problem.

In my role as a spiritual guide,

I've been continually inspired by the faith and devotion of the people of Creggan. Whether through Sunday Mass, sacramental celebrations, or pastoral visits, I've witnessed the profound impact that faith can have in people's lives, offering comfort, hope, and strength in times of need.

I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of its on-going story of faith, hope, and renewal.

Together, we journey forward, bound by the ties of faith and community, as we continue to build a future filled with hope, justice, and peace for all who call Creggan home.



Fr Ignacy Saniuta CC, Creggan

## Hearing Confessions is what fulfils me nowadays – Fr Gerry White



Fr Gerry White.

THE Divine Mercy Chapel in the Creggan was completed in 2018, as part of the 60th anniversary renovations to St Mary's Church. That same year, Derry-born priest, Fr Gerry White returned to live in his native city, having retired from ministry in England due to ill health. After settling into Beechwood Court Sheltered Accommodation, he offered to help out in the Creggan Parish, and for the last five years he has been a much-in-demand Confessor, not only by local parishioners but also the many that travel from further afield to unburden their souls to him in the Divine Mercy confessional.

Struck, since his return home, by "the fear of God which is holding so many away from God,

and the crippling guilt in so many people, usually from away back", Fr Gerry felt moved to preach from the altar that "if there is any sense of separation between yourself and God and the faith, or the Church, come and talk."

He also pointed out: "I do not promise an answer or solution, or even absolution, but I do promise that you will never be told off."

As word spread, the numbers queuing for Fr Gerry during times of Confession grew, and it seems very fitting that this has all evolved in the Divine Mercy Chapel with its huge Divine Mercy Image, and the statues and relics of St Faustina and Pope St John Paul II, and the fruits of the prayer of the Creggan Divine Mercy Men's Group.

As well as celebrating Mass in the Creggan, the 86-year-old hears Confessions from 5-5.30 pm on Mondays and Tuesdays, and sometimes Wednesdays and Fridays as well, and always on a Saturday after the 10 am Mass. He also hears Confessions in Holy Family Church, Ballymagroarty, where he celebrates Mass on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 10 am.

"I am not a very mobile man at this stage in my life, but I feel that I can help people by hearing their Confessions and giving them some support," said Fr Gerry, adding: "Hearing Confessions is what fulfils me nowadays, and I

hear First Confessions too.

"I once did a course that helped prepare people in the work of the Samaritans, and it highlighted the importance of acceptance. The person who walks in is all that you have to work on. You have to accept that person the way they are and go forward."

Aware that some people may worry about what a priest may think or say to them in the Confessional, Fr Gerry makes a point of telling people of his admiration for anyone who walks into the Confessional

"I admire their faith for believing that I can lift them out of sin," he said, "and I admire their humility for exposing themselves in their weakness."

Originally from the Lecky Road, in the Long Tower Parish, Fr Gerry is the second eldest in a family of three girls and three boys born to Bridget and Barney White.

Sharing his earliest memory of feeling called to the priesthood, he recalled: "Frank Deeny was an altar boy away ahead of me and he went on to become a priest. I was about 15 years old when he was ordained, and I decided that I would go to his first Mass in the Long Tower. After that, I decided that I wanted to do that myself, and I followed Frank's footsteps to All Hallows College.

### Ordained

"I left Derry when I was 18, in

1955, and I was ordained in 1964 for the Diocese of Leeds, and Bishop John Heenan who selected me, later became a Cardinal. He was gone from the Diocese by the time I was ordained."

He continued: "My first parish was Bramley, on the outskirts of Leeds. I was there for the first five years. My second parish was in Wakefield, St Peter and St Paul's, and then I was sent to a parish in Keighley Town, where an elderly Irish priest was the parish priest.

"Next, I went to Sheffield, to a steelworks village called Deepcar, where the parish priest was also Irish. I learned more from him in four years than the previous 14 years.

"Then I got my first parish as PP of Wickersley, where I ministered for seven years. After that, I was moved to a big parish in Sheffield, called St Joseph's, Handsworth, where I spent 19 years. By that time, my health wasn't good and I had a year out. I left the Parish on a Sunday, and on the Monday my Bishop rang me and said, don't feel that you can't say no, but would you look after a place to say Sunday Mass only for a year. It was a small parish, but I ended up working full-time.

"Eventually, I asked to go back into parish work and I

was appointed to St Helen's, Oldcotes, in Nottinghamshire. It was my final parish and the best seven years of my priestly life. I was in the middle of having six abdominal operations. I knew that I couldn't run a parish on my own, so I asked the people to please help me and they took over book-keeping no bother, and I just did the work of a priest, saying Mass etc."

Retiring at the age of 76, Fr Gerry's plan was to use his holiday home in Newtowncunningham, Co Donegal, as a retirement home, spending half of his time there and half in England, helping out where he could in parish life.

"However," he said, "my poor health put paid to all of that. I ended up in Altnagelvin Hospital with a reoccurrence of the bowel problem, and my sisters decided that I was coming back to Derry to live.

"By that time, I was already saying Sunday Mass for Fr Paddy O'Kane, in Holy Family, Ballymagroarty. I enjoyed it immensely. I was living in Newtowncunningham and I said Mass in Holy Family Church each Sunday for three or four years.

"Then, I moved to live in Beechwood Court Sheltered Accommodation and started

helping out in Creggan, after introducing myself to Fr Joe Gormley and Fr Paul Fraser, who were in Creggan at the time. And now I am helping Fr Daniel, and I appreciate him and Fr Joe allowing me to help out. I love the people in the Creggan; they are extremely kind".

Having no regrets about joining the priesthood, Fr Gerry reflected on changes in the Church over the years and highlighted his shock at some younger people in the modern church wanting "to go backwards" in wanting the Latin Mass.

"I was ordained in the Latin Mass, and my first couple of years saying Mass was in Latin," he said, recalling: "It caused great friction at the time, as the younger people were all for the change and the older people were trying to preserve what they had known all their lives.

"Now, in the modern church, some younger people would go back to the Latin Mass, but don't have a word of Latin. I don't understand that, having been brought up with the Latin Mass, with knowledge of Latin. I loved the Latin Mass but I knew it had to change."

## Pastoral Bereavement Support Group launched in Creggan

A new and much-needed initiative in parish life is the launch of a monthly Creggan Parish Pastoral Bereavement Support Group, which is held on the second Sunday, at 3 pm, in the Parochial House Community Room. The support also includes the opportunity to speak in confidence on a one-to-one basis with an experienced grief counsellor, for those who do not feel up to group discussion.

Taking the lead in this is parishioner, Michael Lynch, a counsellor with 30 years' experience, including running and being director of Men's Action Network in Derry, which supports and promotes male health and well-being.

Already part of the collaborative ministry set up in the Parish during Fr Brian Brady's time ministering there, whereby the laity and priests work together in addressing the needs of the parish, Michael told 'The Net': "I always said that when I retired I would use my skills base in a practical way in the Parish. My experience is as a counsellor in the area of domestic and sexual abuse, addiction and bereavement. "In discussion, before I retired, with Fr Daniel McFaul and Fr Joe Gormley, when he was parish priest here, it was suggested that

we look at something to support those bereaved. We now have this group that meets on the second Sunday of each month, which offers a chance for those bereaved to be with others who are experiencing bereavement too, and to receive support as they go through the grieving process."

He remarked: "Grief is unique and it can last longer for some. It's not for anyone to say how someone should go through the grieving process. The idea is to offer people the chance to say how they are affected by their grief."

Launching the first meeting of the group just before Christmas, with the awareness that occasions such as Christmas, Easter, birthdays and anniversaries can be a trigger point, he added: "It is currently a small group of about 5-6, and it seems to be making a difference in supporting them.

"After welcoming people, we ask them to remember the name of the person they have lost that they would like to bring into the room, and then there is a chance to talk about them and maybe about themselves, for example the void that the loss has left in their life.

"There is a common shared experience with people who are at different stages in grieving, so they help each other. It's confidential and people are free

to say whatever they need to say. There is no judgement.

"No one can be rushed through the grieving process, the final part of which is acceptance. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. We all have to find our own way."

Noting that there had been 122 deaths in the Creggan Parish last year, Michael continued: "Lately, there are funerals here nearly every day, so there is a legacy from all of that. For now, we will try to do what we can as long as the people want it, and we'll see where it goes from there."

"Being from the counselling sector, I am acutely aware of the demand for grief counselling," said Michael, adding: "We are trying to respond as immediately as we can here in the Creggan, as we wouldn't want people being left for a long period thinking that they had no one to talk to. Some people don't want to burden others in the family, who are also grieving, by talking to them.

"It may not be for everybody, but it is there and people are welcome to use it. While it is based in the Creggan Parish, it is not exclusive to Creggan parishioners if people from another parish are happy to come to the meeting in the Parochial House Community Room."

## Creggan men's lives changed through Divine Mercy prayer

THE Creggan Men's Divine Mercy Prayer Group that was set up about eight years ago is still going strong, and has moved from the Parochial House Community Room into the Divine Mercy Chapel, to the side of the main St Mary's Church.

The Group meets every Monday night at 7.30 pm for an hour of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, during which they pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet and the Rosary, and read from the Divine Mercy book and the Bible.

Creggan parishioner, Damien Melaugh has been involved with the Prayer Group since it started, and finds both the Divine Mercy messages and the support of the other men a great blessing in his life.

The 45-year-old remarked: "There is no set leader of the group and that is something we like. We have Eucharistic Adoration during it, so our focus is on Jesus for the whole Hour... He is our leader.

"When we first started, we didn't fully understand Divine Mercy, but now we know more about the power of the prayer and the Image, and it has changed all of our lives. It has made our faith more strong and all of us have developed a deep love for the Divine Mercy."

He added: "Divine Mercy is all about forgiveness. No matter



how scarlet our sins are, if we seek God's Mercy our sins are forgiven. Knowing this has made us more forgiving, because how can we ask God for forgiveness if we can't forgive others."

"It is also great being part of a group of men praying together," continued Damien, "particularly in our own parish. We are all there together to help each other,

like a band of brothers, any time we need support."

The men currently attending the Divine Mercy Prayer Group are aged from mid-20s to 70s, and will happily welcome new members.

"It doesn't matter how far away you have been from God, all men are welcome," said Damien.



Welcoming Long Tower Parish volunteers to Day of Renewal, Fr Mongan told them...

## We would be lost without you

THE little tea room in Aras Colmcille, within the grounds of St Columba's Church, Long Tower, was buzzing with conversation and laughter on the afternoon of Sunday, March 3, when a number of parishioners gathered with their priests, Fr Gerard Mongan, Adm, and Fr Stephen Ward for a 'thank you' lunch for the various roles they carry out as volunteers in the Long Tower Parish.

Amongst them for the Day of Renewal and Recruitment, led by Fr Peter O'Kane, in his new Diocesan role regarding Evangelisation & Faith Formation,

were seven new recruits who were interested in volunteering.

Welcoming everyone, Fr Gerard told them: "We would be lost without you, whether you are here for the first time or have been here for years."

Taking the floor, Fr Peter guided those gathered in a time of reflection on what they were doing in their roles within the Long Tower, saying: "It is good to ask ourselves every now and then, why we do what we do."

Explaining that he had been appointed in the Diocese "to see how we animate ourselves to be

places of faith as we encounter new challenges", he went on say: "There has been faith here in these grounds for centuries, how do we ensure that continues."

Saying that it was great they had the young, newly ordained priest, Fr Stephen, ministering in the parish, Fr Peter remarked: "It doesn't matter if the Long Tower has one, two or three priests... what is important is the people of the Parish."

He also highlighted the importance of how people are in their public ministries being echoed in everything else that

they do and say, pointing out: "You never know the impact you are having on people's lives."

Saying that the Church was in a time of Mission in 2024, Fr Peter asked the volunteers to consider whether "our churches are places where people feel the joy of Christ and places of welcome."

Highlighting the universal call to holiness and the need to help each other grow in holiness, he added: "There is a place for everyone. Everybody has a gift."

He also quoted what Pope Francis had said in this regard: "To be saints is not a privilege

for the few but a vocation for everyone."

Asked what legacy they had received as parishioners of the Long Tower and how it inspires them, the various responses included: the graces of all the prayer in the Church building down the generations; and walking in the footsteps of a Saint.

Commending the volunteers for their courage in doing what they do, Fr Peter went on to ask them to consider how others could be encouraged to give their 'yes' to God with regards getting involved in the Parish, and what could be

offered in existing ministries to attract others.

With regards to preparation and development in their own ministries, Fr Peter proposed that they should be doing a Holy Hour each week, saying: "You can't give what you haven't got."

He also suggested weekly Lectio Divina for meditating on the Word of God, especially for those in the ministry of reading, and the regular practice of praying the Liturgy of the Hours.

Fr Peter encouraged those gathered to ask for whatever they needed to develop their ministry.

## Moving World Day of Prayer service hosted in St Mary's Killyclogher by Berni Doody



Dorinda Stafford, Esther Millar and Caroline Heara

THIS year's World Day of Prayer (Women-led) service was held on Friday, March 1, and involved 146 countries around the world uniting together to pray for the people of Palestine.

In Omagh, this service was held in St Mary's Church, Killyclogher, and saw representations from all Christian denominations.

The service had been prepared by three Palestinian Christian women and, as well as prayers, hymns and Gospel readings, it included the stories of hardship and suffering of three Palestinian women across three generations.

The service was more poignant by the fact that the women had prepared the writing for the service two years ago, with no

knowledge of what lay ahead for them.

The moving service saw the members of the Omagh Ecumenical team all play a part in leading the prayers, reflecting unity.

During the service, there was an opportunity for the congregation to wish each other the sign of peace.

A bookmarker, with the drawing of an olive branch, was distributed to take home as a constant reminder to pray and work for peace.

The service was further enhanced by the uplifting music provided by Cappagh Parish Choir.



Rev Graham Hare (Church of Ireland, Columbus Church), Rev Eleanor Hayden (Omagh Methodist Church), and Canon Derek Quinn (Cappagh & Lislimnagh Parish).



Omagh Ecumenical Team, with representation from all Christian denominations. Emma Fleming, Lisa Bullick, May McFarland, Caroline Hussey, Esther Millar, Ruth Elkin, and Patricia Ward.



Cappagh Parish Choir.



Margaret Wilkinson, Caroline Hussey and Una Crossey

## Dregish Lenten Rosary & Cuppa



# Encouraging response to 'Leading God's People in Prayer' training

THE first training series in the Diocese to enable the laity to lead times of prayer in their parishes got off to a good start, with around 25 people attending from a number of rural and city parishes, including Three Patrons, Granaghan, Claudy, Waterside, Steelstown and Culmore.

Led by Fr Peter O'Kane, in his role of facilitating Evangelisation & Faith Formation, the four-week programme was held in The Emmaus Room, within the grounds of St Patrick's Church,

Pennyburn.

Commenting afterwards, Fr Peter explained that the 'Leading God's People in Prayer' training was "an opportunity to reflect on what do we mean by prayer... how does the Church understand people gathering together for prayer for liturgy, sacraments and other moments of prayer?"

Saying that the motivation for the training programme was that there is "a change in the landscape in our parishes", he continued: "In some places, the regular

schedule of prayer has mostly begun with the daily celebration of the Eucharist, but this is likely to change over the coming years, and so this is an invitation for formation and preparation for this."

Fr Peter went on to note: "The participants were of a wide range of ages and experience. Some were lay employees in the church, some were invited by their parish priest to come along, and others saw the public invitation and took it up. "It is part of a developing

formation service in the Diocese for people in parishes, and consists of a mixture of hospitality, prayer, reflection and input."

He added: "We hope to run it again at an evening time in another part of the Diocese, in the Spring."

Fr Peter expressed his appreciation for the support of Tony Brennan, Diocesan Pastoral Co-ordinator, Three Patrons' parish priest, Fr Michael McCaughey and parish faith co-ordinators, Kathryn and Eleanor.



## Prayer leadership training challenging and refreshing by Jane Lagan, Granaghan Parish



Seamus and Jane Lagan, Granaghan Parish.

COMPLETING the four-week course, 'Leading God's people in Prayer', led by Fr Peter O'Kane and Tony Brennan, two very articulate people, I found it most refreshing after all the Covid restrictions.

We looked at Liturgical Prayer, Devotional Prayer, Private Prayer and Public Prayer. In the first week, we were challenged to look and think about how we

understand: (A) Church; (B) Ministry; (C) Prayer; (D) Liturgy.

The Faith that we have needs to be nourished by prayer, reflection, and times of silence. Our prayer is never perfect, but it transforms us, our journey is about sowing seeds along the way praying that they take root and flourish. The searching soul finds home in the company of Jesus.

We were reminded that prayer is

God's gift: "The wonder of prayer is revealed beside the well where we come seeking water, Christ comes to meet us where we are, and asks us for a drink."

Having talked a lot about prayer in the first week, Fr Peter invited a few brave members to prepare and present an opening prayer for the following week.

They used the theme of 'Hands' and the hymn, 'Lay your hands gently upon us' reminding us that 'Christ has no hands but yours.' It was so beautiful, we were reminded when the Holy Spirit is at work everything flows.

Fr Peter shared a few clips from the film 'Of God and Men', showing how the monks celebrated the Eucharist in their Monastery Chapel and prayed the Psalms through all their struggles. In the Chapel, the helicopter hovered overhead, as they prayed: "O Father of light, eternal light and source of light, you illuminate us, at the threshold of night, with the radiance of your

face. The shadows, for you, are not shadows, for your night is as clear as day. May our prayers before you rise like incense and our hands like the evening offering."

