



The NET

Sharing fruits of faith in Derry Diocese

ISSUE 76, MAY 2022
PRICE - £1.50
/€2.00



See inside...

Americans on Sr Clare tour – Derry



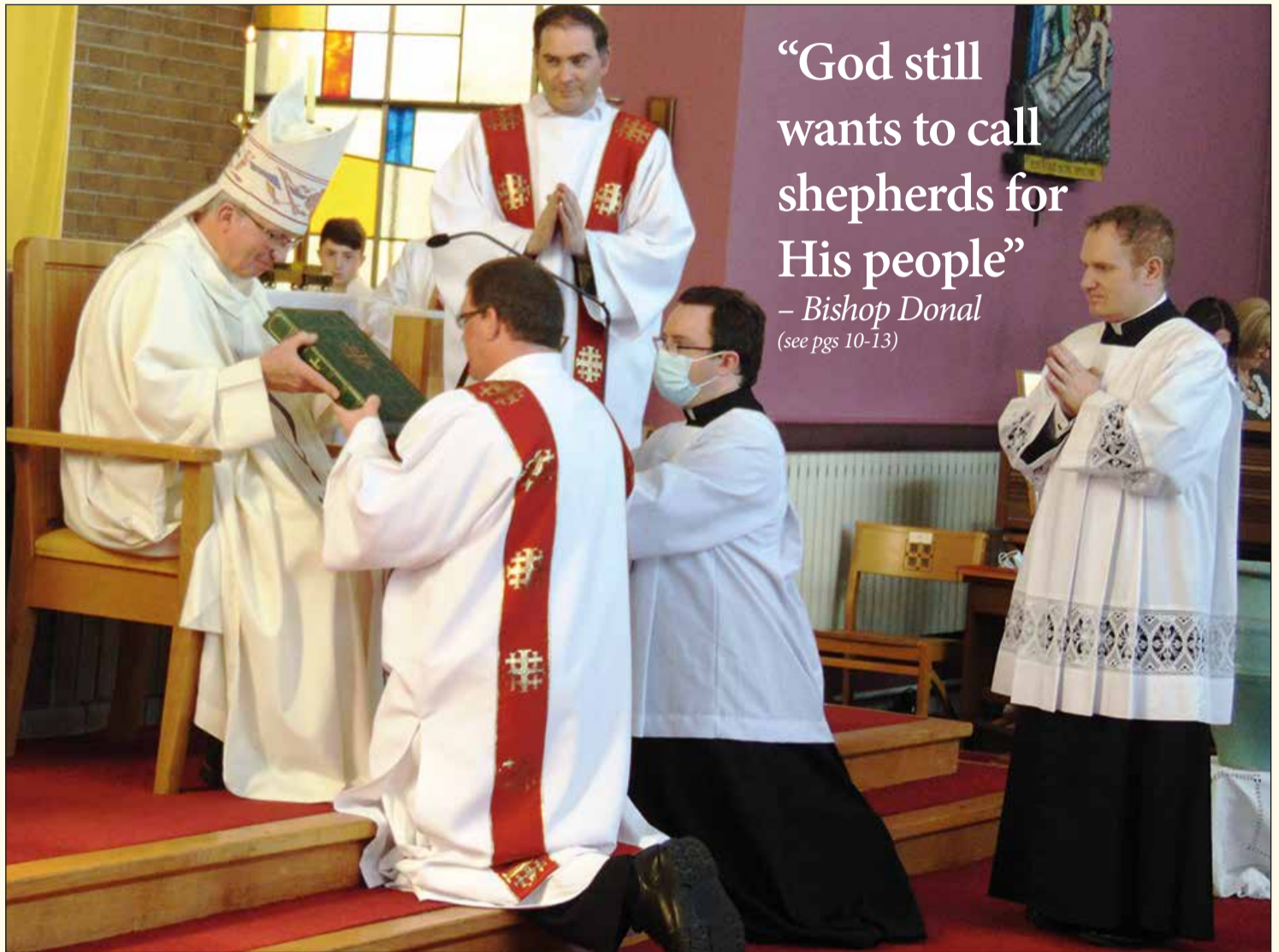
Anam Og Easter Fun - Termonbacca.



Folk and Choir Workshop



Malin Well Turas - Malin



“God still wants to call shepherds for His people”

– Bishop Donal
(see pgs 10-13)

Rev Michael McCaul, Derry, was ordained to the diaconate on Vocations Sunday by Bishop Donal, in Christ The King Church, Cappagh Parish, Omagh.



Mary's Day Celebration - Chapel Rd PS, Waterside.



Mercy Ambassadors - Thornhill



Steelstown PS 50th - Steelstown.

People in focus



Rev Michael McCaul, Derry



Sr Clare Crockett SHM, Derry



Fr Cajetan Apeh ocd,
Termonbacca



Mrs Siobhan Gillen,
Steelstown PS Principal



The late Fr Paddy Dooher ssc,
Aughrack

Also featuring: Praying for our young people – Pope’s prayer intention reflection; Young Writers share thoughts; Children’s Catechism Club; Ireland Needs Fatima – Carnhill & Moville; Pastoral Letter on Vocations; An Sionad – Irish section; Walking as pilgrims with Our Lady – Reflections from across the Diocese; Seventh Anniversary of Laudato Si; Quiz...and much more...

Contents

Parish deliveries

Copies of 'The Net' will be available in parishes again in the coming months

Praying for our young people... - A reflection on Pope's May prayer intention by Aoife O'Neill p2	Derry Diocesan Lough Derg Pilgrimage..... p2	Diary Dates p2
Anam Og Easter Fun by Aoife O'Neill p3	Steelstown PS celebrates 50 years at heart of community..... p4-6	
Bishop Donal welcomes Vatican document on identity of Catholic schools and current challenges..... p6	Thornhill Mercy Ambassadors inspired by Global Leadership Conference..... p6	
Mary's Day a joyful celebration at Chapel Road PS..... p7	Ireland needs Fatima..... p7	
Young Writers share their thoughts on... * Celebrating Our Lady in the month of May * Do This In Memory Of Me' Children's Programme * St Therese and her Little Way * Pope Francis encouraging the youth to bear witness with joy * Taking action against climate change p8-9	WYD 2023 Patron Saints announced p9	
Diocese celebrates diaconate ordination of Michael McCaul p10-13	Pastoral Letter on Diocesan Priesthood - Bishop Donal..... p13	
New chapter opens for Derry Carmelites with arrival of first Nigerian friar..... p14-15	We are channels of God's love through the words and way we sing - Folk & Choir workshop..... p15	
Remembering Fr Paddy Dooher... ...who learned from his Lord to be gentle and humble of heart p16	An Sionad Irish section by Fr Oliver Crilly's 'A Team' p17	
Walking as pilgrims with Our Lady - Reflections from across the Diocese..... p18-22	Malin Well Turas in honour of Our Lady..... p22	
American theology professor hails Sr Clare as bright light in world with shades of darkness..... p23	Young Americans share thoughts on Sr Clare p23	
Eucharistic Adoration Apostolate returning to Knock for annual pilgrimage..... p24	Divine Mercy Sunday celebrated in Claudy..... p24	
Pope Benedict & Sr Clare: an unlikely dynamic duo by Fr Stephen Quinn..... p25	"Come away and rest with me" - Reflection by Fr John McLaughlin ssc..... p26-27	
Call my brother back by Vera McFadden..... p27	Saints we celebrate in May by Fr Michael McGoldrick ocd..... p28-29	
Seventh anniversary of Laudato Si by Patricia McCormack..... p29	Blessed Brunch & Books..... p29	St Joseph weekend retreat for men..... p29
Receive the Holy Spirit by Fr Johnny Doherty..... p30	Concert for Ukraine..... p30	Prayer for Priests..... p30
Pope's Prayer Intention..... p30	Children's Catechism Club - C3 by Veronica Harley..... p31	Quiz Time with Lawrence..... p31

Aoife O'Neill reflects on the Pope's May prayer intention: "We pray for all young people, called to live life to the fullest; may they see in Mary's life the way to listen, the depth of discernment, the courage that faith generates, and the dedication to service".

Do we help our young understand how spending time listening to God everyday should be the most important 'streak' in their life?

POPE Francis has called for the Church to join him in praying for faith-filled young people as his special prayer intention for the month of May. Speaking on May 5, he said: "When I think of a model with whom young people can identify with, our Mother, Mary, always comes to mind: her courage, the way she knew how to listen, and her dedication to service. She was courageous and determined to say 'yes' to the Lord."

As a Church, we need to pray for our young people. As a mother of a now 14-year-old daughter, I have a newfound respect for Mary's 'fiat'. The courage and trust in God that she showed proves the depth of her personal relationship with God.

Reflecting on Mary and the Annunciation also calls me to reflect on the ways we are forming our young people in the faith here and now. In our schools and in our homes, we teach our young people to be ambitious, but are we teaching them to listen to God?

From a young age, we encourage them to set goals and achieve good grades, to push themselves to achieve their dreams. We sign them up for extra-curricular activities and help them acquire new skills. We invest our time, money and energy in helping them to become the best version of themselves. However, do we put the same energy into teaching them about Christ?

We may spend hours on the side-lines watching them play sport, but do we spend time with them in Eucharistic Adoration or reading of scriptures? We can easily spend the money needed for concert tickets or new games, but are we willing to invest money for them to go on retreat or grow in faith?

It is so easy to be caught up in the skills needed to improve their life in the world and completely miss the opportunity to encourage their growth in those things which can have eternal benefits.

In this day and age of technological advancement, what are our young people learning? They are learning that life is fast paced, always changing and they are taught

to quickly consume, scan, browse and scurry along. They are not taught how to "be still and know" or how to sit and listen - instead it is all frantic, fast paced reaction and movement.

If Mary's days had been filled with the sounds of Tiktok videos or Instagram stories, would she have been open to the message of the Angel Gabriel? As parents, teachers and role models, do we help the young people in our lives to understand how spending time listening to God everyday should be the most important 'streak' in their life? (A streak, or a "Snapchat streak", expresses how many days together you've managed to send a picture or video back and forth with a specific friend.)

The digital world is forming our young people. The content of those social media platforms is what they are consuming for many hours each day. As they scroll through social media feeds, more and more information keeps coming at them, with new trends coming and going in the blink of an eye. What seems appealing and is trending one day, is outdated and gone by the next. Surviving in this environment calls for them to absorb reams and reams of information and to keep on going. To stop or remove themselves from this leaves them feeling unease and worry about what they might be missing.

Therefore, as a Church, as parents, grandparents, teachers, friends and neighbours, we need, more than ever, to encourage young people to listen. We need to create environments where young people have the opportunity to come away from their screens and to practice attentiveness. Without the ability to listen, they will never be able to hear what God is asking of them.

Discern

The Pope continued in his speech: "You young people, who want to build something new, a better world, follow her example, take risks!...Don't forget that in order to follow Mary you need to discern and discover what Jesus wants from you, not what you might

think you can do".

In recent years, we have seen through Greta Thunberg and the climate campaigns that young people have a heart and a passion for a better world and to improve things for future generations. We are created with a desire for what is 'fair' and 'right', and any parent can tell you how clearly this can be seen in young children. Young people really are so in touch with their concern for others! As we grow older, the obvious pressures on adults, as they become caretakers and financially responsible for families, seem to dampen this passion.

Youth are so much less limited in their imaginations than their adult counterparts...they have so much less to 'unlearn' that they can often see things that we cannot. As a Church, we need to be there for these young people, to help them, like Mary, to discern what God wants them to do with their passions. We should extend to the youth in our spheres a seat at the table, an open ear, and an open mind every chance we get.

The Pope has this advice for young people regarding discernment: "...And in this discernment, it's a great help to listen to the words of grandparents. In those words of grandparents, you will find a wisdom that will take you beyond the issues of the moment."

It isn't only the role of grandparents to help young people in this discernment. As an entire Church, we all have a role to play. With the right help and encouragement, by being there to listen and support, we can ALL help the youth of today to put their skills and passions into work of dedicated service to God.

In a world and culture that increasingly demands conformance to its ideals, tolerance and acceptance of each individual's unmitigated pursuit of happiness, young people have an unprecedented opportunity to contrast that myopic, self-centred world view with the enduring hope of Christ-centred living.

Our youth need to know that a life given to Christ is not wasted but rather, in return, He promises life to the fullest.



Aoife O'Neill

Mary sets forth a perfect example of how faith can give the courage and trust in God needed when going against the grain. Without our help in developing and growing in their faith, our young people will not become the saints that God has created them to be.

May we join our voices with the Pope when he says: "Dear

young people, do not be afraid of making decisive choices in life. Have faith; the Lord will not abandon you!"

May we take every opportunity to remind all young people that they are known, loved, created for greatness and, most importantly, no matter what, they are never alone.

Derry Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lough Derg
Spiritual Director: Bishop Donal Mc Keown
Friday 24 - Sunday 26 June 2022
If you are aged 16 + contact
Derry Diocesan Catechetical Centre
Tel: +44 28 71264087 Email: lizzie.rea@derrydiocese.org
£80 per person (includes transport from Cathedral)

Diary Dates

Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage
The Derry Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes will take place this year from July 3-8. Costing £689 pp sharing, the flight will leave from Belfast. There are still some places still available. For further information contact the Pilgrimage Office, 164 Bishop Street, Derry, tel 028 71260293 or email derry pilgrim@outlook.com.

All Ireland Rosary Rally

An All Ireland Rosary Rally will take place at Knock Shrine, in Co Mayo, on June 4, at 1.30 pm. Over 30 buses are going from all over the island of Ireland, including from Derry City and Castletin.

The booking contact for the Derry City bus is Ann (07734 562 102), and the Castletin bus contact is Mary (087 758 6350). Visit www.coastalrosaryireland.ie for updated bus list.

Life in the Spirit

The 'Life in the Holy Spirit' seminars organised by Omagh Charismatic Prayer Group

finish on Thursday, June 2, with a talk on 'Transformation' by Fr Declan Boland on 'Transformation'. The seminar will run in conjunction with 7.30 pm Holy Mass in the Sacred Heart Church, Omagh, Co Tyrone.

You can also participate in the Seminar online via webcam at www.drumraghparish.com.

"Let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires take the water of life without price" (Rev 22:17).

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.

The NET

Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

Contacting us:

If you have a story that you would like to share or an event you would like covered by The Net, just drop an email to

editorthenet15@gmail.com
or ring/text 07809292852

Anam Og Easter fun

by Aoife O'Neill

DURING the Easter break from school, 14 young people aged 10-14 years old from the Anam Og youth group attended a day of Easter fun in Termonbacca. They had a great time playing Easter themed games, learning more about Easter and what it means for us as Catholics today.

There was great competition to see who the champion of the Egg & Spoon Race would be, and a Hop-in Hop-out game challenged everyone's sense of direction. A few brave children volunteered to take on the challenge of telling the Easter story in under 60 seconds.

Explaining how Easter was a great act of love from God to us, the group then began to explore love and what it really is. The young people really enjoyed a short Lectio Divina exercise, with scripture on the love of God;

listening as each person explained what part of the scripture spoke to them.

Following lunch, the monastery was livened up with the noise of groups running around trying to be the first group to complete the indoor scavenger hunt and crack the hidden Easter message. The groups then battled it out in a team work challenge to build the largest spaghetti and marshmallow tower.

The main event of the day took the form of the outdoor Easter Egg Hunt. Children ran all over the gardens and the grounds finding the eggs that Fr Stephen Quinn ocd and Fr Patrick Lagan had earlier hidden. The three golden eggs were recovered by the one person - someone had clearly been practicing.

The day was rounded off with

a beautiful time of prayer and reflection led by Fr Patrick Lagan, who was then surprised with a birthday cake and song from the group, as he had celebrated his 40th birthday the day before.

All in all, the day was a great success and thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. Anam Og continue to meet every other Sunday in Termonbacca from 6-7.15 pm. The next meeting will be Sunday, May 29, and newcomers are more than welcome.

Wehopetocontinueourfundays and day trips over the summer months also. If you would like to find out more or sign up please contact Aoife on 028 71 262512 or email termonbaccaderry@gmail.com or contact Fr Lagan on 028 71 262894.



Steelstown PS celebrates 50 years at heart of community

THE Mass to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Steelstown Primary School was a joyous occasion, with a sunny welcome for former staff members, local primary and post-primary principals, the Diocesan RE Advisor, Board of Governor and Parents' Association members, and local Councillors and MLAs, etc, who were among the guests joining pupils, of P4 and above, and current staff members in Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Steelstown, for the ceremony.

The ceremony began with a number of children bringing forward symbolic items to the sanctuary, including: a candle to represent Jesus, the light of the world, as a reminder that God's Holy people are asked to be the light of Christ for others; a Bible, the Word of God, as a reminder to listen to the Word of God and respond to its message each day; the School crest, which includes a spiral representing the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and God's everlasting love for all; a globe as a reminder that as members of the Body of Christ we are part of a much wider community, and should always be aware, led by the Holy Spirit, of the needs of others and be prepared to use our gifts and talents to help and support them.

The school choir was in fine voice, with Derry-born soprano, Margaret Keys, who is currently a teacher in the school, joining in the singing during the Mass concelebrated by Bishop Donal, Fr John McDevitt, PP, and Fr Eamon Graham, PP Lavey & Greenlough, who once ministered in the Steelstown Parish.

Joking that he could remember when he turned 50, Bishop Donal noted that this landmark anniversary for Steelstown Primary School was an opportunity to reflect on that new beginning back on April 17, 1972, and the following years, with much to be grateful for.

"The school began at a challenging and exciting time in the history of the city," he remarked, adding: "With the end of the former discredited system of local government, the city was able to expand and much needed new housing was beginning to appear. But, on the other hand, in the wake of Bloody Sunday, the city was a dangerous environment. Terrible years of suffering and conflict lay ahead – even if nobody knew it. But education had to go on because, as someone said, every child's name is 'Now'.

"And the school has done this in changing times and in the face of changing challenges. The first 25 years of the school were lived out surrounded by the reality of conflict. And the more recent decades have presented new problems for families and communities".

Commending the "huge and consistent role" Steelstown PS had played in the community, the Bishop remarked: "It began with a parish that had to find a substantial part of the building costs. And it has continued with that belief that the school is not separate from the community, merely a facility provided by government for teaching the core curriculum. The great strength of Catholic education has been that schools have grown up within communities that had a passion for educating children, both inside and outside of school.

"With young people spending four-fifths of their waking hours outside the classroom, quality education takes place when the community and the school are working closely together in forming the next generation of confident and committed citizens. It is foolish to expect schools to solve the problems that are being created outside its walls".

He continued: "Catholic schools like this were set up by parish communities to serve their community and its children. Catholic schools will continue to be available where parents wish them to exist and to be welcoming to children from all cultural and faith backgrounds.

"There are those who present a caricature of the Catholic school as a narrow and sectarian invention that has no place in a modern society. Thus, people will rightly be angry when some political leaders suggest that some other type of school is morally superior to a Catholic school – and that government should prefer only some other form of education.

"Some of our parishes may have to fight to ensure that the very successful model of Catholic education that they take for granted is not scrapped as a relic of some sad past. As part of the most successful educational sector in Northern Ireland, Catholic schools like Steelstown expect to have a place at the table with other educational partners – and not told to sit in the corner and keep quiet, while others restructure schools for ideological rather than educational reasons".

Bishop Donal went on to note how schools like Steelstown face other challenges as they seek to prepare young people for adult life: "Your school offers not merely excellent teaching of subject content, but an integrated way of looking at the world. You offer high expectations for all pupils and a belief that they are all made in God's image and likeness. You offer a way of looking at their lives which says that they are not just accidents of evolution; ultimately no more valuable than an insect. You tell them a story about the world which speaks of a loving God, who takes our burdens on

His back.

Pastoral

"Many will disagree with that way of looking at the world. But it is perfectly reasonable for people to argue, for example, that unborn children should have rights and protection. People should not be mocked for that belief by others who think they have superior wisdom. Pastoral care of vulnerable children is important and your school does it superbly well. But it is dishonest for some to use the cover of pastoral care in order to teach an ideology, which no-one is allowed to criticise.

"People of faith are as entitled to hand on their worldview as anybody else is. It is a very intolerant ideology that treats people of faith as heretics who should be banned from any influence on children. There is little integrity in a modern diverse society which proclaims that only their version of the truth is infallible and not open to question. Where awkward questions are rejected as making someone feel uncomfortable, there is no searching for the truth, just a huge pressure for conformity to suit the strong.

"Catholic education at its best asks the right questions, even when they are not popular. The truth may be uncomfortable but only the truth will set us free".

He concluded: "As you look back on the last half century, you can give thanks for great leaders, wonderful staff and a supportive community. When you can look back with gratitude to God, you can face the future with confidence because you believe in a God who is leading you.

"An honest evaluation of the past enables you to learn from what has happened, and to believe that the collective wisdom in the family of Catholic schools will support you in facing the future. Let no-one try to make you apologise for offering a Catholic education. Seek to develop your understanding of the rich intellectual and cultural heritage that we share. Do not be afraid of dialogue and engagement with other beliefs and traditions.

"If you are prepared to stand for wisdom and integrity, for generosity and love, for community and truth, then you

will continue to offer a wonderful preparation for the greatest job any of us does – that is to be a human being. Be proud on your website and publicity materials to identify yourself as a Catholic school. That has been key to your success for the last 50 years. It will continue to be a blessing on you as you seek to help your pupils to dream and to soar. Be open to the grace of the Holy Spirit as you face the future. God will not let you down".

The ceremony concluded with a special reflection delivered by the principal, Mrs Siobhan Gillen, remembering the many gifts bestowed on the Steelstown PS community over the last 50 years, and giving thanks...

...for the good times experienced, for the difficult times, the happy times, the sad times;

...for the light of Christ that the school has shone on each one gathered and on those no longer with us;

...for the gift of those who have shared the journey - families, staff, priests, parish community, all those who have worked in the school and who have given of their gifts and talents in so many ways - each one the light of Christ for the many young people who have passed through the doors, guiding, supporting, loving and encouraging;

...for the dedication of all that helped so many to learn what it truly means to be a child of God, an active member of a loving and caring community, the body of Christ, and to realise that they are precious in the eyes of God, made in His image and likeness;

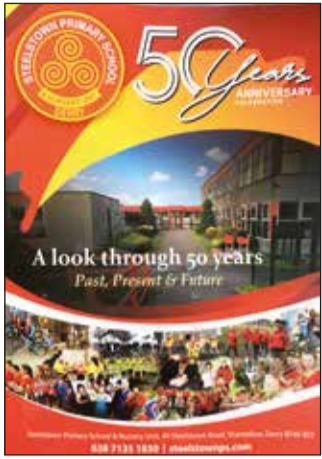
...for the young people who through their joy, enthusiasm for life and innocence, draw us closer into friendship with Christ.

"As the Steelstown Primary School community looks to the future," continued Mrs Gillen, "may the love of God the Father support us, may the light of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, guide us, and may the Holy Spirit strengthen us, now and always. Amen."

After Mass, refreshments were provided in the Primary School for people to enjoy while viewing the anniversary displays and reminiscing.



Past pupil of Steelstown PS humbled to now be principal...



STEELSTOWN Primary School & Nursery Unit has produced a colourful magazine to mark its 50th anniversary, with a mix of old and new photographs of pupils and staff over the years and interesting contributions from former pupils and staff members, sharing memories of their time at the school.

Writing an introductory article, Siobhan Gillen, who assumed the mantle of principal back in June 2017, explains that the school takes its name from the nearby village and was officially opened under the leadership of the “much loved and very fondly remembered” principal, Jim Quinn, on Monday, April 17, 1972, with P1 classes.

The initial enrolment was 285, which rose to 1,005 by September 1972. Other principals over the years included Mr Joe Martin, Mrs Kathleen Bradley and Mrs Deirdre Gillespie.

Noting that while many changes have taken place over the past 50 years, the important things remain the same, Mrs Gillen writes: “Our core purpose is to serve our community by educating and developing our children and working in partnership with our families”.

She highlights that the school

“housed the first established Irish Medium Primary Education in Derry”, which developed into the neighbouring school, Bunscoil Cholmcille.

She also mentions the provision of a Nursery Unit, which is consistently oversubscribed, and the establishment of Surestart within the school premises, showing how it has adapted to meet the needs of children and the community.

Continually upgrading its facilities and resources to ensure each child receives “the best educational experience and opportunities”, the school has a library, computer suite, rainbow room, hygiene areas, sensory areas, nurture nooks, an oratory, music accommodation, outdoor play, nature areas, and a fully refurbished school hall/sports hall.

“We pride ourselves in being an excellent community-based

school,” continues Mrs Gillen, “We are winners of Northern Ireland Families First Award for Best School in Northern Ireland. This recognises the outstanding teamwork, pastoral care and dedication of all our staff in providing the best all round holistic education for all our children, preparing them for life as adults.”

As a past pupil of Steelstown PS, from when it first opened on April 17, 1972, Mrs Gillen concludes her comments by saying that she is very humbled to now be principal “of such a wonderful school”, and “privileged to be part of the lives of our families.”

“We are blessed with our community,” she adds: “I am certain that Steelstown PS & Nursery Unit will continue to thrive and excel in the next 50 years, with children being at the centre of all we do”.



photographs continued from page 5



Bishop Donal welcomes Vatican document on identity of Catholic schools and current challenges

A new 'Instruction' for centres of Catholic education released by the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education, that focuses on the identity of Catholic schools and on current challenges, has been welcomed by Bishop Donal, who chairs the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and the Catholic Schools' Trustee Service.

Entitled 'The Identity of Catholic Schools for a Culture of Dialogue', the document highlights "the need for a clearer awareness and consistency of the Catholic identity of the Church's educational institutions throughout the world", and the prevention of "conflicts and divisions in the essential sector of education".

Remarking that the document comes "at an appropriate time for schools in many parts of the world, and for us here, in Northern Ireland", Bishop Donal stated: "Catholic schools face many new challenges. A lot of

them come from circles in society where people benefited from the highest achieving sector in Northern Ireland. Now Catholics are portrayed by some as barriers to a glorious new future where faith will not play a role in public life - or be an identity that modern people should admit to".

He continued: "The document challenges us to develop our identity in the context of a dialogue within the Catholic community - and to contribute to the Common Good in dialogue with other educational partners".

