



The NET

Sharing fruits of faith in Derry Diocese

ISSUE 66, JUNE 2021
PRICE - £1.50
/€2.00

See inside...



JPPII Awards - St Eugene's.



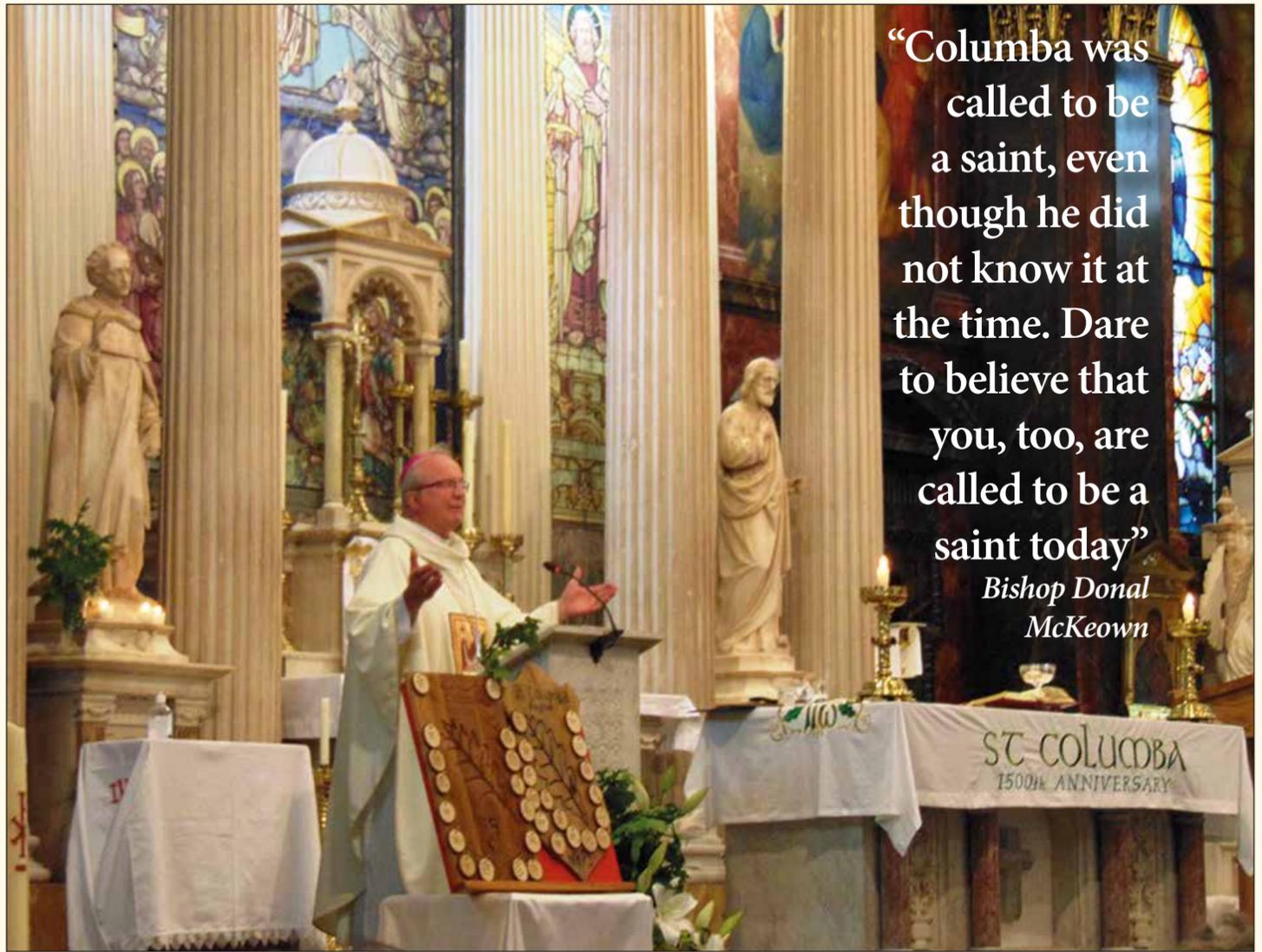
Little Flower Novena - St Eugene's.



Mary's Garden - St Mary's Draperstown.



St Columba's Well - Long Tower.



“Columba was called to be a saint, even though he did not know it at the time. Dare to believe that you, too, are called to be a saint today”

Bishop Donal McKeown



Colmcille Sculptures - The Wells, Derry.



Confirmation Preparation - St Joseph's Drumquin.

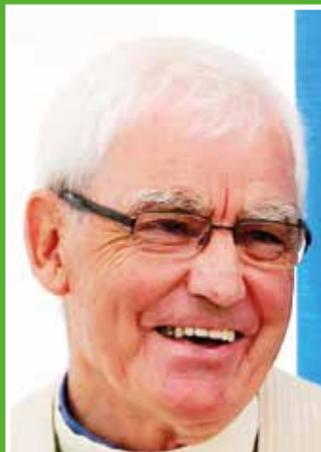


Honouring Our Lady - St Eithne's Derry.

People in focus



Fr John Downey
- St Eugene's & Ballinascreen



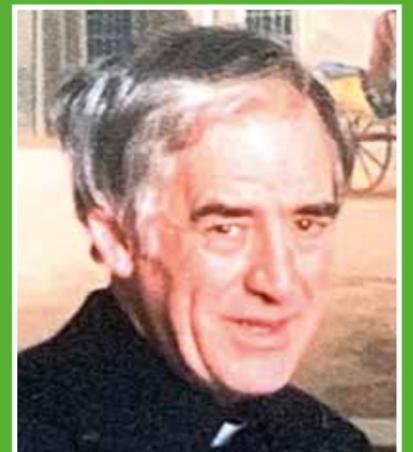
Fr Neal Carlin,
Columba Community.



Martin McLaughlin,
Creggan.



St Columba.



The late Fr Brian O'Donnell
- Waterside & Lavey.

Also featuring: Youth Ministry update; Fan the Flame feature; St Columba's College reflects on role in Derry life; Young writers share thoughts; New Diocesan Safeguarding Team; Newtownstewart Mystery Walk; Immaculate Conception Church 40 hours for 40 years; Pioneer feature; Martyrdom reflections; Irish Page, Children's Catechism Club, Quiz...and much more...

Contents

Parish deliveries

Copies of 'The Net' will be available in parishes again after restrictions, as a result of Covid-19, are lifted.

Marriage is a three-partner relationship
by Geraldine McNamee, ACCORD Derryp2
Bishop Donal introduces new Diocesan Safeguarding Team.....p2

A garden for Our Lady
by Corinne Coyle, principal St Mary's PS, Draperstown...p3
Stories & Legends associated Mary's Garden plants.....p3

Disciples of Jesus - Filled with Joy.....p4-5
Bishop Donal commends Confirmation Preparation
What the children thought...

Fan the Flame 2021
by Therese Ferry.....p6
St Eithne's PS, Derry, honour Our Lady.....p6

St Columba's College to reflect on role in life of Derry....p7
Renewal - Parish leader mentoring.....p7
Derry Youth Ministry Scholarship.....p7

Young writers share their thoughts on...
-Difficulties in praying
-Little Way Novena
-Sacraments of Initiation
-Martyrdom
-Education & Poverty
-Pope John Paul II Award.....p8-13

Derry faithful delighted to attend
St Columba Feast Day Mass.....p14-15

Tribute to the late Fr Brian O'Donnell
Onwards and Upwards!.....p16

Ardú Céime do Chnoc Mhuire
Irish Page by Fr Oliver Crilly.....p17

Colmcille wood sculptures have new home in The Wells
by Ivor Doherty.....p18
The Dove still wants to bring peace to the town that he loved
by Bishop Donal.....p18

Columba Community reflect on yielding to the Spirit...p19
Underground river of faith in Ireland will lead to new life of the Holy Spirit
by Fr Neal Carlin.....p19
Columba by Ann McCay.....p19

Reflections on martyrdom
and journeying with Jesus.....p20-22

Pioneers reflect on their pledge...
"To abstain for life from all intoxicating drinks".....p22-25

Getting the message out there
by Fr John McLaughlin ssc.....p25

Pope Benedict XVI
by Fr Stephen Quinn OCD.....p26

40 years of Immaculate Conception Church
celebrated with 40 Hours' Adoration.....p27
Fr Michael Canny appointed as Vicar General.....p27
Our human desires in their depths are a desire for God
by Bishop Alan McGuckian.....p27
See all things new in Christ during Ignatian Year.....p27

Celebrating St Columba
by Vera McFadden.....p28-29

Mystery walk for Newtown Stewart parishioners
by Fr Roland Colhoun CC.....p29
Prayer for Priests.....p29
Pope's Monthly Prayer Intention.....p29

Lord, I am not worthy
by Fr Johnny Doherty CSSR.....p30
'Leave The Water Running'...
...Creggan man Martin McLaughlin publishes life story...p30
Thornhill Ministries Triduum.....p30

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

ACCORD Derry Marriage Preparation Facilitator, Geraldine McNamee reflects on the Pope's prayer intention for the month of June, in which he asks us to "pray for young people who are preparing for marriage with the support of a Christian community: may they grow in love, with generosity, faithfulness and patience"...

Marriage is a three-partner relationship

AS a Marriage Preparation Facilitator with Accord in Derry, I wish to express the enjoyment I, and my fellow facilitators, Eilish, Margaret and Veronica get from preparing young couples for the Sacrament of Marriage. It is so encouraging to see the high demand there is for Pre-Marriage courses in all our centres; something which the Church should take great encouragement from, as it indicates that young couples are prepared to make a life-long commitment to each other. It is a wonderful testament of their faith, particularly in this secular society.

It is my belief that these couples benefit greatly from participating in our Accord courses as they learn about issues which they will encounter during marriage, which they would not be aware of, or have any insight into, prior to marriage.

Topics covered include conflict management, parenting, commitment, communication skills, issues from their family of origin (the blending of two traditions), and the importance of the sacrament of marriage, and how to live out their faith in marriage, which includes the passing on of faith to their

children.

The couples really participate enthusiastically in the course by working independently through their workbooks, and then discussing privately with their partner, the issues therein. Regarding faith, I find that when we discuss the seven sacraments of the Church, reflecting on their Baptism, Penance, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation, they seem to gain a greater understanding of these. This would indicate that whilst they remember their First Confession, Holy Communion and Confirmation, it is only on reflection, as adults, that they really begin to comprehend the true meaning of their Catholic Faith.

As a result, the couples then realise the significance and importance of the Sacrament of Marriage, and how, as future parents, they will be able to support their children in preparing them for the Sacraments, together with their teachers.

Finally, when couples are asked to indicate what they think is necessary for a successful marriage, they usually mention the following: trust, honesty, compromise, selflessness, respect, sacrifice, forgiveness, and patience.

They then see from their books that these same words are mentioned as the qualities of Christ, and they would then reflect on how they see these qualities in themselves, and in their partner. This again awakens their concept of the significance of faith in creating and sustaining a successful marriage. This is evident from the feedback sheets, which the couples complete at the end of the course.