As they were being led out of their monastery to be martyred, one of the brothers prayed, "You envelope me, hold me, surround me, you embrace me and I love you."

We looked at how the Liturgy is the public work of the Church manifested in the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the 'source and summit' of our faith, the celebration of the Sacraments, and in the public prayer of the Church. Liturgical Prayer is the Prayer of Christ, not ours.

Fr Peter gave us a wonderful insight into the Liturgy of the hours; how when we pray it, either in public or privately, we are joining with our brothers and sisters throughout the whole world, and through it the Church is praying unceasingly.

## Comments from some participants...

"It is great to have the opportunity to focus on the various ways that the laity could lead the people to God in prayer. It is so important that we recognise that we are the Church and are welcome to step up and play our part. I found the training a very enriching experience and it was great to meet people from all across the Diocese. I would thoroughly recommend it to others." (Anne - Steelstown Parish)

"I thoroughly enjoyed the leading people in prayer course. I began not really knowing what to expect, but found the four sessions were very engaging, interesting and spiritually enriching. Gathering as a faith community in prayer and learning with all the other participants was really enjoyable, and sharing with one another our various experiences in prayer and life in the Church in general gave me a lot of inspiration. We learned a lot about different forms of prayer and each week we joined together in different forms of prayer. The course was delivered in a very relaxed and enjoyable way, and I would highly recommend it to anyone. I believe the more we, as lay people, join together in prayer and friendship, the more vibrant and stronger our life and mission as Church will be." (Aoife - Three Patrons)

"I really enjoyed the short course on leading public prayer given by Fr Peter O Kane, and learned so much. It was lovely to take time out with such a great group of people and share about our prayer life." (Pauline - Claudy)

"The 'Leading God's People in Prayer' sessions were very informative. Studying the different ways of prayer has increased my self-awareness. Prayer in all its forms can only be good, but what I found very interesting was Fr Peter O'Kane sharing his vision regarding liturgical prayer and the importance of praying the Divine Office, the prayer of the Church, and its history, right back to Jesus growing up. Everyone listened and engaged in the different topics and shared where they could, as Fr Peter guided the group on how to use the many forms of prayer, liturgical, devotional, etc, and how to make times of group prayer appealing to others. I feel the course was a very enjoyable experience for all." (Annie - Claudy)

"When I hear about these things, I always wonder what to expect. I thought the facilitator did a very good job of relating prayer to the world of the Church. I think that is a very important point to put across." (Gerard - Steelstown Parish)





# Eangach

## Lúireach Phádraig

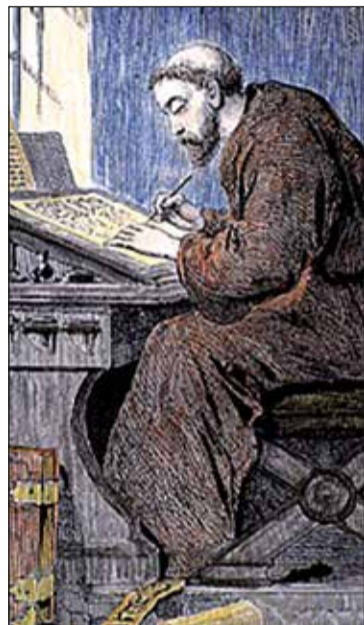
Críost liom  
Críost romham  
Críost i mo dhiaidh,  
Críost istigh ionam,  
Críost fúm,  
Críost os mo chionn,  
Críost ar mo lámh dheas,  
Críost ar mo lámh chlé,  
Críost i mo lúí dom,  
Críost i mo sheasamh dom,  
Críost i gcróí gach duine atá ag cuimhneamh orm,  
Críost i mbéal gach duine a labhraíonn lom,  
Críost i ngach súil a fhéachann orm,  
Críost i ngach cluas a éistean liom.

## Dóchas Linn Naomh Pádraig

Dóchas linn Naomh Pádraig  
Aspal mór na hÉireann,  
Ainm oirearc gléigeal,  
solas mór an tsaoil é.  
D'fhill le soiscéal grá dúinn  
d'ainneoin blianta 'ngéibheann.  
Grá mór Mhac na páirte,  
d'fhuascail cách ón daorbhroid.

Sléibhte, gleannta máighe,  
's bailte mór na hÉireann,  
Ghlan sé iad go deo dúinn,  
míle glóir dár naomh dhil.  
Iarmmaid ort, a Phádraig,  
guí orainne na Gaela,  
Dia linn lá 'gus oíche  
's Pádraig Aspal Éireann

## Pádraig, Aspal Éireann



“Is mise Pádraig, duine gan léann, i mo chónaí in Éirinn, is easpag mé...”. In aistriúchán amháin den téacs ón Laidin (thiocfadh leat rud éigin cosúil le Tugaim tuairisc gur mise Pádraig a scríobh) is mar seo a thosaíonn an cuntas cáiliúil a thugann ár Naomhphátrún air féin – An Fhaoistin – téacs ina mbraitear go mór a umhlaíocht, ach a léiríonn dúthracht dhuine a bhí ar lasadh le ‘tine’ an chreidimh. Timpeall an ama seo a ndéanaimid comóradh ar Phádraig, is luachmhar go mór focail a scríobh fear a chuir tús le saol creidimh sa tír seo, agus le mórán maidir lenár n-oidhreacht chultúrtha. Mar shampla tá sé le fáil (le haistriúcháin Ghaeilge

agus Bhéarla) ag [www.confessio.ie](http://www.confessio.ie).

Is ollmhór an éifeacht a bhí ag Pádraig ar Éirinn, ná bíodh aon amhras fá sin. Tá go fóill. Ar 17ú Márta gach bliain, freastlóidh sluaite ar imeachtaí agus mórshuílta ar fud na tíre. Déanann idir óg agus aosta ceiliúradh. Lá naofa san eaglais atá ann. Ní háibhéil a rá go bhfuil na Gaeil bródúil as Naomh Pádraig, agus go bhfuil grá acu dó, agus bhí riamh. I ndiaidh a bháis, bhí tine an chreidimh láidir in Éirinn agus as sin, athraíodh Éirinn ar fad agus d'fhás sibhialtacht a bhí an-torthúil ar fad. Bhí Éire lán le mainistreacha agus bhí na céadta naomh ann. Tháinig bláth ar an léann (féach toradh na hoibre a rinne duine gan léann!) agus bhí tarraingt ag na mainistreacha ar dhaoine i gcéin. Ba sna mainistreacha seo a scríobhadh i nGaeilge den chéad uair. An ‘tine’ a bhí i gcróí Phádraig, bhí sé anois ag mánaigh na hÉireann agus ar nós Phádraig féin, chuaigh siad amach go tíortha na hEorpa, ag craobhscaoileadh deá-scéil an tSoiscéil, agus ghlac cuid mhór den Eoraip dá bharr sin. Ba théama é seo ar leanadh leis fríd na glúnta go dtí ar na mallaibh, agus thug fir agus mná as Éirinn an creideamh do dhaoine i ngach cearn den domhan.

Tá Pádraig cosúil le hathair dúinn inár n-oidhreacht chreidimh a chothaigh ár muintir leis na



céadta bliain. Tháinig sé anseo mar sclábhaí a ceapadh agus a tógadh ar shiúl óna mhuintir féin, mar fhear óg, chaith sé blianta ag obair mar aoire ar shliabh. Bhí air a bheith ag brath ar Dhia amháin, agus neartaíodh a chaidreamh le Dia go mór. Ina Fhaoistin, luann sé gur ghnách leis urnaithe a rá chomh mór le 100 uair sa lá, agus an méid céanna san oíche. D'iarr Dia air éalú agus nuair a rinneadh sagart de, níor roghnaigh sé fanacht ar shiúl ón tír ina raibh sé ina sclábhaí (ní chuirfeá an locht

ar dhuine sin a dhéanamh!) ach tháinig sé ar ais i ndiaidh dó ‘Guth na nGael’ a chluinstin.

Ba thorthúil obair Phádraig in Éirinn. Chuir sé síol agus d'fhás sé. Bhaist sé mórán, rithe cumhachtachta agus gnáthdhaoine san áireamh. Is féidir a shonrú ón scríobh sé an grá a bhí aige do mhuintir na hÉireann agus an tuiscint a bhí aige gur misean ó Dhia a bhí ann go ndéanfadh sé an obair seo, agus go bhfanadh sé sa tír seo go bás.

## Chun cead a gcos a fhógairt do phríosúnaigh

Nuair a tháinig Pádraig chun na tíre seo ar dtús, ní de réir a thola féin a bhí sé. Tháinig sé mar sclábhaí. Ag an am sin, bhí taoisigh Éireannacha ag dul ar ruathair isteach go dtí an Bhreatain. D'fhás Pádraig aníos ina Rómhánach (bhí an Bhreatain, seachas Albain, Rómhánach san am). Nuair a bhí meath ag teacht ar Impireacht na Róimhe agus bhí sí lag, d'aithin taoisigh na náisiún thart uirthi go raibh deis ann. D'aithin na hÉireannaigh seo a ndeis-sean fá choinne sclábhaithe – daoine a ghoidfí óna n-áit, a gcaithfí leo mar a mbeadh úinéireacht ag duine, nó daoine orthu.

Níl dabht ar bith faoin uafás a bhaineann leis an saol seo. Níl on saoirse ag sclábhaí, tá ‘deireadh’ lena saol mar a bhí roimhe, go pointe. Is go foréigneach a ceapadh

é agus is minic a n-úsáidtear foréigean le tabhairt ar dhuine rud éigin a dhéanamh de réir thoil an ‘úinéara’. Cá bhfios, cé acu rud a dtabharfaidh an ‘maistir’ seo ar sclábhaí a dhéanamh. Ba í aoireacht an tasc a tugadh do Phádraig.

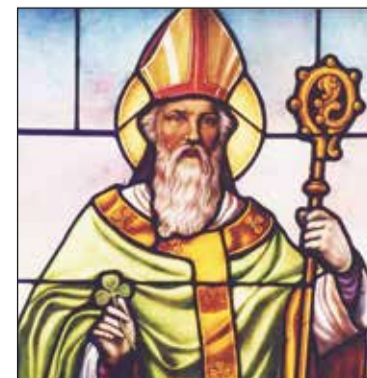
Bhí seo coitianta i ndomhan Phádraig, ach is amhlaidh an scéal do mhórán daoine go fóill inniu sa 21ú Céad, an aois is forbartha riamh.

Ní fadhb í seo atá go hiomlán fágtha sa stair, ní fiú go bhfuil sí amháin le fáil sna tíortha is boichte nach bhfuil forbartha go leibhéal na hEorpa agus an ‘Iú Domhan’. Ach is fadhb í seo, faraor, atá beo bocht sna tíortha is saibhre ar an domhan, Éire ina measc, ach í faoi cheilt, ar shiúl ó aigne an chuid is mó de dhaoine. Is mar gheall

ar ‘gáinneáil ar dhaoine’ (human trafficking sa Bhéarla), atá ina gnó luachmhar ach mídhleathach, a tharlaíonn seo inniu. Tá daoine áirithe de gach aois, teifigh nó daoine a ceapadh cosúil le Pádraig, faoi ghlas mar gheall ar seo. Fiú sa tír seo, tugtar ar dhaoine bheith ag obair ar na sráideanna nó i ngnónna áirithe ar bheagan páighe nó ar páighe ar bith. Is é trádáil an ghnéis ceann de na háiteanna is measa ina n-úsáidtear na daoine seo, gan saoirse agus gan dínit.

Thuigfeá é, bhí Pádraig dubh in éadan na sclábhaithe, rud atá le feiceáil ina Litir chug Coroticus scríofa chuig tiarna a cheap daoine dá thréad mar sclábhaithe. Bhí Pádraig daingean maidir le teachtaireacht an tSoiscéil: tháinig Íosa le “cead a gcos a fhógairt do phríosúnaigh”.

Bhí seo réabhlóideach ag an am. Sheas Pádraig an fhód in éadan na hinstidiúide seo a bhain dínit ar shiúl ó dhaoine, daoine a cruthaíodh in íomhá Dé. Mar chríostaithe, caithfidh féin a bheith ag obair le deireadh a chur leis na héagóir seo, agus mar chrann taca san obair seo, le guigh ar Dhia a thabharfaidh a chuidiú dúinn.



# Birthday surprise for Fr Devine at Greencastle volunteer gathering



SETTLING into life ministering in the Parish of Greencastle, in Co Tyrone, Fr James Devine has been enjoying meeting parishioners at informal gatherings, for a cuppa as a 'thank you' to those who volunteer for various ministries in the parish.

During the 'thank you' gathering for readers in the Parish, Fr James was surprised when some children walked up the hall singing 'Happy Birthday' to him.

It had been discovered just before the event that it was Fr

James' birthday, so a cake with a 'number 1' candle was produced to celebrate this being his first birthday in Greencastle.

Tess Donnelly and Aillinn McDonald were delighted to present him with a cake, while Caillin Joe McDonald and Gearoid McNamee led the singing of Happy Birthday, and Shea Donnelly explained that the 'number 1' candle, as well as being for Fr James' birthday, represented his first birthday in Greencastle, and also him being their 'number 1' priest.



# Warm Moville welcome for Ugandan choir



ST Pius X Church in Moville was the setting for a Gospel Concert recently, during which young members of the New Life Choir, from Uganda, sang.

They were raising money for the

Abaana Charity, which supports getting street children off the streets and into education and employment.

Abaana is the Ugandan word for 'children'.



Maghera video prayer meetings...

# No Greater Love

by Julie Zeoli



IN the Parish of St Patrick's Glen, Maghera, a group of 15-20 parishioners has been taking part in a five-week Lenten programme, based around a series of short films presented by Edward Sri and shot on location in the Holy Land.

This has provided us with an opportunity to gather together as a parish family, as we walk with Jesus, step-by-step, through the scriptures, from the Garden of Gethsemane to Mount Calvary.

This programme is providing us with the opportunity to reflect prayerfully on the scriptures during Jesus' final moments and to share our thoughts and

reflections with one another.

A great support to our meetings and discussion has been the accompanying booklets sent to us by the Living Church Office of Down and Connor diocese.

We are grateful to have this opportunity to enter into further understanding of the passion of Our Lord Jesus during this season of Lent.

Please find the link below to purchase the 'No Greater Love' online access.

No Greater Love: A Biblical Walk Through Christ's Passion Online Access - Ascension (ascensionpress.com)

# Bellaghy & Greenlough thanksgiving for marriages and baptisms since Covid start

THE parishes of Bellaghy and Greenlough have been celebrating those married and baptised since the start of Covid-19.

During February, the weekend celebration of Mass in St Oliver Plunkett's Church, Greenlough, and St Mary's Church, Bellaghy, included special prayers of thanksgiving for the couples married and children baptised during a period in world history when many missed out in being able to gather as family and friends for the traditional celebration of these sacraments.



*Received into the Catholic Church 20 years after marrying in Rome, David Hurst reflects on his conversion journey, remarking...*

# The Catholic Mass is very beautiful



of his daughter and son to his conversion to the Catholic faith, which they have been brought up in, David said: "Rebecca and Mark were a bit surprised, but it was a nice surprise, as I had been going to chapel along with them all their lives. I feel that my conversion has brought us all closer together."

Saying that his wife, Ann's practise of her Catholic faith had been a big influence on him, David added: "She didn't put any pressure on me. It was a decision that I came to myself through years of going to Mass and other ceremonies in the chapel with Ann and the children, and through talking to Fr Brian Donnelly and Fr Roland Colhoun."

Saying that she was very proud of David and his decision to convert to Catholicism, Ann continued: "He wholeheartedly embraced the whole process of learning the Catholic faith and attending the Catechism classes. The dedication he showed is commendable and a true reflection of his character."

The eldest of three boys born to Iris and the late David Hurst, David reflected on the faith journey that led to his conversion to Catholicism: "Throughout the years, as I was growing up, I drifted away from going to church altogether until I met Ann through work, at Daewoo Electronics, in Antrim."

"Ann was brought up a Catholic and we agreed that we would be married in a Catholic Church. So, after a few years, we were married on June 23, 2003, in Rome, a place I would go back to visit in a heartbeat."

"We first lived in Castledawson and then moved to Corrick, which is half-way between Plumbridge and Newtownstewart. As we progressed through our marriage, I started going to Mass along with Ann. First of all, it was in the chapel in Plumbridge, with Fr Brian Donnelly celebrating, and also to St Eugene's Glenock, near Newtownstewart, from time to time. Then we started attending the Glenock Mass more regularly, as it was Ann's home church, and that was how we met Fr Colhoun, who is the curate there."

### Restored

He added: "Through the years, a couple of kids arrived. We had

already agreed that they would be brought up in the Catholic faith, and I got into the habit of going to Mass every week with Ann and the children. This restored my faith again and brought me back into the Church."

"The Catholic Mass is very beautiful and I got a lot from attending it every week with Fr Colhoun. He is a very approachable, kind and generous man. I find him very easy to talk to and that was a big factor in my decision to convert to Catholicism, though the main part was the faith element. It was the celebration of the Mass. I found that the Catholic Mass involved you more."

"The Church of Ireland service and the Catholic service are the most similar of all the Christian faiths, but I think Catholics attend church more regularly and that was something I liked about it."

David's conversations with Fr Colhoun led to him attending weekly Catechism classes in Newtownstewart, and he found this a great help in learning more about the Catholic faith.

"I had been considering converting to the Catholic faith for a good while, ever since I got married in the Catholic Church and started attending Mass," said David, adding: "that is why I spoke to Fr Colhoun about it and that started the process."