"The Catholic community and school now exist in a different context to what prevailed a couple of decades ago," said Bishop Donal, adding: "A new dominant ideology portrays faith as a relic of an evil past - without any recognition of the serious problems that secularism creates today.

"Thus, we have to seek an identity for the Catholic school in a Northern Ireland society

marked by: A fragmentation of identity and the growth of many sub-groups in society; greater religious and cultural diversity; a widespread moral relativism, especially as regards sexuality; negative assumptions about anything to do with faith; and a political landscape where we have few friends".

Noting that there is a temptation "to assume that the best way forward is to retreat into a small number of 'truly Catholic' schools", he commented: "However, this document invites us to go out and engage civic society. Our offer is directed first and foremost, not to those who are 'insiders', but to those who are most in need of support or are far from the faith. Our task is to be salt and light to the world.

"And that is what secular society does not want us to do! It could live with us retreating into ourselves and becoming a harmless group of social oddities. This document points out that

our mission is to walk with the people of our time, confident in our identity and seeking to serve society and not just to preserve ourselves. A self-centred Catholic community and education system has little to offer".

He added: "In the 20th century, catholic communities in Northern Ireland invested huge amounts of money in building schools so that our young people could have a good education. This document suggests that we will have to look again at how much we value our faith-based education and what we will do to ensure that such an option is available to parents long into the future.

"These are challenging times. But tough challenges have always brought out the best in us!"

(https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html)

Thornhill Mercy Ambassadors inspired by 'Mercy Girl Effect Global Leadership Conference' by Ciara Collins & Yr 14 Mercy Ambassadors

OUR Thornhill College Mercy Ambassadors have been blessed to work closely with Sr Deirdre Mullan to spark conversation regarding the aspects of life that we take for granted. The academic year of 2021-2022 focused on the 'Women at the Well' campaign, where young female ambassadors scattered across America and Ireland used their initiative to raise money for those deprived from the right to water.

A central component to this campaign was to develop a personal and universal understanding of mercy. Collectively, we viewed mercy as an opportunity to forgive both the mistakes of others and our personal mistakes in life, but most importantly, we must learn from these mistakes and never be too harsh on ourselves!

We were chosen to participate in the 'Mercy Girl Effect Global Leadership Conference', which as an international Mercy Conference with representatives from pupils in the USA and schools in Ireland.

We felt most privileged and honoured to be chosen to attend and converse with students our age on mercy concerns. As part of this international conference, Cathy Johnson highlighted the

importance of intertwining our personality with our duty as Mercy Ambassadors of Thornhill College.

As we shared the characteristic of empathy, we saw the need to raise awareness for the 'Women at the Well', inspired by Sr Deirdre's presentation on the Mercy Girl Effect Project. We further brought this into action through an array of fundraisers, such as our 'Tea and Chat' mornings, which allowed us to actively discuss our plans to incorporate mercy into our futures as young leaders, confidently fulfilling the legacy of Catherine McAuley, "to fit young women for earth without unfitting them for heaven." This is what we strive to do as Mercy Ambassadors in Thornhill College.

Inspired by our fellow Mercy Ambassadors in America, we decided to collect for a Loose Change Appeal for our global Mercy Sisters. We were truly amazed and overwhelmed by the support of our school community, who raised £600. We know that Sr Deirdre will put this very generous contribution to good use for the 'Women at the Well' campaign.

To us and our school community, Mercy has been

to live out the key values of compassion, kindness and acceptance. A huge component of this is forgiveness of ourselves and others, and recognising when we are at fault. Behind our mistakes there is an educational purpose which we can learn from, thus fulfilling Pope Francis' vision, "A little bit of mercy makes the world less cold and more just".

What we have taken from our Mercy Ambassador role:

"During the Mercy Conference earlier this year, we had quite interesting and informative conversations about helping younger year groups in our schools adapt to life in secondary school. From communicating with the new students through letters and emails the summer before they enter the school, to reach out before the school even starts, it was insightful seeing girls from across America speak of this 'Big sister, Little sister' system they had implemented within their schools to make the rather daunting school environment a lot more personal and comforting for the newcomers. As a Wellness Ambassador, I enjoyed working alongside similar minded women in maintaining the mercy ethos within our own schools, learning

from the words spoken by Sr Deirdre and the key speakers of this event". Rachel Wallace.

"Following the global, virtual celebration of the Mercy Girl Effect, I felt inspired to initiate change amongst young people, particularly those struggling with mental health. Only a few hours before the conference, I had been appointed Head Girl of Thornhill College; a coincidental blessing to initiate my journey of leadership.

The Myers-Briggs Personality test, led by Cathy Johnson, shed light on my strengths as an energetic and motivational leader; one whom fosters teamwork with an aim to support and nurture those around me. Combined with my enthusiasm for psychology, I encompassed these skills when introducing an early intervention nurture room within our school, followed by a 'Walk and Talk' service for students, alongside our prefect team and wellness ambassadors.

On the second day, Sr Deirdre spoke of our mission as women of mercy to help those denied the right to water and, although thousands of miles across the world, her message struck home in Derry. She reminded us that behind every devastating statistic,



there is a human being struggling, feeling lost and hopeless. This is also true of those battling mental health, with many suffering in silence. My mission as a global citizen is to apply the mercy values of love, compassion and kindness to minimise the damage caused by mental health deterioration". Ava McGinn.

"The conference sparked so many thoughts in my own mind, and encouraged me to reflect on how I carry out my own daily tasks with mercy, and how I can continue to do so as I progress into the next chapters of life and

possible career paths.

It highlighted the importance of leadership amongst young women and reminded us that there is always space for us to take up that role, whilst simultaneously highlighting the need for strong team working skills, especially if we are to progress with mercy through a secular world". Molly Duffy.

We are extremely grateful to Sr Deirdre Mullan for extending her kindness and passion to our Thornhill students, and to Ms Collins for her help and guidance throughout this experience.

Mary's Day a joyful celebration at Chapel Road PS

THE pupils and staff of Chapel Road Primary School, in the Waterside area of Derry, were delighted to be able to hold their annual Mary's Day Celebration and Coffee Morning this year, after a two-year absence.

Parents were welcome to come along for the celebration in the School's Assembly Hall on Monday, May 23, which began with a Coffee Morning, followed

by the Mary's Day Assembly by the P7 pupils.

The children performed a short drama based on the Wedding Feast of Cana scripture story, and shared poems they had written about Mothers.

During the Assembly, everyone joined in praying a decade of the Rosary and singing hymns to Mary, making the occasion a very joyful one for all.



Ireland Needs Fatima Rosary

ON the Saturday following the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima, the faithful of Ireland were encouraged to gather to pray the Rosary publicly in reparation for the sin of abortion in Ireland.

In response, a number of people

gathered at the Fatima Grotto within the grounds of St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, and at St Pius X Church, in Moville, on May 14 to pray the Rosary as part of the 'Ireland Needs Fatima' prayer campaign.



THIS is a busy time for 'The Net' Young Writers with examinations, and we ask our readers to keep them and all those undertaking exams in their prayers.

Aware of the power of prayer and the intercession of our Saints in Heaven, Gemma celebrates the month of May in sharing about how important Our Lady is to her, while Bronagh reflects on the much appreciated 'Do This In Memory Of Me' programme in her home parish of Ballinascreen, where a number of children have received their First Holy Communion this month.

Following another successful Little Flower Novena in her home parish of St Eugene's, Zara writes about how comforting she finds The Little Way and St Therese's reassuring words: "Remember that nothing is small in the eyes of God. Do all that you do with love".

Hollie also was drawn to reflect on St Therese and her quote about happiness not being found in the things around us, but in the secrecy of the soul, and she noted that the People of God are yearning for this happiness.

John comments on a recent meeting of Pope Francis with young people, during which he encouraged them to "bear witness to the Gospel of Joy" and to "always evangelize others with a heartfelt smile".

Niamh writes about a United Nations report that warns humanity is on a "spiral of self-destruction" as disasters arise. Highlighting the importance of Christians responding to the call to take action against climate change in their everyday lives, she points to the future benefit for generations to come.



Hollie Frystal,
Co Tyrone
Deanery.



Bronagh
Doherty,
Co Derry
Deanery



Peter Grant,
Inishowen
Deanery.



Jodie Kennedy,
Derry City
Deanery.



Lorcan
McGonagle,
Inishowen
Deanery



Niamh O'Kane
- Co Derry
Deanery



Gemma
Gallagher,
Derry City
Deanery



John Augustine
Joseph, Derry
City Deanery.



Zara
Schindwein,
Derry City
Deanery.

Mary is very important to me and I wear a Miraculous Medal to symbolise that *by Gemma*

MAY being the month of Mary, we have a mini altar in our home that we call 'Our Lady's Altar'.

My mother and father got the statue of Mary in Medjugorje and it is very important to all of us.

Mary is very important to me and I wear a Miraculous Medal to symbolise that. I always pray to Mary every night and morning and thank her for everything, and also pray to her for help if I'm ever in times of hardship.

We also have a statue of Our Lady of Fatima with the children, and the Sleeping Saint Joseph statue. All of these are of great meaning to me and to my family.

May is an entire month in which to celebrate Mary and to thank her for everything you have. It is very common for parishes to have a daily recitation of the Rosary during May, and this is also when special altars can be seen in family



A white statue of the Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child, standing on a small altar with flowers.

homes as a traditional way of celebrating Mary. Some have an altar honouring Our Lady all year round.

People also crown their statue of Our Lady with beautiful blossoms, representing Mary's beauty and virtue.

It is also a strong reminder for all the faithful to live more like Mary, and to strive to imitate our Blessed Mother's virtues in our day to day lives.

'Do This in Memory of Me' in Ballinascreen Parish *by Bronagh*

MAY is usually the start of a very busy season, following the busy period of Easter, when priests often have to start preparing for the start of the First Holy Communion. Our First Holy Communion is the first time we receive the Body of Christ, which we continue to do for the rest of our lives. It is one of the first experiences of faith in our lives.

In some parishes, including here in Ballinascreen, we carry out the 'Do This is Memory of Me' Veritas programme, which aims to prepare children in Primary 4 for the Sacrament of Holy Communion. It can be used throughout P4 where they make their first Penance, followed by the big day, their holy communion.

The 'Do This is Memory of Me' initiative is named very appropriately, as these were the words of Jesus at the Last Supper. When He held up the wine and bread, He said to His disciples: "This is my body which I have given up for you, do this in

memory of me" (Luke 22.19). Veritas, the creators of the 'Do This in Memory of Me' programme, write the book through two characters, Kath and Qumen, who are also celebrating First Eucharist, making it a fun and engaging book for children when they each receive their thumb book.

The 'Do This in Memory of Me' programme concludes with a huge celebration at the annual 'Corpus Christi' Mass in St Columba's Church, Straw. This is when all the children, if they wish, can wear their First Holy Communion dresses and suits, and they do a small parade around the chapel, followed by readings and songs from the children themselves.

This is such a heart-warming day and another chance for the Primary 4 children to be involved in their parishes. Hopefully, it won't be their last, when they progress to high school and, in particular sixth form and get the chance to complete the Pope John Paul II Award.



This programme wasn't in place when I was Primary 4, but I wish it had been. Thankfully, I got to witness it through my younger sister and, more recently, my brother. It really teaches the children about each part of the Mass, and they grow up with a better understanding of the prayers and liturgies used throughout each Mass.

All local primary schools in the Parish take part, with each school taking turns in leading the dedicated monthly Masses. This programme allows the children to

gain confidence through music, choir and leading the readings during the Mass.

'Do This in Memory of Me' is a wonderful initiative and is well underway in each parish. The communion dates for Ballinascreen Parish were May 7 for the children of St Mary's PS, May 14 for the primary school children in St Eoghan's PS, and May 21 for the children in St Columba's. The children from Gaelscoil na Speirini will celebrate their Holy Communion on June 4. Best wishes to them all.

"Oh, how well I know that happiness is not found in the things around us. It is found in the secrecy of the soul" – St Therese of Lisieux

The People of God are yearning for the happiness St Therese spoke of *by Hollie*

ALTHOUGH I am not too familiar with St Therese of Lisieux, I was struck by one of her quotations: "Oh, how well I know that happiness is not found in the things around us. It is found in the secrecy of the soul".

Today, I believe that the People of God are yearning for the 'happiness' that St Therese describes, which is found in the very depths of one's soul. Every person has a soul, a sacred space, or a part of them where God dwells, which can be regarded as unifying or communal, as well as private, personal or individualistic.

One may ask, what is a soul? Although there are many interpretations, I found an interesting definition of a soul in a Hebrew translation, in which it was defined as 'a Creature that breathes'.

Initially, this reminded me of the creation of human life when God 'breathed into his nostrils the breath of life' (Gen 2:7 NRSV).

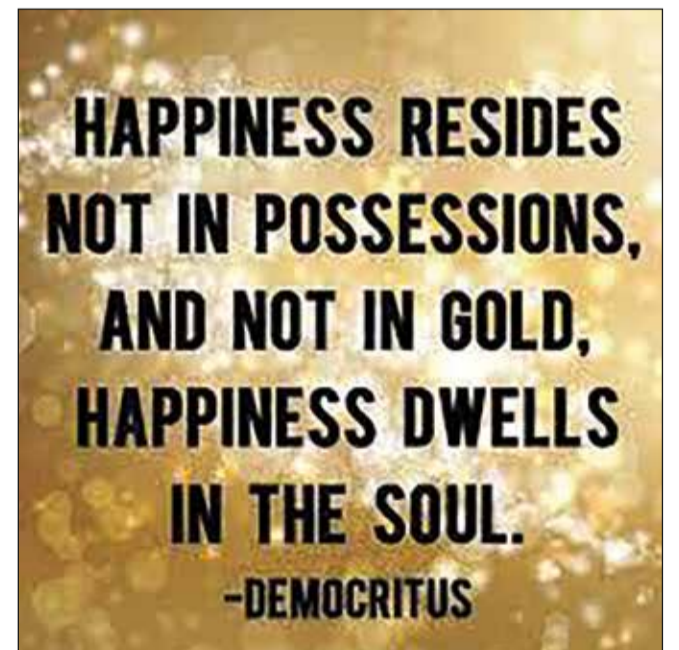
There is a common understanding that God lives in us, but we do not live in Him. The

Soul is often understood to be conscience-like, where one can discern right from wrong. It is a muscle that requires a spiritual work out like every other fibre in one's being. Lastly, although the Soul is invisible and sometimes difficult to define, St Therese speaks of a 'happiness' that is found there, which suggests that the soul can have a major impact on one's life.

Although I have tried to tackle some understanding of the soul from such little knowledge and research, I do understand St Therese's point. Today, we live in a consumerist society, in which, consumerism promotes the concept of 'buying' happiness, whether that be the latest technology or keeping up with the trend or having to buy the best brands.

Jesus said to the rich young man "Go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in Heaven; then come follow me" (Mark 10:21 NRSV).

Again, understanding and



echoing the words of Jesus and St Therese, the path to happiness might not be all that easy but well worth it. For example, when Jesus was presented in the Temple, Simeon said to His Mother, Mary that 'a sword will pierce your own soul too' (Luke 2:35 NRSV),

referring to Christ's death.

Finally, during this month of May, known in the Church as the month of Our Lady, we could try to ponder the words of St Therese, and adopt a humbler way of living in search for the 'happiness' which she describes.

Zara reflects on The Little Flower and takes great comfort in St Therese's words...

Nothing is small in the eyes of God

HAVING enjoyed the Little Flower Novena in St Eugene's Cathedral, I feel that it is important to reflect on the philosophies of Saint Thérèse and how these enlightenments can be correlated to our actions today.

Upon reflection of St Thérèse's story, I found great comfort in her words, "Remember that nothing is small in the eyes of God. Do all

that you do with love".

Thérèse was quite judicious when it came to her relationship with God. She knew that "without love, deeds, even the most brilliant, count as nothing".

Her insight into God's will is so inspirational. She taught that holiness can be achieved through small diverse actions rather than grand gestures. Her teachings

on fulfilling God's intentions by carrying out modest but meaningful works make her more relatable.

Thérèse knew that holiness is something that should be engrained within our souls and practiced naturally.

Within her short life, she was able to grasp the true meaning of this and profess her love for God.

She made it known that "a word or a smile is often enough to put fresh life in a despondent soul".

So, in response to St Thérèse's message, we should try to adapt our actions to live by 'the little way' and trust that these actions are part of the holiness intended for us.



United Nations on human activity leading to natural disasters *by Niamh*

A report released by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) warns that humanity is on a "spiral of self-destruction" as disasters arise.

The findings within the report conclude that the world is set to face 1.5 disasters a day, 560 a year by 2030, as the climate heats up with human influence and pushing millions into poverty.

The UNDRR demonstrates a visual image of the disastrous events in the last two decades, between 350 and 500 medium-sized to major global disasters were recorded annually. They state that governments

are "fundamentally" underestimating their true impact on lives and livelihoods.

The impact of climate change is prominent within our everyday lives through temperatures rising along with water levels, amongst other concerning effects. Climate change causes more extreme weather events, and the impact of these events has been heightened by growing populations in areas more prone to causalities.

Head of UNDRR, Mami Mizutor stresses the importance of speaking out about climate change, "Raising the alarm by speaking the truth is not only

necessary but crucial."

Through this, Christians are called to spread the importance of taking action against climate change in their everyday lives and to encourage others to lessen their effect on global warming.

This is a universal action that we can, and must, all take part in, as it will benefit future generations for years to come.

Mizutor states: "It is less costly to take action before a disaster devastates than to wait until destruction is done and respond after it has happened."

This will not only benefit governments more than if

they choose to deal with the consequences of climate change after disaster has already struck. Pope Francis also speaks out about climate change in his encyclical on ecology, *Laudato Si*, where he states climate change is "a result of human activity."

With his influence, Christians are encouraged to assist the planet in which they live on by highlighting the importance and value of taking a stand against climate change.

(Source: Vatican News)



WYD 2023 Patron Saints announced

PLANS are steadily progressing for World Youth Day 2023, which will be held in Lisbon, and the latest announcement is the names of the 13 Saints and Blessed Patrons chosen to act as models for the young people who will gather from around the world in the Portuguese capital next August 1-6.

The names were announced on the birth anniversary of St John Paul II, May 18, who founded WYD and is amongst the event's patrons.

The 13 women, men and young people who have been chosen as the 2023 Patrons are regarded as having "shown that life in Christ fills and saves the youth of all times".

The names were presented by Fr Manuel Clemente, Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon, with Our Lady announced as the "patroness par excellence" of the next World Youth Day, whom, he noted, "accepted to be the mother of the incarnate Son of God", and also "arose and went in haste to the mountain to meet her cousin Elizabeth, bringing her the Jesus she had conceived".

"In this way", he added, "she teaches the young people of every time and place to bring Jesus to others who are waiting for Him, now as then!"

Commenting on St John Paul II as WYD patron saint too, the Cardinal remarked: "It is to him that we owe the initiative of the World Youth Days, which have brought together and encouraged millions of young people from the five continents".

Going on to name the other WYD patrons, all of whom dedicated themselves to the service of youth, he highlighted St John Bosco, whom, he noted, St John Paul II had declared 'Father and Teacher of Youth'.

The Cardinal named St Vincent, a fourth century deacon and martyr, as another of the patrons, saying: "He, as patron of the diocese, will welcome and strengthen everyone with his charity and evangelical witness".

He went on to announce the names of saints who had left Lisbon to proclaim Christ, as WYD 2023 Patrons, such as: Franciscan, St Anthony, who Pope Leo XIII called "the saint of the whole world"; St Bartholomew of the Martyrs, a Dominican and Archbishop of Braga, who participated in the last phase (1562-63) of the Council of Trent that wanted to reform the Church by bringing the shepherds closer to the sheep; and Jesuit, St John de Brito, who left for India to proclaim Christ and was martyred in Oriuri, in 1693.

Blesseds from Lisbon amongst the WYD patrons are Joana of Portugal, daughter of King Alfonso V, who left for the cloister as a 19-year-old and died in Aveiro, in the convent of the Dominican nuns, in 1490; Jesuit, João Fernandes, who was martyred in 1570 off the coast of the Canary Islands while on his way to Brazil as a missionary; and Maria Clara of the Child Jesus, who became a 'mother' to the destitute.

Other Blesseds named as Patrons are: Pedro Jorge Frassati, who died in Turin in 1925 aged 24, and was called "the man of the eight beatitudes" by St John Paul II; Marcel Callo, a scout and Catholic youth worker who died in the Mauthausen concentration camp in 1945; Chiara Badano, a young focolarina who was struck down by illness aged 16 years old and died two years later; and Carlo Acutis, who died of leukaemia aged 15 and who had a great devotion to Mary and the Eucharist.

Missionaries evangelise with heartfelt smile *by John*

RECENTLY, the Holy Father met with some young people from the Pontifical Mission Societies and spoke a few words about how young people can evangelise to their peers.

He called on us to "arise" from our "sedentary lifestyle" and "care for our brothers and sisters and bear witness to the Gospel of Joy".

The Holy Father was very clear with these words, as he is saying that evangelisation is something that is direct and should be done actively.

Today, many young people who are Christian, who are Catholic, are afraid to be open with their friends about their faith. They often put it away and take it out when they are at home, or church, or somewhere where they feel safe. I think that this is wrong, and it goes along with the idea of a 'sedentary lifestyle'.

Instead, as the Holy Father says, we must arise to the challenges that face us on our journey towards Christ. As he says, "Jesus gives us the strength to arise and invites us to withdraw

from the death of being folded in upon ourselves and the paralysis of self-centeredness, laziness, and superficiality".

Jesus calls us to something greater, something beyond ourselves and the world. It is up to us whether we choose to accept that call or not, but the Holy Father is encouraging us to 'arise' through Jesus, who gives us the strength to do all things that we can't do by ourselves.

This strength is necessary to care for our peers, our fellow brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. We must be able to "accompany people in their journey of healing and growth" so that they can come to know God and be happy.

As St Augustine said, "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You".

Finally, the Holy Father exhorts us to "bear witness to the Gospel of Joy". We must never forget that the Good News brings news of great joy; that good has triumphed evil and God is with us.



"Every Christian", he said, is called "to live immersed in a permanent Easter as one who has been brought back to life and not in a moribund mindset".

Often Catholics, including myself, are not very motivated or moved by the fact that the source of all joy is present amongst us and has made Himself known.

We are reluctant to talk about it because often we don't take the opportunity to receive the joy

that God has given to us. This mission to bear witness "has to be motivated by the enthusiasm to finally share this happiness with others".

The Holy Father, ultimately, encouraged the young missionaries to "always evangelize others with a heartfelt smile and not with melancholy". That smile comes from the joy of the Gospel itself.

Ordaining Diocesan seminarian Michael McCaul to the diaconate on Vocations Sunday, Bishop Donal encouraged him to...

Entrust yourself to the Good Shepherd, who will guide you if open to discernment through the Church and within God's people

GOOD Shepherd Sunday, May 8, was a beautiful day of celebration in the Derry Diocese with the ordination of Derry-born Michael McCaul to the Diaconate by Bishop Donal.

The sun shone brightly overhead as family, friends and parishioners from the Killyclogher Parish, in Co Tyrone, where Michael has been assisting with pastoral work, gathered with Michael's fellow seminarians and priests of the Diocese at Christ The King Church for the ceremony.

Welcoming those present and those joining in via the church webcam, Bishop Donal also welcomed the opportunity on Vocations Sunday to highlight through Michael's ordination as deacon that "God still wants to call shepherds for His people".

He referred to Pope Francis' model of shepherding God's people, where the shepherd sometimes goes ahead of the sheep to scout out the way, sometimes walks in the middle of the flock along with them, and sometimes walks at the back, letting others lead and looking out for the lost stragglers - for they too deserve his love and care (Evangelii Gaudium 31).

Noting from the Gospel of the day that Jesus said no one will steal His sheep away from Him, Bishop Donal remarked: "A priest or deacon who is too concerned with looking after himself is unable to give his life for his sheep".

He went on to tell Michael, "you are called to be a servant who is concerned about Christ's little ones, not concerned with yourself...you are to be dedicated to leading Christ's people to springs of living water. You have to know where to find those restful waters by which you can slake the thirst of those who feel lost.

"Today you are asked to surrender yourself to the service

of Jesus as an ordained minister. You no longer belong to yourself. Today you commit yourself to Christ and to his people, particularly to the neediest".

He went on to tell Michael "your ordination as a deacon and your hopes of being ordained as a priest will be a sign of great encouragement to this diocese. But you are not taking up ministry in order to bolster a model of being Church that prevailed in different times. That form of Church life existed in the context of a widespread acceptance of faith and of church structures".

"We know from local political agendas, as well as from the wider world, that the main job of church is to evangelise those who do not know Christ," added Bishop Donal, saying: "The dominant consumerist and individualist model of society makes no space for the transcendent or for self-sacrifice.

"The synodal process in the Irish and universal church is not merely about changing structures or teachings in order to make the church more popular. Young people will be inspired by a call to idealism and generosity, not by an invitation to make it up as you go along. The synodal process asks only one question - how do we better try to make Jesus known and loved in our time and place?"

Saying that the Synodal Pathway that the Church throughout the world has embarked upon was "an opportunity to discern what God is saying to all of us through all of us", he went on to remark: "We can make all the changes we want. But unless we become much more mission-focused, we are just fiddling with structures rather than having a conversion to mission and away from mere structural maintenance."

Holy Spirit

Bishop Donal encouraged Michael to "be prepared to

journey with God's people as we discern the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Be ready to discern your way forward, not on the basis of your own wishes but as a member of God's people whose needs always come first. That is another mark of the Good Shepherd who knows that the sheep are not stupid".

He continued: "You are setting out in obedience to what Pope Francis calls the unruly freedom of the word of God (Cf EG22). That means leaving behind a trust in structures and income. A church in a missionary mode does not have the security of trusting in self. Good shepherds walk with trust in God's providence and in the generosity of people. It means entrusting yourself to the mission of the Good Shepherd and letting Him look after you.

"You are an apostle of Christ, not an ecclesiastical civil servant. Those who seek security in what they have damage their ability to bear witness to the Good Shepherd who gave everything for His little ones and asks us to rely on His generosity alone. Trust in the Lord and in His people, for - as St Paul says - nothing can separate us from the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:39)".

Referring to Michael's "long journey to this point", Bishop Donal assured him: "None of that time was wasted as, for those who trust the Good Shepherd, every experience - even the difficult ones - are sources of grace and stages in discipleship".