Every Church wedding automatically implies an awareness of God and a willingness to make God part of the relationship. This highlights one of the important elements of our faith as Catholics, namely that a marriage is a three-partner relationship that cannot work fully with only two. The presence of God in a couple's life together is vital, so that they remain turned towards one another in love, and so their commitment to each other will grow ever stronger.

When we reflect on the plan of God regarding man and woman, we encounter God who is love and who, creating man and woman for love, has called them to love. By creating man and woman, He called them to an intimate communion of life and love in marriage - "So that they are

no longer two, but one flesh" (Matthew 19:6). God said to them in blessing "Be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 1:28). (cf. CCC 1601-1605, Comp CCC337).

The marital union of a man and woman, which is founded and endowed with its own proper laws by the Creator, is by its very nature ordered to the communion and good of the couple and to the generation and education of children. According to the original divine plan, this conjugal union is indissoluble, as Jesus Christ affirmed: "What God has joined together, let no man put asunder." (Mark 10:9). (cf. CCC 1659-1660, Comp CCC 338).

Marriage is triply indissoluble - first, because the essence of love is mutual self-giving without reservation, second, because it is an image of God's unconditional faithfulness to his creation, and third, because it represents Christ's devotion to his Church, even unto death on the Cross. (CCC 1605, 1612-1617, 1661).

To conclude, I would like to reiterate the importance of marriage preparation courses for all young couples, so that they can begin their married life with a sound knowledge of what is entailed in order to



Geraldine McNamee, ACCORD Derry Marriage Preparation Facilitator.

have a successful marriage. Marriage is a journey, not a destination, and like all journeys there will be twists and bends, and hills to climb along the way, but if couples take their marriage preparation seriously, they will succeed, and with their renewed understanding of faith, they will have it as their foundation stone.

Sadly, there are many broken marriages in society, but I would be in no doubt that couples who find themselves in that situation, would have no hesitation in encouraging their children to ensure that they complete a marriage preparation course, and that they would want them to have happy, life-long marriages.

Bishop Donal introduces the new Diocesan Safeguarding Team

THE Diocese of Derry, as part of the Catholic Church in Ireland, has the mission of living and spreading the message of Christ. Safeguarding practices, policy and procedures are of paramount importance in the Diocese, as is the case for all other dioceses across Ireland.

The Diocese of Derry is committed to Safeguarding children through the implementation of 'Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016', with updates.

The diocese has a Safeguarding Statement along with practices supporting keeping children safe from harm in church and associated activities.

On the Diocesan website, there is a complete section on Safeguarding, which includes information on support services, complaints and reporting, with downloadable resources.

Bishop Donal McKeown has appointed a Safeguarding Committee to assist him in creating, maintaining and monitoring a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults in all aspects of Church life and activity, and for advising on the human resources required for implementing best practice across services.

The Safeguarding Committee comprises of 10 members drawn from various groups including lay, professional, clergy and religious groups, and reflects an awareness of the needs of children and vulnerable adults.

It is within this context that recent appointments were made to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team as both Noel O'Donnell, Designated Liaison Person, and Paula Cunningham, Safeguarding Co-ordinator, have retired from their posts.

During their time in post,

both Noel and Paula worked tirelessly to create safe environments for children and vulnerable adults. The Diocese thanks both of them for the commendable work that they have achieved and for giving of their time and expertise so generously.

Marie Gormley has been appointed to replace Noel O'Donnell as Designated Liaison Person. Marie's role is to hear any queries regarding safeguarding concerns or allegations, and to liaise with all the relevant agencies and individuals in responding sensitively and appropriately to that concern or disclosure.

Marie brings to this position her past experience working in various safeguarding roles, within both the statutory and voluntary sectors, over the past 26 years. She is based at the Bishop's House, St Eugene's Cathedral, and can be contacted on 075 9650 0793 or by email: marie.gormley@derrydiocese.org



Bishop Donal with the new Diocesan Safeguarding Team, from left, Marie Gormley, Designated Liaison Person, and Briega O'Neill, Safeguarding Coordinator, both from the Banagher Parish.

Briega O'Neill has been appointed to replace Paula Cunningham as Safeguarding Co-ordinator. Briega will assist the Diocese and support clergy and safeguarding representatives in implementing the policies and procedures, to achieve consistent and up-to-date best practice.

Vetting procedures across the Diocese, along with providing parishes with safeguarding training programmes and resources, is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator. General enquiries should be made directly to Briega on 028 7136 2475 or by email: safeguarding@

derrydiocese.org
Briega brings to the position her wealth of safeguarding experiences in the role as principal of two Catholic Maintained Primary Schools over the past 25 years.

Marie and Briega are both parishioners in the Parish of Banagher and are delighted to be appointed to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. They look forward to building on the good work already done in previous years, and meeting new challenges as they arise in the years ahead, as they continue to create safe environments for children and vulnerable adults in our Diocese and parishes.

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

A garden for Our Lady

by Corinne Coyle,
Principal St Mary's PS Draperstown

THE school community of St Mary's PS Draperstown are delighted with the completion of a very special project. During the month of May, a number of P7 and P4 children have been working hard with Nula, the building supervisor, to create a unique sacred space in honour of Our Lady - and what a fitting tribute it has turned out to be!

The children learned all about the history of 'Mary Gardens' and the plants were carefully chosen because of the wonderful stories and legends attached to them.

The association of plants and

flowers with Our Lady dates back to the very beginning of Christianity. From this time comes the legend that after Mary's Assumption into heaven, roses and lilies were found blooming in her tomb, where her body had lain.

Devotion to Our Lady grew very quickly after the Council of Ephesus in 431, when she was first proclaimed 'Mother of God'. The Council of Ephesus was an important meeting of Bishops where they discussed church matters and beliefs.

Ephesus is in Turkey and Our

Lady moved to live just outside Ephesus after Jesus died. She lived there with the apostle, St John until her own death.

During this time, devotion to Mary, or Marian devotion, was particularly strong and many of the native plants and flowers were named after her then.

St Benedict was the first to create a prayer garden at his monastery. His was a rose garden or 'rosary'.

However, it was St Fiacre, an Irish monk, and Patron Saint of gardening, who became the first to plant a garden in honour of Our Lady in 670, using those flowers

and plants which bore her name.

This idea quickly spread throughout Ireland, with many 'Mary Gardens' being created to honour Our Lady. They were often enclosed gardens with a simple statue of Our Lady surrounded by the shrubs and flowers which had been named after her.

We now have a special place in our school to spend time with Mary Our Mother. We hope that the seeds of our efforts inspire the creation of many new 'Mary Gardens' and a revival of this ancient tradition in Our Lady's honour



Stories and legends associated with the plants

Basil Mint

Our Lady's Mint or Holy Communion Plant

This plant is a herb. It is a hybrid of two Marion plants - Mint and Basil. Nowadays, we use Mint and Basil in cooking and it was also used for cooking during the time of Our Lady and Jesus. It was even mentioned by Jesus in the Bible. It's in Luke 11:42 - if you'd like to look it up. It was also a traditional strewing herb during Jesus' time. It later became known as Holy Communion Plant from an ancient Mediterranean custom of strewing basil leaves in front of the communion rails, which used to be around the front of every altar.

Chives

Our Lady's Garlic

This mild member of the onion family was widely used as a flavouring and garnish in cookery, as it still is today.

Golden Rose

Mary's Glory

Roses have long been a symbol of Our Lady, the 'Rose of Heaven'. The golden rose reminds us of her glory in heaven. Our Lady of Knock is known as the 'Golden Rose, Queen of Ireland'.

Lily

Mary's Purity

Lilies have always been associated with Our Lady. They symbolise that she is pure and has never committed any sins. Together with roses they sprang up in her empty tomb where she had lain. Lilies and roses are also said to have grown wherever she stepped on her journey to visit her cousin Elizabeth.

Ox Eye Daisy

Mary's Star

An ancient legend tells that the Wise Men lost sight of the star when they reached Bethlehem. As they gazed around looking for the place where Jesus had been born, they noticed white flowers blooming around an old stable. These flowers, which were daisies, looked very similar to the star which had been leading them throughout their journey. As they went to investigate, the door of the stable opened revealing the Holy Family.

Pansy

Our Lady's Delight or Trinity Flower

The pansy is an ancient symbol of the Holy Trinity as its three main petals form a single flower. They remind us of Our Lady's delight in the Holy Trinity, which she learned about from the Angel Gabriel when he came to ask her to be the Mother of God.

Tulips

Mary's Prayers

Traditionally, tulips represent the prayers of Our Lady. The cup-shaped petals resemble her hands joined and raised in prayer. The open heart of the flower in full bloom reflects how she was open to follow God's plan for her to become the Mother of God.

Marigold

Mary's Gold or Mary's Halo

According to an ancient legend, when Mary and Joseph were taking the baby Jesus to Egypt to escape from Herod, a band of robbers threatened the Holy Family. They stole Mary's purse but when they opened it, the coins had turned into marigolds. Another belief was that the petals of the marigold symbolised the golden rays of Mary's halo.

Lavender

Our Lady's Drying Bush

This legend tells us that Our Lady dried the Infant Jesus' swaddling clothes on a wild lavender bush. In ancient times and even today in poorer countries, linen is often hung over lavender bushes to dry as the flowers and leaves give a beautiful scent and freshness to the linen. Lavender is also an insect-repellent. It is one of the manger herbs said to have been used by St Joseph in the stable at Bethlehem. With its calming qualities it would have been perfect to help put the new-born Baby Jesus to sleep.

Fuchsia

Our Lady's Earrings

It is easy for us to imagine the Child Jesus sitting on his Mother's lap and playfully hanging the fuchsia flower 'jewels' on her ears, like earrings!

More Marion Flowers

Petunias - Our Lady's Praises

Foxgloves - Our Lady's Gloves

Daffodils - Our Lady's Star

Primrose - Our Lady's Frills

Honeysuckle - Our Lady's Fingers

Veronica - Our Lady's Faith Flower



Diocesan Advisor for Primary Schools, Thérèse Ferry, and Diocesan Advisor for Post Primary Schools, Mary O'Boyle reflect on this year's Confirmation preparation sessions...

Disciples of Jesus – Filled with Joy!

IN what was a very different and challenging year for Year 7 and 6th Class children preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Diocesan Catechetical Centre decided to put together a programme to support parents, schools and parishes, as they journeyed with the children in this very important stage of their lives.

Linking with the Diocesan pupil workbook, 'Filled With Joy', and 'Disciples of Jesus', the Diocesan parent booklet, a programme was devised consisting of four sessions, via the catecheticalcentre.org/webcam/ from May 17-20.

Each day, the sessions included catechesis on different aspects of

the Sacrament of Confirmation, prayer, creative activities and music. A support pack for the four sessions was emailed to schools and made available on our website, as were a series of short video reflections by guest speakers for schools and parents to share with the pupils.

Each speaker reflected on their memories of the sacrament of Confirmation and on the impact of the gift of the Holy Spirit in their life. We had contributions from Bishop McKeown, Carmel Dunn, retired principal of Hollybush Primary School, Fr Kevin McElhennon, Parish Priest of Cappagh, Peter Grant, a student

at Moville Community College, and Karen Kiefer, author of the children's book, 'Drawing God'.