"During this, however, Covid hit, which prolonged the process a bit. I had been studying the Catechism for quite a while and may have converted sooner than I did but for Covid."

Delighted that David had approached him about becoming a Catholic, Fr Roland told 'The Net': "Receiving a person into the Church is a source of immense joy. I was delighted that David made this request. He was exceptionally diligent from start to finish. He did his formation in our Catechism course, mostly on Zoom because of lockdown. He never missed a class and impressed everyone with his dedication and deep faith."

"I thank Bishop McKeown for providing the faculties for me to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. And I commend David's wife and family for inspiring him to become a Catholic. He'll never forget 2023!"

## Moneyneena Cowboys night draws funds for Church repairs

**BALLINASCREEN** Parish programme is a Vintage Vehicle Show on Sunday, April 7, at An Rath Dubh. The Centre is located a short distance from St Eugene's Church, on the Moneyneena Road.

The Show will include a Kids' Vehicle Parade, Bouncy Castles, Stalls, and an optional Convoy at 3.30 pm. The gates will be open from 1 pm.

Next on the fundraising



LAST summer, 20 years after getting married in Rome, Co Antrim native, David Hurst and his family experienced a very moving moment when he was received into the Catholic faith upon receiving his first Holy Communion in St Eugene's Church, Glenock.

It was Sunday, July 16, the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, when Fr Roland Colhoun told the congregation that 61-year-old David, who had been amongst the congregation for years with his family, was joining the Catholic Church that day.

The first to receive Holy Communion at the Sunday Mass, David went forward to the altar accompanied by his wife, Ann and teenage children, Rebecca (18) and Mark (15).

Reflecting on the experience, he told 'The Net' that it had been "very uplifting and emotional", and heart-warming to receive the congratulations of members of the

congregation afterwards.

"I didn't know how people would react," said David, remarking: "They would have seen me at Mass for a long time and probably didn't know that I wasn't Catholic, so it was a nice surprise for them."

"Receiving the Eucharist meant a great deal to me, as I had felt a bit excluded at that point of the Mass."

Already baptised as a member of the Church of Ireland back home in Ballyclare, David also received the Sacraments of Confession and Confirmation in his preparation for entering the Catholic faith.

He recalled: "My first Confession was a few days before I received Holy Communion for the first time in the Catholic Church. I found it a bit daunting at the start, never having experienced this before, but Fr Colhoun was very good in helping me to prepare."

David also received the Sacrament of Confirmation from Fr Roland.

Commenting on the reaction



# Omagh day of prayer and praise a powerful experience



THE powerful prayer, praise and worship of Omagh Charismatic Prayer Group continues to lift hearts and minds to God, with its Lenten series of 'Life in the Spirit' talks having followed a very uplifting day of prayer in the Mellon Country Inn before Christmas.

The theme of the annual Day of Prayer, Praise and Healing was 'As fragile clay jars we rejoice in God's Power' (2 Cor 4:7), with the guest speaker being the inspiring Fr Brendan Walsh SAC.

The large turnout from various parts of the Diocese, and beyond, was welcomed by Evelyn Heaney, who led prayer for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The day was also consecrated to Our Lady, as everyone joined in the praying of the Rosary before a beautiful statue of Our Lady Knock that Fr Brendan brings wherever his ministry takes him.

Explaining the importance of including the Rosary as part of the day, Fr Brendan pointed out: "Our Lady was present at Pentecost. She is the spouse of the Holy Spirit. We are in unity in this one prayer going up to God."

He went on to stress that they were gathered together for the day to praise God, saying that healing was not all about the physical, and highlighted the importance of being part of a prayer group.

Regarding charismatic prayer, he explained: "Most of the prayers that we sing are words from the Psalms. They are rooted in the Scriptures."

He also pointed out that with this type of prayer, they were "totally united to Heaven", saying: "We have the ability to join in the praise of Heaven."

And, he explained the importance of putting out their hands while praising, to "indicate that you want to receive."

"If we sing at the top of our voices, we will receive all that God wants to give us," Fr Brendan told those gathered.

Reflecting on the experience of the Apostles in the Upper Room, hiding in fear of the Jews, he noted: "Jesus, prior to His Ascension, had said that an Advocate would come along. He said that unless He went, the Advocate (the Holy Spirit) that the Father promised could not come."

"There was an experience in the Upper Room, where the first Mass had taken place and where Judas had left from to betray Jesus. There were tongues of fire and sounds like rushing wind. They all hear it and the change happens. Something outside of the body came into the room and touched everyone, changing them, and then they went outside to proclaim boldly.

"Today, we are back in the same scenario; we have to praise God to bring down the power of the Holy Spirit. We are proclaiming the message of God when we sing, so we should be singing and praising."

Quoting what Jesus had said about where two or three people are gathered in His name, He is there, Fr Brendan remarked: "When Jesus' name is said/

praised, He is there. So, He is actually in this room ahead of the Mass."

Encouraging everyone to hand over any worries to God and to raise their hands, just as the statue of Our Lady of Knock shows Mary's hands raised, he told them: "Primarily, we are here to join with our brothers and sisters as one body. We are moving as one body, so we should be singing and praising as one body. When we pray as one body, then God acts."

"When I leave here today, I want to leave a body of people enthusiastic about the Lord, and to be grateful and thankful, and praise Him."

The day included prayer for healing, with a Eucharistic blessing, and ended with the celebration of Mass.



continued from page 20



*Holy Week: Up Close*

**22nd-24th March 2024**

**Termonbacca Retreat House, Derry**

*Times of silence, prayer, talks, and sharing.*  
*First-time attendees and returners are welcome.*

Overnight & Day rates available.  
Contact Aoife: [termonbaccaderry@gmail.com](mailto:termonbaccaderry@gmail.com)  
or [www.termonbacca.org](http://www.termonbacca.org)

**APOSTLES OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

*Diocesan facilitator for Evangelisation & Faith Formation,  
Fr Peter O'Kane writes...*

## Holy Week: To the Resurrection through the Cross

THE Monday of Holy Week 2019 would become one of those evenings etched into the living memory of people as the world stopped to watch. Flames belled from the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris and red smoke clouds filled the sky, people watched in awe and terror not knowing what to say or do. Cries, tears, gasps of disbelief as the spire and wooden forest of the roof collapsed, as fears grew about precious artworks and sacred furniture, as anxiety increased of risk to life.

Yet, as the embers began to cool and stock was taken of damage, moments of hope emerged. Symbols of this holiest of weeks had been saved...the nail of Christ intact inside the fallen metal cockerel; the reliquary containing the crown of thorns. The story of the chaplain who risked all to take the Blessed Sacrament to safety. And as the morning sun rose and photographs emerged, standing in the midst of the rubble was the symbol of our salvation: the shining gilded Cross of promise emerging from the debris. As the ancient hymn for Passiontide cries out: "Ave crux spes unica...Hail to the Cross, our only hope".

Little would we have thought that, a year later, our faith communities in parish and diocesan life would be going through another moment of watching and waiting with the arrival of Covid-19 and its associated lockdowns. And yet, there continued to be a cry to the Cross...for by turning to the Cross we still arrived at the place of the Resurrection, albeit from behind closed doors, watching on television or computer, and not being able to physically share in the Sacraments.

Many journeys have been undertaken since March 2020 – physically, emotionally, spiritually, psychologically – and we find ourselves still on that road which brings us anew every Holy Week. March 2024 brings its own invitations and challenges, blessings and sufferings, but we are not alone. We are with Christ, the one whom the Gospels tell us resolutely turned His face towards Jerusalem, and our Gospel readings locate Him there as He makes His way to go to Calvary.

The journey of Holy Week sees the drama intersect with the stories of our own lives; the hope of the Christ's glorious Cross permeates the air. The stage is set, Jerusalem is awaiting her king and the road is paved with cloaks and palms. Unbeknown to many and yet grasped by the Messiah, this road will lead to the Upper Room of communion and the garden of

agony, through the untidy streets and shouts of this chosen city, to the Cross of Calvary. The sounds of violence and the cries of pain will give way to deafening silence, as anticipation clings to the air when Christ's body is laid in the tomb, awaiting the glorious burst of the Resurrection.

We confidently take our place on the path of suffering so that, in the words of Pope Francis, "we accompany Jesus, we follow Jesus, but above all we know that He accompanies us and carries us on His shoulders" (Palm Sunday 2013).

The familiar story of the Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus brings bleakness and bareness as we wander through the narrative of the Gospels. Holy Thursday renews the joys of sharing communion and the sharing of bread, with the living invitation to service and call to ministry. Good Friday recalls all that brought Jesus to the Cross – the trial, the condemning, the crucifixion, the death, the laying in the tomb. One man's act marks the story of Holy Week by his betrayal and selfish desire for power and attention. Thirty pieces of silver being the promise, the act being a kiss – but not the promise of life nor the kiss of life, but the road to destruction. Another man's denial as he is invited to profess his living faith – and yet uses words that refuse truth and engage lies. A time of pain and suffering. Hope fades, faith withers and love grows stale. The heart-wrenching loss of a mother, a woman filled with desolation, fear, hurt.

But in the midst of all this, this Passion story is presented with power, that all was in the hand of God, all was God's plan. Total emptiness and nothingness remain, for we stand in the middle of a story, a story of loss and pain, filled with emotion.

During Holy Saturday, 'there is a great sense of silence on earth; a great silence and then solitude; a great silence because the King sleeps.' On the first Holy Saturday, all seemed lost – disciples scattered, small group of men with hopes dashed. Only Mary kept faith and awaited the resurrection – that's why during the year, we celebrate the Memorial of the Virgin Mary on Saturdays.

Even though Holy Week brings its pause at the Cross, we are called to follow the journey through to its next chapter. For at the place of the tomb, Resurrection will be announced as life is transformed in the light of God's love for His people. It is the Crucified One who becomes the Glorified One. As St Peter tells us, "It is by His wounds

you have been healed".

### Mother of all Vigils

And so, as nightfall approaches, we arrive at the heart of Holy Week, the mother of all vigils. Why so long and so drawn-out? Why so many readings and prayers? Not just because it is ancient and traditional, but because of its profound meaning of the history of our salvation, the journey of Christ, the feast of human redemption through the death and resurrection of the Lord. Because of our union with Christ through faith and baptism, we are intimately connected with the dying and rising of Christ.

As night falls on Holy Saturday, the solemn Easter Vigil begins, the "mother of all vigils". After having blessed the new fire, the paschal candle is lit, a symbol of Christ who illuminates every person, and the great proclamation of the 'Exultet' resounds joyously. The vigil begins with the service of light, the fire is blessed, the candle is inscribed, and the great Easter Candle is lit. As the light is divided, but remains undimmed, the Easter Song of Praise follows, a hymn of joy in praise of God, the author of light and giver of life – coming from the Jewish tradition of saying a prayer of blessing when the lamps were lit.

The Exultet of Holy Saturday night reflects most beautifully the invitation to reflect on why we keep vigil – because of our faithfulness to Christ who speaks to us through the Gospel in the Church. We know of what we are offered by God through the promises fulfilled in Jesus and we desire to share in that life.

As the Exultet proclaims: "O wonder of your humble care for us! O love, Charity beyond all telling, to ransom a slave you gave away your Son! O truly necessary sin of Adam, destroyed completely by the Death of Christ! O happy fault that earned so great, so glorious a Redeemer!" God's love will never be diminished or destroyed, a love that is stronger than all of creation, even death itself. Preparing ourselves to hear the story of salvation as told through the readings, this is an unhurried and attentive listening to the word of God, of God's great plan to redeem the world from the slavery of sin and death. The Gospel reading of the Resurrection is a reminder that it's not the events around it, but the Resurrection itself which commands our faith. The gospel writers speak, and Christ speaks through them – a message for here and now – a call to serious thought of faith. Not just an event of history, but an everyday reality that affects

the life of each person. It changed the course of history – it has the power to change lives!

The Carthusian monks have as their motto 'crux stat dum volvitur orbis' – 'The Cross stands while the world turns'. This is how Christ is for us in these days as the Light of the world – through the Rays that shine from the Cross in these dark days. Why should we trust in this? Because Christ Himself crucified is risen and we praise God for that truth! And this awareness causes us to reflect on how we respond to Christ's call to follow Him. The Lord invites us to share in His Passion so that we can glory in His Resurrection. As the hymn says, 'Lift high the Cross, the Cross of Christ proclaim'.

As we journey through Holy Week, we bring the stories of our lives to Calvary. Even in our fear and desolation, we have the courage to stand – to stand as we are rejected, as we are mocked, as we are crucified. Because we do not stand alone, we see the face of the wounded Christ. In the words of a young missionary: "Salvation comes in that moment when Christ becomes more present to you than your weaknesses or sins".

There is hope, there is faith, there is the power of God. The greatest promise emerges from the embers of betrayal and the ashes of denial, as the cross rises and becomes for us the source of eternal salvation. The promise of glory is given to those who believe, as Bede Jarrett OP writes: "We have a glorious future before us if we care to make use of it, and jump at it and do our best". As we walk with Jesus, knowing of the promise of Resurrection, may we journey in the Cross, since it is truly our only hope. In the words of a theologian, "Good Friday has an Easter Sunday...but that means that Easter Sunday has to have its Good Friday".

In his first book, 'Harte', of 2009, Mickey Harte recalls how at one juncture, when the players were dismayed at their defeats, he encouraged them by simply saying: "Remember boys, the darkest hour comes before the dawn". A flicker of hope in the darkest hour of his life...and yet light came with the dawn with three victories!

There is a consolation for Christians in the holy days of the Paschal Triduum, when we see even just a flicker of light in the darkness. Life begins to be illumined and our vision is widened as the things near and far become clearer, as we start to see with a new focus. A blessed Easter Triduum and may our tears be turned to songs in our 'alleluia'!

*Delighted that nine from Derry Diocese attended the recent northern Vocations weekend for men discerning diocesan priesthood, Fr Pat O'Hagan, Vocations' director, recalls the talks...*

# Vocations begin in the mind of God



Fr Ryan Connors and Fr Joe Zwosta with, from left, Fr Raymond Donnelly (Clogher), Fr Pat O'Hagan (Derry), and Fr Conor McGrath (Down & Connor).

THE Vocations' Directors of the northern region (Armagh, Clogher, Derry, Down & Connor, Dromore, Kilmore, and Raphoe dioceses) organised a retreat for men considering a vocation to serve the Church as diocesan priests. It took place in Drumalis Retreat Centre, Larne, on the second weekend of March, and was led by Fr Ryan Connors, a priest of the diocese of Providence, Rhode Island, who is currently Professor of Moral Theology at St John's Seminary, Boston.

There were 29 participants, ranging in age from the early 20s to the early 60s and from a wide variety of professions, including nine men from the Derry Diocese. Five of the northern Vocations Directors were there for some or all of the weekend.

In his first talk, Fr Connors reminded his audience that Ireland is known as 'The Land of Saints and Scholars', and that priests are called to be both saintly and scholarly, as they are expected to live and preach in imitation of the Lord Jesus.

He offered the example of some of the Saints as models for the priests of today and of the future, beginning with the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mary's docility and humility, as well as her love for Jesus, should inspire us all to follow Him. He went so far as to say that "No priest flourishes without Mary" in his life and spirituality. Like Mary, we are called to "ponder" the things of God and, with her, to "magnify" the Lord as we pray the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) in our Evening Prayer every day.

Margaret Clitherow was a 16th century English martyr. She suffered for her fidelity to the Church and to the Sacraments, and had a particular care for, and protection of, priests.

St Matthew is a pattern of discernment. He was a tax

collector when Jesus called him to become a disciple (Matthew 9:9-13; also Mark 2, and John 5). He was moved by the goodness, openness, and mercy of God, to leave his previous life behind and follow Jesus. The goodness and mercy of God trumps our sinfulness. "Miserando atque eligendo" (being merciful and choosing), which comes from a homily preached by St Bede on the Gospel of the choosing of Matthew, is the motto of Pope Francis. St Bede goes on to explain that Jesus chose Matthew not for what he was (a tax collector) but for what he could be (an Apostle and Gospel writer).

The North American martyrs, Isaac Jogues, Jean de Bréboeuf, and their companions, worked with Native Americans whom they came to know and love, embracing their languages and understanding their cultures. They accompanied the people they served as they preached the truth, despite the challenges they faced. The priest is fulfilled by loving, knowing, and caring for the people he serves.

The following morning, Fr Connors read the Gospel passage which finds Peter and the disciples feeling downcast after the death of Jesus. They go fishing but catch nothing until Jesus, who makes a miraculous appearance on the shore, advises them to cast their nets out again. Despite their reservations, and not knowing who it is who has encouraged them to do that, they cast their nets again, and bring in a haul of 153 fish.

There has been a lot of speculation as to why the figure of 153 is given. The great biblical scholar, St Jerome, said that after all his deliberations on that question, he was afraid that he might one day discover, in Heaven, that it was simply because that was the number of fish they

caught on that occasion. Another opinion, however, is that the people of that time believed that there were only 153 species of fish in the seas, and that the disciples caught one of each, symbolising people of every race and nation.

Like the disciples, the priest is called to love everyone and to want to save everyone. He is to be patient with his people as he listens to the Lord calling him to cast his net far and wide. Seminarians too, in all their diversity, are drawn out of the sea by the same Lord.

Priests are called to teach, sanctify, and govern. They do this by authentic preaching, and by the example of their lives, by their humility. The great theologian of the Middle Ages, St Thomas Aquinas, one of the most brilliant minds in the history of the Church, was particularly humble.