He added: "In the words of today's ceremony, as you move forward, 'may you excel in every virtue: in love that is sincere, in concern for the sick and the poor, in unassuming authority, in self-discipline, and in holiness of life'.

"Entrust yourself to the Good Shepherd, who will guide you if you are open to discernment through the Church and within

God's people. There is a desperate need for those who will model their self-giving on Christ, seeking only His glory and the sanctification of people.

"In a world that is frightened and lonely, often seeking solace in damaging addictions and spiritual junk food, offer them the Word of Life who is Jesus. Nourish yourself at the table of the Lord where you will serve. Model the generosity of the Lord, of whom you become a minister.

"The years ahead will be challenging - but your best witness to Jesus is your dedication in the face of difficult situations. Your fruitfulness lies in your faithfulness to Christ and His mission. Even though you walk in the valley of darkness, no evil will you fear. Let Him lead you to green pastures as you walk with God's people".

Killyclogher Parish Priest, Fr Kevin McElhennon drew applause from the congregation when he spoke at the end of the ceremony to express the love and respect the priests and the people of the parish had come to have for Michael.

He told the newly ordained deacon: "It has been our joy and pleasure here to accompany you on this last stage up to this day. It has been a delight to have you in the parish. You undertook with customary joy your ministry here. Your energy, willingness and zeal for your ministry and love for God have been inspiring".

Thanking everyone who had been part of Michael's journey of discernment, and those who will continue to accompany him in discerning as he journeys on towards ordination to the priesthood, Fr Kevin also thanked all involved in the preparations for the diaconate ordination ceremony, especially the choir.

All were invited afterwards to the neighbouring Christ the King Primary School for refreshments.



Heartfelt message from the Diocese's newly ordained deacon

KEEP things simple. The world is a complicated place. God is simple. Let your every thought, word and deed be guided and done in the name of the Most Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Simply trust in God and keep the Faith, and divine joy, peace and love will fill your lives.

I offer my sincere heartfelt thanks to my dear family, friends, Bishop Donal McKeown and all the diocesan clergy who have nurtured my vocational journey.

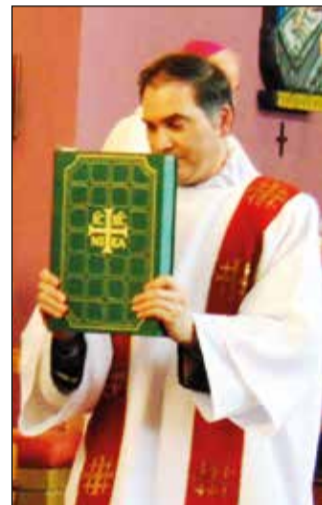
Thank you, also, to everyone for all for your help, support, wisdom and prayers over the years. May Almighty God bless your generous hearts.

Oh Sacred Heart of Jesus I place all my trust in you.

Immaculate Heart of Mary please pray for us now and at the hour of our deaths. May Almighty God go with you all.



Newly ordained Deacon Michael with Killyclogher PP, Fr Kevin McElhennon.



Congratulations Deacon Michael!

by Fr Pat O'Hagan – Vocations Director



CONGRATULATIONS to Revd Michael McCaul, who was ordained deacon by Bishop Donal McKeown in the Church of Christ the King, Omagh, on Vocations Sunday, May 8.

As a diocese, we now look forward to the ordination of Shaun Doherty as deacon on June 15. The ceremony will take place

in the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls, Rome.

During this 'Year of Prayer for Vocations', we are all invited to pray for Deacon Michael, for Shaun and for our other seminarians, and also for those who are currently discerning their vocation.

We ask the Lord of the harvest

to send more and more labourers into His harvest. May the Lord inspire all of us to follow and serve Him in building up His Church as priests, deacons, religious, consecrated virgins and committed lay people.

St Eugene, St Columba, and St John Vianney, pray for us.



Pastoral Letter on Diocesan Priesthood for Vocations Sunday

“The harvest is rich, but the labourers are few.” (Luke 10:2)



A time of change and challenge

POPE Francis has said that this is not just a time of change but a change of time. But in such a time of change and challenge, the Holy Father has urged the whole church to face the future with trust: “The situations that we are living in today therefore pose new challenges which, at times, are also difficult for us to understand. Our time requires us to live problems as challenges and not as obstacles: the Lord is active and at work in our world.”

A year of prayer for vocations

This time of challenge is an opportunity for us to rediscover the gift of calling, of vocation, and for us to realise how many gifts and charisms are at work already in the Diocese of Derry. As a Diocesan Church, we have to face this new reality together.

At the invitation of the Diocesan Vocations Council, I decided to launch a Year of Prayer for Vocations to the diocesan priesthood, beginning at the Vigil Mass for St Patrick’s Day this year, and ending on March 17, 2023. Throughout history, God has always called people to face current realities with courage and not just to lament the changing times.

The Derry Diocese in 2022

At present, the diocese of Derry is comprised of 51 parishes in Derry City, most of Co Derry, the parishes of northwest Tyrone, and 10 parishes in Co Donegal. There are currently 70 priests in full-time ministry serving the pastoral and spiritual needs of the people of those parishes in 94 churches and other parish settings. A number of steps have already been taken to ensure that all the people of the diocese will have a priest or priests available to say Mass, hear Confessions, anoint the sick and dying, and officiate at baptisms, weddings and funerals, as well as carrying out many other duties, including school chaplaincy and the preparation of children for the sacraments of First Confession, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation. This means that some of our priests are now serving in multiple-parish settings. In many places where there used to be up to four priests, there is now perhaps only one. In other parishes where there used to be one or two priests, there is now perhaps no resident priest, and the parishes in question are being served from outside of their

traditional boundaries.

Contribution of Religious Orders

Furthermore, a huge amount of work was undertaken by communities of religious women and men who have made an enormous contribution to education, social care and health services. And history shows that church renewal has never come without communities of radical young men and women who have dedicated their lives to proclaiming Christ by their life and work.

Variety of ministries and vocations

As we face the current challenges, God is still calling individuals to dedicate their lives to the many ministries in the church – ordained priesthood, the diaconate, consecrated life and other lay ministries. Our Diocese will be healthy only when, as often in the past, we are open to all the gifts of the Holy Spirit and are rich in ministries.

Praying for vocations

The Lord has invited us to pray that labourers will take up the task of ministering to God’s people. As followers of Christ, we believe in the power of prayer. We believe that God listens to our prayers, and we know that God will answer our prayers. It has been said that 80% of vocations come from the 20% of parishes where people are actively praying for that intention. How rich will

the harvest be in this Diocese when all our parishioners are praying that those whom the Lord is calling to serve as priests and religious will respond generously to His invitation! By encouraging a culture of prayer for vocations throughout the Diocese, it is my fervent wish that each one of us, bishop, priests, religious, consecrated and lay, will more readily discern and respond to God’s call in our lives.

Holy Family as model of prayer

A vocation to the priesthood or religious life is cultivated first and foremost in the home, sometimes called ‘the domestic Church’, when parents live up to the promises made at their child’s baptism by teaching them to pray, praying with them and attending together the celebration of Mass and the sacraments. We look to the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph as the outstanding model of faithful family life, and we ask Our Blessed Mother and St Joseph to guide and inspire all of us, the people of the Diocese of Derry, in the undertaking of this Year of Prayer for Vocations.

Encouraging prayer for vocations

The Diocesan Vocations Council has already begun to celebrate a monthly Holy Hour for Vocations. Until the end of the summer, these will take place in St Mary’s Church, Creggan, Derry. Everyone is welcome to attend them in person, or to pray at home via the parish webcam. Beginning in September, the

Holy Hours will be celebrated in, and broadcast from, different parishes throughout the Diocese. The locations will be published in parish and diocesan websites, as will the other initiatives of the Vocations Council during the course of this Year of Prayer.

I would ask that prayers for Vocations be offered regularly in all of our parishes. This is already happening in some places in the form of a weekly Rosary, or where an hour of prayer during Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is dedicated to this intention. Some parishes, or individual parishioners or groups, for instance, the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Legion of Mary, St Joseph’s Young Priests’ Society, Cursillo, Youth Groups or Prayer Groups, may decide to offer up a period of prayer and fasting for the wide range of vocations in our diocese – for married couples and families, for the religious men and women of the diocese, for women in consecrated life, for those who are single, as well as for priests, deacons, seminarians, and those discerning their vocation in life.

Vocations in our Diocese An answer to prayer

The prayers of those who have already been praying for an increase in priestly and religious vocations have been, and are being, answered. Currently, we have five men in formation, one of whom was ordained a deacon on May 8, Vocations Sunday. Please God, another will be ordained a deacon next month. Our Diocesan Vocations Council

is working with a number of men who are discerning their vocation, and these are being mentored by some of the priests of the diocese.

Diocesan prayer for vocations

This Year of Prayer for Vocations will encourage co-responsibility and co-ownership among all of us in the work of promoting Vocations. I commend to you the Diocesan Prayer for Vocations, and ask that you pray it regularly. I ask the priests of the Diocese to print the Prayer in their parish newsletters and to post it on their websites and social media channels.

We remember that it was the Lord Jesus Himself who said, “...ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into His harvest.”

And so we pray:

Lord Jesus Christ, gentle shepherd, you know your sheep, and you know how to reach their hearts.

Give to the people of the diocese of Derry

hearts that are open to the call of the Holy Spirit.

Speak to the hearts of the faithful men and women of our diocese, that they may hear your call to follow you and serve your people as priests, consecrated religious and consecrated virgins.

Awaken in them the courage to answer: “Here I am, Lord. Send me.”

St Eugene, pray for us. St Columba, pray for us. St John Vianney, pray for us.



New chapter opens for Derry Carmelites with arrival of first Nigerian friar



Fr Cajetan celebrating a Thanksgiving Mass in his home parish the day after his ordination to the priesthood.

THE Disalced Carmelite Community at Termonbacca, in Derry, has been blessed with the arrival of another member. From Nigeria, Fr Cajetan Apeh has travelled quite a distance to help his fellow friars with their growing ministry on the banks of the Foyle, and although only ordained over three years ago, he has quite a story to tell.

With his joyful personality, he has already endeared himself to many in the few weeks since his arrival in early April, and is settling in well with the other members of the community, Fr Stephen Quinn, the prior, and Frs Michael McGoldrick and Michael Spain.

From the Enugu State, in Nigeria, where his parents still live, Fr Cajetan is the sixth child and last son in a family of five girls and three boys. Married just after the Nigerian Civil War in 1970, his mother and father brought their children up in the Catholic faith.

“Growing up, I loved the Church and prayer at home,” recalled the 37-year-old, “and I remember the first time I said to somebody that I wanted to be a priest was as a six-year-old in nursery school. The teacher was asking us what we would like to be when we grew up. Everybody said different things and, when it came to my turn, I said I would like to be a priest. The teacher encouraged me and the others laughed, but the desire remained and kept increasing”.

After finishing primary school, Cajetan was sent to stay with his grandparents, who were living in a village far from his home and had no one to live with them. During his time there, he found his vocation confirmed through interactions with his uncle, who was a seminarian, when he came home on holidays from the diocesan seminary.

“I enjoyed spending time with

my uncle during his holidays,” he recalled: “One day, he wanted to go and collect a philosophy book from a priest who had just finished his studies in the seminary, and he asked me to accompany him. I was sitting listening to their conversation and, on our way back home, I told him that I would like to be a priest. He did not think that I was serious. I was 12 years old and he probably thought it was just a childish fantasy.

“When we finish primary school, we can go to the minor seminary or any secondary school, and then seminary if we want. Because I was staying with my grandparents and there wasn’t a minor seminary close by, I attended secondary school in their village.

“Towards the end of my secondary school education, when I was in Class 5, my uncle came home again from the seminary and I reminded him about what I had earlier told him, that I desired to be a priest. I told him that I had developed an interest in the religious life. At this point, he knew that I was serious and he encouraged me”.

Initially, he had wanted to join the ‘Missionary Society of St Paul’, a missionary society founded by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria with the intention of making a missionary branch of the Catholic Church in Nigeria.

“It has been very successful because they have missionaries all over the world presently,” remarked Fr Cajetan, going on to explain: “In Nigeria, we have different congregations and there is such a boom in people looking to join them that they can’t cope with them all. Those who apply are invited for an interview and examination.

“When I did the exam for the Missionary Society of St Paul, I was eighth on the list, but they only needed seven. It was at this point that my uncle told me about the Carmelites and gave me a book about St Therese to read. Through that, I got to know about the life of the Carmelites.

“I was struck by how the Carmelite life was portrayed as a community life of contemplation and a life of prayer. I was impressed by how the Carmelite life unites active life and the contemplative life. Carmelites work with people, but equally have time set for prayer and meditation”.

Surprised to find that the Carmelites had a novitiate within his Diocese of Nsukka, he decided to pay them a visit instead of writing.

He recalled: “Providentially,

when I arrived I met the Vocations Director, who was happy to see me and encouraged me. He asked me to apply formally in writing and so began my journey with the Carmelites.

“After that, I was invited for my first interview and examination. I was the only one invited from the group that came that day to come for the second interview and examination, and then the third and final interview and exam. This stage was for the successful applicants from all the regions, and out of the 18 that came for this, eight were selected. Of these eight chosen, four of us followed through to become priests. Initially, 400 had applied”.

Carmelite

Entering the Carmelite Community on June 15, 2007, he did his postulancy, then novitiate, followed by four years of Philosophy, which he studied in the Dominican Institute in Ibadan, in Oyo State. After completing his Philosophy studies in 2013, he did one year of Pastoral and Community experience. He was then sent to study Theology in France, at the Institut Catholique de Toulouse, in 2014, for three years, and was ordained a deacon in France on July 16, 2017, in the Sanctuary of Lourdes.

He then left France to return to Nigeria, and was posted to his first appointment as deacon to Christ The King Parish in Kurudu, Abuja. He worked there until he was ordained a priest on August 11, 2018, on the Feast of St Clare, in the Enugu State, at the age of 33.

After ordination, Fr Cajetan was sent back to Abuja, where he worked for three months until he got his transfer to a Carmelite parish in the Onitsha Archdiocese. Just a few months later, on Christmas Eve, he had a shocking experience that had him fearing for his life, when he was kidnapped by armed bandits.

Commenting on security challenges in Nigeria because of terrorism, he explained: “For so many years, Nigeria has been under attack. It is a country made up of Christians in the south and a predominantly Muslim population in the north. In that Muslim region, there is the Fulani tribe and the Hansas, and in the south you have the majority Igbos and Yorubi tribe.

“In the northern region, the Jihadist Movement became violent, carrying out attacks in different parts of the country. It has given rise to the business of kidnapping for ransom, to fund their terrorist activity, or for forced conversion. Unfortunately,

this has become a growing business in Nigeria among the bandits. Some of these bandits have managed to penetrate into the southern Christian region to carry out kidnappings, killings and many atrocities”.

Recalling his experience of December 24, 2018, Fr Cajetan said: “I was just four months in priesthood. My superior was sick and he couldn’t drive himself to hospital, so he asked me to drive him to the hospital in the city. I had a catechumen that I was preparing for First Holy Communion on Christmas Day, which was a special day for us as we were expecting Francis Cardinal Arinze, who was once the Archbishop of the diocese. He was coming on Christmas Day as that is his tradition. When he comes back to Nigeria, he celebrates Christmas with the people of God in rural parishes. Some of those parishes were created by him as missionary centres when he was bishop.

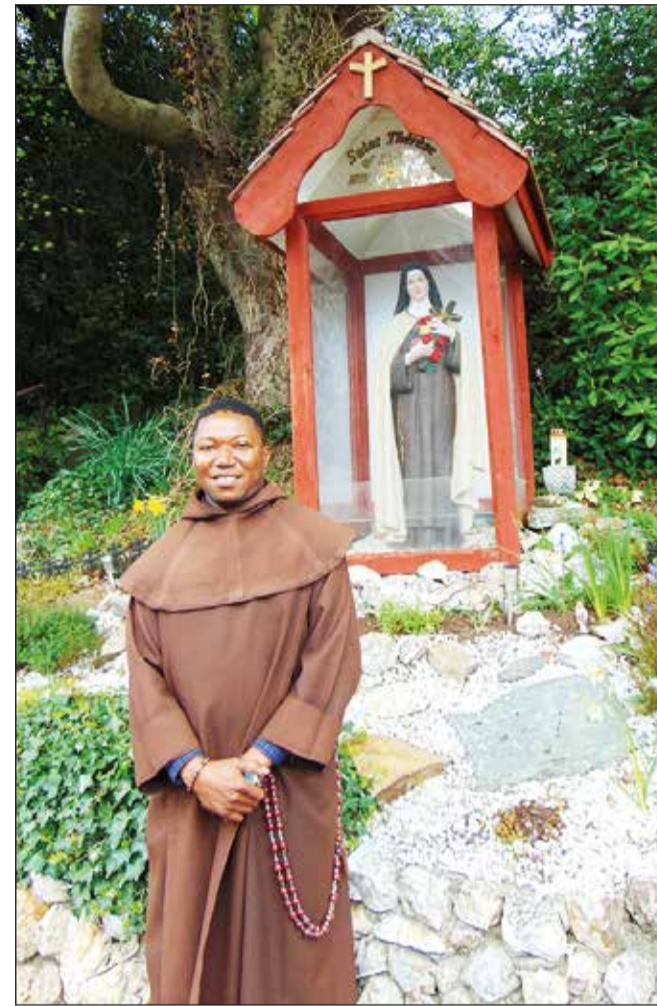
“I took my superior to hospital and on our way back, we ran into an ambush of these bandits. We were at a point on the road where there was a pothole, so I had to slow down. As I slowed down, I saw people coming out of the bush with their guns pointing at me. What came out from my mouth was ‘Father, Fulani bandits’, and he kept repeating, ‘Jesus, Jesus, Jesus’.

“When I stopped the car, with guns pointing at us, they ordered me to open my door. They searched me and asked if we had money in the car. They searched the car completely. At this point, I was thinking that it was simply a robbery, but after collecting all that we had, as well as the gifts for Christmas and for the entertainment for the Cardinal’s visit, they then started shooting their guns in the air”.

“That was the moment I became very frightened and we started reciting our last prayers,” he recalled, adding: “After the gunshots, they pointed guns at us and ordered us to follow them. We followed them far into the bush, until we got to their hideout.

“On reaching there, they gave me my phone and asked me to call my family, or boss, or anyone to inform them that I had been kidnapped. We tried to explain to them that we were priests of the Catholic Church, but they said that it was not their concern, that we were to phone our superior or families and tell them that we were kidnapped.

“So, we contacted our Carmelite superior in Nigeria and they spoke with him. They gave him an amount that he had to bring



Fr Cajetan Apeh ocd, the latest addition to the Carmelite Community in Derry.

for our ransom. The superior and bishop then got the police involved”.

Fr Cajetan went on to explain: “What happens in Nigeria is that when the armed forces get involved, the bandits often kill the victims. In our own case, we were lucky that they did not ask us to renounce our faith or convert to Muslim. They just wanted money. Others fall into the hands of bandits who force their conversion, and kill them if they don’t.

“The negotiation for our ransom and release lasted for three days. During those three days, we could hear the Christmas songs around us, and they said you will have to celebrate your Christmas with us.

Passion



Cajetan with his parents on the day he was ordained to the priesthood.

“It was really a difficult time but I think I came out of that experience more or less stronger in my resolve and in my apostolate, because throughout that time, I saw it as a celebration of the Passion of Christ at Christmas instead of Easter. I was celebrating my own Passion at Christmas during those three days in the forest. I saw it as my own share in the suffering of Christ.

“During our time in the forest, we had been bound. They allowed us either to lie or sit down, and gave us bread we had for the Cardinal’s visit as there was wheat in it, but I had no appetite to eat. We were in the forest with them until December 27, when the amount they finally agreed to was brought to them and we were released.

continued from page 14

“What facilitated our release, apart from the money being paid, was that the other priest’s health was deteriorating and they saw that. He was in his late 50s but having heart challenges. When they saw his situation, they called our superior to say that if he died they had no hand in his blood”.

Receiving medical attention when they were released, followed by a period of trauma counselling, Fr Cajetan said: “Afterwards, my superior gave me the option of leaving the parish, but my love for the people of God wouldn’t allow me. When I heard the amount of prayer they had said for us during those three days, I was encouraged and I had to go back to that same parish. All of the Carmelite Sisters and Brothers throughout Nigeria had been praying for us too.

“It had been a terrible time at home. My family were told that I had been killed, as people had

heard the gunshots that had been fired in the air, so my mother had gone into mourning. Going back to my family on December 31, to celebrate New Year with them, was a very memorable day in my life, as they saw me as Lazarus.

“After spending some days with my family and receiving counselling, I went back to the same parish, where once again the people of God came to show me their support and love. I was there until I was sent to the novitiate in Nsukka as assistant novice master, in 2019, and that is where I was until I got a call from my Provincial, Fr John Grennan ocd”.

“He is our Provincial because Nigeria belongs to the Anglo-Irish Province, which is comprised of Ireland, UK, Nigeria and Australia”, explained Fr Cajetan, adding: “The Anglo-Irish Province brought the Carmelite Order to Nigeria in 1988, and it

has been a flourishing mission.

“Presently, Nigerian Carmelites are working in our Mother Province, the Anglo-Irish Province, and that is how I got the request that they needed someone in Termonbacca, in the Derry Diocese, to strengthen the Carmelite Community there. When I was asked, I had to say ‘yes’. I was happy to go, though it was difficult for me to leave my novices, but I know it was a call to service.

“I arrived in Derry on April 4, 2022. I was surprised by the warm and happy welcome of the Carmelite friars and the people of Derry. My only struggle is the accents”.

Commenting on his new role, he said: “Normally, since I am a Carmelite and sent to a Carmelite Monastery, my primary apostolate is the community life. Sharing life with the community is one of the things central to

our identity. For us Carmelites, what matters most is who we are and not just what we do. Being there, praying for the people of God and for the Church. After community comes ministry to the people and, in Termonbacca, we minister to people through retreats and Confession, and in the Masses we say”.

Expressing a hope that Fr Cajetan will be happy in the Termonbacca community and feel fulfilled in his ministry there, Fr Stephen, as prior, remarked that his arrival was the beginning of something new.

“Our presence in Nigeria is very strong, so Fr Cajetan might be the first of a new line of Fathers to come from Nigeria to help in mission here in Ireland. Our Provincial thought it important for us to have a fourth friar here. We are blessed to have him and look forward to seeing the effect he will have upon the House”.



Fr Cajetan with his novices on the day of their First Religious Profession; his last ministry as a formator of novices before coming to Derry..



Fr Cajetan on the occasion of his ordination with his fellow ordinands.

We are channels of God’s love through the words and way we sing

THE recent Folk & Choir workshop organised in the Waterfoot Hotel by the Derry Diocese was greatly appreciated by those involved in parish music ministry, with a good turnout of singers and musicians eager to learn new pieces and pick up some tips.

Entitled ‘Music for Mass – Why sing, What to sing, When to sing, Sing!’, the Saturday workshop was led by Rev Brendan Dowd, a permanent deacon ministering and living in Holy Family Parish, in North Belfast, who has been composing, recording, and leading music ministry at both parish and diocesan level for over 30 years.

Welcoming everyone, Tony Brennan, Diocesan pastoral coordinator, said that the workshop was organised in

response to many requests for a choir workshop, when parishes were asked what was needed to help in regards to parish ministries.

With an obvious passion for music ministry, Deacon Brendan told those gathered: “Church music has been the thing that has kept me connected to my faith, from when I joined a folk group up to today”.

Looking at the role of music ministry within the Church, he remarked: “I think music is going to save us. Renewal in the Church through music will involve all of us, and, with regards to synodality, all of us means all of us. We want to reach a stage where people are singing along”.

“We need the joy,” he continued, “During lockdown, I didn’t play very much. I lost my mojo. I

didn’t find anything uplifting in any of the music that I usually found uplifting. Covid stole our song from us and we need to get it back!”

He added: “Going to Mass is about our worship of God. When we are singing at Mass, I think of the phrase, when you sing you are praying twice. We are responsible for the nobility of the Mass through the way we sing and what we sing.”

Quoting Pope John Paul II as saying, “Sacred music has a beauty that invites prayer. It leads us to an encounter with Christ”, Deacon Brendan commented: “Whether it is two people and a guitar or a full folk choir, they have a really important role...and we need to remember that it’s not about us; it’s about God.

When we are singing we are

giving flesh to prayer. It’s not just uniting people’s voices, but hearts and minds. The words that we sing will also help people come to a greater understanding of God’s love for them and the fact that they are saved. We are channels of God’s love through the words that we sing and the way we sing. We have to sing with reverence and with dignity”.

He also noted that Pope John Paul II had said that sacred music must adapt to changes in culture, and that a voice and sound should be used that the congregation recognises.

Looking at various aspects, such as what to sing and when, Deacon Brendan highly recommended the guidelines for liturgical music published by the Canadian Bishops.



Deacon Brendan O’Dowd, Down and Connor Diocese, who led the Folk and Church Choir workshop for the Derry Diocese, with organisers, Theresa McMenamin and Tony Brennan.



Remembering Fr Paddy Dooher...

...who learned from his Lord to be gentle and humble of heart



Newly ordained.

THE sudden death of Fr Paddy Dooher, the Columban priest from Aughabrack, in the Parish of Donagheady, in Co Tyrone, on the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25, has greatly saddened all who knew and loved him for the gentle character that he was.

The 79-year-old's close friend and golf buddy, Fr Donie Hogan gave an insight into the special person he was during the homily at the Requiem Mass in St Columban's, Dalgan Park, Navan.

Fr Donie recalled that just the week before, with the ground firmer, they had decided to begin their golf season, so the news of Fr Paddy's sudden death had been a massive shock.

He went on to remark: "So often we have heard the words of Jesus in the gospels saying, 'watch therefore, for you know not the day or the hour'. Truly death has come 'like a thief in the night'.

"But for Paddy, the Lord has come as scripture says, 'like the morning sun rising'. He will have heard the voice of Jesus, his brother and friend, saying simply, 'Come to me...and I will give you rest'. He had learned from his Lord to be gentle and humble of heart. As we all know, Paddy was quiet and unassuming, patient and kind".

"We will miss him," continued Fr Donie, "but we are comforted with the words in the first reading: 'Their going looked like a disaster, their leaving us like annihilation, but they are at peace, for grace and mercy await those He has chosen'.