Two videos by Elma Walsh, mother of the Kerry teenager, Donal Walsh, who inspired so many with his faith and positive outlook on life as he battled a terminal diagnosis, explored how Donal used the gifts of the Holy Spirit in his life and on how God loves each person unconditionally.

All of the materials are available at <https://catecheticalcentre.org/category/sacramental-preparation/>

Anyone who has had the experience of moving ministry online in this past year will

understand the challenge of presenting live from a webcam to an audience you can't see and hoping you can keep them focused and engaged with the content.

In planning the sessions, it was important for us that we were able to combine sound catechetical content with an element of fun! We had to let go of the nerves, imagine the children were in front of us and trust in the Holy Spirit!

We really enjoyed the week and were delighted with the extent of the engagement by schools across the Diocese. But the best people to tell you about the experience are the children themselves!



St Joseph's Primary School, Drumquin

"We participated in the Derry Diocesan Catechetical Centre's online Confirmation preparation sessions from Monday, May 17 to Thursday, May 20. We have been preparing in school with our teachers, Mrs Eimear Donnelly and Mrs Alison Mullan, and Fr Mullan. Our 'Filled with Joy' booklets have really helped us in developing our understanding of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

When we heard that we were going to participate in the online Confirmation sessions, we were a bit apprehensive as this wasn't what we were expecting, but we were excited as this meant that we could prepare during our school day with our friends in a relaxed atmosphere.

There were four sessions in total and we really enjoyed taking part. There was always a thought-provoking prayer to help us get started. We particularly enjoyed

performing the 'Holy Spirit stretch' each day, as this helped us focus and concentrate to begin our day ahead.

The sessions were good fun and we laughed so much when Mary was tempted to open the gifts of the Holy Spirit! The booklet we used during the programme was enjoyable to complete as it was filled with plenty of fun activities and we loved the art!

We wish to thank everyone involved in creating these sessions as they have helped us a great deal in preparing for receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation this weekend. They have enhanced what we are learning in class and our understanding of the Sacrament has increased. We are feeling confident to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation this weekend with Fr Mullan, our families, friends, teachers and the community.

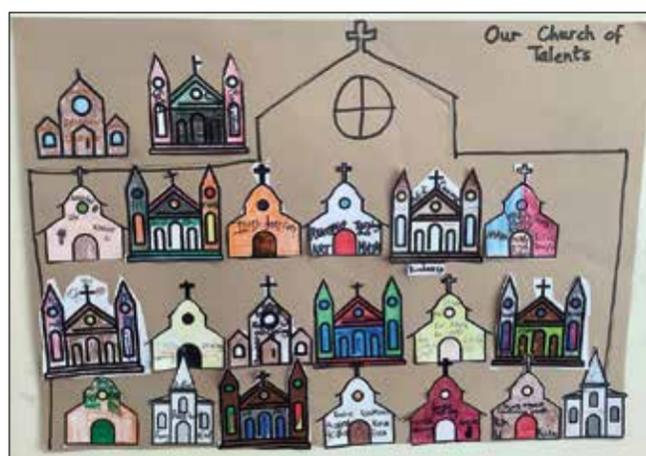
St Brigid's Primary and Nursery School, Derry...

The children of Mr Alan Ryan, Mrs Eileen Fisher and Mrs Mclaughlin's classes really enjoyed the opportunity to reflect on the Sacrament of Confirmation...

"We considered the crucial role that the gifts and the fruits of the Holy Spirit will have as we move forward in our lives as Disciples of Jesus. Bethany said her favourite activity was 'the Holy Spirit Kite,'

and Dean "loved doing the Holy Spirit Stretch".

We would like to thank the Derry Diocesan Catechetical Centre for the excellent preparation sessions for Confirmation 2021."



St Patrick's Primary School, Glen, Maghera

"I really enjoyed the Confirmation workshop because I was nervous about picking my name. I enjoyed Mary and Thérèse because they explained everything very well. I was surprised that Bishop Donal came to say a few words to us. He read the Gospel well and it was interesting." *Fionn*

"I enjoyed the workshops because I loved the way there was fun elements in it but you were also learning. The activities were fun to do and enjoyable. The Bishop speaking to us was very cool as I did not think that would happen. The way they presented everything was my favourite part, they did it in a fun way and I loved that. I feel more prepared and ready for my Confirmation now; it was a really enjoyable experience." *Cara*

"I liked the way Thérèse and Mary presented the workshop. I know more about Confirmation and how important the sponsor is. I learnt about God. I really liked the way Fr John and Bishop Donal told stories about Jesus. I know what

is going to happen on the day of my Confirmation and I am really looking forward to it." *Eoghan*

"I personally thought that the Confirmation workshop was absolutely BRILLIANT! It helped me understand the meaning and specialness of Confirmation. It made me feel more ready for Confirmation and for the Holy Spirit to come to me. Mary and Thérèse were a great help during the workshop. I'd definitely recommend it!" *Nicole*

"The Confirmation workshop was great. Therese and Mary explained the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit while also making me laugh. They had a great sense of humour and I enjoyed seeing them joking about and teaching us at the same time. It was interesting hearing from the Bishop and people who had been sponsors for someone at Confirmation. Overall, I know a lot more about the Holy Spirit and I feel ready for Confirmation. They were very good at explaining it." *Charlie*



A message of appreciation from Bishop Donal...

"If there is one thing that we learn from the history of the early Church in the Acts of the Apostles, it is that the Spirit blows where it will. The apostles were pushed out of the upper room, out of Jerusalem, out of Israel and into Turkey, Greece and Rome. Their feet hardly had time to touch the ground!

The pandemic took everybody by surprise in 2020, but the Diocese of Derry, centrally and locally, has discovered great reservoirs of creativity and possibility. On-line ministry seemed neither possible nor even desirable. But the lockdowns have pushed us towards beaming Religious Education resources straight into classrooms, on-line celebrations and the very welcome sight of smaller and much more intimate celebrations of First Holy Communion and Confirmation. What was thought unthinkable has become indispensable.

The Confirmation preparation sessions were one specific initiative that responded to a real need. Schools had been closed for so long and Confirmation had to be prepared for. The Catechetical Centre put huge effort into developing four two-hour sessions that could be used in schools or viewed by parents and children.

All of this work was done with an emphasis on prayer, quality content, activities and

extensive material – and a spirit of celebration. Adults who had been surprised by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit just wanted to share their gratitude for the Spirit's gifts!

None of this does away with the invaluable work that schools do. But it suggests that a 'mixed economy' of centrally provided resources and local teaching can be a blessing for those who work with our young people.

I was able to participate on two days. That was a real pleasure and privilege.

I thank God for this initiative and I trust that we will continue to be guided by the Holy Spirit to serve the wonderful young people and schools in our diocese."



St Mary's Primary School, Killyclogher...

Mr Seamus McGlinchey's Year 7 Class sent some lovely thank you letters. Here are some quotes from the children on their experience of the Confirmation Preparation Sessions...

"I liked how you started off with the Holy Spirit stretches, it was fun. My favourite activity was when we had to decorate the tiny churches and had to write in our gifts and what we are good at. I laughed when you brought out the cake and a cupcake fell. It was just so unexpected, but the cake looked delicious!" *Aine Sutton*

"The kite was a fun activity to do as it was fun to draw and learn the symbols of the Holy Spirit. I drew the fire, wind, dove and the cross." *Aliz Marko*

"The stories were really enjoyable. My favourite was closing our eyes and imagining Jesus was washing your feet. The other activities were fun as well. Mary's sense of humour was funny, especially at the start when she said she was ready for a cuppa." *Ava Heaney*

"I liked learning more about the Gifts and Fruits, and doing the activities and colouring in. I enjoyed listening to Fr Paul Farren read verses from the Bible." *Ciaren McPhillips*

"We watched all four webinars and enjoyed them all. I really enjoyed when you spoke about Pentecost and the Holy Spirit entering the apostles because it made me feel less nervous about making my Confirmation." *Conall McKenna*

"My favourite parts of the streams were when we coloured or designed something, and I also liked the way you asked us three questions a day and, at the end, used the first letter of every answer to spell Pentecost." *Darragh Thomas*

"You told me about the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Fruits of the Holy Spirit and the Beatitudes.

I am really excited to make my Confirmation and receive the Holy Spirit because during the last four days I've learnt about the Holy Spirit." *Ella McCartan*

"Your stories about your Confirmation names were very interesting and you helped me become less nervous about making my Confirmation. Thank you so much for doing that and I hope you do it in the future." *Emma McGarvey*

"We have been watching the webinars and I really liked the nine questions that spelt Pentecost. I didn't know that St Paul was a tent maker and I find that very cool." *Eoghan McPhillips*

"When Bishop McKeown was speaking it really relaxed me. At the end, when we watched him cut the cake knowing the word was Pentecost, our class was so jealous, until you mentioned about designing our own shirts and the whole class was overjoyed." *Grace Corrigan*

"I really enjoyed the activities, especially the colouring. The Holy Spirit stretch was my favourite because it woke me up in the mornings. I also liked learning about the fruits because I never really knew what they were or what they meant." *Hanna Kulikowska*

"My favourite activity was praying in colour because we wrote our gifts and talents on the lines, and coloured the semi-circles." *Henry Miles*

"I really enjoyed it the past 4 days. It has really helped me because my confirmation is on Saturday 5th in Christ the King, Strathroy and your webcam has helped me so much, thank you." *Junior Fullen*

"I really enjoyed following your messages and your webinars to lead me up to my Confirmation. My favourite part was expressing myself through the activity sheets you sent out, giving everyone a little more self-confidence with writing out our qualities and our gifts on the churches." *Katie McGinty*

"I enjoyed the activities and Holy Spirit stretch, it was so fun. I learnt a lot about the questions and my Confirmation. I liked the gifts of the Holy Spirit and fruits, the webinars were very interesting." *Keelan McKenna*

"I really liked the kite because I got to learn about the symbols of the Holy Spirit. I loved at the start when we did the Holy Spirit stretches and why Mary did acting through prayer. You both got on so well. I really enjoyed the nine questions. It was really funny when Mary and the Bishop tried to steal the gifts of the Holy Spirit!" *Maiya Coyle*

"I enjoyed listening to Mary when she was talking about when she went to Africa to be a teacher. Mary's sense of humour was really funny. I liked when Bishop McKeown, Fr Paul Farren and Emmet Thompson read verses out from the Bible." *Megan Quinn*

"My favourite part of the four days was the nine questions. I wrote all of them as soon as one of you said it. Through the questions you learn facts from the bible, like Paul's other job, which is a tent maker." *Michael McGarvey*

"I'm excited for my Confirmation so that I can receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit and make the good choices in life. I liked 'The Beatitudes' activity because I got to choose what Beatitude I thought

that I needed the most?" *Nico ProTsyuk*

"I liked learning more about the Fruits and Gifts of the Holy Spirit. I like the eight Beatitudes. I like Mary's sense of humour. It was funny when Bishop McKeown let the cake fall." *Oisín McGarvey*

"I liked 'The Beatitudes' because when I got home I tried to practise some of them. I liked when Mary was trying to steal Therese's presents. I am looking forward to my Confirmation because I want to receive the Holy Spirit, which I can use throughout my life if I believe in God." *Ronan Barton*

"My favourite activity was the colouring in prayer, as it shows we can pray in many different ways. I enjoyed Mary's questions especially on Thursdays as I was excited to see what the answer was." *Ronan Broderick*

"Our Confirmation is on June 5 at Christ the King Chapel, Strathroy. I can't wait until my Confirmation. I liked the way you gave us a viewpoint of your Confirmation and said the things you liked about it." *Ronan O'Neill*

"My favourite part was both of you talking about the sacraments because I am receiving the Holy Spirit and might be getting more sacraments in the future. It was very funny when Bishop McKeown did the Holy Spirit stretch. Please do another webinar so everyone won't get bored of their teacher and school!" *Shea McGinn*

"I loved the webinar and learning about the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. I am having my Confirmation on June 5 in Christ the King, in Strathroy." *Sophia McKenna*

Fan the Flame 2021 *by Therese Ferry*



people who were present in other years!