The study and work we must do as seminarians and priests needs to be nourished by the Eucharist "the source and summit of the life of the Christian" (Vatican II). In everything we do, and in our preparation for everything we do, we must go the extra mile, never content with the minimum.

For the Saturday afternoon talk, Fr Connors reminded us that Jesus asks us to "...preach from the housetops." The challenge is to live close to God, to rise above sin, pettiness, and superficiality; to put out into the deep, and to preach to everyone.

## Spiritual poverty

Pope Francis talks of "the spiritual poverty of the age", something that is challenged by an authentic preaching of the Word of God and the teachings of the Church by a holy priest who is a committed celibate, who carries "with love" the sufferings that come his way because of his ministry, and who realises his full and true fatherhood in the confessional, who exercises pastoral charity in caring for the sick and the dying.

St Patrick was offered as a model for the seminarians of today/the priests of today and tomorrow. He is the "Father of Ireland" and was a true witness to Christ.

As the Holy Hour and Confessions began on the Saturday evening, Fr Connors told the story of an elderly priest who was making his way across the sanctuary to preach after the deacon had proclaimed the Gospel. As he shuffled along, he tripped, and reached out and steadied himself by holding onto the altar. He said, "Stay near the altar, or you'll fall." And then he said to the congregation, "That's enough by way of a sermon today!" Fr Connors said that the lesson for discerners,

seminarians, and priests is to stay close to the Eucharist.

The Gospel for the Sunday of the retreat (the fourth Sunday of Lent) was the story of Jesus telling the man born blind to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam (a word that means 'sent'). The man goes off, washes himself in the Pool, and his sight is restored. Jesus is the one who was 'sent' by the Father. We need to immerse ourselves fully in Christ.

In his final talk, Fr Connors talked about the promises made on the day of Ordination as a Deacon. Having promised obedience to his present and future bishop(s), the first 'command' given to the new deacon as he is handed the Book of the Gospels, is: "Believe what you read, teach what you believe, and practice what you teach." The deacon (future priest) is ordered, first and foremost, "to believe" – to be faithful, to be convinced of the truths of the Gospel, to believe in the priesthood, to be holy, to believe that he has been called by God, to be kind, prudent, and pure, not to be afraid, to know that God has spoken in Jesus. But, above all, to believe!

A few other Saints were proposed as role models for the seminarian and priest, beginning with St Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). In his 'Spiritual Exercises', St Ignatius offers a way to holiness. "The great battle is for holiness." Being faithful is an adventure; being charitable is exciting.

St Bruno founded the Carthusian order and promoted 'holy solitude'. His rule idealises the hidden life. The graces achieved by those who live contemplative lives, lives of prayer, are unseen by those who pray in enclosed communities. Likewise, the priest doesn't often see the fruit of his prayer and ministry, but that doesn't stop him praying and exercising his priestly ministry. God sees the good we do. When we pray, even when we pray alone, we do so as part of a community of prayer, in which no Christian stands alone. The desire of the priest who exercises a ministry founded on, and nourished by, prayer is to do great things for God, not for himself. Personal ambition has no place in the heart of the priest.

Our own St Oliver Plunkett was a faithful preacher of the Gospel and died a martyr for his fidelity to the Lord. He took to heart the words of Sirach 2:1 – "My child, if you are going to serve the Lord, be prepared for times when you will be put to the test. Be sincere and determined. Keep calm when trouble comes. Stay with the Lord; never abandon Him..."

St John the Baptist – the patron of seminarians – is an example of someone who spoke the truth, always ready and happy to share it. He's a model of courageous preaching.

Lastly, Fr Connors encouraged future seminarians and priests to cherish chastity as the only way to serve the Lord faithfully; to emerge from the culture around us, while living firmly in the middle of it, and to stand apart from the culture and 'morals' of today by witnessing to the love that comes from a heart committed to celibacy, which allows the priest to love all God's people equally.

The following are comments that stood out for some of those who attended the weekend retreat...

"Vocations begin in the mind of

God."

"Priests are called to be friends to one another; seminarians too. This was very evident over the retreat weekend. There was tremendous energy in the group, a truly inspiring dynamic at work among all those taking part. Guys of different ages, with a variety of backgrounds, both personal and professional, coming from several different dioceses, all got on really well with one another."

"The priesthood is a brotherhood. The Church needs priests, and priests need each other. 'You cannot be a priest on your own' (Pope Benedict XVI)."

"In spite of the differences between the Carthusian lifestyle and the lifestyle of a diocesan priest, in both cases, the fruits of their respective labours won't become apparent this side of Heaven."

"Christianity is never boring."



Those attending the retreat pictured with some of the Vocations Directors of the Northern Province.



Fr Pat O'Hagan and the group of discerners from the diocese of Derry.

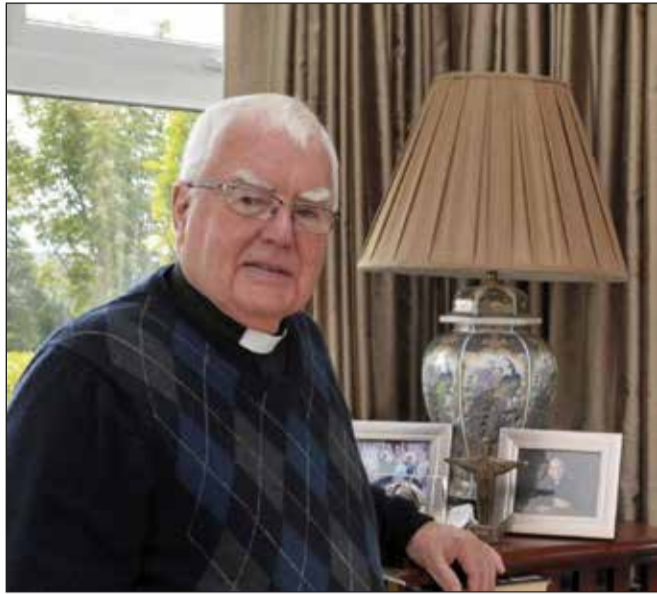
**GOD CALLS MEN TO BE PRIESTS**

**IS HE 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

# Remembering the late Fr George McLaughlin



FOND memories of the late Fr George McLaughlin (92), who died on February 16, have been shared by a great number of people from various parts of the world, including many who had either grown up with him or lived in parishes where he had ministered during his 50 years of active ministry in the Derry Diocese.

A native of Buncrana, Fr George was ordained on June 17, 1956, following his studies for the priesthood in Maynooth. Initially on loan to the Diocese of Down & Connor, his first appointment in his home Diocese was as curate in Strabane, in 1957. He spent the following year as curate in Long Tower Parish, before moving to St Mary's, Creggan, as curate and then, from 1974, as administrator.

This was followed by a nine-year stint as administrator of St Patrick's Pennyburn, from 1978-87, after which he was appointed as Parish Priest of Merville, where he ministered until he retired 20 years later, in 2007. He also served as Vicar Forane for the Inishowen Deanery from 1995 until his retirement. Such was his love for the Merville area that he continued living there after retiring.

Merville native, Fr Kevin Doherty, Adm Clonmany and Cudaff, shared memories of his encounters with Fr George during his visits home from Dublin, where he had gone to work in the early 80s, before later entering the

priesthood there.

"Fr George had hardly arrived in Merville, when my father died," recalled Fr Kevin, "so we would have known him very closely pastorally. He called to visit me at Clonliffe College Seminary whenever he was in Dublin, and I used to call to see him in Merville.

"He was very committed to all that he did and was loyal to Merville. He was there at the time of the Carrickatine fishing boat tragedy in 1995, when six men died, two of whom were from Merville and two from Greencastle.

"When Fr George retired, that may have been so on paper, but he did a lot around the parish in different ways. He was very interested in people and had a great hunger for life. He had a great sense of humour and was a kind-hearted human being, who tried to help people, and wasn't afraid of saying something if it needed to be said."

Current parish priest of Merville, Fr Eddie Gallagher referred to Fr George's death as "the end of an era in Merville Parish", saying: "He spent the good part of almost four decades here from 1987, ministering to the spiritual needs of the people and, through that, making Jesus real for people.

"Fr George was with the people here both in ministry and retirement, and in the joyful and sorrowful mysteries of their lives, especially back in 1995

when six lives were lost with the Carrickatine and their bodies never recovered.

"We give thanks to God for the 92 years of the life and love of Fr George, who was small in stature but larger than life. May he rest in peace and rise in glory."

The Requiem Mass for Fr George was celebrated in St Pius X Church, Merville, where Bishop Donal was joined by over 30 members of the clergy, including Mgr Andy Dolan who delivered the homily. Having ministered as curate with Fr George for two years after he was appointed as Parish Priest of Merville, Mgr Andy and he had remained good friends over years.

Mgr Andy talked about how Fr George left home in 1944 to successfully study in St Columba's College, Derry, and then received a call to the College of Surgeons Dublin, which he declined in favour of studying for the priesthood in St Patrick's College, Maynooth.

Commenting on Fr George's ministry as a priest, Mgr Andy noted that, when appointed as curate to the newly established Parish of Creggan, he became acquainted with the area and his parishioners by walking the streets, visiting the people and blessing their new homes, as was typical of the ministry of priests in the City and beyond.

Headed: "A strong bond of trust was established between priests and people and, in subsequent years, that was going to be so essential with the outbreak of the Troubles. When homes were being searched, arrests made, people being interned, and so on, people turned to their priests and never found them wanting. People knew that Fr George and others were in their corner.

"This too came with its own cost. Never mind losing many a night's sleep, at times they would find themselves in the midst of gunfire, even when Fr George was carrying the body of a young lad who had just been shot. No preparation or training for priesthood could prepare a man for that type of mission.

## Bloody Sunday

"The memory imprinted on our minds, for those of us of a certain vintage, is Fr George receiving the 13 bodies into St Mary's Church for the funerals of the Bloody Sunday victims; some his parishioners."

He went on to recall: "Fr George was familiar with Ebrington Square before the rest of us ever got near the place. He was arrested and spent two nights as a guest over there, not quite in the comfort of its new hotel."

Applying himself wholeheartedly in each of the parishes he ministered in during his priesthood, Mgr Andy remarked that Fr George had endeared himself to the people and was fondly remembered and appreciated by them.

Quickly settling in to his role as parish priest of Merville, where he set about renovating three churches and the parochial house, Mgr Andy said: "He really brought the place to life, and got to know the people well. He was regarded as a priest who took care of his people and soon earned a great respect from them. He loved his association with the fishermen, and supported the suffering families of the Carrickatine tragedy."

Speaking from his own experience in serving as curate with Fr George, he said: "I want to acknowledge his kindness and support, which was very valued. He expected you to do your work, but also made sure you took time off and pursued whatever hobby or interest you had."

"One of his great qualities was his hospitality," continued Mgr Andy, "and this was well and truly facilitated by his former and deceased housekeeper, Susan McGoldrick. From time to time Susan may have been known to express her displeasure, but dare anybody say a bad word about her Fr George.

"The spoiling continued as Josephine Grant came on the scene, initially as housekeeper and latterly in her own home as his carer. Josephine always said that from she was a young child in Creggan she had reason to be

thankful to Fr George, and in a way this was her payback. It is no exaggeration to say that he would not have reached 92, except for the care and attention he received from Josephine."

Commenting on Fr George's prayer life, Mgr Andy mentioned his "absolute love of the Eucharist", saying: "His day was never complete without saying Mass. He just breathed his love of the scriptures, not to mention his devotion to our Blessed Lady. Up until his illness, he read his Divine office - the Prayer of the Church - every day. This was followed by the Rosary."

Mgr Andy extended sympathy to Josephine and to Fr George's only surviving brother, Andy, and extended family circle and friends.

In his comment, Bishop Donal remarked: "Fr George's generation had to minister to a community blessed with culture and hope, but blighted by unemployment and poverty in a city where the majority had little role in public life. But times were changing and he changed with them.

"The awful years of the Troubles then saw parishes pulled in different directions; ministering to the suffering but trying to build a sustainable future. For young priests coming out of seminary, ill-prepared for what was happening in the North, Fr George and others provided a formative environment, where they could learn to minister grace amidst endless strife and sad news."

He went on to point out that, at a critical time for the Irish Church, for politics on this island and for the wider human family, Fr George would "challenge us to read the signs of the times and build a church that is fit for our times."

"If poverty hung like a cloud over his early years in ministry," said Bishop Donal, "today's ill-divided affluence has not brought hope and wholeness. The comparative divine certainties of decades ago have been replaced by fear of what we are doing to ourselves. The safety of the local community has often been replaced by new threats from within.

"The church for our time will not seek to play such a dominant role. But it will still need strong young men and women who will see the needs of our day and offer God's love and mercy to those who limp along, wounded in body and soul. We look back at the past with both pride and repentance - and seek to learn where God is leading us amid the mess and fog of today.

"Renewal is always driven by young hearts. We give thanks for those who were generous in earlier generations. Fr George would ask us to step up to the plate and build new places and communities of hope. We commend him to God who is at work in every time and place, using even our mistakes and failures."

Fr George has been buried in Ballybrack cemetery. May he rest in peace.



## Pope's monthly intention

*The Holy Father has asked for prayer during March for:*

**New Martyrs:**  
Let us pray that those who risk their lives for the Gospel

in various parts of the world might imbue the Church with their courage and missionary drive.

## 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.

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 March:

Fr John Irwin (March 1st)  
Fr Charles Keaney (2nd)  
All Priests (3rd)  
Fr Patrick Lagan (4th)  
Fr Michael Keaveny (5th)  
Fr Seamus Kelly (6th)  
Fr Edward Kilpatrick (7th)  
All priests (8th)  
Fr Charlie Logue (9th)

Fr Paul McCafferty (10th)  
Mgrs Bryan McCanny (11th)  
Fr Michael McCaughey (12th)  
Fr Andrew McCloskey (13th)  
All Priests (14th)  
Fr Peter Madden (15th)  
Fr Noel McDermott (16th)  
Fr Eamon McDevitt (17th)  
Fr John McDevitt (18th)  
Fr Anthony Mailey (19th)  
Fr Kevin McElhennon (20th)  
Fr Daniel McFaul (21st)  
Fr Dermot McGirr (22nd)  
Fr Micheal McGavigan (23rd)  
Fr Brian McGoldrick (24th)  
Fr Neil McGoldrick (25th)  
All priests (26th)  
Fr James McGonagle (27th)  
Dr James McGrory (28th)  
All Priests (29th)  
Fr Edward McGuinness (30th)  
Bishop Donal McKeown (31st)

## The Divine Mercy Image explained...

### “Jesus I Trust in You!” (Part 1) by Sr Benedetta Hutnikiewicz ZSJM

WHEN the original Divine Mercy Image was first painted, Bl Michael Sopoćko asked St Faustina what should be the inscription on the image. With her natural simplicity, she answered that she will ask the Lord Jesus and let Fr Michael know.

This is what followed: “When I left the confessional and was passing before the Blessed Sacrament, I received an inner understanding about the inscription. Jesus reminded me of what He had told me the first time; namely, that these three words must be clearly in evidence: “Jesus, I trust in You”. [‘Jezu, Ufam Tobie.’] I understood that Jesus wanted the whole formula to be there, but He gave no direct orders to this effect as He did for these three words.” The Lord then said to her: “I am offering people a vessel with which they are to keep coming for graces to the fountain

garden after they had eaten of the tree of knowledge. They lost their faith in the goodness and mercy of their Creator. Satan managed to poison their minds with fear and suspiciousness, which in turn, took away their trust. In consequence, instead of running to God, they ran away from Him, hiding away in the bushes. The relationship of trust was broken. Ever since that happened, each of us is prone to act in the same way. But, we have a choice. The grace of God is always at hand, ready to assist us to make our way towards God, turn to Him in our misery.

A great enemy of trust is discouragement. Discouragement can creep very easily into our lives, at any time. How many people say they won't go to Confession because what's the use? They will fall again anyway. It's a great victory of the enemy, the devil, if we start to think that way. It's giving him exactly what he wants. It's the oldest trick that he uses with us: first to tempt us, encourage us to step away from God and, once we've fallen, to convince us that we're not worthy of forgiveness and God's love.

Those of us who struggle with addictions of any kind can testify how difficult it is to get up every time they fall. But isn't it the same with each of us? We fight our small battles with our faults and flaws and often think that every time we go to Confession we have the same sins to confess. Yes, it is so. But the Lord remembers the times we rise to return to Him, not the times we've failed. Every return to His grace makes our relationship with Him closer, more intimate.

St Faustina is a real master in the area of trust. No matter how hard the circumstances were, how fierce the interior battles, or how deep the spiritual darkness, she would always trust God. It was God who taught her that virtue. As she got to know His Mercy better and better, her trust increased. Trust became her Creed. She trusted like a little child. She expressed her trust in fulfilling His will. She had a conviction that God really knows what He is doing and is not indifferent to her suffering. After all, He is a good Father and wants nothing but what is good for His children. I am really touched by the moment when in the midst of her dark night of the soul, she comes to God repeating the words of Job: “Even if You kill me, still will I trust in You!” (cf. Job 13:15 and Diary 77). It's an amazing testimony of her trust in



a moment filled with anguish and suffering.

In the practical day-to-day functioning, Faustina's trust would express itself in faithfully fulfilling the will of God. In all matters, big or small, Faustina would always seek to fulfil the will of God. She writes: “There is one word I heed and continually ponder; it alone is everything to

“ Trusting in God's Mercy means that we acknowledge that He is greater than our sin, that the sacrifice of Jesus and His resurrection are victorious! This is the answer that God seeks of us – to surrender ourselves to Him totally and without reserve... ”

me; I live by it and die by it, and it is the holy will of God. It is my daily food” (Diary 652).