"In our second reading, also chosen by the family, St Paul

says, 'The life and death of each of us has its influence on others'. I would like to share what one of those who sat at the feet of Paddy and Sr Norah for the Faith and Mission renewal course said of his experience.

"I quote from John Leydon, a Columban in the Philippines: 'I am gutted by the death of Paddy. He played a big role in my life on two occasions. The first was as a theology student. I had reached a point of total frustration with theology classes. Then Paddy came on the staff - in a word, he had substance. I owe my love of theology to him. Later in 2010, as I was entering into my 60s, I did the Faith and Mission renewal course. It was just what I needed and I was so impressed by how comprehensive it was and so low key that it seemed not to be such a big deal. But it was! In many ways, that's who Paddy was - low key but of great substance. That last sabbatical has sustained me for over 10 years now and I am grateful to Paddy and Sr Norah for all they have done for me and for many others who benefitted from that course. We have lost a truly gentle man'.

"This is the kind of influence, Paddy and Nora had on so many hundreds of missionary sisters, priests and lay people from all over the world, who came to process their experiences and to be renewed".

Fr Donie concluded: "Finally, after all his years teaching in the seminary and on overseas mission in Peru, and 27 years as director of the Faith and Mission Programme, Paddy could well say with St Paul, 'As for me, the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith'".

The eldest of 11 children in the family gifted to Tommy and Catherine (nee McShane) Dooher, Fr Paddy was born on January, 21, 1943. He was educated in Loughash PS and St Columb's College, Derry, and joined the Columbans in Dalgan Park in 1960.

Ordained in Dalgan on December 21, 1966, he did post graduate studies in Rome before being appointed to the staff in St Columban's College, Navan, where he spent the next 10 years.

During that time, Fr Paddy served as Dean of Studies, vice Rector, Regional Education Officer and lectured in Maynooth.

Faith and Mission

It was then that he also began his involvement in the Faith and Mission Programme provided by the Irish Mission Institute in Dalgan.

After being assigned to Peru in March 1980, he worked in Lima for seven years, where he was based in the parish of Ermitano. In 1982, Fr Paddy was a delegate to the General Assembly of the Society, and two years later was appointed as vice Director of Peru. In addition, he provided theological support for the Overseas Training Programme for Columban students and the theological Institute for Religious Orders (ISET).

Before returning to Dalgan in 1989 as director of the Irish Missionary Union Institute, he undertook sabbatical studies in London's Heythrop College. For the following 27 years, he dedicated himself to his IMUI role, making an outstanding contribution to the mission of the Church by providing updating and renewal courses for hundreds of missionaries of many nationalities, alongside Sr Norah Davey RSM.

Within his own community at Dalgan, his abilities were drawn upon in many ways as well, from helping with Vision Statements to Psychosynthesis Workshops to Regional Council member, and a sought after partner on the golf course.

And, within his family circle he was equally valued, with his younger brother, Johnny remarking that one perk of having a priest in the family was the convenience of being able to call on him to officiate at weddings and baptisms, which Fr Paddy did wholeheartedly.

Reflecting on his brother's vocation, Johnny said: "I was five years younger, so he didn't talk about priesthood to me. I spent one year with him at St Columb's as a boarder and we shared a room, along with three of our cousins.

"When Paddy left St Columb's in 1960, he went to the seminary in Dalgan. One reason he would

have gone there is that we had a cousin already training as a Columban priest, Fr Liam McCarron of Castleterg, who died about six years ago.

"I remember we all went down to Dalgan Park for his ordination in December 1966. At that time, when there was an ordination there was a homecoming celebration afterwards and bonfires were lit around the townland. I remember that as a youngster. It was a very different day; one to remember. He said his first Mass in Aughabrack Chapel, which was another great celebration, with a big crowd including aunts, uncles, cousins and the local community.

"That year was a very special time for us as a family and the parish. You accepted his priesthood as something special in one sense. I remember when he was a student in Dalgan, in summer holidays and anytime he was home, he cycled four miles to Mass every morning. It was something he did himself, as I don't recall any of us going with him, and I remember thinking that it must have been a bit of a burden to go through, like a punishment".

However, it became evident that his brother was happy in his vocation, though he enjoyed coming home for some time of relaxation, as well as catching up with the family, which actually kept him busy as it was a big family circle.

"He kept in touch well by letter and was able to come home fairly regularly," said Johnny, adding: "If the local priest needed him he would come up, and he was always happy to perform family marriage ceremonies and celebrate baptisms, if he was available".

Fr Paddy's death is a deeply felt loss for his family, friends and the Columban community, but they are happy in the belief that after a lifetime of faithful service to them and to God, he is now enjoying his eternal reward.

Laid to rest in Dalgan cemetery, Fr Paddy is predeceased by his parents and brother, Dan, and survived by Mary, Annie, Johnny, Noel, Hugh, Brian, Eugene, Liam and Kevin. May he rest in peace.



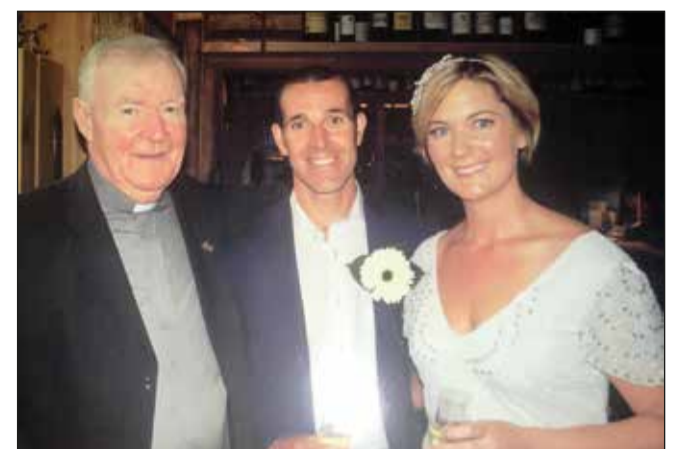
With some of Mission course participants on tour of ancient Irish sites.



Fr Paddy, right, with his mother, Kathleen, sister, Annie, and nephew, Brian Dooher, of Tyrone Co GAA, with some silverware, including the Sam Maguire Cup.



Officiating at a family christening.



At his niece's wedding in France.



With his family on the occasion of his ordination



With some of the participants in the Faith and Mission courses in Dalgan



Eangach

Ár nDúchas

Na Leamhain le Seán Ó Ríordáin

Fuaim ag leamhan leochaileach, iompó leathanaigh,
Bascadh mionsciathán,
Oíche fhómhair i seomra na leapa, tá Rud leochaileach á chrá.
Oíche eile i dtaibhreach bhraitheas-sa Peidhre leamhan-sciathán,
Mar sciatháin aingil iad le fairsingeacht Is bhíodar leochaileach mar mhná.
Dob é mo chúram lámh a leagadh orthu Is gan ligean leo chun fáin,
Ach iad a shealbhú gan sárú tearmainn Is iad a thabhairt chun aobhais iomlán.
Ach dhoirteas-sa an púdar beannaithe Bhí spréite ar gach sciathán,
Is tuigeadh dom go rabhas gan uimhreacha, Gan uimhreacha na fearúlachta go brách.
Is shiúil na deich n-uimhreacha as an mearbhall
Is ba mhó ná riamh a n-údarás,
Is ba chlos ciníocha ag plé le huimhreacha, Is cách ba chlos ach mise amháin.
Fuaim ag leamhan leochaileach, iompó leathanaigh,
Creachadh leamhan-scannán,
Oíche fhómhair is na leamhain ag eiteallaigh Mór mo bheann ar a mion-rírá.

Foilsithe in *Brosna* (1964)



Seán Ó Ríordáin

Pobal na Heaglaise ag Siúl le Chéile

San eagrán seo is machnamh an Easpaig ar an tsionad an t-ábhar a bhéas idir lámha.

An Sionad

Tá an eaglais chaitllceach in Éirinn i lár phróiseis shionadálaigh. Seo cuid de'n obair atá ag dul ar aghaidh faoi stiúradh an Phápa Phrionsais faoi choinne na heaglaise ar fud an domhain roimh Sionad na nEaspaig i 2023.

Ach tá an eaglais naisiúnta ar bhealach sionadálach naisiúnta a mhairfidh ar a laghad cúig bhliain. Agus cad cuige a bhfuilimid ag cur tús leis an bhealach seo?

Iarrtar orainn an soiscéal a fhógairt dona daoine de'n aois agus de'n áit mar a bhfuilimid inár gcónaí. Rinne an eaglais iarracht sin a dhéanamh in am Phádraig, i rith na bpéindlíthe, nuair a bhí an Gorta Mór ag dul ar aghaidh agus i mblainna fad na dTrioblóidí. Táimid in aois nua anois- agus mar Pobal Dé iarrtar orainn bheith ag obair le chéile chun an bealach ceart a aithint.

Ní chuirtear ach ceist amháin orainn. Cad é tá Dia ag iarraidh uainn san eaglais? Ní hionann sin agus a rá – cad é mar is féidir linn gach rud deacair a sciobadh ar shiúl, chun níos mó daoine

a mhealladh isteach ins na heaglaisí?

Níl ach ceist amháin ann. Is Íosa an bealach, an fhírinne agus an bheatha. Cad é bealach na fírinne dúinn I láthair na huaire? Agus de gnáth ní hionann an bealach ceart agus an bealach fusa.

Bhí cruinniú, nó ceisteoir le lionadh amach ins an chuid is mó dena paróistí. Agus ón mheid a chualamar óna paróistí agus óna scoileanna, tá an deoise ag cur páipéir le chéile a sheolfaimid chuig Comhdháil Easpaig Éireann. Ansin cuirfead le chéile achoimre ar son ár n-eaglaise naisiúnta a sheolfar chuig Papa Prionsais. Agus bainfead úsáid as na páipéir a thagann ó gach cuid den domhan chun guth an Spioraid Naoimh aithint i rith an tsionaid sa Róimh i mí Mheán Fómhair 2023.

Litir Thréadach

Ar Dhomhnach an Tréadaigh Maithe foilsíodh Litir Thréadach don deoise. Tá dianchomórtas roimh Phobal Dé, ní amháin sa tír seo ach ar fud an domhain. Ach

Iompó Leathanaigh

D'iarr an tEaspaig Dónal Mac Eoin ar Mary O'Donnell leathanach Gaeilge a chur isteach sa Net thart fá cúig bliana ó shin. Mhol sé di labhairt leis an Sagart Oilibhéar Ó Croiligh agus shocraigh siad crot seasmhach don leathanach Gaeilge.

Táimid uilig faoi chomaoín ag na daoine a chuidigh an leathanach a chur le chéile le blianta beaga anuas: an tEaspaig Dónal, an tEagarthóir Mary O'Donnell agus an dearthóir Sonya Duffy ach go háirithe.



deir Papa Prionsais nar gá dúinn bheith éadócasach. In achan aois – ó am Íosa go dtí an lá atá inniu ann – bhí sé deachair cloí le h-Íosa agus a shoiscéal a fhógairt.

Ach I ngach aois, tugann Íosa cuireadh do dhaoine óga tharraingt ina dhiaidh agus ligint do Dhia iascairí ar dhaoine a dhéanamh díobh. Is eaglais sinn mar a n-imríonn na sacraimintí róla an-thabhachtach. Mar gheall ar sin tá sagairt agus diagairí de dhíth chun na sacraimintí sin a cheiliúradh.

Ach bíonn ról sacraimintíúil I lár gach gairm a fhaighimid ó Dhia. Rá ról ar leith in an bhainis. Is sacraimint de ghrá Dé an lanúin phósta. Is comhartha grá Dé an duine a oifailíonn a beatha nó a bheatha i seirbhís Dé san eaglais. Agus is sacraimint íosa an sagart. Agus in achan aois, is frid 'amadáin do Dhia' a thagann athnuachan ins an eaglais.

Iarann an litir thréadach ar gach paróiste tús a chur le bliain paidre ag iarraidh Dé daoine nua a scairt isteach ins an fhómhar.

I láthair na huaire tá thart faoi 70 sagart ag freatsal I bparóistí na deoise. Ach tá neart acu measartha aosta beidh siad ag éirí as a bpostanna i gceann deich mbliana. Ma tá paróistí beo le bheith again, cad tá de dhíth orainn?

- Sagairt nua
- Tuataí a fhaigean oidechas sa chreidimh chun iad a dhéanamh reidh faoi choinne rólaí nua ins na paróistí;
- Daoine atá reidh a mbeatha a thabhairt i seirbhís an tsoiscéil.

A Thiarna Íosa
Tá aithne agat ar do chaoraigh.
Tabhair do do phobal I ndeoise Dhoire
croithe atá oscailte do ghuth an Spioraid Naoimh.
Labhair le croithe do phobal.
go gcluinfidh siad do ghuth agus leanstan ort
i seirbhís an tsoiscéil agus do thréada.
Sin é ár nguí, trí Chríost ár dTiarna.

Naoimh Eoghain, guí orainn
Naoimh Cholmcille, guí orainn

Briathar agus Sacraimint

Nuair a chuireann tú na sacraimintí in éineacht leis an Bhíobla, faigheann tú bealach chun Dé. Mar sin más maith leat saol na sacraimintí a chaitheamh, bí cinnte go bhfuil an dúshraith cheart curtha síos agat i dtosach. Má tá tú ag iarraidh tuiscint ar na sacraimintí a thabhairt do dhaoine eile, go háirithe daoine óga, inis dóibh faoi shaol Chríost agus lig dóibh aithne a chur air. Bí cinnte go bhfuil tú féin ag iarraidh aithne a chur ar Íosa Críost, agus go bhfuil tú ag iarraidh muintearas a chothú leis san urnaí. Ní féidir na seacht sacraimint a chur in áit na hurnaí,

agus ní féidir iad a chleachtadh gan urnaí a bheith lonnaithe i do chroí istigh. Ní féidir, agus ní fiú, ceann amháin a bheith agat gan an ceann eile a bheith in éineacht leis. Caithfidh gach duine tosú leis an Bhaisteadh lena dtugtar cuireadh dó páirt a ghlacadh i slánú Íosa Críost, i bpobal na hEaglaise. Tugann sé sin bunús dó le bheith ag urnaí, nó ag tosú ar an urnaí a fhoghlaim. Ar dhóigh amháin caithfidh tú a bheith ag urnaí sula mbeidh tú ábalta dul isteach i saol na sacraimintí. Agus treoraíonn an urnaí thú i dtreo chíocras na sacraimintí, faoi mar a threoraíonn

na sacraimintí thú i dtreo chíocras na hurnaí, agus go dtreoraíonn an dá cheann thú i dtreo chíocras Íosa Críost. Mura bhfuil dúil sna sacraimintí ag duine, ní leor tosú á míniú dó, óir ní fheicfidh sé a riachtanas go dtí go gcuireann sé aithne ar Chríost. An rud a thug dúil sna sacraimintí dár bpobal thar na blianta, go raibh siad ag foghlaim faoi bheatha Chríost i scéalta an tSoiscéil a insíodh dóibh ar scoil agus ag an Aifreann, sa Phaidrín agus ar na crosa cloiche, ar na hArdchrosa atá le feiceáil tríd an tír. Cosúil leis na híocóin deir siad go léann tú na crosa seo.

Buíochas do Dhia na glóire go bhfuil na sacraimintí againn san Eaglais, agus go dtig linn a bheith i gcomhlúadar le Críost ach iad a úsáid agus a chleachtadh. Ní thig linn iad a chleachtadh gan sagart a bheith ar fáil againn. Mar sin bímis ag guí go ndéanfaimid ár ndícheall leis an tsagartacht a chur os comhair na ndaoine óga ar dhóigh is go mbeidh siad toilteanach éisteach leis an ghairm a thagann ó Dhia trína phobal, agus go mbeimid fláithiúil go leor le tacaíocht a thabhairt dóibh ar an turas sin.





Our Lady of the Way walks with us on our pilgrimage through life

DURING May, we pay particular devotion to Our Lady. On May 13, we celebrated the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima, when Mary called the faithful to prayer, penance and reparation.

Then, on May 24, we celebrate 'Our Lady of The Way', a reminder that Mary walks with us on our pilgrimage through life, helping us to follow Jesus.

And, on May 31, we celebrate 'The Visitation', when Mary set out to be with Elizabeth on hearing of her pregnancy. As well as having the example of Mary's great selflessness in rushing to help her older cousin, we are given an insight into the power of the Holy Spirit when Elizabeth and the baby in her womb were enlightened to know that they were in the presence of The Lord in His Mother's womb.

Reflecting on their pilgrimage through life, a number of people from across the Diocese have shared their experience of Mary walking with them, guiding them towards Jesus, and how aware they are, through the power of the Holy Spirit, of the presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist and in the people they meet along the way.

Walking through life with Mary by Sharon Gorman



Sharon Gorman, Galliagh.

FOR me, Mary is one of the most precious gifts my family and I have been blessed with. Mary was a person who was not meant to be seen; a most beautiful presence here on earth with one mission in mind, which is to lead all souls to her beloved son, Jesus and, at the same time, giving all glory and honour to God Most High.

I felt her presence during Lent. I was finding it very hard to pray, as if my heart wasn't in it. I have always been a person who has had very visual dreams and on the eve of Easter I had a dream! Our Lady was standing before me with a pair of Rosary beads in her hands and

she called my name, "Sharon, pray the Rosary".

Now, most people would say that is just a dream, but my faith tells me better...that my heavenly mother saw that I was struggling and came to my aid with words of encouragement and love.

Mary is the mother of all mothers, who cares for each living soul just as much as the Father. She pours out her heart for you and I. She said 'yes' to the death of her own son for our salvation. Even in life after death, our beloved mother is here calling us to receive her Son, to come visit with Him in the most holy Eucharist, which is a heavenly gift.

Who can deny the presence of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, when you sit before the Eucharist in Adoration, when you look around and see people full of peace. The sweetness in the air overflows as joy at just being able to be there in His glory, His kingship.

My goodness, God is good to give us His mercy, His kindness. Amen.

Open to the Holy Spirit, allowing God to lead her, Mary is a great figure on our synodal journey by Bishop Donal

MARY has always played a central part in the Catholic world. My granny was called Mary and I have a sister who also shares that name.

The Rosary played a key part in our family prayer. That great prayer looks at the life of Jesus through the eyes of the one who loved Him most, His Mother. I grew up, pickled in that prayer.

My grandfather had the chance of travelling to Lourdes on the Second Irish National Pilgrimage in 1924. It was not because he had lots of money. He was the chief stone cutter on the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, in Moneyglass, and the Parish Priest, who was one of the organisers of the national pilgrimage, arranged for him to go.

And then my parents joined a pilgrimage to Lourdes in the Holy Year of 1950. When I was 13, I accompanied my granny and mother to Lourdes. Since then,

Lourdes has always been a very important place of prayer and pilgrimage to me.

I had the opportunity of travelling to Lourdes by coach for four years with CLM (Cuairteoirí le Muire), and was then asked to set up and lead the Down and Connor Diocesan Pilgrimage. Interestingly, when I was looking for help, I turned to Derry for a model of organisation, unaware that I would end up in this diocese, and of the fact that the first Irish National Pilgrimage to Lourdes in 1913 was led by Dr McHugh, the Bishop of Derry (1907-1926).

I have always pictured Mary as a strong, no nonsense and gracious woman. She knows that her greatness is a gift from God. In Lourdes, she treated poor little Bernadette with great dignity. And in Knock, she points to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. She teaches me to glorify



the Lord and to rejoice in God my Saviour.

It seems to me that she is also a great figure on our synodal journey. She was open to the Holy Spirit, allowing God to lead her, even though she had no idea where that path would bring her. The Acts of the Apostles show her at the

heart of the early church, waiting in the midst of the disciples for the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 1:12-14).

We can continue to pray for Mary to accompany us for, in this time, God still calls people to do great things for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Bridge over troubled waters by Brenda Deery



Brenda Deery, Faughanvale Parish.

I happened to have the opportunity of listening to an audio tape on St Catherine of Siena recently, and heard about her ecstatic vision where she saw Jesus as the bridge in which we needed to be on, in order to gain entry into heaven and escape the dangers of the water. This got me thinking of our present situation, living in this chaotic world with so many disordered values and dangers as symbolic of the waters.

In her mystical dialogue, St Catherine was told by God: "I tell you, my dearest children, travel on the bridge, not under it. For the way beneath the bridge is not the way of truth but of falsehood. It is the way of wicked sinners, and I beg you to pray to me for them. I ask for your tears and sweat on their behalf so that they may receive mercy from me."

God does not want to lose a single soul, every person is of immense importance and He does everything He can to bring souls

back to Him.

This dialogue echoes many of our Marian apparition messages, where Our Lady asked for prayers, penance, sacrifices, repentance, reparation for our sins and the sins of others in order to turn back to God, and assist sinners to return to God.

St Catherine's mystical experience made very clear that the bridge represented Jesus, however, I can never think of Jesus without Mary. The Church very much espouses the union between Jesus and Mary as mystical and inseparable. Jesus' means of entering our world was through the womb of Mary and the home of Joseph. All of this affirms to me that the bridge to Jesus is Mary, as taught by St Louis Marie De Montfort. So how can Mary bring me to the bridge?

The month of May is a natural pondering point. The Church dedicated May in honour of Our Lady. May is a month of growth, especially with regards to nature, but also a time for planting, planning, getting out more, enjoying longer days, etc. Meanwhile, within our Church, we are again awakened to the role of Mary in our salvation throughout May, but especially on her Feast Days, such as May 13, 'Our Lady of Fatima', May 24, 'Our Lady of the Way', and May 31, 'The Visitation'.

Jesus is Our Saviour, but Mary has a role in assisting the Saviour, and she was given to us by Jesus as He was dying. Jesus shared His mother, Mary with all of us who are baptised. We need to continually ponder the role of Mary as our Mother to appreciate our worth,

dignity, origin and end. Mary instructs us on how to become holy, including valuing our dignity, our life, the Church and our God. Mary is our protectress and was gifted with this role by God (Gen: 3:15) to assist in the battle against evil.

Put another way, Mary is the bridge between the hidden and the revealed. As we remember her as Our Queen and Mother, the Ark of the Covenant, Star of the Sea, to name but a few of her titles, we have recourse to her to shelter us and reveal to us the mysteries of God and of His works in our times.

Refuge

The month of May reveals the how nature that was hidden and downtrodden, throughout the winter, is again revealed. Our Lady, through her intercession and our honest endeavours to turn to her, will reveal to us God's plan for our lives and will ensure that we remain on the bridge if we seek refuge in Her.

St Pope John Paul II and St Maximilian Kolbe, two of a number of recently canonised saints, both lived out their vocation by consecrating their lives and works to Mary for Jesus. Both taught us the means to get to Jesus was through his Mother Mary.

To consider the gift of Mary in the order of salvation is vital, and the fact that the Church dedicates the month of May to her echoes this. Mary, through her meditating on the Word of God and her prayer and service, recognised God's will for her and fulfilled it to help bring about God's plan of Salvation. As her children, we also need

the graces available to us (see the Miraculous Medal story) to bring about God's plans in and through our lives.

The month of May calls us to reflect on the spiritual and practical ways to grow our relationship with Mary. Outside of getting the opportunity to attend Mass, or the time to pray the breviary, we have the gift of the Rosary. The Rosary is a prayer which can be said while walking, kneeling, driving etc. It is our anchor which assists us in getting out of the muddy waters of this world. There is no excuse for us not to recite it after Our Lady's many requests to do so.

I was fortunate to grow up in a home which recited the Rosary every evening, which was a good education and habit. The Rosary takes our mind into a reflective place which helps to recharge our hope, joy and peace. The knowledge of knowing that God and his Blessed Mother are walking with us on our journey through this world is a great strength.

I am presently reading about Josyp Terelya and his long years spent in communist prisons, where he was continually tortured, starved, frozen, placed in solitary confinement etc, all for his Catholic faith and evangelism, which he refused to deny or stop. Throughout the tortures, he knew that God and His Mother were on his side, and Mary intervened at different times to save his life.

Again, it is affirmation that Our Lady has an eye for each individual soul and journeys with us in these challenging times, and we must SEE OVER...

May calls me to open up to Mary of the Magnificat and Mary Mother of all creation *by Grainne Doherty*

MARY: Perpetual virgin... Immaculate Conception... Mother of God... the Assumption. Four teachings held by the Catholic church about Mary. Even as an adult, they can be difficult concepts to get my head around, but trying to grapple with them as a child, was nigh on impossible.

Growing up, I never really warmed to the Mary presented to me by my school, and by my church. For me, she symbolised a barrier to a lot of the fun and freedom every child craves and needs. I was repeatedly warned that "every time a young girl whistles, Mary cries in heaven." At school, the requirement to "be like Our Lady in all things" necessitated

the length of our skirts/dresses being frequently checked to ensure they fell below the knee, our being instructed "to walk rather than to run," and the confiscation of novelty large pens/pencils because they were perceived as 'unfeminine'.

The observation in scripture of Mary as someone who "pondered things in her heart" was often quoted in a way that demanded unquestioning compliance to whatever we would encounter in our lives. The interpretation of Mary often presented to me, therefore, was perceived by me as a child and young adult as something that sought to curtail my enjoyment and sense of independence in life.

It took a long time to recognise

that there are a myriad of interpretations of Mary in existence, and the one that I received in my youth was only one among many to which I could relate. How Mary is both portrayed and understood often depends on who is in control of the interpretation.

Very little of our knowledge of Mary comes from the scriptural stories we hear in church. Mary's parentage of Anne and Joachim, as well as her immaculate conception for example, all appear in the Gospel of James, which is not found in the Bible. St Paul rarely refers to Mary – and never by name. As all of the gospels were written post-resurrection and through the lens of the early church struggling to understand who 'Jesus' was, much of who Mary was in her own daily life was not included – unless it helped in pointing to the identity and purpose of Jesus.

Nevertheless, devotion to her quickly became central to the church. This is seen for example, in the fresco found in the catacomb of Priscilla in Rome which was painted around the year 150 AD. Prayers, hymns, devotions, and feasts have been composed in her honour, while churches, cathedrals, religious orders, and even holy years have been named after her.