"I have great memories of being involved in the Fan the Flame Mass. It usually starts with an early morning arrival at Celtic Park to set up; a bonus if the sun is shining. Therese and the team have everything well organised, and everybody has a role to play and they work well together.

Once the children start arriving, the atmosphere lifts; the excitement, the laughter, the fun and the colours of the banners, t-shirts and balloons take over the stadium. The Mass is beautifully celebrated, as is the music and liturgy, and captures everyone in attendance from start to finish.

I feel that it is something the children will remember for the rest of their lives and look back on it fondly, and feel the Holy Spirit every time they do. I look forward to being able to help at Fan the Flame again, hopefully in the near future."

(Emmett Mullan, Faith Development Coordinator, Saint Eugene's Cathedral, Derry)

"My name is Hollie and I was confirmed in St Mary's Church, Melmound, Strabane, on Saturday, April 12, 2014 by Bishop Donal McKeown. Then, about a month or two later, I attended the Fan of the Flame Mass with my class in Celtic Park, in Derry.

Some of my memories of the Fan of the Flame Mass are quite vague as I was very young, although I do remember two key things, one being that there were so many young people. Primary Seven

and Sixth Class pupils from all over the Diocese came together in a youthful celebration of our common Confirmation promise and commitment to God and His Church.

Secondly, was the release of the big bunch of red, orange and yellow balloons into the sky - signifying the Holy Spirit and its gifts. Theologically, we understand the nature of the Holy Spirit to be like a gust of wind, therefore, the balloons in the sky signify the Holy Spirit's large and close presence to us all. This also represents the fact that the Holy Spirit unites all our brothers and sisters, in Christ together, from all over the world!"

(Hollie Frystal, Student, Holy Cross College, Strabane.)

"I remember my first time at Fan the Flame. I was invited by Therese to help steward the stands. I arrived just before the Primary 7 and 6th Class pupils, and all I can say is that the park was soon awash with colourful t-shirts and excited children, carrying water for sustenance. A few even brought raincoats and umbrellas! I was not so organised!

The excitement was at fever pitch when the procession began, the choir sang and the young people, and the not so young, joined in. Once the Eucharistic celebration began quietness reigned and peace descended. There was no doubting the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Despite the large numbers - almost 3,000 - all went well. The young people and their teachers had a wonderful experience and left the



Gloria Perry, Urney Creations.

IN a year when things are so very different, restrictions prevent us from hosting our annual Fan the Flame Mass for Year 7 and Sixth Class pupils in Celtic Park. However, thankfully, like so many other Church celebrations in the last year, we are still able to have this celebration through the gift of technology.

On Monday, June 21, at 11am, Bishop McKeown, via the webcam at St Eugene's Cathedral, will give thanks to God for the gift these children have been to the Diocese and ask God's blessing on them as they prepare to move to new schools in September.

Many of the children will have received the sacrament of Confirmation by this time and we hope schools, families and parishes will join us for the celebration of Mass.

In preparation for the Fan the Flame Mass, schools will receive a Fan the Flame pack for pupils with a Reflective Journal, a hymn sheet for the Mass and ideas for celebrating

this very important event. This will also be made available on our website - www.catecheticalcentre.org

Fan the Flame began back in 2007 and has grown steadily, with almost 3,000 pupils from across the Diocese in attendance in 2019. One of the lasting memories is of the sea of children, with their brightly coloured t-shirts, specially designed in school, in preparation for the Mass.

This year we are delighted to announce, again through the gift of technology, that well known artist, Gloria Perry, 'Urney Creations', will host a session via the Catechetical Centre webcam: catecheticalcentre.org/webcam/ to help the children with their designs.

This will take place on Monday, June 14, at 10am, and will begin with a time of prayer and reflection led by the Catechetical Centre team.

Hopefully, we will be able to return to Celtic Park for Fan the Flame in the near future. In the meantime, here are a few memories from

park in high spirits.

Since this first experience, I have been privileged to work alongside an amazing team and I have seen at first hand the amount of preparation, before, during and after, which goes into this event.

Initial meetings with Celtic Park staff regarding Health and Safety and the organisation of the day take place months in advance of the June date, and these meetings are swiftly followed with meetings with builders, youth and adult volunteers, safeguarding and many others!

When I attended my first Fan the Flame as a steward, I had no idea of the amount of preparation which preceded it. Let's hope that this event will be back in place in June 2022.

(Mary O'Boyle - Post Primary Advisor, Diocese of Derry)

If you have attended any Fan the Flame Masses in the past why not share your memories with us on social media using #fantheflammemories.

St Eithne's PS, Derry, May procession





Launching a Year of Commemoration in celebration of its Patron's legacy...

St Columb's College to reflect on its role in life of Derry



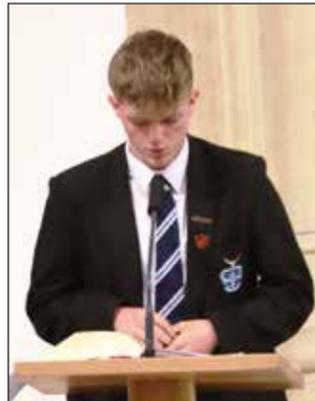
Principal of St Columb's College, Finbar Madden.

BISHOP Donal McKeown celebrated a special Mass for St Columb's College on the Feast of St Columba, as it embarks on a Year of Commemoration as the 1500th

anniversary of their Patron's birth. Welcoming Bishop Donal, Fr Micheal McGavigan, current and former colleagues and alumni to the Mass in St Patrick's Church, Pennyburn, the principal, Mr Finbar Madden said that the day marked the beginning of a year of celebration, not just for the Diocese of Derry, but for the community that makes up St Columb's College. "Between now and June 9, 2022," he added, "we will be undertaking a Year of Commemoration, reflecting not only on the legacy of Columba but also on the part that St Columb's College has played, is playing and will continue to play in the life of this city, and far beyond".

As well as giving thanks for all that the College has achieved over the past 142 years under the patronage of Columba, Mr Madden said: "More importantly, we commit ourselves afresh to the vocation that we have. With

God's help, we will continue to form young men strong in faith, firm in hope and active in charity; young men whose 'energy' will undoubtedly shape tomorrow's world locally, nationally and internationally".



RENEWAL – Parish leader mentoring with Diocesan Youth Ministry



DERRY Diocesan Youth is hosting RENEWAL, a six-week mentoring programme for parish and volunteer leaders working

with young people (13-18 year olds), running this June and July. The online webinars will provide leaders with an opportunity to come together in prayer and support, celebrate and share best practice, and strategically plan the next steps in their parish for Youth Ministry. The mentoring programme will explore the 'what and why' of Youth Ministry, and look at 'Exploring Christut Vivit, the apostolic exhortation from Pope Francis to young people, and what the shift from Catechetical

to Accompaniment means. Different leadership and ministry approaches will be considered, such as intentionally engaging young people from a range of backgrounds, and also animating volunteer parish teams, and looking at engaging young people online and safeguarding support. Another areas looked at will be models for employing a Parish Pastoral leader for Youth Ministry, with first hand testimonies, and forming a Parish Youth Council.

Diocesan Youth Ministry initiatives and training for parish based programmes, such as GIFT for Year 8's-Year 10 and Youth Alpha, will also be covered. Parish representatives will be supported in planning the way forward as we move to a fuller reopening of churches and parish life post-Covid. If you are interested in finding out more about Renewal or developing Youth Ministry in your parish please contact yvonne.rooney@derrydiocese.org

Derry Youth Ministry Scholarship by Yvonne Rooney

CONGRATULATIONS to the young people who are coming to the end of their Derry Youth Ministry Scholarship. The young people have been exceptional in their commitment and dedication to the scholarship programme over the last year. They have completed a Level 1 Qualification in Youth Work Practice, accredited by OCN, and they have shown effective leadership skills, particularly online as part of the Derry Youth Online Programme and with Mary's Meals, the chosen charity for the year. Bishop Donal will celebrate Mass with the young people

and their families on July 3 in St Eugene's Cathedral and the young people will receive their certificates and goodie bags. As this year's programme draws to a close, some of the young people have reflected on their experiences... Grace, from Ballinascreen Parish, "loved working with the charity Mary's Meal's over the year" and felt she fully connected with their work. Zara, from St Eugene's Parish, said the highlight of the scholarship has been "meeting other young people" and being able to put her faith into practice. Cate, from Greenlough Parish,

felt that the scholarship has really helped her grow in confidence, particularly when doing 'lives' online. The programme will run again in the new academic year and senior students are invited to apply now for the Derry Youth Scholarship. The scholarship will include faith formation, community involvement and opportunities to gain life and team building skills. It offers: 1. A chance to learn about and grow in faith with a community of young people; 2. A qualification in youth ministry eg Level 1 OCN course

with Youth Link NI; 3. Experience and participation in service through community outreach projects; 4. A laugh and a fun time getting to know yourself better and those you journey with; 5. Continue or become an active member of your parish and/or diocese; 6. Be well equipped and supported with your discernment and transition from school to working life or university

For more information contact lizzie.rea@derrydiocese.org

THIS month, Hollie, Peter, Oisín, Gemma, Zara and John, 'The Net' youth contributors from the Co Tyrone, Inishowen, Co Derry and Derry City Deaneries, reflect on a variety of subjects that have interested them, with Oisín and Peter commenting on catechesis by Pope Francis on prayer and sharing their own experience.

At this time in our Church when our children are receiving the Sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation, Hollie writes about the importance of the Sacraments of Initiation, and Gemma shares a beautiful image she painted of The Sacred Heart and The Child to honour the sanctity of life.

Moved by the large number of children unable to read, Oisín shares his thoughts on the importance of enabling every child to get an education so that they can rise up out of the poverty cycle, and with martyrdom a recurring theme for Feasts celebrated in the Church during June, John reflects on whether he could follow Christ like the martyrs.

Zara and Hollie write about their experience of this year's Little Way Novena in St Eugene's Cathedral, and having attended the Pope St John Paul II Awards in the Cathedral, Hollie reports on what was a rather different JPPII Award Ceremony from the norm for the Diocese.



Hollie Frystal,
Co Tyrone Deanery.



Oisín Mulhern,
Co Derry Deanery.



Peter Grant,
Inishowen Deanery.