#### Difficulties

The same was true when she faced difficulties. She was faithful to His will in all circumstances, renouncing her own will. What I find especially striking is the moment when God gives her a completely free choice: she can become a living sacrifice for His sake (which entailed many

“ St Faustina is a real master in the area of trust. No matter how hard the circumstances were, how fierce the interior battles, or how deep the spiritual darkness, she would always trust God. It was God who taught her that virtue. ”

exterior and interior sufferings, shown to her in a vision) or decide not to. The Lord tells her that He

will not lessen His graces, will still remain intimately close to her, and she will still be saved, no matter what her decision will be. And in that moment, with a full awareness of what she is signing up for, she chooses what is more pleasing to Him. She chooses His will. Now that's an example to look up to!

Faustina knew that she could not trust herself. She recognised her own misery and her inadequacies. The closer she came to the Lord, the more she saw her own sinfulness, too. While our Saint recognised her own misery, she would always at the same time look towards Jesus and His Mercy.

“At the beginning of my religious life, suffering and adversities frightened and disheartened me. So I prayed continuously, asking Jesus to strengthen me and to grant me the power of His Holy Spirit that I might carry out His holy will in all things, because from the beginning I have been aware of my weakness. I know very well what I am of myself, because for this purpose Jesus has opened the eyes of my soul; I am an abyss of misery, and hence I understand that whatever good there is in my soul consists solely of His holy grace. The knowledge of my own misery allows me, at the same time, to know the immensity of Your mercy. In my own interior life, I am looking with one eye at the abyss of my misery and baseness, and with the other, at the abyss of Your mercy, O God” (Diary 56).

Trusting in God's Mercy means that we acknowledge that He is greater than our sin, that the sacrifice of Jesus and His resurrection are victorious! This is the answer that God seeks of us – to surrender ourselves to Him totally and without reserve, with the confidence of a little child.

I would like to share with you a story from my own life. I was in Poland about a year ago for my annual eight-day retreat. On Tuesday morning, I woke up with a verse from one of the Psalms: “Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the Lord on high is mighty!” (Ps 93:4). It was quite a surprising verse, but I stuck with it and prayed with it for the whole day. I got a lot out of that prayer, but still was puzzled at the verse.

When my retreat was coming to an end, I became aware that I am feeling more and more stressed. I started reflecting on that and asked myself what is the reason for it. I realised I get stressed by little things in everyday life: making arrangements with different people, dealing with phone calls, emails, making decisions etc. I had left all those things out of the sphere of God; as if God didn't care about those details and I had to deal with them on my own. Of course, in my mind I am well convinced God cares about every

smallest thing. But, in practice, I was acting as if they were only my business.

As I realised this, I also understood that during my retreat I was completely relaxed. And the reason was that I was constantly walking with God. I did everything with Him and in His presence, aware that He is always living in me by means of Baptism and sanctifying grace. I would spend every moment with Him, The Most Holy Trinity, living within my soul. Looking at things from that perspective, there is nothing to be stressed about, because everything is in God's hands, He is in control. So I prayed and asked that I remember about that and bring it into everyday life. That I might live in trust and surrender, in the presence of God who dwells within me.

When the retreat finished on the Saturday, the very first message I got after turning on my phone

“ It's an important lesson for me, a sister of the Merciful Jesus. Our Constitutions say that our whole lives should be one great act of trust in His Mercy and our every action should begin with the words, “Jesus, I trust in you.” ”

was about a flooding that had taken place on Tuesday afternoon in our house in Letterkenny. I then understood more deeply why the Lord had given me that verse from Psalm 93. Indeed, He is greater than many waters and the waves! He had prepared me for the message of the flooding. And I could also immediately put into practice what He had shown me just the day before: instead of getting stressed, I could live this from within, from the deepest core of my being where He himself lives. From that perspective I know He is not indifferent to anything that happens in my life, big or small.

Living every moment in His presence, bringing an awareness of that presence into every action and minute of the day, leads me to a deeper trust. It's an important lesson for me, a sister of the Merciful Jesus. Our Constitutions say that our whole lives should be one great act of trust in His Mercy and our every action should begin with the words, “Jesus, I trust in you.” I pray that He will also increase that trust in your heart and everyday life.



# Derriana by Dr Seán Beattie

## – The Journal of the Derry Diocesan Historical Society

THE Diocese of Derry has produced many fine historians and our churches are the physical repositories of our heritage, both lay and secular, as distinct from their main function as places of worship. As an historian, I constantly receive enquiries relating to our past and, recently, one such enquiry drew my attention to a little-known journal published in the Diocese almost 50 years ago. So in this issue, I have decided to write about the Derry Diocesan Historical Society, its origins and its journal, known as 'Derriana'.

I believe there were only five issues – at least, that is all I can find on my bookshelves, covering the years 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981/2 and 1983. I have a personal interest in this small collection as I was a contributor myself, on the subject of the Congested Districts Board in Donegal which existed from 1891 to 1922. My article appeared in 1980 and little did I know then that that topic would, some years later, form the subject of my doctorate at Magee College.

### Membership

Founded in 1976, the Society had an initial membership of 108. Fr Kevin McKenna, Principal, Community School, Carndonagh, Co Donegal, agreed to act as Editor, with Fr Oliver Crilly and the late Conal Byrne of Malin as his assistants, and Fr John Walsh as Secretary. The membership list included the names of John Hume,

6, West End Park, Derry and Liam McCormick, 29, Clarendon St, Derry, who later made his name as a church architect.

In the first issue in 1978, Fr Ciarán Devlin, then CC Maghera, wrote an article entitled 'Clerics of Derry'. His information was drawn from M A Costello's 'De Annatis Hiberniae', (Ulster), Volume 1. Annates were a tax levied by Rome on appointments to benefices. Today, church contributions are voluntary but for a short period, support was derived from tithes and taxes. On appointment, a Bishop paid his dues to Rome, based on taxes he derived from local clergy, often in kind, and so on down the line. Like all taxes, they were unpopular but in Ireland, because of the poverty of the churches, there were few disagreements. The payments ended during the reign of Henry V111, circa 1535.

### The Derry Discussion 1828

Today, ecumenism has helped to build amicable relationships between the various churches in the Diocese. In 1828, public differences came to a head in an event known as the Derry Discussion, as reviewed in 'Derriana' 1980 by Hugh McVeigh. A Protestant group, the Reformation Society, wanted to establish a branch in the City. Catholics, who were demanding parliamentary representation at this time, objected; tensions were high, as the Catholic clergy

opposed the proposed body. An arrangement was worked out in which Catholic and Protestant clergy would engage in a public debate on differences on church teachings, particularly, the role of the Pope, Transubstantiation, Purgatory, the Bible and Martin Luther.

The debate lasted a fortnight, with six ministers and six priests arguing their case. The speeches were later published in a tome of 781 pages. What was the upshot of the debate? Well, very little, other than that the Reformation Society was prevented from setting up a branch in the City. The Catholic Relief Act of 1832, referred to as Catholic Emancipation, was a sign of changing times for Catholics in Ireland. Catholics were now permitted to enter Parliament, a major step forward, following the demise of the Penal Laws passed over a century earlier.

### Bishop Maginn

The journal issued in 1981/2 has a fine article by Rev James Coulter, then President of St Columba's College, Derry, which has the intriguing title, 'Dr Edward Maginn (1802-1849): Priest of Politician'. By the age of 26, he had come to public notice and was perhaps the best-known priest in the Diocese. This was in no small measure due to his participation in the Derry Discussion. He was a follower of Daniel O'Connell, who is credited with securing Catholic Emancipation. Fr Coulter was

very unimpressed by the level of debate, describing it as "dullness unrelieved".

Maginn was the leading figure in the Diocese in a campaign against poteen-making. In evidence before a House of Commons Select Committee, it was stated that an Inishowen rector, Rev Lucius Carey, had set man-traps on his land to prevent revenue officers searching for poteen. Maginn was responsible for the setting up of St Columba's Total Abstinence Society in November 1873.

He was passionate about education and was responsible for the construction of several schools in the Diocese. In 1847, he built seven churches, an amazing achievement when famine was rampant. He was equally active in working with Relief Committees during the Great Famine. He is buried in Buncrana.

### Convent of Mercy, Carndonagh

The history of the Sisters of Mercy in Carndonagh is outlined by Sr Brendan Burns in the final edition, in 1983. Fr Paul Bradley, Carndonagh, went on board ships at Moville and invited passengers and crew to contribute to the building of a new Convent in 1870. On May 3, 1871, four sisters arrived from Derry to open the new Convent. In 1960, it became a secondary school for girls, later amalgamating with the College and the Technical School to form the Community School in 1973. The former Convent building has a history spanning over 150 years in Carndonagh.

Some copies of 'Derriana' are available in the Central Library in Foyle St, Derry, and in other

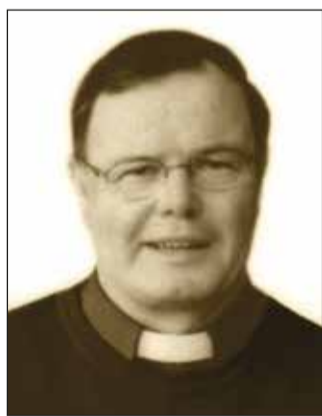


libraries. The journal ceased publication in 1983. With so much valuable research by eminent historians on church and secular history, there is a strong case to be made to have the articles digitized to enable new researchers to have access to the material.

Perhaps, there is a place for a new journal to research the history and heritage of the Diocese of Derry,

whether online or in hard copy format. Church records form a central element of all genealogical research which has a global reach, thanks to our history of emigration. Genealogists worldwide would value further research on our invaluable collection of published and unpublished history, both secular and ecclesiastical.

# New book on the spiritual journey of St Patrick by Martina Purdy



The late Fr Aidan Larkin

'THE Spiritual Journey of St Patrick' is the title of a new book on St Patrick's spirituality that was launched in the St Patrick Centre, in Downpatrick, earlier this month.

Canon John Murray, Downpatrick PP, launched the book as the author, Fr Aidan Larkin, had passed away four years ago.

Noting that Fr Aidan had had "an unusual spiritual journey and a great heart for evangelisation," Canon John said: "What I liked about 'The Spiritual Journey of St Patrick' is that it was written

by a missionary. Fr Larkin's background was that he was an SDLP politician, then he became a priest in a diocese, in Dublin, I think, and then he joined the Columbans.

"He sees Patrick's great heart for evangelization and that comes out in various parts of the book, Patrick's compassion and his desire to teach as many people as possible.

It is an easy read. Fr Larkin had a nice soft style and I think you are brought to the raw, original Patrick."

He added: "I think readers will see Patrick afresh, as Fr Aidan is at pains to separate Patrick, the man, from the myth. St Patrick's Day has morphed into a Paddy's Day that caricatures Patrick.

"The default position for the Irish is 'let's drink to Paddy'. And if you said to people that Patrick came to convert you, to bring you and me to Christ, it would be 'Oh, okay'. I find when I bring people down to the mosaics about St Patrick, at the back of our church, and start to tell the story, that they have never heard it and I see a shift in them."

The book was launched on March 13 as part of celebrations

at The Saint Patrick Centre, the world's only permanent exhibition to Ireland's patron saint.

Dr Tim Campbell, director of The Saint Patrick Centre, remarked that Fr Larkin's own life was something of an epic story, and full of the joy which Patrick himself experienced, despite hardships and trials.

"There have been many writings about Patrick which often focus on the facts of his life," said Dr Campbell, adding: "Fr Larkin has tried to unlock the secret of Patrick's spirit - his joy, his inner faith journey, his humility and his courage.

"This is a great book for anyone who is interested in that kind of authentic, life-giving spirituality."

Fr Larkin's own journey began in Lissan, near Cookstown in 1946. After studying at St Patrick's College, Armagh, he went on to UCD, where he earned a First Class Honours Masters in Ancient Classics, spent time discerning a vocation with the Jesuits, marched in the civil rights campaign in the 1960s, studied law at Queen's and became a barrister, represented Mid-Ulster as an SDLP councillor in 1972, was elected to Sunningdale

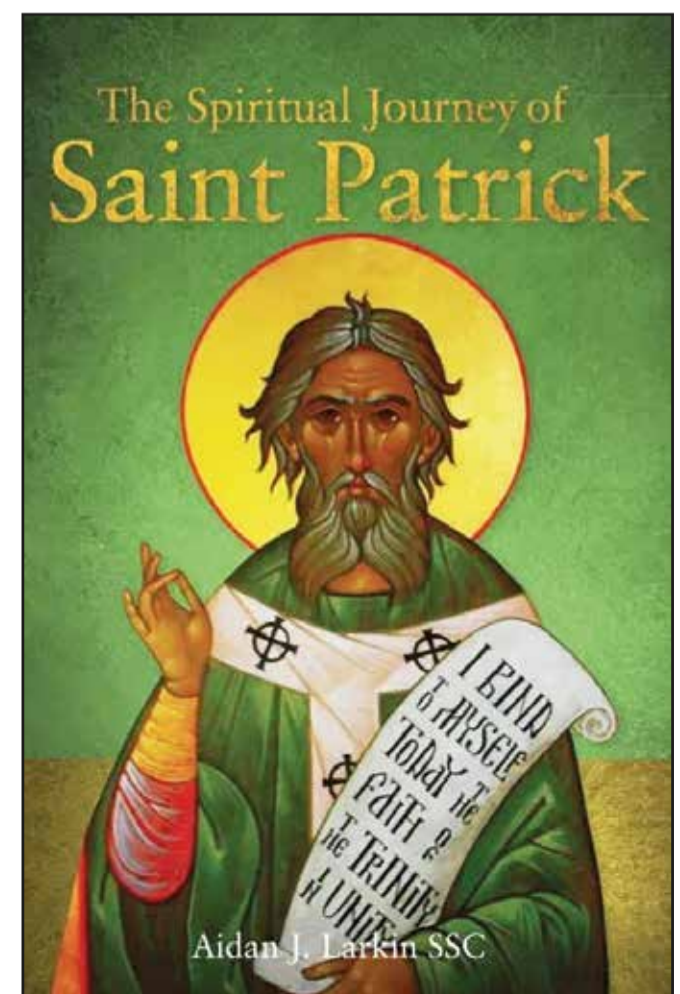
in 1973, moved to Brussels to join the legal service of the European Council, and learned French and Spanish, before entering the seminary in 1981.

He was ordained a priest in 1985 in the Dublin Diocese, and then became a Columban priest who built a church in Santiago and toiled in a shanty town in Chile. He eventually returned to Ireland when he was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2006.

Fr Larkin's first book followed the story of St Columbanus 'Pilgrim for Christ', before he turned his sights on St Patrick.

The book was completed before Fr Larkin died on March 31, 2019, and contains a foreword from Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh. He said that he too believes this book gives great insight into St Patrick's spirituality: "Perhaps this will help all of us, laity and clergy alike, to avoid the temptation towards a token patriotic celebration of The Feast of St Patrick."

"The Spirituality of St Patrick' is published by Messenger Publications, and costs 14.95 Euro or £12.95 sterling.



# Trust by Fr John McLaughlin ssc

## 'Puedo confiar en el Señor'... 'Mending Walls' (Robert Frost)

THE above hymn in Spanish and the Chilean version marked the lives of so many of us in normal pastoral life at parish, and maybe at a higher level. There was the sadness and celebrations around the Velorios, the house-funeral services where often I would listen to the heart-felt testimonies around the remains of the person being waked. There were also the other-level vigils for peace in times of the repression felt during the dictatorship of Pinochet. And, of course, there were the very real and personal fears and outrage and loneliness that most of us would have faced as missionary priests, sisters and committed lay people all around us. "Si el sol llegara a oscurecer y no brille mas yo igual confio en el Señor, Él me va a ayudar" (If sun begins to darken and no longer shines...I will continue to trust in the Lord; He will come to my aid.)

I recall a moment when I quoted in a homily phrases from a PNUD report which indicated that the public no longer trusted the media, nor the judiciary, nor their employers, nor politicians and, only a little, the Church. So they basically were saying that they trusted only themselves and their judgement and opinions. It seemed to me so horrible and I shared it on that occasion with the Christian Community to try to evoke their impressions on where their own trusting would rest.

Of course, I could see where they were coming from even at a very personal level. Many of us had got 'burned' over the years on issues of trusting people, and our own Church and religious groupings. And, for some of us, it would linger on for many years, this sense of betrayal and violation of the confidence or obedience that we had proffered to others.

In pastoral parish life, some of us had become hardened after the discovery of dishonesty and misuse of money in collections, in the Planned Giving for example in Dublin. It was one of the hardest early moments of my priestly life, to have to confront a much older man of malpractice, and ask that he step down from his position. To experience it amongst even some young people shook my trust in otherwise noble families, and names still live on in the memory there.

Again, at household and domestic level, when there was a shortfall in household or personal monies on a couple of occasions in my life, the impact on my personal mental and spiritual health was like a minor tsunami. I hated being asked to make a loan to a person who promised to pay back at the end of the month, having had only one experience of that actually occurring. Such was the impact on that occasion, that I simply gifted back the money to the person of such integrity, who had restored

my faith in humanity for the moment.