As Pope Paul VI pointed out at Vatican II, almost everything we think we know about Mary, therefore, comes from the various 'interpretations' of who she was at different times in our church's history. This can be seen in particular in the Middle Ages,

when people turned to her in a variety of ways: during the Black Death for example (which resulted in killing approximately half of Europe's population in the middle of the 14th century), Mary became a source of protection, with 'Hail, Holy Queen' becoming a popular prayer that reflected the fear and desperation of the time. Earlier, soldiers fighting in the crusades placed images of her on their banners, while language of 'Our Lady' emerged from the later romance and chivalry associated with knights and jousting tournaments.

She was revered as more than just the mother of Jesus. She has often been worshipped and prayed to as almost as an autonomous divinity. For those who felt that human authority could not or would not protect them, Mary emerged as a protector. For those disenfranchised in the official church, Mary was another route to God – this reflects the rosary having often traditionally been the prayer of the laity, while the breviary was that of the ordained.

With all of these – and many more – interpretations in our church's history, I think of two aspects of Mary that can radically speak to today's world: Mary of the Magnificat, and Mary, the mother of the creator God.

When much of the church's focus on Mary has often leaned towards an image of her that renders her almost silent and passive, many parts of the Catholic world who have experienced oppression

and suffering have regularly turned to the image of Mary as the proclaimer of the Magnificat. In her hymn of praise to God, she very clearly presents a God who is always on the side of the poor and marginalised. To be followers of such a God, means to work tirelessly for a radical transformation of society – a society which is free from all forms of discrimination and domination, and which promotes peace, and the dignity and equality of all.

In today's world, which is marred by so many living in poverty and fleeing war, Mary's words proclaim to us that such a reality is contrary to the vision of God. She reminds us that:

God has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.

Radical words for a world that is often in need of radical change.

Mary being a mother has often spoken deeply to women who are mothers. The month of May, however, is a welcome reminder that Mary is mother of all the earth. By conceiving and giving birth to the Creator of the world, Mary embraced the universe in her person. As a result, Jesus being born of Mary enters immediately into a profound solidarity with all of creation. With Mary agreeing



Grainne Doherty, Moville

to and becoming the Mother of God, she facilitates and confirms that every aspect of the universe has the capacity to be the dwelling place of the divine. Recognising that the divine is deeply embedded in all creation has strong implications for our attitude to, and relationship with, nature. As the devastating realities of climate change remind us daily that Pope Francis' observation that "the cry of the earth is the cry of the poor," Mary's motherhood, is a prophetic symbol for a world requiring a reconnecting to the mystery and sacredness of all of creation.

The month of May is a time which calls me to open myself up to Mary of the Magnificat and Mary, the mother of all creation. In doing so, I am challenged to live out the message of the resurrection in concrete terms in my daily life – to help make the 'fullness of life' promised to each one of us a reality

Praying Rosary after long time away from my faith moved me to go to Confession *by Patricia Harkin*



I am a member of the Legion of Mary, and have been so for many years, and I don't even know where to begin to tell you how much Our Lady walks with every single soul in this world, every single day.

For a long time, I was away from my faith and in the month of May, strangely enough, many years ago now, I had just wandered down to the chapel and heard singing, and went to find out where it was coming from. It was from the grotto behind the chapel. I wandered round and the Legion of Mary and other people were praying the Rosary for the month of May.

I found myself joining in. Even though I had forgotten how to pray the Rosary, I still remembered how to pray the basic prayers. After we had finished, I felt a warmth and love in my heart that I hadn't felt in

many years, so I came down every night then to join in.

I felt such love in my heart, which moved me to go to Confession after many years, and I started going to Mass as often as I could because, when I received the Eucharist, I felt such a love and peace that I had never felt in my whole life.

I started sitting in front of the Blessed Sacrament every night, and then, one September night, a wee man came up to me and said, Our Lady approaches you through people and she's asking you to join her Legion. When he said this, a light came on in my heart, and two weeks later I joined the Legion of Mary and have never looked back.

My life is now in Jesus through Mary, and I cannot begin to describe how much Our Lady and her Son love each and every one of us on this earth, and how she walks bedside us every single day, and how important the Rosary is.

The Rosary is the spiritual weapon which binds us to Our Lady's Immaculate Heart, and reflects the life of the Holy Family and how she and her Son walk very closely beside us every single day. Praise be to Jesus and Mary. Amen.

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS...

never despair or lose hope of this truth. She is calling on us to assist in her army, which Frank Duff truly understood when he set up the Legion of Mary.

The final prayer of the Legion of Mary clearly shows an understanding of Mary's role in God's salvation: "Confer O Lord on us who serve beneath the standard of Mary, that fullness of faith in Thee and trust in her, to which it is

given to conquer the world..."

Mary, in all her humility, purity, poverty and obedience, shows us the real tools we need. We must rally up the souls around us to join in these endeavours to pray for sinners, receive the sacraments, do works of charity, value all life and walk together with Mary to Jesus on the bridge to our heavenly home.

What Mary went through gives her a very real understanding of our difficulties and problems *by Martin Harran*



Martin Harran, Urney & Castlefin.

AS I write this, we are in the early days of May, one of my favourite times of the year, late spring with beautiful bursts of colour bursting forth in our gardens and hedgerows, and the feeling that we are saying our last goodbyes to winter for another year. It is also

a wonderful time of the year in our religious life, with our special devotion to Mary encapsulated in that wonderful hymn 'Bring flowers of the rarest, bring blossoms the fairest...'.

Our devotion to Mary this year, however, seems just a little bit strange with Easter having been so late. This month we celebrate her beauty and wonder, yet not that long ago we were looking at her standing at the foot of the cross gazing at her beloved son tortured, humiliated and undergoing a truly dreadful public execution as a common criminal.

I find great inspiration in this juxtaposition of Mary's unique role and honour as the Mother of God, and yet undergoing so many trials and tribulations as a human being and mother. I think about the young girl who had to explain to her dear betrothed, with whom she had never been intimate, that

she was pregnant but had not been unfaithful to him. Luckily, she had an angel to intervene on her behalf! We all know the dreadful way our own people treated unmarried mothers in times gone by yet, bad as that was, it was even worse in Mary's time. If Joseph had not stood by her, she might not just have been ostracised by her community, she would have run the very real risk of being stoned to death.

I think about Mary in the final stages of her pregnancy travelling by donkey to a strange town and going through the ordeal of childbirth in the most primitive of conditions. I think of Mary taking her infant to present Him in the temple, an occasion that, like our ritual of baptism, should be one of great happiness and thanksgiving. What was it like to have the joy of that special occasion shattered with Simeon's prophecy that a

sword would pierce her soul? Finally, we have the rejection of her son by His own people and the agony of the crucifixion.

I believe that the things Mary went through herself give her a very real understanding of the difficulties and problems that we go through in our daily lives, and that, when we pray to her, she can respond to us as someone who knows first-hand the things we are undergoing and how we can sometimes wonder why God does these things to us.

We can also take inspiration from Mary's ultimate reward for accepting those difficulties - her very special place as Queen of Heaven. If we, too, can accept the negative things that life throws in our way and remain loyal to God and continue to trust Him, we, too, will surely achieve that ultimate reward of our own special place in heaven.

Mary, Jesus and Myself *by Noel Bradley*



Noel Bradley, Buncrana.

THE month of May has often been called the month of Mary. It seems appropriate as everything is getting green or greener, and flowers are blooming and birds are chirping. I love the hymn, 'Bring flowers of the rarest, bring flowers of the fairest from garden and woodland... O Mary we crown thee with blossoms today...' It always reminds me of my own mother singing it quietly or humming it in the kitchen, at a time when I knew she was relaxed and happy in herself.

May 24 is often called 'Our Lady of the Way', a reminder that Mary walks with us on our pilgrimage through life, helping us to follow Jesus. I am also aware that after Jesus' death, His followers were called 'followers of the Way' before they were called Christian. Mary, Jesus and His followers were all followers of a particular way of life.

Submission to the Will of God

A key characteristic of this Way is submission or surrender to God. This submission to God is also the central requirement of Islam. In the Alcoholic Anonymous movement, the submission to a Higher Power is the first step to recovery. Humanists and atheists also acknowledge the binding authority of conscience as absolute, even though their explanation of its presence does not require the existence of a personal God.

In the Annunciation story, we have a profound example of this submission to God. 'Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word' (Lk1:38). This was an act of faith, or the obedience of faith. But it was not a blind faith. Mary asked questions first before she said 'yes'. She listened first, was 'disturbed' and asked 'what this greeting could mean' (v.30) and, again, 'how can this come about since I am a virgin' (v.35).

We know very little about Mary's role in the public life of Jesus. We can speculate and imagine it. She was His mother, so she would continue to love and support Him and be there for Him. Did she have questions about His teaching and activities? Did she understand what He was about? Or, like other family members, did she question His sanity? I am sure she had her worries. There was the incident once when "he went home, and the crowd came together again, so

that they could not even eat. When His family heard it, they went out to restrain Him, for people were saying, 'He has gone out of his mind' (Mk3:19-21).

If she worried about Him, did Jesus worry about her? How did He regard her? There is the story of "his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, 'Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you.' And looking at those who sat around him, he said 'Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother' (Mk 3:31).

Jesus uses the occasion to speak, not about family but about discipleship. The core of this teaching is that there is something more important than the physical bond between a mother and son and it is the relationship of faith-obedience between any individual person and God. When He praises those who do the will of God, and calls them His 'brother and sister and mother', He is putting faith-obedience at the heart of the kingdom that He preached and worked for. He is also describing the essence of discipleship. As Jesus looks at those 'sitting around him', He is addressing them directly. Nevertheless, indirectly, He is recognising that Mary, who is 'standing outside', also practicing faith-obedience. Mary's faith-obedience makes her also a disciple.

To be obedient is to listen

The root meaning of the word obedience in Latin and Greek is 'to listen attentively'. Jesus listened continuously to the One He called 'Abba' in order to do His will. That was always His priority in life and, finally, in His suffering passion and agonising death. We are told so many times of this in St John's gospel: My food is to do the will of him who sent me (4:34); I seek not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me (5:30); I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me (6:38); I always do what is pleasing to him (8:29).

As with Jesus, we can presume that it was the same with Mary. She would listen to God call, His will, in her life and being obedient to that will, would have been her priority and her holiness. It was this obedience that made her go in haste to visit her pregnant cousin, Elizabeth in the hill country of Judah, and stay with her 'about three months' in order to support and care for her. This support and caring was part of her discipleship.

It was this same listening and obedience of faith that would ask her to stay with her son at Calvary. 'Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother...' (John 19:25). If you were ever with someone you love who

was dying or in pain, and had to remain there for some time, it can be very painful. This being 'with' and being powerless is part of discipleship also.

We, too, are called to listen to God as He speaks, communicates and reveals Himself in Scripture, in the teaching of the Church, in other people, in the signs of the times, eg, the destruction of our environment, in our consciences, and in the inspirations and stirrings of our hearts, until we have to say our final 'Amen' to the time and manner of our death.

In the words of Mary, 'Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.'

Our Lady supports and guides me daily

by Martin Callaghan



Martin Callaghan, Burt, Co Donegal.

I was born in St Francis' Private Nursing Home, Lancashire, Scotland, and delivered by the nuns. My mother, after reading the book of the life of the saints, named me Martin Dominic, meaning 'God of War' and 'of the Lord', because I was dead at birth due to the umbilical cord wrapped around my neck.

My mother told me years later of her own childhood, when she was seriously ill with diphtheria and given a yellow rose flower from Carfin Grotto, Scotland's national shrine to Our Lady of Lourdes, by her Aunt Grace.

I remember my Confirmation preparation class question from the

priest was 'to name the fifth Joyful Mystery of the Rosary', and after my answer thinking to myself, it was lucky Mary and Joseph found Him, or the world would be in trouble without our salvation through Our Lord Jesus Christ.

St Francis, St Martin, and St Dominic were the warriors of the Lord who found their strength, meaning and purpose of life through the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Our Lady supports and guides me daily.

On one occasion while visiting Rome, my companion insisted on sitting at the rear during the Mass at the Church of the Santissima Trinita dei Monti Spanish Steps. The Mass took place at one of the side altars, so we had to sit closer. Then suddenly a Church usher tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Do not sit there come with me." He opened the gates of the altar rail and placed us in front of the altar. The next day, visiting the Basilica Papale di Santa Maria Maggiore, a different usher approached me and repeated the same words as before and opened the gates and, again,

placed us beside the side altar.

The next morning, my companion again said not to attend Mass. I felt uncomfortable with this suggestion, but I was willing to support him. However, I had the desire and the hunger to receive the Eucharist so, while out walking, we came upon a smaller church and, after entering, we decided to separate and admire the architecture. I noticed two religious nuns sitting in the front seat and then suddenly one of them approached the Tabernacle and came forward to the other nun with the Eucharist. I was able to approach her, and I received the Eucharist. My companion said that he was surprised that I was able to receive the Eucharist since he requested for us to stay away from the Mass that day.

Just like the Bible passage at the wedding feast, it is better to place yourself at the end of the table because the host seeing you sitting there will bring you to the front (Luke 14). I believe that weekend in Rome, I sat with Jesus and His Mother Mary.

We know that Mary walks with us and pray that she will continue to support us

by Caoimhe Mahony, Search Youth Group



MARY is the ultimate role model for young women. As Catholics, we are so grateful for her stepping up and into her destiny, even though it would have been really difficult to understand at such a young age.

Mary gave up her life so selflessly to help mould Jesus into the man He was, so that He could fulfil His destiny. We acknowledge the strength, courage and bravery that it takes to step into that role.

We find comfort that we, too, can step into our future with the grace that Mary did, and we continue to pray to Mary for strength to face what our future holds.

At the wedding in Cana, we see how Mary encourages Jesus to perform His first miracle, even

though we get the sense that Jesus doesn't feel ready. Mary's encouragement demonstrates that all encompassing motherly love towards Jesus. Whenever we need that motherly love, we can look to Mary, particularly for those of us who have not experienced motherly love on Earth. We can receive that comfort warmth and support from Mary.

We can imagine the pain that Mary experienced during the crucifixion of Jesus and we admire her strength in coping with that. When we face into our own sufferings in life, we can call on Mary's suffering as a reminder that we can get through it to, and we ask Mary to support us and give us the

courage to weather the storms of our own life.

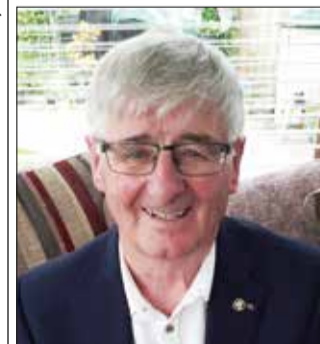
We can relate to Mary's pain and suffering in the trials of our own life. We always have hope through the Resurrection and how Mary continues to stand at Jesus' side, being there for Him and us when we need her.

We are forever grateful for Mary and the gifts that she gives us, and we will continue to pray to her and through her.

We know that Mary walks with us, and all we have to do is ask her to give us what we need and we give thanks for that. We know that Mary lives in our hearts and we pray that she can continue to support us and our relationships.

May Feast Days provide good focus on various aspects of Our Lady's role

by Robert Glackin



Robert Glackin, Waterside, Derry

OUR Lady has a special role in our journey through life. There are many references in Scripture devoted to Mary. Mary's role in the mission of Christ is one of cooperation and participation, which is vital to our own journey

of faith.

The grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit enables Mary and the Church and us, as individuals, to make a response which is utterly dependent upon God but which, at the same time, represents true involvement and real participation in the life and work of the Church, and this stands to our credit in God's eyes.

The feasts which occur in the month of May, such as May 13, Fatima, May 24, Our Lady of the Way, and May 31, The Visitation, give splendid opportunities for a balanced presentation of Our Lady's role in the celebration of the Liturgy, where she is mentioned prominently in all the Eucharistic

Prayers.

All these feast days provide us with focus for considering various aspects of Our Lady's role and for developing an attachment to her and the example she gives us. We should always do something about this by drawing attention to these celebrations and make a positive contribution to real spiritual growth.

The Hail Mary is deservedly the most popular prayer of the Church addressed to Mary. In addition to this basic prayer, The Angelus, The Rosary and the Magnificat represent a good combination of prayer and meditation to Our Lady on the central Mysteries of Christianity.

Without Mary in my life's journey, I would never have got to know and love Jesus

by Lexie Morrison



Lexie Morrison, Derry.

AS I look back at my earliest memory of the family Rosary, I must have been around eight years old. The Rosary seemed to me to be just a 'series of words', it wasn't prayers to me. Those words meant nothing to me, they didn't get me thinking and they definitely didn't penetrate light into my soul! Or did they? If I didn't feel any Grace or light enter my soul, does that mean it didn't happen? If I wasn't aware of our Blessed Mother's presence with us during the Rosary, did that mean she wasn't there?

By the age of 19 I had a

conversion. A death in the family caused me a fear of dying and judgement of Hell. At that time, I started to listen to some audio concerning the end times which made me worse, but near the end of the audio there was a declaration that souls faithful to the Holy Rosary would be sheltered under the protection of our Holy Mother. I found my answer and began to start praying the Rosary on my own.

Initially, this wasn't an act of love for God or our Blessed Mother; it was purely to rid me of my fear. Maybe I thought I could pray my way out of Hell and into Heaven. I noticed after a few months of praying the Rosary that I started to sense joy and peace, and I was soon attending daily Mass. So what happened? I was praying those same words again. Was it because my own Will was now involved? Did I now have Faith? Maybe! I was praying to Mary but I never really contemplated that she was actually there with me. Again, just because I didn't realise she was there with me, it doesn't mean that she wasn't!

As I journeyed through life, I went through difficult and dark

times, and I recall, as I look back, that I used to pray the Rosary walking to work and, when possible, I fitted in prayers during work. What had happened to me? Why was I still praying the Rosary all these years later? What started out as a 'series of words' was now taking root in me as faith and as my comforter.

Many years later, I went to Medjugorje and had the most wonderful experience of my life. I didn't see anything but I experienced the love of our Blessed Mother and the beginning of a relationship which changed my life. For to know the love of Mary is to know the love of Jesus!

Now today, when I look back, contemplating my journey and the awareness of our Blessed Mother, it seems to me it was more than just words, even more than a bunch of prayers...it reminds me of 'Footprints'. Mary was caring for me during difficult times, protecting me, loving me, and guiding me towards Jesus every day. All this was given to me - it was never about what I returned back. When I didn't feel our Blessed Mother's love towards me, did that mean she didn't love me?

Without a doubt, I know that without Mary in my life's journey, I would never have got to know and love Jesus. So my answer to the above questions accepts her presence in my life, no matter what I was aware of. I realise now that Mary was there with me all those times. God gave us Mary, so Mary could give us God! Mary accepted God's plan for us and gave the world Jesus! But Mary also knew that time when she had to give Him back to the Father for love of us. Thy Will be done!

Lead

Mary's only plan is God's Will and to invite us to love Jesus every day. It is easy to look in at ourselves and even think this journey is about us, individually, getting to Heaven. It is never that! Bishop Fulton Sheen was once asked what is the surest way to get to Heaven, and he answered by saying "take someone by the hand and lead them there". This is the Mary way!

Let us contemplate Our Lord's words as He hung on the Cross: "Woman behold thy Son...Son behold thy Mother!" And what was John's response to these words? He made a place in his

home for Mary. It's easy to forget the real message of making our Eternal home right here and now, in preparation for when we truly go home. In making a place in our homes for Mary, we are bringing God and Eternity, too, within.

When I can't see Mary in my life is she not there? Faith tells us she is. When I look at the Holy Eucharist on the Altar, what do I see? Bread? If I keep looking, what do I see? Still Bread? Is Jesus not there then? Of course He is. Faith tells us that! Do we only seek Jesus in the Holy Eucharist? Do we only seek Mary in the Holy Rosary? Why? Let's rethink! Is Jesus not in everyone? Jesus is everything! Jesus and Mary are inseparable. Therefore, in each person we meet, there is Jesus, and there is Mary, too!

For years, I always based things on 'feelings'; that's who I am, I guess. If I was feeling good, life was good. If my prayers felt good, I must have been praying well. If I got a spiritual feeling at Mass today and not yesterday, did that mean something was wrong with the Holy Mass yesterday or maybe me? But lately, some good friends have been telling me not to base things on feelings, as they are just

feelings after all.

How many times was I truly aware of the presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist? How many times was I truly aware of our Blessed Mother's presence with me as I prayed the Rosary? Eternity is within us and only faith can see and know this, not human feelings. It is ironic, but at times it is like as if we need to go back, as the cured blind man, and say, "Lord make me blind again so I can see", and like the cured deaf man and say, "Lord make me deaf again so I can hear".

So, after all these years, I now realise that the mystery of God and Eternity cannot be comprehended by feelings but by a spiritual awareness. This awareness needs to be addressed by us in Faith. We are now spiritual beings in Christ, and no eye has seen and no ear has heard what God has prepared for those who love Him.

Let us become more aware of the presence of Jesus and Mary in our lives, so that we may enter Eternity as God's spiritual children, and that Eternity is already our familiar homeland. With these thoughts in mind, let us, like Mary, ponder them in our hearts.

Our Lady always brought me back to Jesus when complacent in my faith

by Rory McGilligan



Rory McGilligan, Dungiven.

WHEN Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was dying on the cross on Good Friday, giving up His life so that we could share in His eternal life, an act of total selflessness for us who are truly unworthy of such grace and mercy, He also gave His mother to us in another truly selfless act.

"Therefore, when Jesus had seen His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing near, He said to

His mother, 'Woman behold your son'. Next He said to the disciple, 'behold your mother'. And from that hour, the disciple accepted her as his own" (John 19 25-26).

This simply was not just Jesus asking John to look after His mother, it was Jesus giving His mother, Mary to us, so she would now be our Mother. Why would Jesus do this?

When the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and asked if she would cooperate with God's will, she accepted. She said 'Yes' to God's will all the time.

Sometimes, we hear Mary being compared to Eve, the difference being when Eve was tempted she carried out her own will first. Even though she knew what she was doing would offend God, she decided to put her selfish reasons in front of God's and, in doing so, she sinned, and when any of us sin it has consequences.

Mary, on the other hand, always chose God first, as we should. In doing so, we are letting God

work through our lives so that we may live the best life possible. She is our example of God coming first, no matter how difficult, how challenging, how uncomfortable this may be.

With Mary's acceptance of the Angel's message, the Holy Spirit over shadowed her and she conceived. When we receive the sacrament of Confirmation, we welcome the Holy Spirit into our lives also. We can choose to ignore the Holy Spirit and fall into sin, like Eve, or we can choose the way of Our Lady and live a full, rich life in union with God's plan. The latter choice is the road less travelled. It is a more difficult road, with possibly greater challenges, but, in the end, the reward of eternal life is an unbeatable prize.

We know from scripture that Mary was aware of God's difficult plan for her and Our Lord, even when Jesus was a baby - "And a sword will pass through your own soul, so the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed". (Luke 2

35)

At the wedding feast in Cana, it was Mary, moved by the Holy Spirit, who asked Jesus to change the water into wine. By asking this question, Mary was asking Our Lord to start His public ministry. She was asking Him to begin what He was sent here to do, and how did he respond to that question... "What is that to me and to you, woman? My hour has not yet arrived" (John 2:4).

Our Lord calls his Blessed Mother 'Woman'. This is at the start of His ministry and we know the next time He calls her "woman" is when she is at the foot of the cross, where He gives His mother to us.

There are seven in my family and, before the days of seven seater SUVs and MPVs, my father would have taken us all down to Knock in a Renault 18, and I'm sure many people of my generation would have taken the same journey, in the same conditions, with no complaints.

Pope John Paul II, the then

Pope, who had a great Marian devotion, visited Knock in 1979, and I remember the full buzz about it. We made that journey most summers as a family. Knock then was very busy but also very exciting. It was a day out and an adventure.

I suppose being exposed to how important Our Lady was in my formative years has given me a lifelong connection to her. As you grow up and think you know better, it was always our Lady that brought me back to her Son, Jesus, when becoming complacent in my faith. I often tell my children last thing at night, after their bedtime story, that Jesus and Mary are close by watching us, loving us and taking care of us. I find it comforts them and, hopefully, they will form a personal relationship with Jesus and Mary also.

In 1917 when Our Lady appeared to the Portuguese children, Jacinta, Francesco and Lucia, in Fatima, she often looked sad. Her earthly children had drifted from her and

her Son through sin. She wanted them to come back to Jesus, to go to Confession and receive Holy Communion so we would be united with Jesus.

She asked the three children many times to pray for sinners. When we drift from God and choose our own way and not His way, we offend God, the same God that died on the cross and rose from the dead so we could share in life everlasting. The message Our Lady gave in Fatima has not lost its relevance, especially in the 21st century, where we are all the more inclined and encouraged to put ourselves first.

May in the Catholic Church is the month of Mary. There are many graces this month. Mary, our mother, wants us to be united with her Son, Jesus. Why not start your journey, give Mary a rose everyday by saying the Rosary. You will receive graces and strength overtime. Let your journey to a closer relationship with Jesus and Mary begin.

When we go off track Our Lady takes us by the hand and leads us back to Jesus *by Oliver Barrett*



Oliver Barrett, Leckpatrick

IN my early years, I had a sense of the importance of Mary as Saint Mary is the patron of my Primary School in Cloughcor, Co Tyrone. I learned prayers to Our Lady from my family, particularly my grandmother, who prayed the Rosary with us and accompanied us every year on our annual pilgrimage to Knock, from our holiday caravan in Bundoran.

At first, I did not understand Our Lady's apparition in Knock and only cared about spending my holiday 'punts' in the small stalls around the Shrine. I preferred to

play handheld computer games than to say the Rosary, and looked forward to the picnic we would have in St John's Welcome Centre rather than the Mass we would attend as part of our pilgrimage.

It is only in my later years, when I recalled my grandmother getting plastic jars and making sure we took 'Knock Water' home with us, that I became interested in the Shrine as a place of pilgrimage and prayer.

Now, I can easily spend time contemplating at the gable wall where this silent apparition of the Blessed Virgin, St Joseph, St John, an Altar, an eight-week-old Lamb, a cross behind the Lamb and angels, took place in 1879. This extra-ordinary event gave great hope to people in the west of Ireland at a time when famine had ravished the country and caused many to emigrate. Now, Knock is an International Eucharistic and Marian shrine and thousands travel from all over the world every year to this place of peace and reconciliation.