Gemma Gallagher, Derry
City Deanery



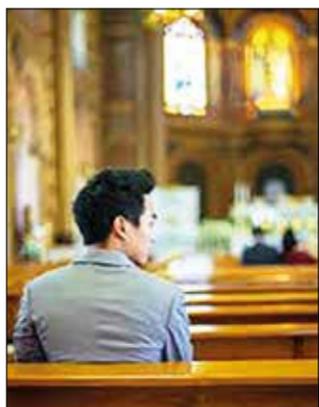
John Augustine Joseph,
Derry City Deanery.



Zara Schindwein,
Derry City Deanery.

Overcoming difficulties in prayer

by Oisín Mulhern



DURING a recent general audience, Pope Francis brought attention to three of the major difficulties that many feel when they are in prayer, and this would include me as well, as I feel I have experienced these at some point. The difficulties he highlighted

were: Distractions; Aridity; and Acedia. Each of these has many things to be considered when talking about and tackling them.

The first one, distraction, is the most obvious and common difficulty that we will usually face during prayer. The Pope tells us that these distractions we experience are not in themselves sinful, however, this does not mean that we should give into them either as God asks us to be ever vigilant of His arrival. Pope Francis suggests that we should rely on the gospel virtue of perseverance.

This resonates deeply with me, as there are many times when my mind wanders while praying and I am not entirely focused on the task at hand, which leads to

Reflecting on the Sacraments of Baptism, Holy Communion and Confirmation, Hollie writes...

The Sacraments of Initiation are incredibly important... uniting us more deeply with Christ and His mission

DURING these days in our Church calendar, following the celebration of Pentecost Sunday on May 23, and the honourable Feast of Corpus Christi on June 6, and looking forward to the commemoration of the Nativity of John the Baptist, on June 23, we are reminded and invited to reflect on the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Holy Communion and Confirmation.

Especially at this time, it is important to keep all our primary school children in our prayers, whilst they continue to prepare for their First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

On June 23, we celebrate the Nativity of John the Baptist, who appears in all four Gospels, foretold by the prophet Isaiah as "a voice of one crying in the wilderness."

John was an exceptional prophet, who mirrored the old prophet Elijah, by the way he behaved and dressed. For example, John ate wild honey and locusts, and wore camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist. He was both a strange and penitential figure, and his purpose or vocation was to "prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for Him."

John prepared the people for the coming of Christ, and urged them to repent and to be baptised in forgiveness of their sins. Incredibly, John baptised Jesus, which initiated the beginning of Christ's public ministry. We learn that at that very moment Jesus took the sins of the world upon His shoulders, so that we could be baptised with the Holy Spirit and that we could share in the joy of His Resurrection.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that "Baptism is a sacrament that washes away original sin. That makes us Christians, and members of God's family and members of the Church."

In the same way, as Jesus embarked upon His public ministry through Baptism, we too

embark upon our Christian lives, mission and vocation through our baptism. We are cleansed by an "outward sign" (water) and given an "inward grace" (Holy Spirit), which enables us by strengthening us throughout our lives to "deny oneself, take up the cross and follow" Christ.

Obviously, I don't remember anything about my Christening day, however, I am extremely grateful that I am baptised and, like John, I believe that the seeds of my vocation had already been planted before I was born, and that my baptism has marked the beginning of that journey.

On Sunday, May 23, we celebrated the birth of our Church, a missionary Church, and the first Confirmation - known as Pentecost. Pentecost falls exactly 50 days after the Resurrection of Jesus, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles, with its many gifts, enabling them to go out and proclaim the Good News. They were "filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues".

Committed

Similar to the sacrament of Baptism, we also receive the pouring out of the Holy Spirit and its gifts, which unites us more closely in communion with one another as brothers and sisters of Christ. We become committed more deeply with His mission. In making our Confirmation, we renew our baptismal promises and are, once again, anointed with the oil of chrism.

The bishop or priest performs an apostolic gesture of the laying of the hands on the person's forehead, accompanied with the words "be sealed with the Holy Spirit." Interestingly, the candidate chooses a name of someone who has inspired them, and who will serve as a role model in their life, devotion and service to the Church.

Unlike my christening day, I remember much more of my Confirmation day. I was

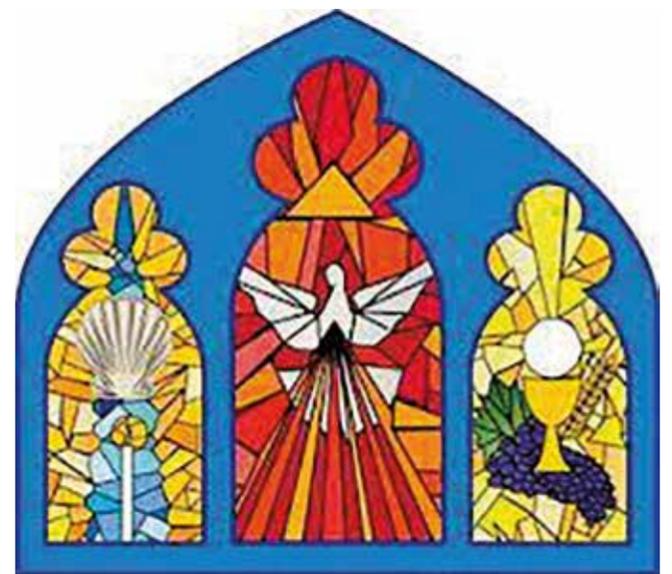
losing my train of thought and restarting my prayers all over again. To combat this, when I say my prayers I go to areas with little to no distractions so that I can focus completely on my prayers. I do still find myself being distracted at points, but it is certainly much less than I had previously.

The second of these difficulties is aridity, or 'dryness' in prayer. This refers to the thought process of when prayer does no good and brings no enjoyment or enthusiasm. This problem can come from the outside rather

than solely from within us, and the Pope even posits that God, Himself, allows us to have this dryness to make us rely on "pure faith".

This is a problem that many people face during prayer and I am no different, as there have been many times when I was having difficulties during my school or home life and I tried to pray for help or comfort regarding these issues, but my mood at those times and worry led me to experience this aridity.

However, when I further discussed this and thought



confirmed by Bishop Donal, in my home parish of St Mary's Church Melmount, and I chose the name Bernadette. St. Bernadette served as an early inspiration in my life, and from a young age I fell in love with the story of Lourdes. I was able to relate to her in so many ways.

Rebekah, from Strabane, chose the name Bridget. She explained: "I chose Bridget because Granda's mummy was called Bridget, and mummy also chose the name Bridget at her Confirmation." Therefore, it was a popular Irish name that ran in the family.

Erin, who is also from Strabane, chose the name Mary. She said: "I chose the name Mary because Jesus' mummy was called Mary and nobody in the family had chosen that name before."

It's clear to see that the meaning of Rebekah and Erin's Confirmation still echoes through the inspiration of their chosen saint. We are reminded of our Confirmation promises.

On June 6, we celebrated the feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, also known as 'Corpus Christi'. On this day we commemorate Jesus' sacrifice of His Body and Blood, which He gave to us on Holy Thursday under the physical appearance

of bread and wine. The change of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is known as transubstantiation, where the Spirit descends down upon our offering, which we make present again at Mass at the act of consecration.

There is a mysterious presence and appearance of the Sacred Host. Most of the Sacrament's significance is beyond human understanding. Recently we have learnt of how the Sacrament still never fails to inspire, for example, the story of Blessed Carlo Acutis.

I also remember my First Holy Communion Day; wearing my white Holy Communion dress and white veil, which had a small silver cross at the back of it. Although I don't remember everything, I am reminded of my First Holy Communion when I "recognise Him at the breaking of bread" in Mass.

We are a sacramental Church, and we grow more closely to Jesus every time we receive Him. His Body and Blood nourish our souls.

The Sacraments of Initiation are incredibly important in our Church. We can see the importance and significance of making these commitments that unite us more deeply with Christ and His mission

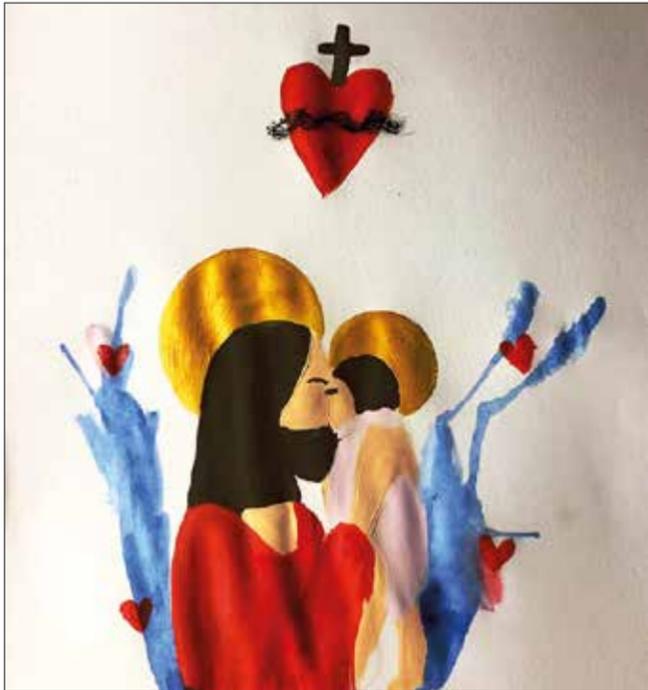
long and hard, I was able, as the Pope said, to rely on pure faith, believing that no matter what happened God would help me along, and He did.

The final and most damaging difficulty regarding prayer is that of acedia, or more commonly known as 'sloth'. Pope Francis tells us that this is not only a temptation against prayer but also Christian life. This is because of its place as one of the seven deadly sins, and he even describes giving in to it as the death of the soul.

Many people may struggle with sloth and I believe that there has

been times even where I have fallen to this deadly sin, which annoyed me greatly. When I realised I had given into laziness by not saying my prayers, I immediately took steps to rectify this as I knew it was very destructive behaviour.

In conclusion, I believe that these great difficulties can occur to anyone and can lead us to even complain or protest against God. However, we can move past these difficulties by remaining constant through our prayer and by knowing that no matter what we feel, or what difficulties we face, God is always with us.



Gemma reflects on the sacredness of life in her painting...

Sacred Heart and The Child

I felt drawn to paint this particular image, which I have called, 'Sacred Heart and The Child', because, as I see it, Jesus gave up His life and everything in it so that we could have life.

I wanted this painting to honour

life...specifically the life of the unborn and for the children who have gone to Heaven.

While working on the painting, I felt a great peace. For me, it has a very strong and meaningful message.

Children unable to read

by Oisin Mulhern

DESPITE some severe setbacks, many children are now continuing with their journey through education. However, an analysis tool recently launched by the ONE Campaign, the Save the Children charity and the GPE, shows us that over 393 million children have failed to get basic literacy skills by age 10 and even further, it shows the stories that lead to that point.

The CEO of 'Save The Children', Kevin Watkins brings up the point that without access to these skills, which most of us learn very early and then take for granted, a child's chance to grow and achieve higher in life gets completely stunted, depriving them of the chance to break out of the cycle of poverty in which many groups become trapped.

The organisations behind this tracker have banded together to warn and urge the world, and specific governments, that if no steps are taken regarding this massive figure, then the world may risk losing the next generation of many types of jobs, such as teachers, doctors, and even world leaders.