The use of the Spanish language in those later years showed a shower of words to wallpaper a room: *decepcionado; enganado; estafa; defraudado; pisoteado; el pirameade; lanzas; Cogoteado.* At one time or another, they made their entrance into my own vocabulary and shook up my trusting in the system and those around me. Power, even at that level, can corrupt and the 'absolute power' taken on by others only served to confirm others in the paths of subterfuge they had taken. "They are all doing it" and so why not I? That is maybe the real damage done under a Dictatorship (as it was under Pinochet!) and the imitators it breeds. That is why many in the World today fear another Trump Presidency in this present year!

As I mused over this title and its implications, I received the present of a book, 'John Hume: The Persuader' (Stephen Walker). It is a majestic piece of writing in so many areas. For me though, it spoke loudly on the challenge faced by Hume to gain and sow trust even at his own very local level, as he went on to inter-community and international levels of achieving understanding and openness to the mistrust, often legitimate, felt by whole peoples. As many wonderful testimonies in the book indicate, it was very often a deeply painful and vulnerable exercise. People will never, hopefully, forget that this was the measure of the Man!

More recently, in his periodic philosophic pieces in the Irish Times, P Humphries wrote on Trust, and I felt it was worth keeping and sharing at least in part: "This arguably leaves us more dependent on experts to interpret the practical implications. So who do you trust?"

A handy toolkit has been developed by a team of researchers led by Prof Maria Baghramian, of UCD's School of Philosophy to answer this very question.

### Peritia

Under a three-year, EU-funded programme, the Peritia project produced a series of academic reports on the subject of 'trust in experts', and one outcome is the online toolkit - which can be tried out at [peritia-trust.eu/toolkit](http://peritia-trust.eu/toolkit). Aimed at everyone from school students upwards, it tests how trusting - or gullible - you are by asking some provocative questions, for example, whether you should listen to psychologist, Jordan Peterson on climate science.

To determine whether someone is a 'genuine expert', a good starting point is to check their CV, it recommends. "Do they have a good track record of experience in their field? Do other scientists refer

to their work?"

To evaluate whether the information they provide is reliable, measure it against the scientific consensus (for the sake of the referendum, one can replace 'scientific' with 'legal' or 'expert').

"Does the source clearly distinguish between factual reporting and editorial opinion? Reliable sources correct themselves. Does your source do that? Does the source operate under reliable oversight?"

Northern Irish philosopher, Onora O'Neill, who was one of a slew of academics from nine countries involved with Peritia, had previously developed a more condensed test for trustworthiness. Look out for three things, she said: "Honesty, reliability and competence."

There is no magic formula, however. And the lesson from psychology is that none of us is above blindly trusting those whom we regard to be part of our group identity. This isn't to excuse people from wallowing in tribal swamps. But, as Haidt suggests, when it comes to critiquing public debate, we should cut each other some slack as political animals and focus our indignation instead on environmental factors that breed narrow-mindedness.

Again, at very local (from 'Macro to Micro' and they are inter-dependent, I believe!) and pastoral level, I found that my own brother-priests and sisters in religion were great witnesses to the seeding of the new estates with an incentive to trusting their own neighbours. Frs Michael Hoban and Pat Egan devolved a system of Blessing for new housing estates, which involved invitation to a couple of gatherings. They nearly all wanted a blessing on their houses or departamentos. So, under that same scheme, I invited those interested in some of the new blocks, to share a little about each other and their hopes. That would be the loose content of the first encounter: where they had come from, maybe from a 'sin casa' agrupacion (allegados) and what they hoped for in this new environment. It was an opening up to even their own neighbours, of whom they might have their fears and suspicions, learned over the years.

On the second meeting, I would come around to the 'Christian bit': experience in some other chapel, baptism or marriage in the Church, my own presence as a missionary with a rare accent! And what we could be as a 'comunidad'. For the third evening, the subject would be what they were waiting for, the actual ceremony of the Blessing, which we would plan for in outline. So that on the day, usually a Sunday when they would nearly all be present, we gathered in a common plot and had the introductory address, a hymn, a short reading. After which the

group of leaders (Helga Hansen, Jaime Cisternas and others) and I would go from each 'departamento' onwards, with a brief introduction, a prayer leaflet or religious image, and the sprinkling, with an abrazo as we continued on. There were, of course, some who just wanted it all apart, free from suspicion of the neighbours, or letting others see what they had in their furniture etc, and they had to be convinced to let down their barriers just a little for the moment. And to Trust!

There was often a great sense of bonhomie, or genuine joy, as the event was wound up with a common prayer and blessing for the whole grouping, out where we had started. Seeds had been sown and Trust would only grow, with the help of the Lord of the Harvest!

It was not unlike what, for years we had been doing in Dublin pastoral visitation and generating mutual trust and confidence, in places like Rialto, Arklow, Marino and Glasnevin, in my own diocesan life

At national level in those years in Chile, the Press would very often not gain much trust, as they either denied or fudged the atrocities that were being committed at national and local level. The 'Sebastian Acevedo' Movement, an anti-torture group, eg, held lightening protests saying 'The Mercurio Lies'. So the mission of the Church was to provide a counter-current of values: Trust rather than deception, hope instead of despair, community in place of atomization, solidarity rather than individuality, truth in place of propaganda, person instead of consumer, justice to replace the instrumentation of people and communities. The list has been modernised in recent years, and the Church nowadays has Pope Francis - and his detractors, just as Cardinal Silva ('The Red Cardinal', some said!) and the bishops of Chile gave their frequent and awaited messages at Episcopal Conference and deanery and parish levels. Trust, as ever, remains the challenge of the proclamation of the Good News.

### Pope Francis

In his last intervention from the floor at the recent Synod in Rome, Pope Francis spoke in a couple of short and incisive paragraphs: "I like to think about the Church as the faithful people of God, holy and sinful, a people convoked and called with the power of the beatitudes and of Matthew 25.

Jesus does not choose any political models of his time for his Church: neither Pharisee, or Sadducee, or Essene, or zealot. No 'closed corporation'; he simply assumes the tradition of Israel: 'You will be my people and I will be your God.'

I like to think of the Church as this simple and humble people



Mission Sunday celebration. The DUM as it was known - Domingo Universal de las Misiones



Ten Commandments



Helga and Blessing of Departamentos



Pope Benedict. Caritas en Veritate

walking in the Lord's presence (the faithful people of God). This is the religious sense of our faithful people. And I say faithful people so as not to fall into the many ideological perspectives and models with which the reality of the people of God is 'reduced'. Simply the faithful people, or also, 'the holy, faithful people of God' on the way, holy and sinful. And this is the Church.

One of the characteristics of this faithful people is its infallibility; yes, it is infallible in belief. (In *credo* falli nequit, says LG 9). Infallible in belief. And I explain it thus: 'When you want to know what Holy Mother Church believes, go to the Magisterium because its task is to teach it to you. But when you want to know how the Church believes, go to the faithful people.'

An image comes to mind: the faithful people united at the entrance of the Cathedral of Ephesus. History says (or legend) that the people were on both sides of the street leading to the Cathedral while the Bishops were processing toward the entrance, and they were repeating in chorus: 'Mother of God', asking the Hierarchy to declare as dogma this truth that they possessed as the people of God. (Some say they had sticks in their hands and were showing them to the Bishops). I don't know if this is history or legend, but the image is valid.

The faithful people, the holy, faithful people of God, has a soul, and because we can speak of the soul of the people we can speak of a hermeneutic, of a way of seeing reality, of a consciousness. Our faithful people have an awareness of their dignity, baptizing their children, burying their dead.

The members of the Hierarchy come from this people and have received the faith from this people, generally from our mothers and grandmothers – 'your mother and your grandmother' Paul says to Timothy - a faith transmitted in a feminine dialect, like the mother of the Maccabees who spoke to them 'in the dialect' of her children. And here, I would like to underline that, in the holy, faithful people of God, the faith is transmitted in dialect, and generally in a feminine dialect. This is so not only because the Church is Mother, and it is precisely women who best reflect her (the Church is woman), but because it is women who know how to wait, who know how to discover the resources of the Church, of the faithful people, who risk beyond what is possible, perhaps fearfully, but courageously, and in the chiaroscuro of a dawning day, they approach a tomb with the intuition (not yet hope) that there might be some life.

The women of the holy people faithful of God are a reflection of the Church. The Church is feminine, she is spouse, she is mother.

When the ministers exceed their service and mistreat the people of God, they disfigure the face of the Church with machismo and dictatorial attitudes (it is enough to recall the intervention of Sr Liliana Franco). It is painful to find in some parish offices the 'price list' for sacramental services, similar to a supermarket. Either the Church is the faithful people of God on the way, holy and sinful, or it ends up being a business offering a variety of services. And when pastoral ministers take this second path, the Church ends up being the supermarket of salvation, and priests, mere employees of a multinational company. This is the great defeat to which clericalism leads us with great sorrow and scandal (it is enough to go into the ecclesiastical tailor shops in Rome to see the scandal of young priests trying on cassocks and hats, or albs and lace robes).

Clericalism is a thorn, it is a scourge, it is a form of worldliness

that defiles and damages the face of the Lord's bride; it enslaves the holy, faithful people of God.

And the people of God, the holy, faithful people of God, go forward patiently and humbly, enduring the scorn, mistreatment and marginalization of institutionalized clericalism. How naturally we speak of the princes of the Church, or of episcopal promotions as getting ahead career-wise!"

### Ministry

Over a long life in ministry, I came to appreciate that Trust and Truth for me was first encountered amongst that "people of God, the holy, faithful people of God".

One of the little greetings which was music to many of us was: 'Ud es de confianza Senor, you have our trust'. For me, it was not to be taken lightly in any of my dealings with people, families and groupings. There were also the little buzz words learned from living with and amongst the poorer, often humbler peoples. Un pajarito, un mañoso, un pintar monos, un sapo, etc, indicated that these would not be the persons to be trusted with secrets or confidences at comunidad or parish levels.

A great personal support to me, and to many other Columbans, at this time was time spent with the 'Jesus Caritas' or 'De Foucauld Fraternidad'. In our small group, there were other Chilean Diocesan priests and occasionally a fellow Columban. A key moment, before the hour of Adoration, in the true practice of Carlos de Foucauld in his north-African ministry, Algerian life and witness, was the 'Revision of Life'. This involved an often deep and sensitive issue being put on the table on the part of each of us, after which, on a simple vote, we would take on one of the issues for a group reflection. So often there would surface issues around the place of Trust in our personal, parroquial, diocesan or congregational levels. There was, on occasion, a deep hurt or betrayal that had to be brought to the surface and the prayer and counsel of the group would be available. Authority, Obedience, Fidelity do not come easy, and some of us felt that on a human level, we had been left out to dry, or not supported, or used by superiors who failed us. And I was no exception in that field of 'wheat and tares'.

On more recent reflection and at a deeper soul-searching, I know that the greatest source of sadness and anger of that time were the abusers amongst us and whose names were on the lips of so many people in our parishes. (I have those names here now but feel, for the Eighth Commandment etc, they need not be named!) That was The Betrayal of Trust and there was, and is, deep hurt and anger in all our hearts.

A Derry priest, at the time, wrote in 'The Furrow' and summed it up for me: "We are all tainted in the public eye and in our own person;

so the Them-Us will not help us escape, nor should it."

My great friend, Fr Paddy Gleeson, in Dublin, had the huge task and privilege of visiting the victimizers (in prisons) and the victimized (at home), and the rebuilding of Trust. I might mention, a propos of that subject and its dark shadow, the privilege I had of accompanying a young Irish parishioner who had to denounce and expel her husband for the abuse of a family member. It was just heroic and so lonely for her, and I pray for her often in these years!

There were also a couple of Chilean families amongst my friendships who had equally harrowing and divisive nightmares. So that, even today, and on almost a daily basis, my go-to prayer is that of de Foucauld, on Abandonment, which I continue to recite in the Spanish of those days.

Amongst the many phrases from lessons in History that I can recall, was the declaration of the betrayed Earl of Stafford, "Put not your trust in princes!" There was a period when I repeated it aloud often, though not in a Spanish translation!

I have been around long enough in Ireland and the social-political arena to recall, with almost warmth, the column in the Saturday Irish Times when the columnist, Backbencher would give us a language and material to discuss with family, classmates and golf companions, the whole social and political ambient in which we were growing up. So we threw around the phrases – 'Rent a Crowd', 'Government by Tailwind', 'the Mohair coated men', 'the Smoked Salmon Socialists', 'the Golden Boy', etc. By present day standards, it all seems to have been so light and respectful and humorous; and shame or smearing was not the objective.

### Commentators

Being from then on an avid reader of political and social columns in South America and Chile, I knew, or came to know, those commentators of integrity and courage, who could hold and gain my trust, and I still recur to them as I try to keep up with recent events in that country of my missionary life. Names like Ascano Cavallo, Hector Soto, Raquel Correa, Hernan Millas, Mario Gomez Lopez, et alia, helped me maintain respect for the Press and the Radio in darker times, and their Catholic and Christian passion often shone through.

Though, in that context, it might be still relevant to mention an occasion when the Bishop of Valparaiso, Gonzalo Duarte, invited Silvia Pelegrini, long-term professor of Communications at the Catholic University of Valparaiso, to speak to a special meeting of the priests and deacons. (She is by the way, a sister of the well-known Manuel Pelegrini, himself with a degree in Engineering, and a Real Madrid,

Man City manager!) Maintain your respect for the Press and its members, she told us. Tell them only what you really want to say, and nothing more, And remember, she advised us, they are not your friends!

In those years and still today, I turn to the BBC programme, 'From Our Own Correspondents' with something of that same trust; Fergal Keane and John Simpson, Orlagh Guerin and many others, as well as a whole chain of brave war-correspondents, evoke from me a deep sense of respect and trust. And gratitude!

At a deeper faith-level, the words 'Covenant', 'Testament', 'Alliance' become something like the foundational word that it was always meant to be. God offers us Himself in Trust as a guarantee for world-order, for personal options, and modern Popes, like Benedict eg, try to spell it out for the World today. In his social Encyclical 'Caritas en Veritate', there is a clear challenge to the world of today to have a new Solidarity, a sense of the Common Good, and of international inter-dependency, which seemed to be gaining traction during the world-wide Covid pandemic. But now, as so many nations seem to be withdrawing into their own internal spheres, and isolationism, there is a general sense of alarm, and lack of Trust! Democracy, the great challenge to Trust and integrity, is under fire, and slogans like MAGA cause me to shudder at the apparent replacement of Trust by expediency, Machiavellian diplomacy, isolationism, manipulation and false-information, etc.

### Psalm 30

God of truth, you detest those who worship false and empty gods.

As for me, I trust in the Lord: let

me be glad and rejoice in your love.

You who have seen my affliction and taken heed of my soul's distress, have not handed me over to the enemy, but set my feet at large.

Within the Book of Psalms and a Lectio Divina of the Gospels of the Day, we have the inner spiritual resources to offer once more a less adversarial more-inspirational politics, and a way forward out of the morass that threatens to snuff out the value and virtue of Trust, eg, and passim. And, in the Magnificat and the Anunciation, we have the 'Fiat' of Mary and her active presence to sustain us in our moments of fear and despair. The Angelus is ever more relevant to a committed and sane Christian life!

While in the process of setting-off from Diocesan life to the Missions, some of my parishioners offered me small and portable gifts. There was a small bronze Crucifix modelled on a Penal Cross from the Marino Folk Group, and there was wooden carved version of the Mac Lochlainn Clan shield, from Michael Synott from Glasnevin Parish, a daily-Mass goer there. Both came to have a role in my pastoral and parish life. The Cross is the model for the wooden Crucifix in my first Chapel, Virgen Peregrina, on Cerro Placeres in Valparaiso, and it does, indeed, evoke love and trust from the feligreses in that Capilla. The Clan Shield (Mac Lochlainn!) and Motto, 'Cumhnaigh do Gheallamhnacha', has proved a treasure on the occasion of some youth and community workshops. My good friend, Sr Veronica Maguire, who worked with school retreat groupings in Emmaus, Swords, shared some of her teaching aids and dynamics with me. And amongst them was the outline of a clan shield with spaces to be filled in by those taking the

workshop. So, personal details and clan or family values were amongst the terms to be inscribed on the shield of each individual. And my shield, or Escudo, would be held up as an example!

### Prayer for Trust

Finally, there is the Prayer for Trust, 'Adoro y Confio', or an alternative in an available English translation, from the hugely influential Jesuit of the last century, and for any century, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin...

*Above all, trust in the slow work of God.*

*We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay.*

*We should like to skip the intermediate stages.*

*We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new.*

*And yet it is the law of all progress that it is made by passing through some stages of instability – and that it may take a very long time.*

*And so I think it is with you; your ideas mature gradually – let them grow, let them shape themselves, without undue haste.*

*Don't try to force them on, as though you could be today what time*

*(that is to say, grace and circumstances acting on your own good will)*

*will make of you tomorrow.*

*Only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming within you will be.*

*Give Our Lord the benefit of believing*

*that His hand is leading you, and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete."*

ST PIO HOUSE  
**DERRY**  
 BY ST JOSEPH'S CHURCH  
 3 FAIRVIEW ROAD  
 DERRY BT48 8NU

**TERRY QUINN**

**AWAKE**

**MARIA VADIA 24TH MARCH**

**10AM - 5PM**

**PALM SUNDAY**

ALL WELCOME!

LIAM STEWART  
 ROISIN DOHERTY  
 FERGUS MCMORROW  
 FR ANTONIO MARIA

TALKS - TEACHING - PRAYER MINISTRY - HOLY SPIRIT

£20 ENTRY • TEA AND COFFEE PROVIDED  
 • BRING A PACKED LUNCH • PARKING

# Parish Post-its

## Aghyaran

**Adoration:** Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Thursdays after 10 am Mass, and finishes at 12 noon.

**Luncheon Club:** A luncheon club is held on Tuesdays, from 12-1.30 pm, in Aghyaran Centre. Running initially for weeks, from February 27, it offers an opportunity to get lunch, meet with others and have a chat. Each week there will be a different activity, including entertainment and provision of useful information.