From an early age, Our Lady has always been part of my life, and particularly during difficult moments in my life. Twenty

years ago, I had the opportunity to go on the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes. This was during a particularly tumultuous time in my life, when I was unsure about what the future would hold for me. There, I saw the English pilgrimage to Lourdes and the faith of those who are sick and less able bodied. This helped me to put my own problems into perspective and be thankful for what I have.

Around 10 years ago, I came to a crossroads in my life and again became unsure about the future. At this time, I started to read about the apparitions of Our Lady to three children in Fatima, Lucia, Jacinta, and Francesco, in 1917. When I read the children's account of the events, I became inspired to travel there and went to visit the Shrine. I travelled knowing that St John Paul II placed the bullet that shot him, in a failed assassination attempt in 1981, in the Crown of Our Lady of Fatima. Whilst there, as I walked from the Cova da Iria, where the apparitions took place, to the Laca do Cabeço, where St Michael had appeared to the children in 1916, and then to Aljustrel where the children had lived, I found serenity and had

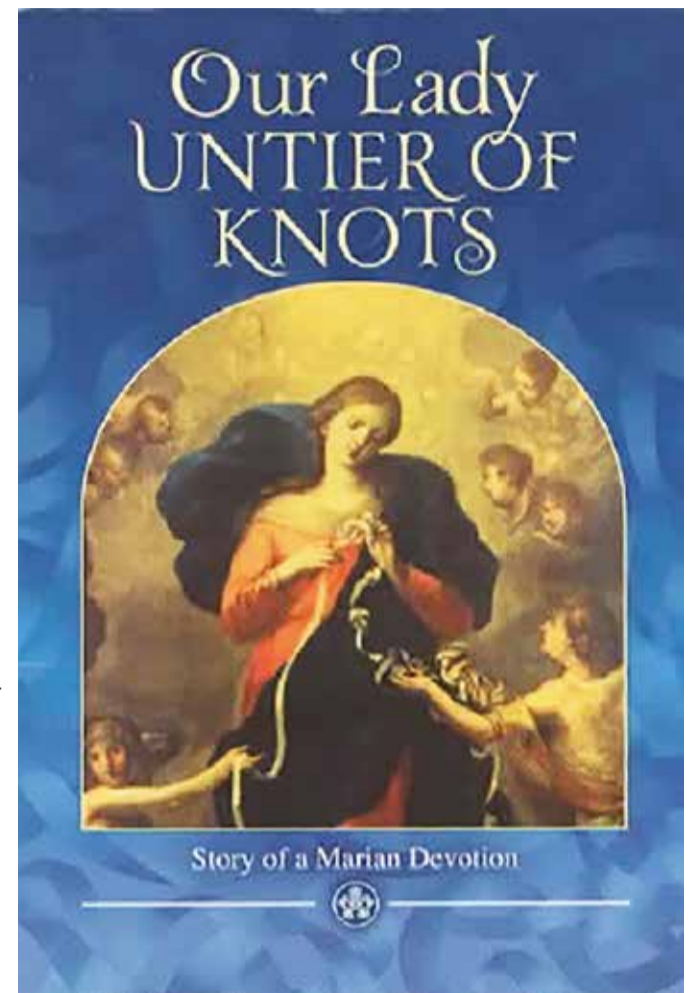
peace in my heart.

I experience St Mary as someone to turn to during difficult moments in my life. Mary intercedes for us before the Father, when we allow her to be our mother. When we go off track, Our Lady takes us by the hand and leads us back to Jesus.

The prayer I turn to in difficult times, and recommend to others, is the Novena to 'Our Lady Untier of Knots.' This devotion emerged from Augsburg, in Germany, at the beginning of the 17th century, when the knots of the wedding ribbon were untied through the intercession of Mary. I understand Our Lady as someone who can untie the knots of our life through her intercession.

The painting of 'Our Lady Untier of Knots' is attributed to Johann Melchior Georg Schmidtner. It depicts the 'Blessed Virgin of Good Counsel' in Heaven among the angels. She is intent in untying the knots in the ribbon that is held for her by an angel on her left. After untying the knots, Mary passes the untied ribbon to another angel on her right.

Mary, untier of knots, pray for me.



Malin Well Turas in honour of Our Lady

THE Malin Well Turas in honour of Our Lady took place on Sunday, May 22, with a good number turning out for the prayer walk despite a heavy rain shower before it got underway.

Organised annually by local members of the Legion of Mary, Fr Charlie Logue, curate, accompanied the procession as it left from Star of the Sea Church and followed the quiet country road through the townland of

Ballygorman down to the early Christian Well, beside the sea, with which Benedictine monk, St Muirdhealach is associated.

The younger pilgrims on the walk appreciated the honour of walking at the front of the procession, holding up a wooden Cross, while the Rosary was prayed.

A statue of Our Lady, which had been on Inishtrahull until the last of the islanders left in 1928, is also on the holy site, facing the island.



American theology professor hails Sr Clare's great value as bright light in a world with shades of darkness

THE Carmelite Monastery at Termonbacca was the picturesque setting enjoyed by a group of American visitors from the University of Mary, in North Dakota, keen to find out more about Derry's inspirational nun of posthumous fame, Sr Clare Crockett.

The group of 13 students, aged 18-24 years, and three faculty members arrived in Derry in mid-May, some days after a week of powerful prayer and talks by people inspired by Sr Clare's life and its message that the call to holiness is universal, during a retreat in St Mary's Creggan.

Led by Theology professor, Michael Taylor, the group had visited Maynooth University, Dublin, Clonmacnoise, and Knock Shrine, in Co Mayo, before spending a few days in Derry. 'The Net' caught up with them on their return from a walk that included visiting Sr Clare's grave in the City Cemetery and viewing her mural in the Brandywell.

Himself a regular visitor to Ireland, Michael explained that they were on a faculty-led study abroad trip, adding: "We like to think of it, however, as a pilgrimage. It's about serving others and being served, and an understudy of another culture. Northern Ireland has a proud tradition of ecumenism, so that is very important for us to understand too."

Saying that the University, which is a Benedictine, Christian and Catholic Institute, has been bringing groups to Ireland, both north and south, for the last five years or so, he recalled it being a goal of his since he and his wife first started coming to the island 35 years ago.

"My wife did her student teaching in Inverness, in Scotland. We're both American but both have relatives in Ireland, Scotland and England. The first time we came here, we took a ferry from Ayre, in Scotland, and when we got off a car bomb had exploded and we saw military everywhere. The Troubles became real to us at that time," said Michael, adding: "My favourite music group is U2, so we wanted to see where their 'Bloody Song' was made. Bono goes to Scripture first before he writes a song; 75 per cent of his songs are based on Scripture. He is a very spiritual man."

He went on to say: "Ever since I was a primary grade school teacher, I have taught kids about The Troubles in Northern Ireland. We have a Bloody Sunday Forum in our university and have just finished our seventh Forum. We stood in solidarity with those marking the 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday earlier this year. We have a Peace Park in downtown Bismarck, and we gathered there for an ecumenical service. We had a piper and a Native American

shared prayer in his native language. It was a very ecumenical gathering to honour that spirit of peace and reconciliation that we get so strongly here in Northern Ireland.

"We have also published our first journal from the Forum, 'Island of Saints and Scholars', which includes a review of the book, 'Say Nothing', that tells the story of the mother of 10 children who 'disappeared' in 1970s Belfast. I have an article on St John Henry Newman in it. The second volume will be published this month."

Explaining that the University of Mary was founded in 1959 by the Benedictine Sisters of the Annunciation, who were originally from Germany, Michael said: "They came out in the late 1800s to Bismarck with three Sisters and one of the first things that they did was to patch up bullet wounds. They founded the first Catholic school there and then Mary College, which became the University of Mary."

"A group from the University had been planning to come to Ireland and Derry in 2020, but the trip was cancelled because of the Covid situation," he added: "We had a group of 21 students coming at that time, and one of them had a particular interest in Sr Clare. She mentioned it to me and was greatly excited about coming here and learning more about her."

"I think Sr Clare is a noble role

model. She is extremely valuable as a bright light in a world that has shades of darkness. I very much connect with her in her 'All or Nothing' philosophy.

"Having visited Sr Clare's grave and the mural of her in the Brandywell, I feel that there is something exceptional going on with her. We need to pray about it."

During their visit, the group enjoyed some time in conversation with Sr Clare's sister, Shauna, and best friend, Sharon Doran (nee Doherty), finding out more about the inspirational nun.

Through his connection with Liam Milligan, of North West Methodist Mission, whom he first met about five years ago, Michael and the group had a tour of the Ulster University Magee Campus, a tour of the Bogside, including the Free Derry Museum, Free Derry Corner, Murals and the area of the Bloody Sunday Civil Rights March in 1972. They also explored the Waterside and the Walled City of Derry, and visited the Columba Community's Celtic Saints' Garden, the Grianán of Aileach, and St Patrick's Well, in Co Donegal, and travelled to Omagh to meet with Michael Gallagher regarding the Omagh Bombing of 1998.

Full coverage of the Sr Clare Retreat will be included in the June edition.



Young Americans share thoughts on Sr Clare

A mix of first and second years and graduates from the University of Mary, with study interests ranging from communications, exercise, science and social work, the group of young Americans who visited Sr Clare's grave and mural have shared their thoughts...

"It is notable the impact that Sr Clare has had on the community of Derry, as there are pictures of her everywhere, including a mural, and her grave is visited by so many people. I always hear about her being very joyful and bright. She is one of those people that you want to know more about, and you have a feeling there is going to

be more stuff that is still going to 'wow' you; it's always going to be meaningful".

"I ended up watching the 'All or Nothing' film about Sr Clare a few years ago. It was a very interesting film. You get to feel like you know her and then she dies at the end. I didn't find her conversion that

shocking as a lot of the saints had lives like that, but her story makes her more human. When people look at religious life, or someone that is looked up to, they usually seem perfect, with no flaws, but when you look at Sr Clare's story and realise that she did all those things and then had a conversion, you can see that it is possible for you to do that too".

"Looking at her mural, her eyes capture you and bring you in, as does her smile. There's a saying about someone entering a room and lighting it up, well, when you walk around that corner in the Brandywell, her mural definitely lights up that area. You can see

why the Catholic community are so drawn to her".

"I had no idea who Sr Clare was before this. When I heard her back story, she was a person you would never think would be a nun. The stories about the lighter that she loved and running in the field of flowers make her seem real. Standing at her grave and having her home pointed out, and actually seeing what she lived and did, has made her easier to relate to.

The mural is striking. The artist didn't slip up in any way. The eyes are really well done and just draw you in".

"What strikes me about her compared to other religious figures I have heard about is her separation from faith growing up and all the tense moments she experienced in her childhood, all made her more devotional. She was not thinking of becoming a nun, her vocation found her. It was not a conscious decision. You could tell that it was obvious that the Lord was calling her and she was doing everything she could to get away from it".

"I was struck by how relatable she was – the partying, the lighter that she didn't want to get rid of, and the figuring out how to change her life. Her struggle is very

relatable. With some saints, it's usually 'Oh, they were so perfect', but with Sr Clare, we know she struggled. She is the kind of role model that resonates the most, as her life wasn't perfect, but nobody is. Her story gives you hope".

"Everything that I have heard about Sr Clare tells me that she was very joyful. In all the photographs of her, she always had a big smile. Life can be very tough and hard, and it is about keeping your peace and being joyful. I found that very inspiring, especially for a young person not much older than us".

Eucharistic Adoration Apostolate returning to Knock for annual pilgrimage

THE National Apostolate of Eucharistic Adoration is returning to the International Eucharistic and Marian Shrine of Knock for its annual pilgrimage, and it will take place on the weekend of Corpus Christi, June 17 and 18.

Some parishes within the Derry Diocese are organising buses to travel to the Co Mayo Shrine for this special pilgrimage celebrating the silent message of the Apparition of the Lamb of God on the Altar, Our Lady, St Joseph, St John and angels, in Knock in August 21, 1879 – A Call to Prayer and Adoration.

The Pilgrimage Programme gets underway in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel on the Friday night, June 17, at 7.30 pm, with the Rosary, followed by a talk at 8 pm on ‘The Eucharist: Source and Summit of many graces, including healing of mind and body’ and Healing Service by Fr Pat Collins CM, an international speaker, author of many books and founder of New Springtime Community. The Friday programme will close with the celebration of Mass at 9.30 pm.

On Saturday, June 18, there will be a Eucharistic Rosary in St John’s

Rest & Care Centre at 10.20 am, followed by Guided Adoration in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel at 11 am, which will be led by the Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal.

The Keynote Address for the Pilgrimage will be delivered from 11.50 am to 1 pm in Knock Parish Church, during which there will be a Teaching on the Eucharist. This talk will be given by Fr Morgan M White, M Div MA, STL, KCHS, a named Knight of The Holy Sepulchre by Pope Benedict, who has taught in American seminaries. The 3 pm pilgrimage Mass will be celebrated in the Basilica, with the main celebrant and homilist to be Archbishop Michael Neary. This Mass will be broadcast by EWTN.

This will be followed at 4 pm with a Rosary Procession from the Basilica to the Apparition Chapel, where there will be Benediction. Pilgrims are encouraged to bring along their flags and banners for the procession.

During the day, there will also be a Children of the Eucharist (COTE) programme, and pilgrims are invited to bring their children and grandchildren to a time of prayer and Adoration in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. There

KNOCK

Friday 17th & Saturday 18th June

Corpus Christi Weekend

Fri 7.30pm - 10pm; Sat 10.30am - 5pm



A CALL TO PRAYER AND ADORATION

Apostolate of Eucharistic Adoration

ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE 2022

info@eucharisticadoration.ie 087 1045200, 086 1027411, 01 6625899
www.eucharisticadoration.ie (for further details and updates)

will be two sessions to choose from – 11.45 am-12.45 pm and 13.45-14.30 pm.

There will also be an opportunity

for Confession in the Chapel of Reconciliation between 11 am and 2.30 pm.

World Communications Day... Listening with the ear of the heart

WORLD Communications Day falls on Ascension Sunday, May 29, and in keeping with the synodal pathway he has called the faithful to journey on together, Pope Francis’ message this year has the theme of listening with the ear of the heart.

Commenting on the Holy Father’s message for World Communications Day 2022, All Ireland Primate, Archbishop Eamon Martin, who is chair of the Council for Communications of the Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference, notes that he is “encouraging all people of goodwill to listen attentively to everyone we engage with.”

He remarked: “In doing so, we are expressing, not just a mark of sincere respect for the dignity of the other, but in doing so we are also laying the foundation stone of genuine relationships, which in turn is foundational to the relationship between God and humanity.”

“It is in all our interests to note Pope Francis’ concern that many people ‘are quickly losing the ability to listen to one another, while at the same time listening is undergoing new developments, especially due to new forms of

communicating’
“As the Catholic Church in Ireland, and around the world, continues on our journey of faith and spiritual renewal, it is also timely that Pope Francis highlights the importance of listening in the context of this local and universal synodal process.

“In his message, Pope Francis says, ‘The most important task in pastoral activity is the ‘apostolate of the ear’ – to listen before speaking, as the Apostle James exhorts, ‘Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak’ (1:19). Freely giving some of our own time to listen to people is the first act of charity.”

Archbishop Eamon took the opportunity to offer his prayerful support and gratitude “to all those who have participated in local parish-based listening, discussion and prayer gatherings which have been taking place across the island as part of the Church’s ‘Synodal Pathway’ process”.

The National Pre-Synodal Assembly takes place on June 18 in Clonmacnoise, and Archbishop Eamon is hopeful that it will be greatly enriched by the fruits of these meetings, which represent the initial listening stage of the Irish Synodal Pathway.

Divine Mercy Sunday celebrated in Claudy

DIVINE Mercy Sunday was celebrated in various parishes throughout the Diocese, including in St Patrick’s Church, Claudy.

The ceremony began with the parish priest, Fr David O’Kane blessing the Divine Mercy image. Following a talk about Divine Mercy, the Mercy Chaplet was

prayed and a poem about the Mercy of God was read.

Fr David then gave a Eucharistic blessing to those gathered in the church and watching online, and the ceremony came to a close with the praying of a decade of the Rosary.



Pope Benedict and Sr Clare: An unlikely dynamic duo *by Fr Stephen Quinn ocd*



Pope Benedict with the Book of the Gospels.

I am going to let you in on a dark secret that I do not tell many people. I was at one stage a fully paid-up member of the Joseph Ratzinger Fan Club. I would go as far as to say that “I am Stephen, and I am a Ratzinger-a-holic.”

From the time that I entered seminary, I started to read Ratzinger books, where I discovered a singular mind reaching out to the very edges of human thought and that could bring me with him. He struck me as a prophet, who knew from the inside human affairs and who could read effectively the direction of things, and who was also a priest attempting to delicately reveal the beauty of the face of God.

A very different caricature has gripped the popular imagination since the Netflix film of “The Two Popes” that presented Joseph Ratzinger as cold, aloof, isolated, and reading everything in a one dimensional and fundamentalist manner. Open one book of his and you will find it so completely otherwise!

So, you can imagine my delight when reading Sr Clare’s biography that she also had picked up this same addiction. In 2005, she had foreseen the upcoming election and had prayed and agitated for Ratzinger’s election to happen after John Paul II died. With my delight, goes a certain amount of jealousy when I read that Sr Clare just happened to be in St Peter’s Square when Joseph Ratzinger stepped out on that central loggia in the shoes of the fisherman. Even given this joint proclivity between myself and Sr Clare, she was still cooler than me; I only did books, she was able to do jokes in an impressive impression of the German pontiff!

Sr Kirsten, in her book, noted that Sr Clare spent weeks and months after Pope Benedict XVI’s inauguration, poring over the homily that he preached for that significant occasion. She let the words of the new pope set for her a whole set of new priorities. Of course, in speaking, Pope Benedict did not mean to address himself solely to Sr Clare but rather to give some priorities to the whole Church. Pope Benedict challenged each Christian to take the whole idea of mission more

seriously.

In his homily, the Holy Father spoke of that moment recorded in the Gospel of St Luke when the Lord Jesus almost happens upon the fishermen. It is quite easy to imagine, that morning all those years ago, when the Lord came around the headland on the Lake of Gennesaret, with a large crowd in tow. Almost by chance, He bumps into a group of fishermen. These men had spent a long, frustrating night on the water and, for all their efforts, had come up empty handed. One can imagine the loud grumbles and the angry gestures that were going on as this strange stranger stepped towards them.

Right there and then, He asks these tired fishermen to put out into the deep water and lay down the nets for another catch. Certain colourful words must have been on the tip of some of their tongues at the temerity of such a request. From somewhere, (the Holy Spirit!) their leader found within himself the wonderful reply, “If you say so, I will pay out the nets.” And so, the fishermen put out again into the deep waters. They lay out their nets and have such a catch of fish that the nets begin to tear. Then comes the mission. Jesus asks each of these men to give up their pursuit of dumb animals and become “fishers of men and women.”

In just the same way, the Lord Jesus strides into our midst today, He lifts up His voice and asks each member of the Church to fish for men and women, to put out from the shores of comfort and convenience, put out into the deep sea of this World, to lay out the nets of their own voice and talents, so as to win men and women over to the Gospel, to God, to Christ, and to true and abundant life.

The Early Christian community was profoundly perceptive; they noticed a contradiction in the whole idea of fishing for men and women. They could not help but see that in fishing you take the fish out of its natural environment and this extraction means death for the fish. The Early Christians went on to comment that in the case of fishing for men and women, the exact opposite is true.

These Christians were more profoundly aware of the whole

concept of pollution than we are, for all our ‘green consciousness’, and all the dangers that threaten our planet. They knew of deeper pollutants than carbon, fossil fuels, and plastics. Pride, gluttony, greed, lust, and sloth have created a lethal cocktail that has damaged humanity’s natural environment. A sea salted in suffering and death, a murky water without any light. The nets of the Gospel go down into these waters of death and hoist human beings up into the brilliance of God’s light, into the untainted environment of God’s life. The men or women caught by the net of the Gospel are lifted out of the asphyxia of the modern world and now breathe in the goodness, the beauty and the truth of God himself. Is there any more necessary or beautiful task in the whole world?

We are labouring under a serious misapprehension. The word mission we associate with priests, brothers, and nuns going to far flung destinations in order to build churches and schools along the Congo, at the top of the Andes, or on the very rim of the Pacific in Japan, we could not be more wrong about this. The people of these places have faith in Christ in a more vibrant way than in many places that claim to have heard of Christ already!

Mission

The mission of the Church is much closer to us than we can imagine. The mission lies in our own communities, along the familiar streets around our houses, and even in our own homes. We are, indeed, living in difficult times for the Church. The problems are well known to us all, they fill our headlines; we need not retrace them here. All of them pale into insignificance compared to the strange forgetfulness that has entered the human heart. A form of amnesia that has allowed people to forget the God who created them, the God who redeemed them, and the God who wants to sanctify and share Himself with them. They forget what it is that they owe to this God. They turn a blind eye to the dignity that He has given them. They forget what has been handed onto them, at such a high price. They forget the difference between right and wrong. And in the end, they forget even themselves.

How to get through the thick clouds of this amnesia has taxed the wits of the Church for many years, but really the answer is very simple. Each one of us is the answer! The Lord speaks, “Whom shall I send? Who will be our messenger?” We can either sit on our hands and pretend that nothing is happening, or we can stand on our own two feet, put our money where our mouth is, and say with all the conviction that we can muster, “Here I am, send me.”

If our neighbour came around

to our door and asked for a loaf of bread, we would not think twice. We would give it and more besides. When we see our neighbour labouring under the strain of unbelief and no longer knowing the meaning of their own life, why is it then that we start to hmm and hah, that we start to pull at our collar uncomfortably, that we go red in the face, and worry about what they think of us and what they will say about us? If we can give what is good in one case, why can we not give what is best in another?

The call of Pope Benedict XVI came in the first years of Sr Clare’s religious life. She, like so many of us, did not want to be defined by her past. She did not want to remain only a sister who had a good back story, a dramatic conversion experience, and by her journey from Ireland to Spain. Nor did she want to be defined by some of the talents that the Good God had put within her character; acting, singing and playing the guitar were all good in themselves, but they were never going to be enough. Pope Benedict’s words resonated in her heart because they showed her the priority, the true meaning of her conviction, and the shape of her future, to devote herself to be a fisher of men and women. Afterwards she would say of herself that she was “a witness to the Lord’s mercy” and would use her talents “for the glory of God.”

If we start to think about how to do mission, we can think of it in terms of the fishermen laying out their nets in order to lift the fish up to the light of God. The Church has noticed that there are really two nets at the disposal of the fishermen of the Church. The first net is a silent one. Even though it is silent, in an ironic sense, it, maybe, speaks louder than any other; it is the witness of who we are, and what we do, as we struggle to live out an authentically Christian life, as we endeavour to bring our words and our actions into some kind of congruency. Words carry so much more weight when they are backed up by reality. They have a power that cannot be argued with or be easily dismissed.

Not many of us have completed that process of bringing our lives into conjunction with the Lord’s words, we might not even see the end of that process, but the important thing is that we are attempting, struggling and trying to make it happen and that is to some extent enough. No matter what we think of our lives, Jesus’ face will be there under any effort to please Him. He radiates from us without us even knowing. People who do not know Christ are quicker on the uptake than we are, and they are able to spot His presence in His followers. It raises questions in them, “Why is he or she like that?” or “why does he or

she do the things he or she does?” Each disciple is the net that will catch men and women for God.

Power

Sr Clare’s life shows us the latent power of this first net. As her life became ever more marked by the face of the Lord, so she became ever more attractive to ever greater amounts of people; people could not help themselves but loved her and loved what she did. And all her acting, singing, and playing the guitar were galvanised to one purpose; to draw people to the one who had called her to change her life and to be a fisher of men. Yet the witness of life will go for nothing if it is not followed up by the second net of the mission.

The second component is the taxing part of the mission. It asks us to put away our well-rehearsed excuses for inaction and speak out, loud and proud, of the hope that we have arrived at. In a clear and unapologetic manner, we must give all those people who have not known the truth, the God given answer in Jesus Christ. The Scriptures make clear that there is no other name in heaven or in earth by which we can be saved. To undertake the mission, we have to share His name. Tell others that in Jesus Christ, God was made man, that He was crucified for love of each of us, and that He rose on the third day for the life of us all. Tell them that Jesus Christ offers them liberation not only to live this life with dignity and beauty but also a life fulfilled in blessed eternity. Tell them that Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Man, is now the measure of each and every human life. Tell them that they are willed, that they are necessary, and that they are loved by God himself.

In telling of Christ, there is no need to recite the formulas of the faith at people. What should be far more convincing is the Christ that you have come to know, and the Christ who has entered through the door of your life. Give Christ as you know Him! Go around the various places that Sr Clare went on Mission and ask the people who encountered her: the first communion class in Jacksonville, the patients in the hospital in Valencia, and in the school in Playa Prieta, and they will tell you one thing: Clare Crockett had one name on her lips and would not stop speaking of Him, her Good Lord.

Pope Benedict, in commenting on this Gospel passage, noticed an interesting phenomenon whenever the Lord had performed His miracle, made His significant commentary, and invited these fishermen to a new task. Peter immediately backs away from it all, sensing deep within himself that he was not worthy and that he was not up to the task. In Peter’s head, what the Lord is asking

seems all too much for him; that he would not have sufficient words, he would never be enough, and that he would almost certainly fail. Pope Benedict believes that we live in a time when the whole Church stands hesitating and intimidated. We are, as a body, afraid. We are frightened in a very particular manner.

Benedict asks the far-reaching question, “Are we not perhaps all afraid in some way? If we let Christ enter fully into our lives, if we open ourselves totally to Him, are we not afraid that He might take something from us? Are we not perhaps afraid to give up something significant, something unique, something that makes life beautiful? Do we not then risk ending up diminished and deprived of our freedom?”

All of us can feel the weight of these words and the bite that they take out of our comfort and convenience. They speak a sad truth that we, as Christians, are afraid of our own master!

In the week of the Sr Clare Retreat, in which we celebrated the example of Sr Clare, we found the answers to these searching questions. Take a good look at her journey from Iona Court to Praya Pieta, and ask yourself, does she look diminished or deprived of her freedom? Did she not live a unique life as a fisher of men? And was she not beautiful in a way that went beyond skin deep?

A resounding ‘No’ to all of the above! A ‘No’ that is joined to Pope Benedict’s own responses to his own questions. No, he said, “only in this friendship are the doors of life opened wide... Only in this friendship is the great potential of human existence truly revealed... Only in this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation...”