Furthermore, they urged many specific governments to endorse schemes and commit at least \$5

billion to the global partnership for Education replenishment conference.

I think that it is an absolute disgrace that governments are not focusing on education like they should and are, instead, focusing on other areas and devoting large amounts of funds to them. Without education, the next generation of people living in any area cannot thrive and make it out of the cycle of poverty they are in.

Introducing this tracker is very worthwhile as it shows governments all over the world how damaging their ignorance regarding education truly is, and it not only affects the people that they are depriving but also the countries themselves, as they miss out on people that could affect their countries in a wide variety of positive ways.

In closing, I believe that the data shown by this tracker is a wake-up call to many governments and should also allow us to see how lucky we all are to read and write, and to have the opportunity to learn, especially when we can see that a high number of young people in many countries, unfortunately, don't have the same luxury.



Prayers are always heard

by Peter Grant

DURING Pope Francis' General Audience at the end of May, he said that while it may seem our prayers are not being responded to, they are always heard from the Lord and He never forgets about them.

"If God is Father, why does he not listen to us?" he asked, going on to say that the answer is the Catechism.

When we pray, he said, "We can give in to the risk of not being the ones to serve God, but of expecting Him to serve us".

The Pope referred to St Paul, saying that he "reminds us that we do not even know what it is appropriate to ask for".

Pope Francis and many other followers of God believe that if we

focus and concentrate on our daily prayers, we may get a response, but there are people who believe that God still doesn't listen to our prayers and pleas.

The Pope said that in meditating on the Gospels, we will find that Jesus prayed a lot and also suffered.

Jesus suffered in His life by spreading the word of God. We must walk in His shoes to understand what He really sacrificed for us and this will give us a better understanding of saying our prayers to God.

In many cases, problems aren't just solved instantly but gradually heal over time. I think that is what Pope Francis is telling us, that God will never forget us. Our problems may be solved over the



course of our lives or they may be solved instantly, but it is always important to have the loyalty to God for what all that He has done for us.

Pope Francis pointed out that "the prayer that Jesus addresses to the Father in Gethsemane also seems to go unheard", but then

came the Resurrection, which gives hope that all human longings for salvation will be fulfilled on the last day.

"Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want."

Reflecting on the Little Way Novena in honour of St Thérèse

by Zara Schlindwein

THE Little Way Novena in Honour of St Thérèse took place during May in St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry. I was lucky enough to attend the glorious celebrations with my family and be able to share in the light of St Thérèse's burning love for Jesus Christ.

The theme for this year's novena was the idea that 'Holiness consists simply in doing God's will and being just what God wants us to be'. That thought was reinforced by the words of the speakers. They all thoroughly conveyed the true meaning of holiness through their stories and showed great humility and compassion.

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 made 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 our actions are part of the holiness intended for us.

My favourite part of the novena was the blessing of the roses at the Closing Ceremony. It allowed me to reflect on the beauty of God's creation and focus on Thérèse's words, "When I die, I will send down a shower of roses from the heavens, I will spend my heaven by doing good on earth".

St Thérèse was thoroughly aware of the beauty of God's creation and the individual plan God has for



Photograph by Stephen Latimer.

everyone. That is why she should be a true inspiration to us all. Her burning flame of love and hope continues to burn, and the novena is proof of that.

I aspire to be as compassionate and devotional as St Thérèse, and to strive for complete holiness in all aspects of my life.

Can I follow Christ like the martyrs?

by John Augustine Joseph

FROM Corpus Christi to the feast of the First Martyrs of Rome, June is a month that is full of feasts that are of great importance in the Church. Feasts such as the Nativity of John the Baptist and Sts Peter and Paul, remind us of the great figures of the early church - normal, imperfect, sinful human beings, who glorified God by submitting to His will.

They were not by any human standards the cream of the crop, rather "God chose those who by human standards are fools to shame the wise; he chose those who by human standards are weak to shame the strong, those who by human standards are common and contemptible - indeed those who count for nothing - to reduce to nothing all those that do count for something, so that no human being might feel boastful before God". (1 Cor 1:27-29)

If anything, they, through their lives, showed how Jesus could transform us to become His

instruments for holiness.

Peter, Paul, John the Baptist, and every other saint were humans, like us, who lived for the Kingdom of God and spreading the Good News. Their lives were a sacrifice for a greater purpose - that all humans would experience the love of their Creator and be liberated from the slavery of sin through the grace given by Jesus through the Church.

They did not care if they had to go long distances, or undergo torture, or even be executed. All they cared about was getting this Good News out to everyone. Just look at the 20th Century - the last century produced for the Church more martyrs than it ever had before.

Whenever I think about these martyrs, these people who gave their lives up to God, I often contemplate whether I would be able to the same. It is a very difficult question: Would I follow the crowd or follow God, Himself?

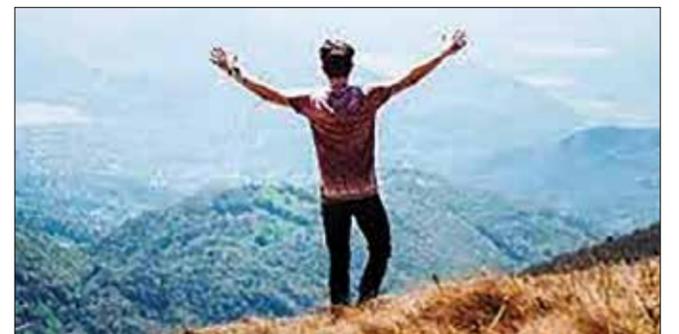
One path is wide, open and very accessible. The other path is narrow and oftentimes quite uncomfortable. That's just to paraphrase Jesus himself.

Even though the circumstances in which these martyrs died long ago was quite hostile and violent to our Christian faith, it seems that each day, trying to live the faith in our modern world is becoming a difficult ordeal. Each day, different people are mocking you for professing beliefs and ideals which are seen as far too strict.

Then there are the temptations

that surround us. The conveniences that we enjoy have become a way to remove ourselves from our problems. It's becoming easier to say 'no' to carrying the cross than to say 'yes' to taking it.

If I was asked the question, "Would you be a martyr for the faith, like Sts Peter, Paul and the First Martyrs of Rome?"...my honest answer would be, "I don't know". All I know is that I will be praying this, "If such a day comes, may God give me the strength to be with Him!"



We learn from St Therese that we are not perfect but that God has a perfect plan for each one

WHILE devotees of St Therese from across the City and beyond were not able to squeeze into every seat in St Eugene’s Cathedral, as is the norm, for the annual Little Way Novena this year, there was a great joy amongst the priests of the parish and the people that a socially distanced congregation was able to attend for the week of talks and prayers.

Hollie Frystal reports on the series of powerful talks delivered by the guest speakers...



THE popular annual ‘Little Way Novena’ to St Therese of Lisieux involved the usual opening and closing ceremonies, the daily celebration of Mass followed by evening devotions, talks, as well as space and silence for rich prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, and concluded with the blessing of roses.

The guest speakers were Mrs Maire Lindsay, Jim Deeds, Fr Michael McGoldrick OCD, Yvonne Rooney and Archdeacon Robert Miller, Church of Ireland.

Born on January 2, 1873 in France, Therese was one of five children who survived out of nine in the family of Louis and Zelig Martin. After her mother died of breast cancer in 1877, the family moved to Lisieux, where Therese entered the Carmelite Convent at the age of 15.

Therese suffered from mental health and died of tuberculosis at the age of 24. She maintained selflessness and determination. Her burial site is a popular place of pilgrimage, and a basilica was built bearing her name. Canonized by Pope Pius XI on May 17, 1925, St Therese was declared the youngest doctor of the Catholic Church by Pope John Paul II in 1997.

In 2015, Pope Francis canonized St Therese’s parents, making them the first spouses to be canonized together as a married couple. Interestingly, St Therese and St Bernadette’s conditions of life were, in some ways, similar. The most breath-taking thing that they

have in common is that they were both two young girls of strong faith, who continue to inspire countless people from all over the globe.

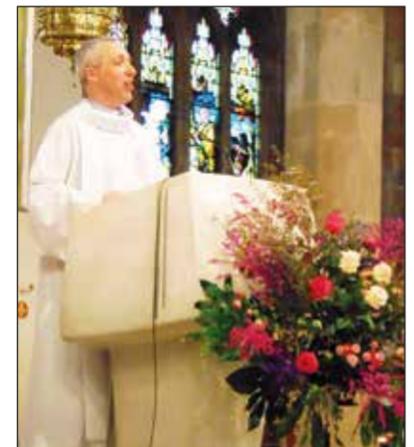
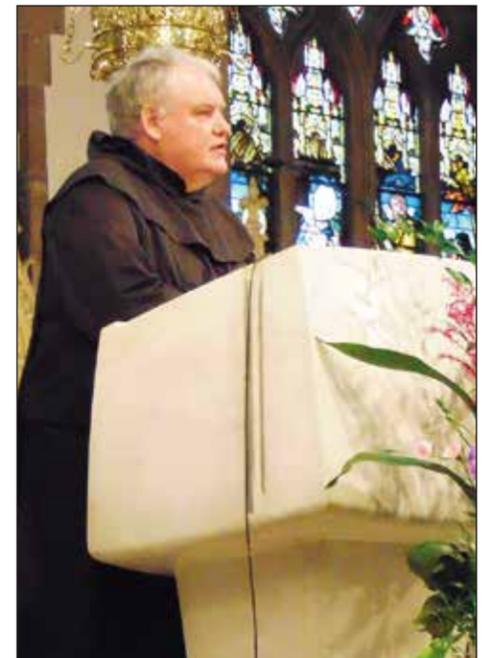
The first reflection of the week was given by Mrs Marie Lindsay, former principal of St Mary’s College in Derry, and the theme of her talk was ‘thanksgiving’. She quoted St Therese saying, “use the gifts you have received and pass on the love that has been given you.”

As a young person, what I take from this reflection is that all the obstacles and blessings we obtain in life will serve as a source of formation whilst we embark upon doing the will of God. Additionally, I am reminded that God is with us in the good as well as the bad, and that it is His ‘footprints’ that are in the sand.

Similar in thinking to St Therese, young Blessed Carlo Acutis said: “We are all born original, but many die as photocopies.” Again, we are reminded that each and every one of us is unique and that God has a plan for each one of us, requiring us to use our abilities, skills and talents to the service of others.

The second reflection was given by Jim Deeds, Parish Development Coordinator and Training and Facilitation Officer with the Living Church Office, in the Diocese of Down and Connor.

Jim Deed’s reflection was quite allegorical-like in its structure. He spoke of artistry and carpentry



in the context and focus of the 'path to holiness'. Interestingly, he put emphasis on 'small things' in everyday life that contribute to the 'path to holiness'. He quoted St Therese, saying: "Miss no single opportunity of making some small sacrifice. Here by a smile, there by a kind word, always doing the smallest right and doing it all for love."

We learn that 'sacrifice' is expected on the 'path to holiness'; however, it doesn't have to be huge. It can be simple, therefore, it can be a common practice embedded into our everyday lives, performed through the act of love.