## Ardstraw East (Newtownstewart)

**YOUCAT Study:** A one-hour interactive YOUCAT programme, for those aged 16+ years, takes place on Tuesdays in the Oratory, at 7 Main Street, Newtownstewart, starting at 6.30-7.30 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)

**Adoration:** Adoration takes place in St Patrick's Gortin, after the 12.30 pm Mass until 5 pm on Tuesdays, and in St Mary's Rouskey after 7.30 pm Mass on Wednesdays, when there will also be Confessions.

## Ballinascreen

**Dawn Mass:** Dawn Mass will be celebrated in Moneyneena on Easter Sunday. More details later.

**Vintage Vehicles:** There will be a Vintage Vehicle Show at An Rath Dubh, in Moneyneena, on Sunday, April 7, with the proceeds going towards the necessary repair work on St Eugene's Church. The Show will include a Kids' Vehicle Parade, Bouncy Castles, Stalls, and an optional Convoy at 3.30 pm. The gates will be open from 1 pm.

**Scouts events:** The 33rd Derry Ballinascreen Scouts are having an Easter Bake Sale on Saturday, March 30, from 10 am to 1 pm in Ballinascreen Credit Union, and an Easter Trail in Derrynoid Forest on Saturday, March 30, from 11 am to 3 pm. Bookings at Eventbrite, select 'Easter trail - Derrynoid.' One slot per group booking. Cost £6.50 per child. For details Tel: 07749538199 or Email: ballinascreen.scouts@gmail.com. The Scouts are having an 30th Anniversary Gala in Shepherds Rest on June 1 at 7.30 pm. Dinner will

be served at 8 pm. Tickets now on sale £40 each. Search Ballinascreen Scouts Gala on Eventbrite or Email: ballinascreen.scouts@gmail.com. Over 18s only, smart dress code.

**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

**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 St Joseph's Church, Fincairn, on Fridays, 10-11 am.

## Bellaghy

**Cemetery Sunday:** Graves in Bellaghy & Balliscullion will be blessed on Sunday, July 7.

**Community Café:** The Open Door Community Café is open on the last Sunday of each month, from 11.30 am until 1 pm.

## Buncrana

**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, and on Sundays 2-10 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 & Fahan

**Grave Blessings:** The annual blessing of the graves will take place in St Mura's Parish Church on Sunday, June 9, at 11.30 am, in St Aengus' Church, Burt, on Sunday, June 16, at 3 pm, and in Our Lady of Lourdes, Inch, on Sunday, June 16, at 6 pm.

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

## Cappagh

**Catholicism Series:** A journey around the world and deep into the Catholic Faith, through a 10-week Catholicism series, with acclaimed author, speaker and theologian, Bishop Robert Barron, is underway in the Parish. Running in two locations on two different days, the Series runs on Mondays, in Christ the King Church at 7 pm, and/or on Thursdays, in Cappagh Parish Hall at 10.30 am. Just come along.

**Lough Derg:** A Parish Pilgrimage to Lough Derg will take place on Saturday, September 7.

**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.

## Creggan

**Catechism Course:** The YOUCAT Catechism Course continues on Wednesdays at 7 pm.

**Bereavement Support:** Parish Pastoral Bereavement Support. The Parish Pastoral Bereavement Support Group meets on the second Sunday of each month at 3 pm in the Parochial House community room. All are welcome to share a cup of tea, have a chat, remember and talk about their loved one and find support with others experiencing similar feelings. In addition to the group, there is an ongoing opportunity to speak on a one-to-one basis with an experienced grief counsellor. The contact number for more information on the group or to arrange one to one support is 07907085178.

## Carndonagh

**Graves' Blessing:** Cemetery Sunday will take place on Sunday, July 7.

## Castleberg & Ardstraw West

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

## Claudy

**College Anniversary:** St Patrick's & St Brigid's College will be celebrating its 60th anniversary with Mass in St Patrick's Church at 7 pm on Thursday, May 2, 2024, followed by further celebrations in the College, until 9.30 pm.

**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.

**Living Word:** There is a 'Living Word' gathering in the Upper Room in St Patrick's Church on Thursdays, 7-8.30 pm, for a time of reading and reflection on the Mass readings for the following Sunday. All welcome.

**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

**Parish Picnic:** The Parish Picnic will take place at Chapelfield on Sunday, May 19.

**Lough Derg:** A Parish Pilgrimage to Lough Derg will take place on Saturday, September 7.

**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.

## Creggan

**Catechism Course:** The YOUCAT Catechism Course continues on Wednesdays at 7 pm.

**Bereavement Support:** Parish Pastoral Bereavement Support. The Parish Pastoral Bereavement Support Group meets on the second Sunday of each month at 3 pm in the Parochial House community room. All are welcome to share a cup of tea, have a chat, remember and talk about their loved one and find support with others experiencing similar feelings. In addition to the group, there is an ongoing opportunity to speak on a one-to-one basis with an experienced grief counsellor. The contact number for more information on the group or to arrange one to one support is 07907085178.

**Vocations Prayer:** There will be Vocations Holy Hour in St Mary's Church, Creggan, on the second Friday of each month, running from 8-9 pm.

**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.

## Culdaff

**Graves' Blessing:** Blessing of Graves will take place on July 7 and Mass for the Dead of the Parish will take place on November 24.

## Desertmartin

**Knit & Natter:** Knit & Natter classes take place in Knocknagin Hall on Tuesdays at 7.30 pm. Bring your own project or you can help with knitting for local charities.

## 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.

## Drumquin

**Rosary:** The Rosary is prayed each Tuesday morning at 10 am in St Patrick's Church, Drumquin.

**Eucharistic Adoration:** Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesdays from 6 pm - Mass at 7.30 pm.

## Drumragh (Omagh)

**Cemetery Sunday:** The Blessing of Graves will take place on Sunday, June 2, at 3 pm, in St Mary's, Drumragh, and 5 pm at the Dublin Road Cemetery.

**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 5.30 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.

## Dungiven

**All-Night Adoration:** There will be Eucharistic All-Night

**ALL IRELAND Rosary Rally KNOCK 2024 | SAT JUNE 1ST**

- 9.30 am | St John's Centre**  
Marian Conference  
Fr. Michael Donnelly | Sr. Ava Margareta Lenca, SCJM | Fr. Joseph Mary Dineen, CPS
- 11.30 am | St John's Centre**  
Meet 20 Apostolates from around Ireland
- 1 pm | Basilica**  
Rosary Talk  
Mother Aelia Galindo, SCJM (Foundress)
- 2 pm | Outside**  
Stations of the Cross
- 2.30 pm | Outside**  
Rosary Procession
- 3 pm**  
Concelebrated Holy Mass with Bishop Phonsie Cullinan, Bishop of Waterford and Lismore (including Anointing of the Sick)  
Rosary and Scapular making workshops in the marquee

In association with:

To see a list of buses going from around Ireland visit [www.allirelandrosaryrally.com](http://www.allirelandrosaryrally.com)

Adoration in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, at St Patrick's Church, starting at 8 pm. on Friday, March 22, right through the whole night, ending with Mass in St Patrick's Church at 7 am on Saturday, March 23. Confessions will be heard from 9-10 pm on the Friday night. Everyone welcome. Prayers will be for devotion to the Priesthood, the community, the sick, those with addictions and anyone who is finding life difficult in these times

**Penitential Service:** There will be a Penitential Service in St Patrick's Church on Sunday, March 24, at 5 pm.

**Lectio Divina:** The Lectio Divina Group meet for meditation and Scripture reflection on Wednesdays, at 7 pm, in the Parish House, 30A Chapel Road.

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

**St Pio Healing Mass:** A St Pio Healing Mass is celebrated monthly, on the first Tuesday, in St Patrick's Church at 7 pm.

## 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

**Graves' Blessing:** The annual blessing of the graves will take place at St Mura's Parish Church on Sunday, June 9, at 11.30 am, St Aengus' Church, Burt, on Sunday, June 16, at 3 pm, and Our Lady of Lourdes, Inch, on Sunday, June 16, at 6 pm.

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

## Faughanvale

**Alpha Course:** The three local churches - St Canice's, Star of the Sea and Faughanvale Presbyterian - are running an Alpha Course at the Faughanvale Community Project, beside the Vale Centre, Greysteel, on Wednesdays at 7.30 pm. Alpha is a series of group conversations that freely explore the basics of the Christian faith in an open, friendly environment. What's the meaning of life? What is faith really all about? etc. All welcome.

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

## Granaghan (Swatragh)

**Morning Prayer:** Morning Prayer of the Church from the Divine Office is prayed on the Tuesdays of Lent at 10 am.

## 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 7.30 pm Mass on Mondays, with Confessions.

Continued on p29

Stations of the Cross: The Stations of the Cross are prayed after 7.30 pm Mass on Fridays in St Patrick's, Greencastle.

### Greenlough

**Adoration:** Eucharistic Adoration takes place in St Oliver Plunkett's Church from 9 am-5 pm on Thursdays.

**Cemetery Sunday:** Cemetery Sunday will take place on July 14.

### 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.

### Kilrea

**Stations of the Cross:** The Stations of the Cross are prayed on Sundays in St Anne's Oratory at 7 pm, with Confessions beforehand from 6.30-6.50 pm.

**SVP:** The St Vincent de Paul Thrift Shop is open on Saturdays from 10 am -1pm.

### Leckpatrick

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

### Limavady

**The Chosen:** 'The Chosen' is an historical drama based on the life of Jesus, through the eyes of those who knew Him. The second series of 'The Chosen' is being shown

in the Minor Hall on Monday nights at 7.30 pm. Tea and coffee are served beforehand. All welcome.

**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

**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.

### Melmount

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

**Graves' Blessing:** The annual Blessing of Graves will take place on Sunday, May 19, 2024 at 4 pm.

### Moville

**Stations of the Cross:** The Stations of the Cross are prayed after 10 am Mass on Fridays.

**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.

**Graveyard Sunday:** The Blessing of the Graves will take place in Ballybrack on Sunday, July 7, and in Ballinacrae on Sunday, July 14.

### Sion Mills

**Blessing of Graves:** The annual Blessing of Graves will take place on Sunday, June 2, 2024, at 3 pm.

**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 Sunday, from 6-7 pm. Adoration also continues each Friday after 10 am Mass until 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)

**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

**Gala Concert:** The Three Priests and soprano Margaret Keys are performing in a Gala Concert in St Columba's Hall on Sunday, March 24, at 7.30pm. The concert is a fundraiser for the restoration of the 180-year-old organ in St Columba's Church, Long Tower, and tickets are £25. For further details see the Long Tower Facebook page or email darinaghboyle15@gmail.com or longtower@derrydiocese.org.

### Templemore - St Eugene's

**Last Seven Words:** The Seven Last Words of Christ will be reflected on in preparation for Holy Week, on Palm Sunday, March 24 at 8 pm.

**Eucharistic Adoration:** Every Sunday, there is Eucharistic Adoration from 3-6 pm and every Tuesday from 10.30 am until 7.20 pm. 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 Club:** The Cathedral Club meets after the 10 am Mass each Thursday in the Cathedral Hall. Everyone is welcome

to this parish social group. Refreshments will be served.

### Three Patrons

**Men's Bible Study:** Men's Bible Study takes place in the Upper Room in St Brigid's Chapel, Carnhill, on Tuesdays at 7.30 pm.

**God Club:** God Club is an opportunity for 16-30 year olds to learn together about their faith. It takes place in St Pio House, in the grounds of St Joseph's Church, Galliagh, on Sundays from 7.30-9 pm on Sundays.

**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 am - 7 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.

**Holy Face Devotions:** Devotions to the Holy Face of Jesus takes place every Tuesday after 11 am Mass in Our Lady's Chapel, St Joseph's Church, Galliagh. 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, from 7-10 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.

**Vocations Society:** The Vocations Society of St Joseph hold monthly meetings on First Fridays after 10 am Mass, in the Emmaus Room, Pennyburn. New members welcome.

**Women's Laugh & Craft:** The Women's Laugh & Craft Group meets every Monday from 7.30 -9 pm in the Kildare Room, St Brigid's, Carnhill. £3 per class. Spaces limited.

**Urne & 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

**Eucharistic Adoration:** There is Eucharistic Adoration in St Oliver Plunkett Church, Strathfoyle, on Monday mornings, and on Wednesday evenings from 7-9 pm. All welcome.

**Lectio Divina:** Reflect on the Scriptures with Lectio Divina in the side chapel in St Columba's Church, Chapel Road, on Thursday nights, starting at 8 pm.

## ...other Diary Dates

**Ladies Retreat:** A Ladies' Weekend Retreat takes place from March 22-24 in Termonbacca, led by the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The weekend will include times of silence, talks, prayer and sharing. The cost is £90 residential/£70 non-residential. To book email termonbaccaderry@gmail.com All welcome.

**Concert:** The Priests and soprano, Margaret Keys are performing on Sunday, March 24, at 7.30 pm in St Columba's Hall. The concert is a fundraiser for the restoration of the organ in St Columba's Church, Long Tower, and for restoration of Christ Church in recognition of the kind financial support given by Bishop Hervey to the building of Long Tower 240

years ago, this year. Tickets are on sale, priced at £25. For more information see Long Tower Facebook page or email darinaghboyle15@gmail.com, longtower@derrydiocese.org.

**Knock Eucharistic Pilgrimage:** The annual National Adoration Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine by the Apostolate of Eucharistic Adoration takes place from April 13-14. The keynote speaker will be Fr Brendan Walsh and the closing Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Thomas Deenihan, of Meath Diocese.

**Sr Clare Retreat:** The annual Sr Clare Retreat will take place from April 15-21, in St Columba's Church, Long Tower.

**Youth Retreat:** The Knights of St Columbanus, Omagh, are organising a retreat on Lough Derg for young adults, aged 18-30 years old, on Saturday, April 27, from 10 am - 4 pm. Guest Speakers, inspirational talks, reflective time and concluding with Mass. This event is free of charge and will include guest speakers, inspirational talks, reflective and Mass to finish. For further information, email info@knightsfstcolumbanusomagh.co.uk.

**Palm Sunday Retreat:** Join with the Columba Community for a Day of Healing Prayer at St Anthony's Retreat Centre, Dundrean, Burnfoot, which will include Scripture meditations, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Teaching and Cel-

ebration of Eucharist in preparation for Holy Week, on Sunday, March 24, 11 am-4 pm. Mass celebrated at 3 pm. Light lunch included. Suggested donation £20 Call 02871262407/ email columbacommunity@hotmail.com

## Diocesan Diary

**Mass of Chrism:** Bishop Donal will celebrate the annual Mass of Chrism with the priests of the Diocese in St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry, on Holy Thursday morning, March 28, at 10 am. During Mass, the holy Oils for Baptism, Confirmation, Anointing of the Sick and Ordination are blessed. Also, the priests renew their Ordination promises. It is the only Mass celebrated in the Diocese on Holy Thursday morning. Everyone is welcome to

attend the Chrism Mass, or it can be viewed via the St Eugene's parish webcam: steu- genescathedral.com/webcam.

**Ladies' Bible Study:** Ladies interested in coming to a deeper understanding of scripture are welcome to come along to the Ladies' Bi-

**Diocesan Youth Pilgrimage:** The Diocesan Youth Ministry team is organising a nine-night youth pilgrimage to Medjugorje for young people aged 16+, from July 30 to August 8. This will be a unique experience for young people and an opportunity to engage with peers from around the world, in a faith context. Up

ble Study in Termonbacca, Derry, every Tuesday evening from 8.30-9.30 pm. It is led by Fr Stephen Quinn ocd, who is currently working through the Gospel of Mark, which is the Gospel for Mass for this year.

Full board £799, single room supplement £150. Telephone 028 71260293, or email derypilgrim@outlook.com for enquiries or bookings.

**Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage:** The Derry Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes in 2024, led by Bishop Donal, will run from July 1-5, leaving from City of Derry Airport.

This Bible Study is open to all women who are interested in coming along. There is no need to book, you can simply show up. For further information contact Termonbacca on 028 71 262512.

**ACCORD:** Accord Derry Marriage Preparation Courses (Pre Marriage Courses) will take place on April 19/20, May 17/18, and June 14/15, 2024, in the Everglades Hotel, Prehen Road, Derry. Please note that these courses are not virtual and are in person. Bookings are now being taken on www.accordni.com.

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

# Authentic Catholic Joy

IN the Catholic world, my 'alma mater', Franciscan University of Steubenville, in Steubenville, OH, USA, is known for many things. One of these is producing truly joyful students and alumni. While there are exceptions to every rule, I have found this to be true in my experience both on and off-campus encounters.

One moment, in part, stands out above the rest. Holy Week is a big deal at Franciscan. Students line up for hours to go to Confession on the Tuesday of Holy Week. Each of the Triduum liturgies is celebrated beautifully on a large scale, including a long Eucharistic procession on Holy Thursday, Living Stations on Good Friday (offered twice before the liturgy), and culminating in the Easter Vigil. A line, for choosing seats for the Vigil, wraps around the fieldhouse hours before the actual Mass takes place. This is something that I had never witnessed before, nor have I seen it since. There is truly an understanding among the student body that what takes place within those walls is an encounter with the Sacred on the holiest of nights.