With great strength and conviction, the Pope could affirm “do not be afraid of Christ, He takes nothing away, and He gives you everything. When we give ourselves to Him, we receive a hundredfold. Open wide the doors to Christ and you will find true life.”



Sr Clare...a glance

“Come away and rest with me...” (Mk 6:30-34; Heb 4:1-13)

by Fr John McLaughlin ssc

THERE was an occasion in the garden of my brother, in Howth, when his children were still young and innocent. Ruth was being questioned by her pal, Ruth Eile, about what her Uncle John was doing out in the garden, walking up and down, book in hand, and stopping every now and again. And their lovely Labrador was practically on my tail as I wove my way around that confined space.

“What is your uncle doing out there?” asked Ruth Eile. And her namesake submitted that “it must be the dog that he is talking to” amidst all this stopping and starting and slow movements; so much for the possible witness to those young girls of my openly praying the Prayer of the Church (or the Breviary, as it was then known, mostly amongst priests and nuns).

It was never given to me to explain to any of my blood family what that Prayer meant to me over the ages. As in affairs of Faith at the time, and perhaps more so at the present time, it is easier to be effusive about such passions to those who have accompanied me on pilgrimage and the pastoral paths of Mission.

“Thou has made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our hearts are never happy until they rest in Thee!” (St Augustine, in his ‘Confessions’). Finding out those places and sources of rest might be the big challenge of the new emerging and searching Catholics of today, I feel.

Some of my priest friends and I took on the practice of the ‘Day in the Desert’, followed by members of the De Foucauld Fraternities. And it often presented a real challenge to step out there into a wide space or open fields for a whole day, armed only with a bottle of water and maybe a small bible. For some of the more cerebral members, this was almost an intolerable burden: to lay aside the pastoral planning for others and to face ourselves in our frailties and fears and hopes.

In a recent edition of the US Catholic (April 21), I came across a reflection admiring the Jesus “who lets His mind wander”.

Hari explains that human attention often works like a spotlight. We narrow our focus on the stimulus of the moment. The problem, Hari argues, is that most people today live in a “tornado of mental stimulation.” Our brain spotlights constantly jump from a friendly conversation to an email notification to a grocery list to a needy child to another email notification. Bulbs burn out at this pace.

Hari advocates for the importance of mind-wandering; a different form of attention when the spotlight fades and thoughts can meander free of agendas. This type of thinking is essential for human flourishing. During mind-wandering, our brains reflect

on experiences and make new connections. We allow ourselves to follow a train of thought, uninterrupted, from start to finish. Mind-wandering tends to be a deeply creative time. As Hari notes, “Many great breakthroughs don’t happen during periods of focus - they happen during mind-wandering.”

It occurred to me, during a device-free, agenda-less walk, that mind-wandering is a profoundly spiritual practice. Religious folk may liken mind-wandering to contemplation, the practice of being fully present to the divine.

Jesus seemed to allow His mind to wander plenty during His ministry days. The gospels describe the Son of God going off by Himself to pray quite a few times, often escaping to the mountains or other wild spots of solitude. The authors do not go into detail about how Jesus spent that time. He could have brought a stack of books to keep Him stimulated. He probably spent at least a few minutes reciting psalms and other traditional prayers.

But I imagine the Son of God spent a good chunk of His time in the mountains letting His mind wander: processing the events of the day, connecting insights from the people He served, and simply sitting with God. Jesus quieted external noise so He could pay attention to the internal musings. He quieted societal agendas so He could listen to the Creator. Jesus let His mind wander and was a more whole person for it.

In one of the Santiago parishes where I worked, we actually had the resource of two forms of enclosed retreats for pastoral agents; the Ignatian Exercises at local levels, and some for whom the notion of a retreat was completely outside their horizon, the Conversion Retreats. Later on, I encountered those for married couples, the Nazarene groupings... and the ‘Family of Nazareth’. There were, of course, the more middle-class retreats of Cursillo and Marriage Encounter, which some had experienced.

It meant that we could give back something, as it were, to our own pastoral agents by supporting those Ignatian Retreats and being present for the discernment process. And we could offer a discrete lifeline to people who were on the fringes and had a feeling of failure, about their addictions or their family and marriage relationships.

Energy

Fostering and accompanying these Retreats offered a huge spiritual energy to the chapels, to those accompanying and preparing and, later on, in the inspiring follow-up, often involving special and supplementary Scripture and liturgical courses. Sometimes it

seemed that these were the people who had that special ‘encounter with God’ that the more routine catechetical and sacramental preparation meetings didn’t always produce, despite the goodwill and endeavor of the participants.

For many of the people, going on a weekend retreat was their first experience spent away from their families, and in a noise-free ambient. So there was a process of adjustment involved in those first hours of the Friday evenings, where the silence was almost intimidating. About those Retreats, which on the Ignatian level could be repeated at another level, I carried with me the phrase of John Donne, “To live is to change, and to be perfect is to change often!”

An active Rest was so much more than a ‘day at the seaside’, which was one of the supposed ‘selling-points’ for people in the Conversion Retreat movements, as they were bussed down to the coast and seaside places, like Cartagena or Algarrobo, which, somehow or other, Padre Pepe Valdes had acquired in his early efforts to attract back into the fold, some of the city’s taxi drivers and, in successive weeks, their spouses, and teenage sons and daughters.

In one of the latter, I had my own first experience of this testimonial process, as they sought the presence of a priest who would accompany the group. From another parish, they had to get familiar with my accent on the hour-and-a-half bus journey to the coast, and I had to get acquainted with young and competent youth leaders who ran the whole thing, over a very wet weekend where there was no occasion to even walk on the beach! But I was more than recompensed for my loss of sleep and creature comforts, by the zeal and enthusiastic capacity of those young people. My only duties, strictly speaking, were the Penitential Service and the Final Mass, though I was more than happy to sit in the groupings and listen to the testimonial nature of the output. That certainly convinced me on later occasions to get involved with the men’s and women’s groups which were being set up in my own parish of San Columbano.

Other Columban parishes had the same thrust, and I remember Fr Barney Martin, working in the deep south of Chile, called the Araucania, setting about facing his pastoral challenge with the men and women from Puerto Saavedra, by bringing a team down from Santiago for a couple of weekends to set up the formation of local leaders for the same Conversion Retreats, which did touch a group that he could not reach in ordinary pastoral situations like Sunday Mass or festivals of the Virgin. “Come ye here ...and rest awhile...!”



Of course, over a long life, I had many personal experiences of outstanding retreats. Apart from the Dublin Diocesan Retreats, I had assisted on a couple of occasions at the Intercession for Priests organized by Sr Breid McKenna and Fr Kevin Scallan, in All Hallows. Being deeply charismatic, the whole intercessory theme was very edifying and priests came from all over Ireland to ‘confess’ as it were with Sr Breid. On one of those, in later years and after some time in Latin America, I recall putting myself ‘at the feet of’ Breid on the question of my returning definitively to that mission. And indeed, she seemed to be able to see into my soul and choose the precise words and image in her response.

On Mission and visiting Bolivia with the Franciscans in El Alto, La Paz, at the same time, she was leading the Intercessions in that country. We both found ourselves caught up in a violent social revolution, against the regime of General Natusch Bush. In the monastery of the Franciscans in El Alto, we found that we had to bury the corpse of a young demonstrator in the grounds there, and working in breath-sapping altitude was an ordeal for all of us. Meanwhile, Sr Breid and the team were held up as all flights out were delayed for some days. So, eventually, I found myself on the same first flight out, as I returned to my Spanish studies with the Maryknoll in Cochabamba.

There was another memorable retreat while on the Columban ‘Faith and Mission’ Course in Dalgan. A group of us had become enamored of the Celtic Circle Dances and we were permitted to incorporate these dances into our silent retreat. When I returned to

Chile and Mission, I was glad to introduce some of the groups on retreat and on seminars to those same dances, which were quite a hit...and very devotional!

Inspiring

Some of our Columban group retreats were also inspiring. On an early one, we had Padre Esteban Gumucio, a Sacred Heart priest and a gifted charismatic leader in the Santiago Church, as I came to recognize from his writings and dramas and questioning of the ethics of the dictatorship. Fr Esteban’s ‘Cause’ is being put forward for the consideration of the Church.

Some of these Columban group retreats were held in Los Andes, in the same grounds as the Basilica of Santa Teresa, the Carmelite Saint whose tomb is there, and a place of pilgrimage for the whole Chilean Church. It was refreshing for us, on those occasions, to visit the Shrine, sometimes in the quiet of the evenings, and to pray in the crypt that contains the remains of the Saint.

Another wonderful experience was the ‘Month of Nazareth’ with the de Foucauld fraternity of priests, which had been an inspiration to many priests from all over Chile and the Continent. On that occasion, in Chacao, in Chiloe in the south, there were priests from Bolivia, and Spanish missionaries and a couple from Malta, with the north Americans and others in our own immediate circles. Fr Mariano Puga, a very high-profile member of the Santiago clergy, led with Fr Alvaro Gonzales, both having been ‘World Responsibles’ of the Jesus Caritas ‘Fraternidad’, and Mariano was a worker-priest, with a host of stories and escapades.

The Revision of Life practice and exercise in that group was inspiring, as were the manual work periods. There, Mariano, a qualified architect and speaker of many languages, led the painting of the chapel of Chacao, mostly from the roof, and singing aloud in many of his acquired languages. The more fainthearted amongst us did not dare accompany him on those lofty heights! Sadly, Mariano died in Santiago two years ago and was buried after a tumultuous funeral through the main avenue of Santiago, the Alameda. Books are appearing in numbers, testifying to his life, his activism, his fearless leadership...and his own special spirituality.

“Let us then make every effort to enter that rest so that no one may fall through disobedience...” (Hebr 4:11).

It is, therefore, essential that ‘education in prayer’ should become in some way a key-point of all pastoral planning. I have decided to dedicate the forthcoming Wednesday catecheses to reflection upon the Psalms, beginning with the Psalms of Morning Prayer, with which the public prayer of the Church invites us to consecrate and direct our day. How helpful it would be if not only in religious communities, but also in parishes, more were done to ensure an all-pervading climate of prayer.

With proper discernment, this would require that popular piety be given its proper place, and that people be educated especially in liturgical prayer. Perhaps it is more thinkable than we usually presume, for the average day of a Christian community to combine the many forms of pastoral life and witness in the world with the celebration of the Eucharist, and

Continued from p26

even the recitation of Lauds and Vespers. The experience of many committed Christian groups, also those made up largely of lay people, is proof of this. (NMI 2001 Apostolic Letter JP2)

And thank God, there are many people today, who pray the Prayer of the Church; like those people in the Columban parish of Alto Auspicio, in the north of Chile, and of strong indigenous presence and influence that I mentioned in an earlier article!

More and more in this part of my life, I become convinced that the 'Prayer of the Church', (The Divine Office) in liturgical connection under the Holy Spirit and the whole Body, should be within the sights and reach and ambition of the convinced Catholics of our time.

With the modern translations, even in the Spanish that I used for prayer for many years, all the great Teachers and Fathers of the Church become available to us in the Office of Readings. On one occasion recently, I found myself in Readings where the Second Vatican Council document

'Gaudium et Spes' presented for reflection The Mystery of Death. So, I had just downloaded it for future reflection, noting its freshness and relevance to modern life. About ten minutes later, I was reading a text and listening to a friend telling me about the sudden death of her husband, who had been an altarboy of mine. So, despite the distance in which she had placed herself from the Catholic faith, I still felt that receiving that text from me could surely help at some point. "There is no coincidence in the spiritual life", I seemed to hear from a former director of my own vocation. On the advice of my good priest friend, the late Dermot Clarke of Dublin, on coming back into the use of English after years of Spanish breviaries, I installed 'Universalis', which is full of resources for any practising and searching Catholic. Less often I use The Divine Office, which is a spoken and sung presentation and very enriching, especially when I might feel a little tired in the evening; the hymns are modern as well as traditional and the Sunday celebrations are very rich.

What to say about getting to become familiar with the Psalms and the Old Testament, both seemingly a 'well-kept secret' of the Catholic Church as far as lay people are concerned. This little quotation from my own collected archives might sum it up:

William Wordsworth, in Tintern Abbey, writes: "And passing even into my purer mind, /With tranquil restoration: - feelings too/ Of unremembered pleasure: such perhaps, /As have no slight or trivial influence / On that best portion of a good man's life. /His little, nameless, unremembered acts /Of kindness and love."

Of course, in our modern world, the question of Peace and Rest must leave us to ponder on how we live the 'Day of Rest' in the midst of the turmoil of our daily lives. There was the Pastoral Letter of Pope John Paul 'Dies Domini' and the Chilean Bishops Cardinal Oviedo wrote a helpful Letter: 'Revaluing Sunday' and 'Living Sunday as a Family'.

Finally, reflecting on that image we might have of the Garden of Eden, and the tranquility and

communion that it seemed to offer, placed at the beginning of the Bible, rather than at the end, where some modern commentators would place it, there is a challenge in the words of Sister Joan Chittister. The Brazilian scripture scholar and communicator, Carlos Mester, described it as "a prophecy projected in the past"...

"What God gave Adam," Elie Wiesel said, "was not forgiveness from sin. What God gave Adam

was the right to begin again"...the lesson of the Garden of Eden. If we want to live full and vibrant lives, we need to remember the lesson of the Garden of Eden. It is the fine art of learning to be wrong. The fact is that Eve and Adam were human, not angelic, and the eating of the apple was the most humanizing thing they did. The real message of the Garden story is that it is of the essence of humanity to stumble from apple tree to apple

tree, trying to get it right, searching for the difference between good and evil, but able to learn it only the hard way.

Then, the lesson for the human heart to learn from the Garden was not that God was angry that Adam and Eve were not gods, but that God knew it was necessary for them to learn that they were human, that life would not be easy, that there would be pitfalls aplenty, and most of all, that they could



Call my brother back by Vera McFadden

CALL my brother back' is the title of a novel which was written by Michael Macavity. It was a thought-provoking story about the generations long misunderstanding of each other in Northern Ireland - though, of course, that is only in some cases.

At elections, the politicians want me to vote for them, but they do not represent my values. Most of them claim to work for the protection of the environment and the planet, but they do not protect the most important thing on the planet, the protection of future human life. So, for whom are they protecting the planet?

Some people move with the times, without checking or wondering if the times are moving in the right direction. When St John Paul II visited Ireland, he said: "A nation which does not protect its unborn is a nation without hope."

This lack of proper relating between people, or entire races, is spread worldwide, and is often the cause of war and conflict. It has been there for centuries. Long, long ago, Cain killed his brother, Abel, and Joseph of the coat of many colours had brothers who were jealous of him and sold him to foreign merchants.

In the time of Jesus, there was antagonism and discrimination between people of different creeds and races. Jesus ignored these. He asked the Samaritan woman for a drink, and she pointed out, "Why do you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan for a drink?" When Jesus gave his reply, she realised who He was and went to fetch the other people from her village so that they could listen to him as well.

One time, Jesus told the parable

of the Good Samaritan to illustrate what a true neighbour was like. When the pagan Canaanite woman asked him to cure her daughter who was possessed by a devil, He tested her faith, though because He was God He already knew what He was going to do. He challenged her, saying, "It is not good to take the bread from the children and throw it to the dogs." When she agreed with Him, but also pointed out, "Yes, Lord, but even the whelps eat the crumbs that fall from their Master's table." He told her that her request had been granted because of her faith.

He told His followers the parable of the Prodigal Son to show that we must have forgiveness and welcome for those who have offended us, especially when they return with sincere regret. As He guided His disciples, Jesus always directed them to treat others as they would wish to be treated themselves.

When James and John urged Him to call down fire on the city that had rejected Him, Jesus told them, "You do not know what kind of people you are."

To treat others as we would wish to be treated = this is the way we must live - with friendship, if we are to be true followers of Christ. We may have different opinions, but we do not need to allow them to make us antagonistic towards each other.

In Northern Ireland, one of the problems is about racial identity. In my own case, DNA tests show that my ancestors were from Ireland, Scotland, Iceland, Scandinavia and Finland.

I remember a BBC history programme for children. As it explained about the several

variations and mixing of races in Ireland, shapes were used to represent them. The Vikings, the Normans, and all the other races, in their turn, were devoured by another shape. I thought this symbolism of the various conquests was powerful. The Normans, it is said, "became more Irish than the Irish themselves."

Reformation

The Reformation created great division among Christians. There were great persecutions on both islands as Henry VIII, and later Elizabeth, tried to suppress Catholicism. There were many sad cases of division then. One local example was when Father Hegarty's brother-in-law informed about his whereabouts and the Donegal priest was martyred. Another was when two McLaughlin brothers worked in the same area, one as a Catholic priest and the other as a minister of the established church.

One of the saddest examples of family division is about Blessed Margaret. Her son changed his religion, was elected mayor, and then kept her, without food, in prison because she would not renounce her Catholic faith. She is now one of the 10 beatified Irish martyrs.

We are of mixed ancestry, but we can endeavour to understand each other and work together. In this area, most of us have some planters in our family tree, yet a lack of understanding led to conflict.

The Troubles began when my son was four years old. We were left with a sense of loss, anxiety and fear for many years. I found that one way of coping was to

write my feelings as they evolved. One poem that I wrote at the time reads...

*It is hard work taking down this wall.
The stubborn stones of division
make heavy loads.
I did not build this wall, but I must
take it down.
Why don't you help me?
I want to see from your side too,
to better understand you.
Let us build a different wall
together,
A wall, however, lit by graces from
the cross of Christ.
The road uphill may seem toilsome
now.
This barrier has been here for
centuries, erected by old hates of
long ago.
We did not build this wall, but we
must take it down.
Together, we can.*

In times of conflict, the Holy Spirit leads people of peace to bring hope. Brother Rodger began a non-denominational centre at Taize. Christians of different denominations gathered to pray and praise together. Prayer centres were built in several areas of Northern Ireland, such as St Anthony's Retreat Centre, Corrymeela, Rostrevor, and others.

There were periods for healing prayer and miracles happened; the lame walked, and many people were cured. The best was the healing of negative attitudes.

In Belfast, the Redemptorist Fathers worked out peace strategies with clergy of all denominations and with the laity, as well. There were increased opportunities for Adoration of the Blessed



Sacrament and pilgrimages and prayer walks. Then the Holy Spirit led the late John and Pat Hume to an opportunity for the building of mutual understanding.

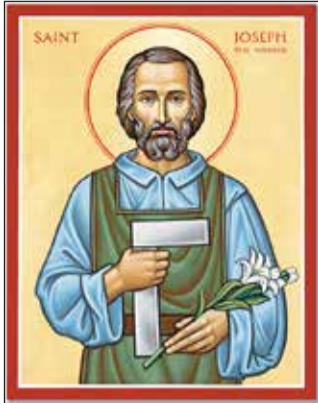
With continued prayer and reaching out, we still can achieve the fulfilment of their vision. Of course, the reaching out should also be for those in need of friendship everywhere. St Leopold constantly prayed in the monastery at Padua for unity and friendship among the different denominations in his own country.

The 'Four Corners' movement is another sign of hope. As Mother Teresa of Calcutta said, "We are all God's children. All people living in

hunger, thirst, conflict, and illness throughout the whole world are our brothers and sisters too. It is good that many people give so much help to them and to the needy at home, but so much more is needed. Then we can truly call our brothers and sisters back from estrangement, starvation, fear, and all other kinds of need. These will be ongoing, but we can alleviate them. In that way, we are being instruments of God's peace.

Let us call our brothers and sisters back every day that we live, with prayer, praise and, as the late John Hume said, the open hand of friendship.

Saints we celebrate during April *by Fr Michael McGoldrick ocd*



St Joseph the Worker

St Joseph the Worker

Saint Joseph was a carpenter who earned an honest living to provide for his family. From him, Jesus learned the value, the dignity and the joy of what it means to eat bread that is the fruit of one's own labour. In our own day, there is a renewed need to appreciate the importance of dignified work, of which Saint Joseph is an exemplary patron. Saint Joseph's work reminds us that God Himself, in becoming man, did not disdain work. Let us implore Saint Joseph the Worker to help us find ways to express our firm conviction that no young person, no person at all, no family should be without work! (Pope Francis, *Patris Corde*).

Feast day – May 1.

St Athanasius

Athanasius I of Alexandria (c 296–298 – 373), is also known as Athanasius the Great. Conflict with Arius and Arianism, as well as successive Roman emperors, shaped Athanasius' life. In 325, at the age of 27, as a deacon and assistant to Bishop Alexander of Alexandria, Athanasius took a leading role against the Arians during the First Council of Nicaea. The council was called to address the Arian heresy which stated that the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, is of a distinct substance from the Father.

Three years later, Athanasius succeeded Alexander as archbishop of Alexandria. He served as archbishop for 45 years, 17 of which were spent in exile, when he was replaced on five different occasions on the order of Roman emperors. Athanasius is considered one of the four great Eastern Doctors of the Church in the Catholic Church, the others being Sts Gregory Nazianzen, Basil of Caesarea and John



Sts Philip and James

Chrysostom. St Athanasius was the first person to list the 27 books of the New Testament canon that is in use today. His feast day is May 2.

Sts Philip and James

Philip came from the same town as Peter and Andrew, Bethsaida in Galilee. Philip is mentioned a number of times in St John's Gospel: at the time of his call (1.43), at the multiplication of the loaves and fishes (6.6-7), when he asked Jesus to show the apostles the Father (14:8-9), and when the Gentile proselytes asked him to introduce them to Jesus. Philip is believed to have died by crucifixion in 62 AD. We know nothing of St James except his name, and the fact that Jesus chose him to be one of the twelve apostles. James, son of Alphaeus, is also known as James the Lesser to avoid confusing him with James the son of Zebedee. Their relics lie together in the church of the Holy Apostles in Rome. The feast of Sts Philip and James is May 3.

Bl Edmund Rice

Edmund Rice was born in Callan, County Kilkenny in 1762. Due to the restrictions on Catholic education at the time, he and his brothers was educated by an Augustinian friar. He moved to Waterford in 1779 to join his uncle's business. He became active in the societies which cared for the poor and sick. In 1885, he married Mary Elliot but she was killed in an accident shortly afterwards, leaving Edmund a widower with a young daughter with special needs. Following his wife's death, he began discerning a vocation to join a monastery, but he was advised to care rather for poor young

people in Waterford. In 1802, he established a makeshift school in a converted stable in New Street, Waterford. Despite the difficulties he encountered, his classes were popular and another school had to be set up.

In 1808, Edmund Rice and six other teachers took religious vows under the authority of Bishop Power of Waterford. They were called Presentation Brothers. They were later recognized as a religious congregation by the Church and became known as the Christian Brothers. The new congregation opened schools all over Ireland and in other countries. Some brothers in Cork chose to continue under the original Presentation rule. Edmund died on August 29, 1844, at Mount Sion, Waterford. He was beatified in 1996. His feast day is May 5.

Bl John Sullivan

John Sullivan was born into a prominent family on May 8, 1861. His Protestant father, Edward, would later become Lord Chancellor of Ireland. His mother, Elizabeth Bailey, was a Catholic from a land-owning family. John attended Trinity College, Dublin, where he studied the Classics. He later studied law and for a time practiced as a barrister. To the surprise of his family, John was received into the Catholic Church in 1896. At the age of 40, he entered the Jesuits and was ordained on July 28, 1907. He was appointed to the teaching staff of Clongowes Wood College, where he spent most of the rest of his life.

His priestly life was one of prayer, sacrifice, care for his students, and concern for the sick and the poor. Fr John spent hours in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament or praying the Rosary. He also spent many hours walking or cycling to



St Matthias

visit the sick and pray with them. From the 1920s until his death in 1933, there were many instances of spiritual and physical healing through his prayers. He was beatified May 13, 2017. His feast day is May 8.

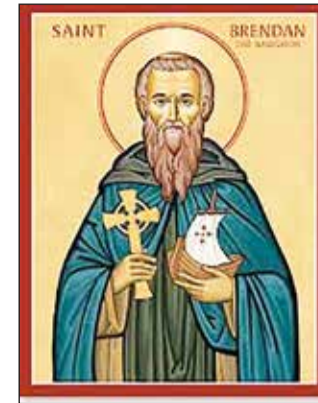
St Matthias

Matthias was one of the 70 disciples of Jesus, and had been with Him from His baptism by John to the Ascension (Acts 1:21-22). The Greek Matthias is a name derived from Mattathias, Hebrew Mattithiah, signifying 'gift of God'. After the death of Judas, Matthias was chosen as an apostle. That is the only mention of him in the scriptures. We do not have any other definite information about St Matthias. His feast day is May 14.

St Carthage

St Carthage was born in Co Kerry about the year 555. He spent his youth as a swineherd near Castlemaine, and later became a monk in a neighbouring monastery, where he was ordained a priest. In 580, he decided to lead a hermit's life, and he built a cell at Kiltallagh, where his fame soon attracted pilgrims. Local jealousies forced him to quit his hermitage. He went to Bangor, where he spent a year. On the advice of St Comgall, he returned to Kerry and founded churches there. On the recommendation of St Colman Elo, St Carthage founded a monastery at Rahan about 590, and soon had hundred of disciples. At the instigation of monks from neighbouring monasteries, he was expelled from his monastery in 635.

St Carthage settled on the banks of the River Blackwater, where he was given a foundation by the Prince of the Decies. This was the beginning of the episcopal city



St Brendan

of Lismore, County Waterford. Carthage lived less than two years at his new foundation, though with time it would become a very famous monastery. He died on May 14, 637. There is a diocese in New South Wales, Australia called Lismore in memory of him. His feast day is May 15.

St Brendan

St Brendan was born in Ciarraige Luachra, near the present city of Tralee, Co Kerry, in 484. He was baptized at Tubrid, near Ardfert, by Bishop Erc. He was educated at the schools of St Ita, 'the Brigid of Munster', and St Erc. He was ordained priest in 512. Between the years 512 and 530, St Brendan built monastic cells at Ardfert, and at Shanakeel, at the foot of Brandon Hill. It was from here that he set out on his famous voyage.

Having established the See of Ardfert, St Brendan founded a monastery at Inis-da-druim (now Coney Island, County Clare), about the year 550. He then journeyed to Wales and from there to Iona. After a three-year mission in Britain, he returned to Ireland. His most celebrated foundation was Clonfert, in 557. He died at Annaghdown in 577. St Brendan was interred in Clonfert, and his feast is kept on May 16.