On the third evening of the Novena, we listened to Fr Michael McGoldrick, a Carmelite priest in the Carmelite Priory and Retreat Centre, at Termonbacca. Fr McGoldrick reflected on St Therese's life and her famous autobiography, 'A Story of a Soul'.

What stood out for me in St Therese's life was her battle with mental health and anxiety. So many people, especially young people, can relate to her with similar mental health struggles. We can ask St Therese for her intercession for those suffering from mental health, and we learn from her to place our hope and trust in God's hands.

The fourth reflection was given by Yvonne Rooney, our Derry Diocesan Youth Director, who spoke of how prayer enriched her "authentic relationship" with Christ. Yvonne quoted St Therese, saying that "Prayer is a burst from the heart". Prayer is both a great and unique expression of love and dialogue with God, which unites us more closely to Him.

St Therese said: "The nearer one gets to God, the simpler one's life

becomes." For me, personally, the absence of prayer brings a sense of loneliness and despair, therefore, I pray because I want to be close to God and to be at peace for whatever lies ahead in life.

Lastly, on the fifth evening of the novena reflections, we welcomed Archdeacon Robert Miller, Archdeacon of Derry and Rector of the grouped parishes of Christ Church, Culmore, Muff and St Peters.

Archdeacon Miller said, in the context of the pandemic, "This novena has reminded us that being together with one another and with God on that journey together, is a journey which draws us forward."

The sense of community in the Church is vital in moving forward. As we all know by now, the concept of synodality requires the 'walking together' of a people who will listen, encounter and discern where God is calling His Church to be today. Also, the physical sense of togetherness is now much more appreciated, as we have experienced the sore reality of social distancing and staying away from one another in order to keep each other safe.

St Therese is an outstanding example of faith. She is a young woman who wasn't afraid to admit her flaws and human failings, whilst her holiness shined through her 'little ways' and determination throughout her life. She is a genuine role model for young people today.

We learn from St Therese that we are not perfect but that God has a perfect plan for each and every one of us. We are measured by our efforts and are called to place our trust and confidence in Christ, and to love Him and one another.



Reporting on the 14th Annual Pope John Paul II Award Ceremony, Hollie Frystal highlights some inspirational advice from guest speaker, Baroness Nuala O'Loan...

“Be yourself, but make that self all that God wants it to be”



Guest speaker, Baroness Nuala O'Loan.

WE held our 14th annual Pope John Paul II Award ceremony in St Eugene's Cathedral, celebrating the achievement of 301 young people from across the Diocese of Derry who received their award, that being either the Papal Cross, Gold, Silver or Bronze, in recognition of their hard work, dedication and commitment to their parishes and community.

I was very fortunate to be present at it, as only one representative from each school was permitted to attend in order to keep within Covid regulations.

I achieved Gold and am currently undertaking the Papal Cross Award. I found that taking part in the Award has provided me with a platform, a springboard, in a way which has enabled me to get more involved, on a wider scale, in my parish and across the Diocese. It has provided various other opportunities for me as well, for example, the Derry Diocesan Youth Scholarship and the Book Club, which I am very grateful for.

Our guest speaker was Baroness Nuala O'Loan, and the guest entertainer was Irish country singer, Derek Ryan.

I am a parishioner of St Mary's Church, in the Melmount Parish, Strabane, and every Sunday I am entrusted with the privilege of reading the Word of the Lord at Mass. It was something that I had always wanted to do and, I suppose, the Pope John Paul II Award enabled me and gave me the excuse to start.

I will always remember the advice my great-uncle, Fr Peter Madden gave me about reading at Mass. He told me to “read very clear, very loud and make sure that the person at the very back of the chapel can hear what you're saying.” He reminded me that I am entrusted with a very special role in delivering the Word of the Lord on the altar and, therefore, it is very important that each and every person is able to hear it.

Indeed, our curate and priest of Melmount and Sion Mills, Fr Thomas Canning made a very interesting point in his homily on the Feast of Corpus Christi. He pointed out that because of Covid and the lockdowns we had to more or less solely rely on the “nourishment” of The Word in the absence of receiving the Eucharist physically. Therefore, the importance and purpose of The Word has been further emphasised and reinforced in our lives. We have learnt that it is a spiritual necessity.

The other half of the Gold Award consisted of obtaining 20 social hours. For these, I volunteered for numerous charities, for example the Koram Centre, the Three Bridges Cross Community Group, St Vincent de Paul, Habitat for Humanity, EA Authority, PTFA, and so on. I also completed my last couple of hours via the Derry Youth Ministry online Instagram channel, which I continue to be greatly involved in.

Community

My three favourite community volunteering experiences was, firstly, the Melmount Parish fundraising coffee morning, for the installation of a defibrillator for the Chapel, and secondly, I was involved with St Vincent de Paul, which was particularly a great eye-opener to the injustices present within our communities today, especially around Christmas time.

Thirdly, I absolutely love volunteering with the online Derry Youth Ministry programmes. It is a fantastic way to bring young people together in faith and communion to discuss Church and create friendships, whilst working together on a common project. It has been a privilege and wonderful experience watching the Derry Youth's online ministry blossom. For me, and I am sure many others, it has blessed and enriched this past year and half.

At this year's Award Ceremony



Hollie receiving her Gold Award from Bishop Donal, Award Patron.



we welcomed guest speaker, Baroness Nuala O'Loan, who told us: “Since its earliest days, I have thought that this wonderful scheme, with the opportunities it brings you to deepen your relationship with the Lord, to understand your faith even more, and to understand what live faith is about, is profoundly important.”

Baroness O'Loan also shared with us a message that she was given by the nuns in her youth: “Be yourself, but make that self all that God wants it to be.” I love that quote. It basically tells us that God is calling each and every one of us to be original, and to use our whole being, abilities and skills to serve Him and His Church. It is vocational.

Lastly, Baroness O'Loan ended with this message for us: “Know that you will never be alone. God has been with you on this journey to this happy night. You have done well. Everyone is proud of you and happy for you. Be happy, be at peace and do whatever God asks you with courage, because you

will be able to do it, even when you are afraid.” I found this very inspirational. She also spoke of her challenging public life and how her faith in God comforted her.

We simply take the message originally taught by Christ and re-emphasised by Baroness O'Loan: “Do not be afraid” in answering God's call and for whatever lies ahead in life.

Finally, I have absolutely loved undertaking the Pope John Paul II Award. It is an amazing programme that I highly encourage every young person to undertake. I am very grateful that I got the chance to attend the 14th annual Award ceremony, and that the majority of my experience was out in the community and parishes, as well as getting the chance to go to Knock and the annual sleep out before Covid.

I would like to extend a massive thank you to our Pope John Paul II Award team, and to Baroness O'Loan and Derek Ryan, who was a great surprise and had provided fantastic music.



JPII Awards Photography *by Stephen Latimer*



After living through a 15-month mix of lockdowns and restrictions in the struggle with Covid-19...

Derry faithful delighted to attend St Columba Feast Day Mass



Donal McKeown had a very warm welcome for the return of the Long Tower Folk Group, which drew an appreciative applause from the congregation.

Bishop Donal also thanked Mr McCrossan and his Nazareth House Primary School class for creating a beautiful wooden plaque, bearing the oak leaf and the words 'St Columba Pray For Us', to mark this special year for the parish, City, Diocese and country in celebrating the Saint's birth 1,500 years ago in Gartan, Co Donegal.

Reflecting on the relevance of St Columba today, in a world that has "changed radically over the centuries", Bishop Donal noted that human nature changes very little: "We are capable of great things and tempted to do very stupid things. Everything changes in the world, and yet, generosity, love, greed and violence occur in every generation. Whether we write manuscripts with quills made from bird feathers or use 3D printers, we struggle with whether we are going to be our best selves, or give in to our dark side".

Adding that while rising wealth brought new possessions and opportunities, there was also more addiction and a growing prison population, he said: "Every generation has to struggle with problems...St Columba had to struggle with a battle and the death of people. He went to Scotland and had to face the problems of a small community on a windswept island. We all have to wrestle with ourselves, other people and circumstances.

"Columba would say that we should be courageous. Face problems rather than running away from them. Don't let fear paralyse you. He found peace despite the struggles of his own life, and he tried to bring peace to the places where he lived. Real heroes don't run away and just look after themselves. Columba would tell us that we can all make a difference to the lives of others. He knew that Jesus had done that.

THERE was a wonderful sense of joy amongst the Long Tower parish community to be able to pin on their oak leaf and attend the annual Mass to celebrate the Feast Day of St Columba in their beloved St Columba's Church.

While the continued Covid-19 restrictions meant restricted seating to enable social distancing, a number of pupils representing Long Tower PS, Nazareth House PS and Gaelscoil Eadain Mhoir, were able to attend for this particularly special celebration of Derry's Patron Saint in the year marking the 1500th anniversary of his birth.

Welcoming everyone present in the chapel and watching online via the Church webcam, Bishop



He did that in his time. He would challenge us to do the same in our day, where there are many problems to face”.

Reflecting on how “God provides great people, especially in difficult times,” Bishop Donal remarked: “Societies have gone through crises, but saints have appeared, especially at the worst of times. The great saints appeared when things looked at their worst. St Francis of Assisi wasn’t just a guy who liked animals. He went out to live in poverty in order to challenge young people to do great things. And 800 years later, we still remember him.

Renew

“The history of the church is full of people who believed that when the going gets tough, the tough get going. Saints are people who believe that we are all called to be outstanding. The culture tends to say that all you need is Deliveroo and Netflix. On the other hand, saints believe that you have access to tremendous reserves of courage and generosity. Being a saint is not a question of being so heavenly that you are no earthly good. God keeps sending people who want to renew the face of the earth.

“The Church has continued because, precisely when there is most need of saints, when we are living through crises, outrageous saints have appeared who said, ‘Things can be different’. In the 20th century, Ireland sent out thousands of young men and women from every town and village to bring faith, schools and hospitals to the poorest parts of the world”.

“St Columba,” he added, “would ask us to let God make heroes of us, being generous with ourselves so that others can see Good News in us. Live simply so that others may simply live. Columba would

tell us that the choice for you is not between being holy and having fun. The real choice is between being saint and being a wimp”.

Going on to comment on how “modern society offers our young people many opportunities, but it asks them to pay a price”, Bishop Donal quoted from Pope Francis’ talk to over three million young people at the 2016 World Youth Day in Poland: “It is very sad to pass through life without leaving a mark. But when we opt for ease and convenience, for confusing happiness with consumption, then we end up paying a high price indeed: we lose our freedom... There are so many people who do not want the young to be free; there are so many people who do not wish you well, who want you to be drowsy and dull, and never free!”

Encouraging young people to not “be swept along by cuckoo thoughts that somebody else wants to lay in your heart”, Bishop Donal urged them: “Do something beautiful with your life. My mother told me that one her great teachers left her one message, ‘Start something!’”

He added: “Columba was called to be a saint, even though he did not know it at the time. Dare to believe that you, too, are called to be a saint today”.