But what really stands out in my memory is the very end of the Easter Vigil. The joy of celebrating the Resurrection is palpable. Usually, the closing hymn is a series

of three songs with students singing their hearts out, louder than I have ever heard in any church building in my life. There is a tangible sense of excitement, as if the Resurrection has just taken place and not an event from 2,000 years ago. The joy just fills the room and swells with the voices proclaiming Christ, the Victor over sin and death.

At the end of the three hymns there is cheering and applauding, and a mad rush to the student center for a Resurrection party. The Resurrection party has everything one could want for a celebration - food, drinks, live music, activities, and fellowship. The energy continues as the congregation moves to break their Lenten fasts and bathe in the glory of the Risen Christ. This party goes on all night long and, typically, a crowd will stay to attend the sunrise Easter Mass before shuffling off to sleep.

I was so struck by the joy of my fellow students that I couldn't help but catch it too. This is something worth celebrating! I had never witnessed this kind of joy and it spoke to my heart and soul. This is the kind of joy that Catholics should possess all year round in our hearts, reflecting it in our encounters with every single person. Joy as a state of being that comes from a life of practiced virtues out of love of God,

not simply happiness, a passing emotion. Obviously, this could be recreated on a much smaller scale in a typical home, which we have tried to do each year as a family.

Catholics often face the stereotype of being excessively penitential; of focusing on death and suffering above all else. I think there must be a balance to this, of course. Certainly, we must remain focused on 'memento mori', remembering that one day we will, in fact, die and return to the dust. We must also remember that sin has eternal consequences. So, I am in no way suggesting that we live with frivolity or a sense of "you do you" because "Carpe diem" and all that. Rather, it is important that we balance that knowledge of impending death with the reality that Christ conquered death so that we might have eternal life. That is something worth rejoicing over and something that should make life joyful no matter the circumstances. There is nothing frivolous about the Cross, but neither is there about the Resurrection and the power it holds for each of us.

### Grace

In the Fall of Man, recounted in Genesis 3, we learn that disobedience to God results in man's death. Not just physically,

but even more seriously, spiritually: the death of grace in the life of the soul. Sin cuts us off from God's grace, and we are separated from the ability to spend eternity with Him. This loss of sonship, however, has an antidote prophesied to us in Genesis 3:15, which states, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (RSV-CE). While this verse could use an article unto itself, suffice it to say that God foretells the coming and saving work of His Son, so early in the Bible. Despite sin, hope abounds. Where there is sin, grace is even more.

This promise of new life through Christ is expressed in the earliest moments of God's plan for humanity and that is something to surely be joyful about. This promise changes everything for us. The prophecy indicates that a Saviour will overcome evil - sin and death. We know this is fulfilled in Jesus. Even the ancient text of the Exultet, which is proclaimed at the Easter Vigil, tells us, "O truly necessary sin of Adam, destroyed completely by the Death of Christ! O happy fault that earned so great, so glorious a Redeemer!" It was necessary for God to become man in order to offer us salvation.



St Gregory of Nanzianus tells us: "What is not assumed is not redeemed." God the Son takes on a human nature in order that human nature, glorified, might be able to enter Heaven; that which was lost in the first sin. While we still must face the consequences of death, through Christ's death and resurrection, we need not fear eternal separation from God - the gates of Heaven are re-opened.

St Paul proclaims of this great triumph: "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" This statement should be a foundation of hope and joy in our hearts - we need not fear death because there is hope of Eternal Life.

Pope St John Paul II says of Catholics: "We are an Easter people and 'Alleluia' is our song." The question is: How do we live accordingly? How do we become people of greater joy? How do we allow the Resurrection to affect us? First, we must make Christ our focus and our goal. If He is first and foremost in our lives, then our soul

will look forward even more to that union with Him at the end of our lives. And not simply because we don't want to go to hell, but rather, because we want to be with Him forever in Heaven. We can do this by striving to eradicate sin in our lives, making frequent avail of the sacrament of Confession.

Another way that we can look towards Heaven is by attending Mass often, with our whole hearts invested. We can do this by praying before and after, by reflecting on the readings prior to Mass so we can absorb them better, by making sure we are in a worthy state to receive Communion and do so with utmost reverence. It is in the Mass that Heaven and Earth meet; it is the closest we can be to Heaven on Earth. The more we embrace Christ and the mystery of His resurrection through these encounters with Him, the more the joy and hope of the life to come can take root in our hearts. When we allow the reality of all the Resurrection entails, the more Christ's joy will fill us and spill over into all facets of our lives.

## Wise Up! Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR

ON the First Sunday of March, which this year is also the Third Sunday of Lent, the Gospel passage that we read is the story of Jesus driving people out of the Temple in Jerusalem.

This is where God lived among them. It is where they came together, a number of times a year, from all over the world to experience being God's people and to worship God.

A little bit like what has happened for us in regard to Christmas, commercialism took over and gradually large parts of the Temple were filled with stalls and money changers, and the whole experience of worship and awe were being whittled down. It got too much for Jesus. He made a whip and began overturning the tables, scattering the money, and driving the animals out of the Temple.

This was a very strong way of telling the people there to 'wise up'; to catch themselves on, and to return to what this was all about - the wonder and beauty of God and the privilege of being God's people.

### Let wisdom rule

We live in an age where there is instant information about almost everything. All of us are aware of what is happening in places that other generations had hardly heard of. And most of us speak as if we are experts on topics that we can hardly spell!

This is particularly true of the social media activity. It is happening 24/7 and so many people are desperately trying to keep up with events and rush in with their contribution, in terms of their ideas of what the truth is and what should happen.

One of the major things that is missing in our society is the opportunity for wisdom to have its proper place in determining right and wrong, in setting us on paths that will lead to what is best for everyone rather than just a few, that will be fruitful for the common good rather than just some vested interests.

Wisdom takes time to form and time to discern. This is sadly lacking in so many situations of our world today. It is largely a world that is instant and immediate. It is forever moving and not always forward.

### Wisdom and faith

In our Catholic Tradition, there are three sources of Wisdom, of God's Word, that have to be attended to all the time.

1. The Scriptures: We accept these as the Wisdom of the ages as inspired by God's Holy Spirit. They show us how God is the ultimate wisdom, because God is the source and origin of all that exists.

2. The Teaching and Tradition of the Church: In every generation since the beginning of the Church, a lot of effort was made to discern

how the Scriptures should be applied to the reality of life at different times. This included: teaching of doctrine in line with the Scriptures; teaching of moral life in the light of the Scriptures; particular disciplines that were needed to protect the Church from going astray.

3. The world in which we live: We can easily see how much the world we live in needs the wisdom of God. Our world is being threatened by so many different forces; all insisting that their way is the best.

What we may not appreciate though, is that the world today is also a source of God's Word and Wisdom for us. We can so easily settle into the mentality that we have all the answers because we have our faith. That is a huge mistake. We have to take our place in helping to find the answers that the world today is forcing all of us to answer. This will mean expanding our minds and hearts to embrace every person and every situation and bring life not death to them.

### Wisdom and life

'Wise Up' is a call to bring wisdom into the centre of all the important decisions that have to be made at every level: world-wide; international; national; local; personal. Many other factors will be fighting for that centre role; factors like self-interest,

self-promotion, self-gain. Other factors are often there also from history; factors like enmity, competitiveness, 'what I have I hold' and so on. Wisdom always has a great struggle to get in there to the centre and also to remain there and grow.

### Climate change

There is an unprecedented level of knowledge today about the state of the world and the grave dangers that face the future of the world. This knowledge comes to us day after day, and even hour after hour, from all the news platforms that show us floods and storms that can only be caused by the global warming of our planet. Scientists keep warning us of the dire consequences that face us, unless we take serious action to reverse it.

Each year, COP meetings of the nations of the world are held to decide on these actions. And each year, they come up against the same barriers, national interests that block the full making of decisions, and even when those decisions are made they are often not implemented because of those same national interests. Wisdom shows us that everybody is going to lose everything if those decisions are not made and fully implemented. There is a strong call for all to 'wise up'.

### Personal responsibility

It is easy to point the finger at the leaders of the world and see how they are failing us. But one of the things that is clear from the facts about Climate Change is

that every one of us has a personal responsibility for change. And yet, we resist this too, because of our own self-interest, our carelessness, or our lack of interest in what Pope Francis calls our Common Home.

We have been given a workable formula for our own and our family contribution: Reuse, Reduce, Recycle. How many of us actually take this to heart and try to work it?

### Violence and war

The world we live in is racked by war and violence of one kind or another. The two major areas of concern are obviously Ukraine and Gaza. But there are many other places that are being destroyed by war that are no longer mentioned.

There are always reasons given for each war, reasons that sometimes are presented as reasonable. These are often around the right of self-defence, which can quickly deteriorate into vengeance. Every day, we see pictures of mass destruction and hear of numerous people being killed and countless others being dispossessed and rendered homeless.

Wisdom teaches us very clearly that war and violence only lead to more of the same. Making peace is the only way forward to life and goodness and hope. It is a very difficult decision to make, but it is the only one that is going to bring us into the future with gladness. There is a huge call for everyone to 'wise up'.

### At every level

Making peace is wisdom's way,

not only at the large level of nations and factions. It is also the only way for life at the personal level of marriage, of family life, of divisions in the community of faith, and so on. 'Wise up' makes so much sense in all of our destructive quarrels and enmities.

### Conclusion

Climate change and war/violence are only two to the very many issues that are torturing and/or destroying our society today. Mass migration; the millions of displaced people; starvation; human trafficking; abortion; sexual abuse of children and women, which is often promoted by pornography; drug addiction; the gender wars that are leading to the destruction of marriage and family life; etc, are some of the other issues that our society needs to attend to urgently, because countless people are suffering greatly in our world.

This time of Lent is given to us to renew our faith in Christ. We do that by standing with Him for all that is good and best for each human person, from conception to natural death and beyond; to proclaim the goodness of all creation as God's creation and our common home; to live as witnesses to Christ in our homes and families, and also in our faith communities in which there is a home made for everyone and no one is excluded; and to make peace our way of life, so that the world may believe and give praise to God.

# Children's Catechism Club - C3

by Veronica Harley

**HELLO children. Welcome to the month of March. This month is dedicated to St Joseph, the husband of Mary and foster father of Jesus. In Matthew's Gospel, Joseph is described as a just man. This means he was a true, faithful person, full of justice and virtue. Joseph was given a very important task by God; he had to protect Mary and Jesus, work hard to provide for them, teach Jesus and lovingly watch over Mother and Child. St Joseph did an amazing job and so he is loved and celebrated by many.**

**St Joseph pray for us!**



## Lent

The season of Lent (CCC 540) continues during the month of March. Catholics are asked to do humble acts of penance, like abstaining from meat or some other food, making more time for family prayer, visiting the Blessed Sacrament, praying the Stations of the Cross, or helping the elderly or lonely.

Everyone is encouraged to participate in the special season of Lent. It helps us to purify our bodies and souls in preparation for the wonderful feast of Easter, when we celebrate how Christ overcame suffering and rose from the dead.



## Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday (CCC 560) is the first day of Holy Week. On this day, Christians remember how Jesus travelled into Jerusalem riding on a donkey. It is called Palm Sunday because, on this day, people were so happy to see Jesus that they took palm branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The people shouted 'Hosanna', which means 'God saves' in Hebrew, as Jesus passed by. Palm Sunday is also known as Passion Sunday because Holy Week reminds us of Jesus' passion and death. This year, we celebrate Palm Sunday on March 24.

## The Easter Triduum

The Easter Triduum (CCC 1168) is the proper name for the three-day liturgical season which concludes Lent and introduces the joy of the Easter season. The Church Fathers saw this celebration as being unitive,

bringing together major feasts to memorialize the suffering, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. The Triduum begins with the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. It includes Good Friday (Veneration of the Cross), Holy Saturday (the celebration of the Easter Vigil), and closes with evening prayer on Easter Sunday.

The Easter Triduum celebrates a single indivisible mystery over Friday, Saturday and Sunday, as it marks the most significant events of Holy Week and draws it to a spectacular close. This year we begin our celebration of the Easter Triduum on Holy Thursday, March 28.

## Saints of the Month

March 4 – St Casimir

March 9 – St Francis of Rome

March 17 – St Patrick

March 19 – St Joseph



## St. Patrick

St Patrick was born in Britain, but he is the patron of Ireland. When he was 16 years old, he was captured as a slave and taken to Ireland, where for six years he took care of sheep and pigs. He was very lonely and prayed to God all the time. Eventually, he escaped from his captives and returned to Britain, where he studied to become a priest and teacher. He returned to Ireland as Bishop to teach the people about God.

Patrick often used shamrocks to explain the Holy Trinity. He worked many miracles as he preached and converted people all over Ireland. Many kingdoms were converted to Christianity by Patrick. After living in poverty, enduring many sufferings, Patrick died on March 17, 461AD.

## The Annunciation of the Lord – March 25 (CCC 494)

On the Feast of the Annunciation of the Lord (CCC 494), March 25, we celebrate how the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary of Nazareth with a special message. The Angel Gabriel announced to Her that She was full of grace and that the Lord was with Her. God had chosen Her to have the Christ Child through the power of the Holy Spirit and to call Him 'Jesus'. He is the Saviour of the world, the Son of God (Luke 1:26-33).

Mary, trusting in God, replied "Yes" to what the angel had told Her. She was meek and obedient to God's will. We can learn from Mary how to live humble Christian lives and to be always ready to say 'yes' to God, as She did.



## The Year of Prayer 2024

The 'Youcat for Kids' tells us that when we pray, we hear God but not in the same way we hear people speaking to us. God speaks to us very quietly, in a secret language, the language of the heart, so we should always have our hearts open to listen to what He has to say. We can also hear God speaking to us through the Bible, and through wise and holy people (Q. 140).

'Youcat for Kids' also tells us we can talk to God through prayers.



## YOUCAT for Kids

There are prayers we have learned and there are prayers that are our own words. We can simply speak to Him in our own way about the secret wishes of our hearts and what is happening in our lives (Q. 141).



Pope Francis teaches us to pray using our hand:

- The thumb is the closest finger to you. Pray for those who are closest to you, for example, your family.
- The next finger is your pointer/



index finger. Pray for those who teach you, instruct you and heal you.

• The middle finger is the tallest. It reminds us of our leaders and those in authority.

• The fourth is the ring finger, the weakest finger. It reminds us to pray for those in need.

• And finally, your pinkie/smallest finger; this reminds you to pray/be grateful for yourself.

## The Annunciation

*An Angel visits Mary*

*"You will conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus" (Luke 1:31).*

*Choose the correct word from the word bank to answer the question...*

### Word Bank:

Gabriel, David, Angel, Jesus, Joseph, Nazareth

1. A heavenly being, a messenger sent from God?
2. The Son who was born to Mary?
3. The name of the angel who appeared to Mary?
4. The man to whom Mary was engaged to marry?
5. The town in Galilee where Mary lived?
6. Joseph was of the house of?

### Answers:

1. Angel, 2. Jesus, 3. Gabriel, 4. Joseph, 5. Nazareth, 6. David

## Quiz Time with Lawrence

1. Alexander de Croo is the current Prime Minister of what European country?
2. What prestigious awards are presented annually to recognise exceptional performances in plays and musicals staged on Broadway?
3. What pair of adventurers grew up in the fictional town of St Petersburg, Missouri?
4. Who was the lead singer with 1970s/80s rock band 'Pulp'?
5. Who was Mayor of New York at the time of the 2001 terrorist attacks?
6. What TV comedy role has been played at various times by Idris Elba, Will Ferrell and Steve Carrell?
7. In what country would you find the spectacular Eden Gardens cricket ground?
8. What are the three common primary colours?
9. What was the name of Denis the Menace's dog?
10. In which US state is the city of Baltimore situated?
11. Who is the Patron Saint of Motorists?
12. Kate Callahan was the fictional name of what TV detective's wife?
13. What country knocked Ireland out of last year's rugby

**Quiz Answers:** 1, Belgium; 2, The Tonys; 3, Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn; 4, Jarvis Cocker; 5, Rudy Giuliani; 6, Manager of 'The Office' (US); 7, India; 8, Red, Yellow and Blue; 9, Gnasher; 10, Maryland; 11, St Christopher; 12, Lieutenant Columbo; 13, New Zealand; 14, Humza Yousaf; 15, Rita Coolidge; 16, Reykjavik; 17, Great Dane; 18, For Whom the Bells Toll; 19, The Lev; 20, Vin Diesel; 21, Thirty; 22, Jupiter; 23, Jimmy; 24, Sweden; 25, Rick Edwards.

World Cup?

14. Who replaced Nicola Sturgeon as leader of the Scottish National Party?
15. What US singer duetted with her then husband, Kris Kristofferson on the hit 'Help Me Make It Through The Night'?
16. Which of Europe's capital cities is closest in distance to the USA?
17. What breed of dog is cartoon character 'Scooby Doo'?
18. What Ernest Hemingway novel tells the story of Robert Jordan, a young American volunteer fighting in the Spanish Civil War?
19. What is the national currency of Bulgaria?
20. By what name is American actor Mark Sinclair more commonly known?
21. How many fences are jumped in order to complete Horse Racing's Aintree Grand National?
22. Which is the largest planet in the solar system?
23. Who is the youngest member of the musical family, 'The Osmonds'?
24. Which country just this month became the newest member of NATO?
25. Name the current presenter of TV quiz show 'Impossible'?

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

# Let Your Light Shine!

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

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



'Were not our hearts burning within us' (Lk 24:32).



## Cumber Upper & Learmount Parish Mission

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