St Bernardine of Siena

Bernardino was born in 1380 to the noble Albizzeschi family in Massa Marittima (Tuscany), a Sienese town of which his father was then governor. Left orphaned at six, he was raised by a pious aunt. When he was 20, the plague was at its height in his hometown of Siena. Bernardine offered to run the hospital and, with the help of other young men, nursed patients there for four months. He escaped the plague, but was



St Rita of Cascia

so exhausted that a fever confined him for several months. He spent another year caring for his beloved aunt.

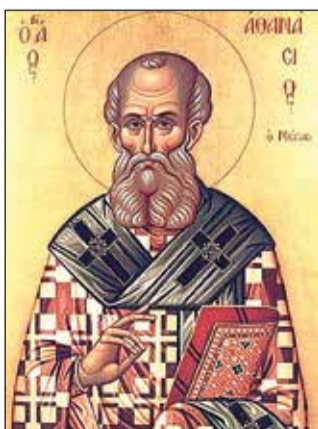
At 22, he entered the Franciscan Order and was ordained two years later. After nearly 12 years spent in solitude and prayer, he was sent to preach. He became the greatest preacher of his time. Pope Pius II described him as the "second Paul". Especially known for his devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus, Bernardine devised a symbol - IHS, the first three letters of the name of Jesus in Greek - in Gothic letters on a blazing sun.

In 1438, he was elected Superior General of the Franciscans. Bernardine strongly emphasized scholarship and further study of theology and canon law. When he started, there were 300 friars in the community, and when he died there were 4,000. He returned to preaching the last two years of his life; dying while travelling. He died in 1444. His feast day is May 20.

St Rita of Cascia

Saint Rita was born Margherita Lotti in Roccaporena, Italy, in 1381. At an early age, she asked her parents to allow her to enter a convent. Instead, she had to enter into an arranged marriage to Paolo Mancini. Young Rita became a wife and mother at only 12 years of age. Paola had a violent temper and was often cruel to her. He was killed as a result of a feud between families. Rita had two sons who gradually became like their father. Rita prayed to God, asking Him to take her sons before they lost their souls to the mortal sin of murder. Both died within a year.

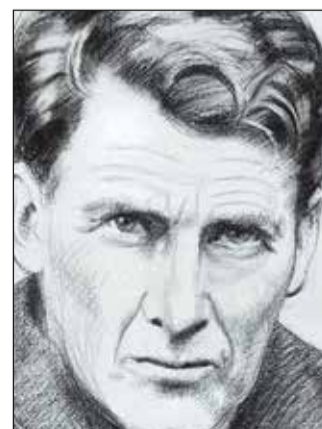
Rita entered the monastery of Saint Mary Magdalene in Cascia. She had a great devotion to the



St Athanasius



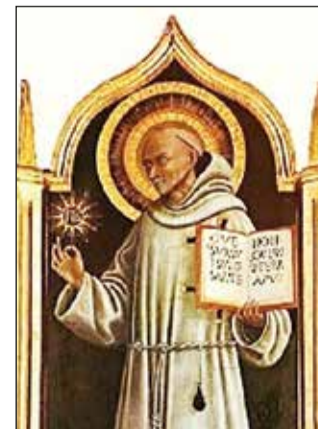
Bl Edmund Rice



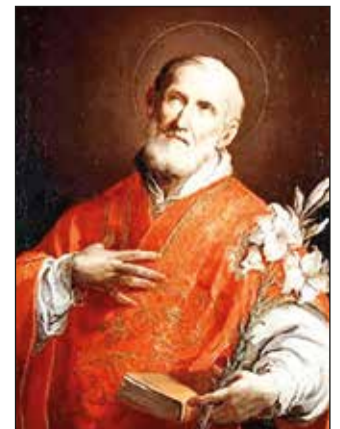
Bl John Sullivan



St Carthage



St Bernardine of Siena



St. Philip Neri

Seventh anniversary of Laudato Si'

by Patricia McCormack

THIS year marks the seventh anniversary of Pope Francis' papal encyclical letter, "Laudato Si' – On care for our common home", which was published at Pentecost, May 2015. This encyclical has helped us to understand that "everything is connected" and put millennia of Catholic teaching in the context of

today's ecological crisis and climate emergency. Laudato Si' highlights the interrelated "cry of the earth and the cry of the poor". These are becoming increasingly urgent as targets to reduce carbon emissions are missed and global warming continues to rise. The current

extreme weather conditions will increase with devastating consequences.

The grave injustice is that those who contributed the least will suffer the most, while those who are most to blame will be insulated from the consequences of their actions and lifestyles by their wealth.

"Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience."

On this seventh anniversary of Laudato Si', let us examine how far we have come on our ecological conversion journey.

A Prayer for our Earth

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,

help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives

that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

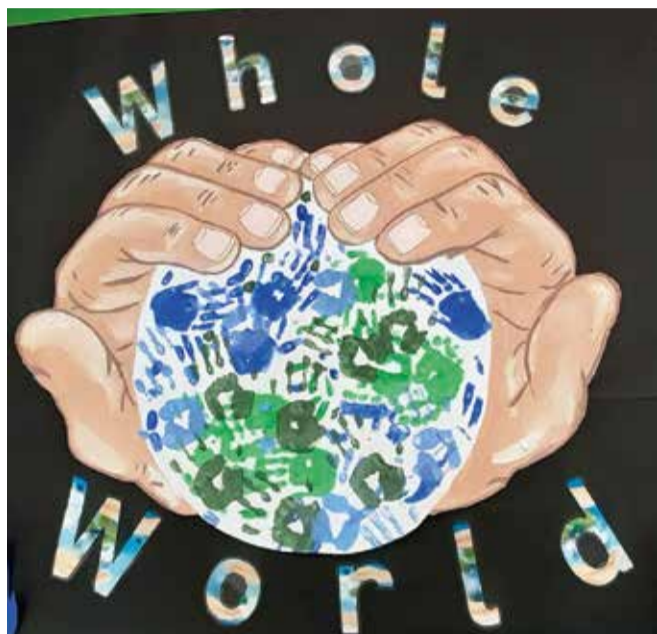
Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation,

to recognise that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.



Continued from p28



St Paul VI

Passion of Christ, and prayed that she would be allowed to suffer like Christ. A wound appeared on her forehead, as if a thorn from Christ's crown had pierced her. The wound was deep and did not heal. It caused her to suffer until she died on May 22, 1457. Her feast day is May 22.

St Philip Neri

St Philip Neri was born in Florence in 1515. From a very young age, he was known for being cheerful and obedient. He received his early education from the Dominican friars. In his late teens, Philip had a mystical vision, which he later described as his Christian conversion. He felt called to radically live for and serve Jesus and the Church.

In 1535, Philip began studying theology and philosophy in Rome but, after three years of studies, gave up the thought of ordination. He set out to help the poor people of Rome and to re-evangelize the city. At 34 years old, Philip's confessor convinced him that his work would be more effective as a priest. Philip was ordained in 1551. He discovered that he

could help people greatly through confession and spent many hours in the confessional for the rest of his life. Priests gathered around him attracted by his holiness. He was given permission by Pope Gregory XIII to establish the Congregation of the Oratory.

Philip was respected and loved throughout Rome. He was a trusted advisor to popes and cardinals but especially to the poor. Around midnight on May 26, 1595, Philip suffered from a haemorrhage and died. His feast day is May 26.

St Paul VI

Giovanni Battista Montini was born near Brescia in northern Italy in 1897. His father, Giorgio, was a lawyer, editor, and eventually a member of the Italian Chamber of Deputies. His mother, Giuditta, was very involved in Catholic Action. After ordination in 1920, Giovanni did graduate studies in literature, philosophy, and canon law in Rome before he joined the Vatican Secretariat of State in 1924, where he worked for 30 years.

In 1954, he was named archbishop of Milan, where he sought to win disaffected workers back to the Catholic Church. He was made cardinal in 1958. He helped in preparing Vatican II. He was elected pope in June 1963. In 1964, Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras revoked the excommunications that their predecessors had made in 1054. In 1965, he initiated the Synod of Bishops. Pope Paul VI died on August 6, 1978. He was beatified in 2014 and canonized in 2018. His feast day is May 29.



Blessed Is She Derry
Blessed Brunch & Books
 Saturday 11th June 2022
 12pm- 2pm
 Termonbacca Carmelite
 Retreat Centre
 An opportunity for women of all ages to get together, eat, pray and journey through spiritual books together.
 For bookings or queries please PM or email termonbaccaderry@gmail.com

Termonbacca Derry
The Servant Brothers of the Home of the Mother will lead a men's weekend retreat on
St Joseph
3rd- 5th June 2022
This weekend will focus on St Joseph as a model of masculinity, husband and father for men today.
For bookings/queries please contact Aoife on 02871262512 or email termonbaccaderry@gmail.com

Receive the Holy Spirit *by Fr Johnny Doherty, CSsR*



Fr Johnny Doherty

THE weeks after Easter of the Church's Liturgical Year lead us into Pentecost Sunday, the day when the Holy Spirit filled the followers of Jesus and gave them a new sense of purpose. In the first day of this section, Easter Sunday, Jesus was already urging us: "Receive the Holy Spirit". We are once again at the heart of the mystery of God's desire for us and of our reluctance to let go!

A paradox

We are a people who have already received the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit has filled the Church since the first Pentecost day. We, individually, received that same Spirit on the day of our Confirmation. How can we receive the Spirit again? That is precisely the paradox and the problem.

We have to acknowledge our need of the Spirit and our possession of the Spirit at the same time. Our need is that we simply settle down into repeating religious actions rather than being on fire with love and hope and a real sense of purpose for the world we live in.

What are the signs?

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are

good testing points for our need to be open to a fresh outpouring again this year.

Wisdom: How easily we settle for a superficial wisdom of life and dress it up and make it look good. The real wisdom that is on offer is the wisdom of a little child who is in awe at the wonders of life. How close are we to that individually and as a Church? Come Holy Spirit.

Understanding: So much of life is spent in self-protection. A sign of this is how we so easily depend on structures to save us. True understanding is seen in a person or a community that is: free to love; to hope; to have compassion; is ready to forgive. How badly we need the Holy Spirit to move us to those points.

Counsel: A good counsellor is not one who solves our problems but one who can lead us into the centre of our lives. The gift of counsel helps us to know that the only true reality is God. The only true life we have is Christ, our only homeland is heaven. Life for countless people, and for the Church as a whole, can so easily become a succession of problems to be solved, where we cope with life rather than live it from within. We need God's Spirit to set us free.

Fortitude: Original sin is still being born in us as we try to be God rather than creature, someone who has everything by gift. It comes from within us as individuals. It rises from the heart of the Church. It is only when we are in awe at our own weakness and fragility that we can acknowledge our true strength, the amazing love of God for us. The Spirit is given to us to bring us there and to set us free from the need to dominate life, others,

God. Come, Holy Spirit.

Knowledge: One of the major mistakes of life is to think that what we know is all there is to know. There is such a vast, wonderful world beyond ourselves to conquer. This is true of the physical world. It is even more true of the spiritual world of the human person. The Holy Spirit keeps urging us out of our own little world of conceit and limited knowledge into the large world of God's magnificent creation in us and around us.

Piety: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." What we value most in life determines how we live. So much selfishness and self-preoccupation would indicate where our true values are as individuals and as the Church. It is only the Spirit of God that can blast us out of our hardness of heart into taking on the new heart of affection for God and for one another. The gift of piety, of submission in humility to the truth of life, is a great need in us today. Receive the Holy Spirit.

Fear of the Lord: "Do not be afraid". This is the most repeated sentence in the Scriptures. Fear is identified as the greatest obstacle to life and to love. Yet fear continues to be a weapon in our relationships with God and with one another. God's Holy Spirit leads us to the deepest truth of our lives; the passionate, intimate, personal love of God for us. That same Spirit brings us to the point of falling in love with God so that our whole lives get caught up in that relationship. Our only fear should be that of someone who is madly in love.

"Receive the Holy Spirit": Jesus speaks these words right through the weeks of May, urging us to take them seriously and let

ourselves go to all that He has to offer. We cannot afford to play games of religion with this call.

Week 1: May 1-7 "It is the Lord"

Jesus said to His disciples: "Come and have breakfast."

What a beautiful invitation that is. And the wonderful truth about it is that this is the invitation Jesus extends to each one of us also. Because of His resurrection from the dead, Jesus is available to us in all the ordinary things of our daily lives. He wants us to know that He is with us at breakfast because He lives in us in our homes and families. He is with us in our joys and sorrows, our tears and laughter. He is with us in our love relationships and in our enmities, if we would only open our hearts to recognise Him and let Him shape our lives. One of the big mistakes we often make is to regard our religion as something we do for God. Christianity is about what God is doing for us, in and through Christ, who is our way, our truth and our life. This is what has to give shape to our lives, even at breakfast!

Week 2: May 8-14

The Lamb will be our shepherd
Jesus said: "The sheep that belong to me listen to my voice".

One of the big questions of today for people is: "Who am I?" and there are all kinds of self-awareness courses around to help us answer that question. It is an important question and many of these courses are helpful. But it is not the most important question for us. Much more important is the question: "To whom do I belong?" Belonging is of the essence of being human and our belonging is identified by, and

lived out through, the voices that we listen to.

Some people listen to the voice of the world around, which tells us to put ourselves first and they belong to the world. Others listen to the voice of Christ telling us to put others first and by so doing they belong to Him. In the struggle between the two, Christ invites us to listen to His voice.

Week 3: May 15-21 The new creation

Jesus said to His disciples: "I give you a new commandment: Love one another; as I have loved you, you also must love one another".

It is said that familiarity breeds contempt. Maybe contempt is too strong a word when we apply this statement to the command of Jesus; it is more likely to be indifference. We hear it and leave it. But this commandment, if it were to be lived out by us, would revolutionise the world.

The most obvious place for living it is in marriage and family life. There continues to be far too much mediocrity in marriage and family relationships, rather than the passionate love of Christ. This power of love is also to be lived in our faith community. But again, mediocrity is more the flavour of our community than joy and gladness. The love of Christ, lived

by us, His followers, knows no bounds, but is destined to reach the ends of the earth to heal the divisions of humanity.

Week 4: May 22-28 The radiant glory of God

Jesus said to His disciples: "Peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I leave you".

We are very conscious today of all the trouble there is in our world and yet peace is a longing in every heart. As Christians, we have a great responsibility to work for peace in every way we can and in every situation where there is war or conflict.

However, the peace that is Christ's gift to us is much more than an absence of war or conflict. His peace, for which we also have a great responsibility, is about spreading joy and happiness in our homes and community. It is about practicing forgiveness so that the past is always left behind us. It is about creating an atmosphere in our homes and community in which each individual can feel at ease and be glad to be there. It is about letting Christ's presence change us to the extent that, even in the midst of suffering and division, we can be a people who look to the radiant glory of God. Come Holy Spirit.



Pope's monthly intention

The Holy Father has asked for prayer during May for:

Faith-filled young people: We pray for all young people, called to live life to the fullest; may they see in Mary's life the way to listen, the depth of discernment, the courage that faith generates, and the dedication to service.

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:

All Priests (1st May)
All Priests (2nd)
Fr Michael Porter (3rd)
Fr Roni Zacharias (4th)
Fr Ignacy Saniuta (5th)
All Priests (6th)
Fr Gerard Sweeney (7th)
Fr Joshy Parokkaran (8th)
Fr John Walsh (9th)
Fr Alex Anderson (10th)
Fr Patrick Arkinson (11th)
Fr Patrick Baker (12th)
Fr Declan Boland (13th)
Fr Eugene Boland (14th)
Fr Francis Bradley (15th)
Fr Manus Bradley (16th)
All Priests (17th)
Fr Brian Brady (18th)
All Priests (19th)
Fr Thomas Canning (20th)
Fr Michael Canny (21st)
All Priests (22nd)
All Priests (23rd)
All Priests (24th)
Fr Colum Clerkin (25th)
Fr Roland Colhoun (26th)
Fr Michael Collins (27th)
Fr Oliver Crilly (28th)
Fr Patrick Crilly (29th)
Fr Brendan Crowley (30th)
All Priests (31st)

Concert for Ukraine

THE Magnificent Seven Crew, featuring over 30 top singers and entertainers from Derry City and beyond, will be giving of their time freely to help those suffering as a result of the terrible devastation being inflicted on the people of Ukraine, in a special fundraising concert for Ukraine in the Millennium Forum on June 6.

At the height of the Covid pandemic, The Magnificent Seven Crew, formed by Leo Fitzpatrick and working with Damien McAdams from Foyle Foodbank, performed nightly online from their homes to help those experiencing food poverty in Derry City and surrounding areas. As a result they managed to donate

£25,000 to the Foyle Foodbank, helping to ensure that no one should go hungry.

Concern initially deployed an emergency response team to Krakow, Poland, working in tandem with local organisations,

our Alliance 2015 partners and the UN.

On the border between Ukraine and Moldova, Concern's humanitarian partners are providing hot meals, hygiene materials, SIM cards, psychosocial information support and transportation to people fleeing the violence.

Having conducted initial assessments on the borders with Poland, Moldova, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania, Concern's focus is now turning to inside Ukraine, where we feel the needs are greatest. They are partnering with Czech organisation, People in Need, and French organisation, ACTED, to scale up the delivery of live-saving humanitarian aid both within Ukraine and at the borders.

This includes: delivering food, hygiene items, trauma kits, nappies, sleeping bags and mats into Ukraine, to the cities of Lviv and Kyiv, by truck and train;

providing essential supplies and support to internally displaced families in Ukraine; access to clean water; psychosocial support for those traumatised by conflict and displacement through a telephone hotline.

They are also supporting Ukrainian people at border crossings by providing food to people on the roads leading to the border with Poland, assisting with building toilets and heated tents, and providing hygiene supplies, such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, shower gel, shampoo and sanitary products.

"Humanitarian needs are escalating as hundreds of thousands seek safety across borders. With the support of the public, we are there to help those in need. We urge you to support our appeal for funding in any way you can," says Concern Worldwide CEO, Dominic MacSorley.

It is with this spirit of wanting to help those most

vulnerable and in need that 'The Magnificent Seven Crew', in partnership with the Derry branch of Concern Worldwide, are giving of their time freely to bring together what will be a magnificent night of music and entertainment.

The performers are mainly from the city and include: Felix Healy, Conor McGinty, The Campbell Sisters, Graham Monaghan, Gerry and Jacqui Coyle, Andrew Monk, Collette and Rob, Stephanie McNicholl, Nikki McCool, Colum McLaughlin, Brian McFadden, Joanna Harkin, Damien White, Stanza, Ciaran Stevenson, Eamonn Karran, Damien McAdams, Wayne Rodgers, Yvonne Tilley, William and Caitlin, Ali Skeggs, Tim Glenn, Chris and Mickey Wilson, Michael McCafferty, Erin Carlin, and Isobel Caldwell.

All proceeds from the show will go to the Ukrainian humanitarian appeal

Children's Catechism Club - C3

by Veronica Harley

HELLO children. Welcome to the month of May. This month is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. We offer up special prayers and devotion to Mary who always leads us to Jesus. Some traditional customs to show our love for Mary is the making of a May Altar, where a statue of Mary is placed on a table and surrounded by fresh flowers, or by taking part in a May Crowning of Mary as the Queen of Heaven by crowning a statue of Mary with flowers.



We also honour Mary on two beautiful feast days during May. On May 13, we celebrate the feast day of Our Lady of Fatima, when the Blessed Virgin appeared to three young children and called for prayer and conversion in the world. The Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary is on May 31. On this day, we remember how Mary, while carrying her Son Jesus within her, went to visit her cousin Elizabeth to offer her charitable assistance and to tell of God's great mercy.

We continue to celebrate the Easter season and, with Spring upon us blossoming forth new life, we also celebrate the great Feast of the Ascension of Jesus into Heaven.

The Ascension of Jesus (CCC 659)



"Then He took them out as far as the outskirts of Bethany and, raising His hands, He blessed them. Now, as He blessed them, He withdrew from them and was carried up to heaven" (Lk 29:50)

The Ascension of Jesus is a mystery

of faith. It always falls 40 days after Easter, which is a Thursday, but most parishes now celebrate this important feast on the following Sunday. The word 'Ascension' means to go up, and on this day we remember how the earthly body of Jesus went up into heaven. Jesus was with His disciples on the Mount of Olives outside Jerusalem. He told them that soon they would receive the power of the Holy Spirit and to go to preach the Good News of His Resurrection to the whole world. After Jesus ascended, an angel appeared and promised that one day Jesus would return.

The Ascension True or False

How well do you know the story of the Ascension?

See if you know which are true and which are false.

1. Jesus kept appearing to His disciples for 40 days after Easter
2. Jesus did not send the Holy Spirit to His disciples until after He went up to heaven.
3. Jesus taught the Apostles everything that they needed to know before He died, so He didn't have to teach them anything after the resurrection.
4. Some of the disciples asked Jesus if He was going to start a new kingdom in this world.
5. Jesus and the apostles were all gathered in one room when Jesus disappeared and went into heaven.
6. Jesus was with a big crowd of his friends when He went up, body and soul, into heaven.
7. When Jesus comes back, He will



return in the same sort of way as how He left.

Our Lady of Fatima

The Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, appeared six times to three shepherd children, Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta.

Between May 13 and October 13, 1917, She came to the little village of Fatima in Portugal. Our Lady brought a special message from God for everyone to hear. She promised that the world would be at peace and many souls would go to heaven if people listened to Her requests and obeyed them. Her three requests were penance, prayer and devotion to Her Immaculate heart.

Our Lady told the three children that a great sign from heaven would happen so that everyone would



believe. This miracle took place in Fatima on October 13, 1917, and was witnessed by 70,000 people. It is called the miracle of the sun. Everyone could stare perfectly at the sun without blinking or hurting their eyes. The sun rotated in the sky, became large and small, drew close to the people and then far away from them. Everyone who saw this said that the sun was dancing. It was an extraordinary event that even made unbelievers fall to their knees and beg God for forgiveness.

The message Our Lady brought to Fatima still applies today. She asked that everyone should pray the Rosary every day to overcome evil in the world. Centuries earlier, Our Blessed Mother Mary had given us the Rosary, a very powerful weapon, to keep us safe from harm in this world. The Rosary is like the sling-shot of King David that killed the mighty enemy because the power of God was behind it. When we pray the Rosary, we have the power of God in our hands which protects and guards us and leads us to God.

*O my Jesus,
forgive us our sins,
save us from the fires of hell,
lead all souls to heaven,
especially those in most need of Thy
mercy.*
(Our Lady at Fatima, 13th July 1917)

Saints of the Month

- St James and St Philip, Apostles – May 3
- St Matthias – May 14
- St. Philip Neri – May 26
- St Augustine of Canterbury – May 27

The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

"My soul proclaims the greatest of

the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, because He has looked upon the lowliness of His servant, yes from now onwards all generations will call me blessed". (Luke 1:46-48).

The Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary is May 31. Visitation means 'to visit'. The Angel Gabriel told Mary that Her cousin Elizabeth was going to have a baby boy, so Mary set off at once to visit Elizabeth.

Mary, too, was expecting a baby, Baby Jesus. When She arrived at Elizabeth's house, the Holy Spirit revealed to Elizabeth that Mary was going to become the Mother of God. Elizabeth greeted Mary with the words, "Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb" (Luke 1:42; CCC 2676).

While Elizabeth and Mary greeted each other, the baby boy in Elizabeth's womb leapt for joy. He would later be called John the Baptist.

Elizabeth asked Mary, "Why should I be honoured with a visit from the Mother of my Lord?" Mary responded in humility and spoke of how God had blessed Her so richly. "Holy is His name", Mary exclaimed.

During Her visit, the Blessed Virgin Mary brought many graces to Her cousin Elizabeth's house. St John the Baptist, while still hidden in His mother's womb was cleansed of original sin. His father, Zechariah, who had lost his voice, got his speech back after John was born. Saint Elizabeth was filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Mary remained at Elizabeth's house for three months before returning to Nazareth.

Quiz Time with Lawrence

1. Lewis Collins and Martin Shaw played the lead roles in which 1970's TV Detective show?
2. In which country is the 'Samsung' company based?
3. Who was the first female to win a Nobel Prize?
4. What nationality was footballer Ferenc Puskás?
5. What was the full name of Leonardo Di Caprio's character in the film 'Titanic'?
6. Which motor company owns both the Lamborghini and Porsche franchise?
7. County Kerry has borders with just two other counties. What are they?
8. In which US state would you find Fort Knox?
9. What was the name of 'Boycey's wife in 'Only Fools and Horses'?
10. In which country would you find the iconic Angel Falls?
11. What is the name of the only male in the band, 'The Corrs'?
12. What was Margaret Thatcher's middle name?

13. For which airport is BHD the IATA travel code?
14. Who played the title role in the BBC series 'Jonathan Creek'?
15. How many balls are potted in a maximum break (147) in snooker?
16. Of which US state is Harrisburg the capital?
17. In banking - what does ATM stand for?
18. In which city is the TV sitcom 'Frasier' set?
19. How many fences are there in the English Grand National?
20. In which children's nursery rhyme did the Bells of Old Bailey ask when will you pay me?
21. Who was the original presenter of the UK version of 'The Price is Right'?
22. In what year did Tony Blair become British Prime Minister?
23. According to the Book of Genesis, Reuben was the eldest son of whom?
24. In basketball, what is the maximum number of players a team can have on court at any one time?
25. Who was President of Ireland immediately before Mary Robinson?

Quiz Answers: . 1, The Professionals. 2, South Korea. 3, Marie Curie. 4, Hungarian. 5, Jack Dawson. 6, Volkswagen. 7, Cork and Limerick. 8, Kentucky. 9, Marlene. 10, Venezuela. 11, Jim Corr. 12, Hilda. 13, George Best Belfast City. 14, Alan Davies. 15, 36. 16, Pennsylvania. 17, Automated Teller Machine. 18, Seattle. 19, Thirty. 20, Oranges and Lemons. 21, Leslie Crowther. 22, 1997. 23, Jacob. 24, Five. 25, Patrick Hillery.

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

Let Your Light Shine!

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

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



P2 pupils at St Columba's PS, Sixtowns, in the Parish of Ballinascreen, with their May Altars in honour of Our Lady.

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