The ceremony ended with the Novena Prayer to St Columba, which the community had been praying over the previous nine days, followed by the singing of the uplifting ‘Hymn to St Columba’. Afterwards, while the pupils returned to their schools, the adult members of the congregation were delighted to once again walk down the hill for the annual blessing of the water in St Columba’s Well by Bishop Donal, as the sun shone down “from the happy courts of heaven”



Photographs by Ivor Doherty and The Net



Remembering their much loved former pastor, the people of Lavey bade a fond farewell to...

Fr Brian O'Donnell – Onwards and Upwards!



The late Fr Brian O'Donnell, who was ordained on June 22, 1958.

THE love and appreciation expressed by the community of Lavey for their former parish priest, Fr Brian O'Donnell, in their rapturous applause when he joined them for the rededication of their beautiful Church in December 2019, was again very much apparent in the warm tributes paid to the 87-year-old when news spread about his passing away peacefully on May 25, at Milesian Manor, Magherafelt.

Fr Brian ministered to the Lavey faithful for 21 years of his priesthood, and while Fr Paddy Baker, Fr Eugene Hasson, and then Fr Eamon Graham were both warmly welcomed into the fold as his successors, Fr Graham acknowledged that they each had known there was no replacing Fr Brian in the hearts of the people.

Concelebrating the Requiem Mass in the Church of Our Lady of Mercy, with Fr Dermot Harkin, CC Greenlough, and Fr Paddy Doherty, PP Maghera, where Fr Brian had retired to after leaving Lavey, Fr Eamon shared this thought with those gathered socially distanced in the chapel, and those joining in via the church webcam: "The Christian message is very simple; love God and love your neighbour. We are not always very good at this but, at the end of our lives, I think we are going to be asked one question – did we love and were we loved by others. When it comes to Fr Brian, we know the answer to that.

"On the day the chapel was being rededicated, I went over to Milesian Manor and asked him if he was coming over to the ceremony. He said that he didn't know. I said to him, 'There was only ever one parish priest in Lavey and that's you', and then he said, in that case, he would come!"

"Fr Brian did great work here," remarked Fr Eamon, adding: "To him, the building

of the church was not the building but the people, and he did a great job in building up the church in the people here in Lavey."

And if confirmation of any of this was needed, then it was delivered by Fr Brian's nephew, Dr Barry O'Donnell when he spoke at the end of the ceremony to pay tribute to "the good people of Lavey" and all who had loved and cared for his uncle in the latter years of his life.

"It has long been crystal clear," he said, "the very high regard in which our Uncle Brian was held by the good people of Lavey Parish. Regard is too polite a word for it: The good people of Lavey loved Fr Brian and he loved them back".

He continued: "While no doubt Fr Brian did important work in other parishes in the diocese of Derry - Strabane, Rouskey, Coleraine, Leckpatrick, Clonmany, Pennyburn, Ballykelly, Bellaghy and latterly Maghera, it was in Lavey, I think we can say, that he found his true rhythm. The good people of Clonmany may still delight in recalling the lift they experienced when Fr Brian introduced the Bingo but, with all due respects, the good people of Clonmany have yet to lift the Andy Merrigan Cup".

Recalling the 2018 celebration in Erin's Own Clubhouse for his uncle's 60th anniversary of his ordination, Barry said: "On that occasion, Joe McGurk spoke very precisely and movingly about Lavey before Fr Brian's arrival. In those troubled times, spirit was in short supply. Within two years of Fr Brian's appointment, not by chance, Joe clearly established, Erin's Own Gaelic Athletic Club Lavey were All-Ireland Club Football champions. Fr Brian's Catholic ministry was catalyst indeed".

He went on to mention "another very tangible legacy of Fr Brian's work in Lavey... the beautiful, exceptionally fine renovation, re-invigoration, of St Mary's Chapel".

Describing it as "a work of art", he remarked: "Fr Graham humbly defers to Fr Brian for this community achievement, the work of the people of Lavey together, but it was initiated and realised by these two exceptional men. It is a joy to frequent".

Going on to comment on the "quiet, effective way" Fr Brian went about life, "a quiet

effective way, moving quietly, so quietly moving", Barry continued: "A way buoyed by wit and clarity, and yes, at times, a bit grumpy, not shy of brusque, clear when saying 'no', for sure, wily. Humour always there, Fr Brian was a priest of the people.

Discrete

"I can only imagine the thousands of discrete wee words that have passed - silence was not a problem; more a mode of effective punctuation - the thousands of quiet words for occasions, as often joyful as painful in the lives of his parishioners - his fans, as he would humourously put it".

He went on to tell how his uncle had been the last surviving child born to John and Margaret O'Donnell of Desertegney Parish, in Inishowen, and latterly, The Ulster Bar, Clooney Terrace, in the Waterside, Derry.

"The story goes," he recounted, "that the spark of love between these two young folk, John O'Donnell and Margaret Bradley from neighbouring farms, lit one day on a journey on the Derry-Buncrana train. They would have five children; first two infant daughters, both lost in the whooping cough epidemic of the early 1930s, then Seamus, Brian and Pat, three brothers who loved and supported each other through their lives.

"Many years ago, when I was visiting him in Lavey, Uncle Brian shared with me a reverie precious to him: that, in the years before that fateful train journey, his father on his cycle back to Magherbane from the grind of Belfast, where he was learning his trade as a barman serving to the men who built the Titanic, would stop for a rest in the sunshine just there where the road turns off for Knockloughrim and Lavey. He pointed the spot out to me. His father would rest, draw breath, take stock, study, before taking on Glenshane on his bicycle. This reverie represents a message from his father to Brian that, with Lavey, he had arrived where he should be".

The funeral homily was delivered by Fr Paddy Doherty, who described Fr Brian as "effortlessly intelligent", excelling academically as he progressed through his education at Waterside Boys' PS and St Columb's College, before going on to Maynooth.

Setting out as a priest, after

his ordination on June 22, 1958, Fr Paddy remarked that Fr Brian "could not have known the many changes in church and culture, beginning with the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, until the present day," and had "embraced all the changes willingly".

Highlighting Fr Brian's awareness of how important it was to have all groups in the parish working together for growth in faith and church, Fr Paddy spoke of how he had become the Erin's Own Club's president and number one supporter, and how his interest in the club had left a lasting impact on its history, with a tribute message from the Club noting: "They were magical times with a man who was the epitome of what parish is about - the pastoral care of its people".

He went on to recall Fr Brian's declaration of Lavey as 'Ireland's Premier Parish', with the motto, 'Onwards and Upwards', and the famous 'yellow and black' parish bulletins, adding: "He loved his people and parish, and whatever failings he may have had, he lived his life at the service of others".

Fr Paddy also spoke about how the Eucharist was central to Fr Brian's life, saying: "He set about creating a Eucharistic people, teaching them the value of, and need for, the Eucharist".

"These past months of restrictions," he added, "hopefully help us to appreciate more our need for the Eucharist".

Fr Paddy also highlighted Fr Brian's passion for technology, which led to him introducing a webcam to the Lavey Church 15 years ago, one of the first in the Diocese and greatly appreciated during the Covid-19 pandemic.

While the last few weeks of his life had been difficult for him, Fr Paddy spoke of how Fr Brian had "braved it" and that, in the end, "there was that sense of homecoming... He knew that the Lord was with him and would bring him to a better place, where the struggles of life would be over".

Presiding at the Mass, Bishop Donal McKeown spoke at the end to acknowledge how Fr Brian had dedicated himself to his priestly ministry, like "so many others who have done their bit to build God's Kingdom in local areas".

"We live in an increasingly individualist culture," he remarked, adding: "But building communities is an invaluable contribution to human wellbeing. Communities of faith add an extra dimension to healing broken hearts and relationships. And those parish communities have found ways of speaking idealism, mercy and hope in Jesus' name. Belief in Christ's eternal life can help us all process the pain of loss".

Bishop Donal concluded by saying that Fr Brian "would want us to pray that there will be others to build on his legacy. For, without hope, the people perish".

Fr Brian is survived by his sister-in-law, Berna, and nieces and nephews, Keve, Rhona, Barry, Brian, Margaret and John. As he was carried to his final resting place in the adjoining cemetery, representatives of Erin's Own Lavey and St Brigid's PS formed a socially distanced guard of honour for their adopted 'Laveyite', whom the local St Brigid's Primary School had honoured in naming its grass pitch - the Fr O'Donnell Park.



The Lavey Erin's Own team in 1991 with Fr Brian



Fr Brian concelebrating at the rededication of Lavey Parish Church on Sunday, December 8, 2019.



Some family members at the St Brigid's PS 'Fr O'Donnell Park', in Mayogall, Lavey, on the occasion of Fr Brian's celebration for the 60th anniversary of his ordination.



Fr Brian in Croke Park the day Erin's Own Lavey GAC team became the 1991 All-Ireland Champions.



Eangach

Ár nDúchas

Liodán Naoimh Dhoire

A Mhuire,

máthair na hEaglaise
neamhaí agus talúnda,

Guigh orainn.

A Mhuire,

tonn Chliona na trócaire,

Guigh orainn.

A Naomh Eoin Baiste,

Guigh orainn.

A Naomh Iósaeaf,

Guigh orainn.

A Naomh Peadar agus Pól,

Guigh orainn.

A Naomh Pádraig,

Guigh orainn.

A Naomh Bríd,

Guigh orainn.

A Naomh Colm Cille,

Guigh orainn.

A Naomh Eoghan Ardsrátha,

Guigh orainn.

A Naomh Cainneach,

Guigh orainn.

A Naomh Sáfan,

Guigh orainn.

A Naomh Maolíosa

Ó Brolcháin,

Guigh orainn.

A Naomh Breacán,

Guigh orainn.

A Naomh Lurach,

Guigh orainn.

A Naomha uile Éireann,

Guí gí orainn.

Ardú Céime do Chnoc Mhuire



Cros pheannaideach

Is féidir comhthéacs stair na hEaglaise in Éirinn a léamh ar na saothair ealaíne a cruthaíodh in amannaí éagsúla. Tá seo fíor go háirithe faoi íomhánna na gcros: Tháinig na crosa móra Scriptorúir as tréimhse ghlórmhar na luath-Eaglaise — an ré órga — agus tá na crosa sin bunaithe ar Pháis Chríost i soiscéal Eoin: an ghlóir i lár na péine. Nuair a bhí an Eaglais cráite ag na péindlithe agus ag an Ghorta Mhór, tiontaíodh ar na crosa peannaideacha agus íomhá na fulaingthe. Tá sé suimiúil gur thiontaigh muintir na hÉireann i

dtreo íomhá den Chéasadh a bhí ag teacht le soiscéal Mharcais—Íosa tréigthe, agus siombail na péine— ag an am ina raibh siad féin ag fulaingt de thairbhe an bhochtanaís agus na géarleanúna. Agus tá sé suimiúil go raibh comharthaí Naomh Eoin ar thaispeánadh Chnoc Mhuire (altóir agus Uan; Muire agus Iósaf agus Eoin, agus na haingil—an saol eile agus an saol abhus in araicis a chéile). Shílfeá go raibh Dia ag cur i gcuimhne do mhuintir na hÉireann go raibh an ghlóir i bhfolach i gcroí-lár na péine, díreach mar a léiríodh i scéal an Chéasta i soiscéal Eoin—Íosa ag nóiméad an bháis ina rí ar an chros: Mac Dé bhí, Rí na Rún.

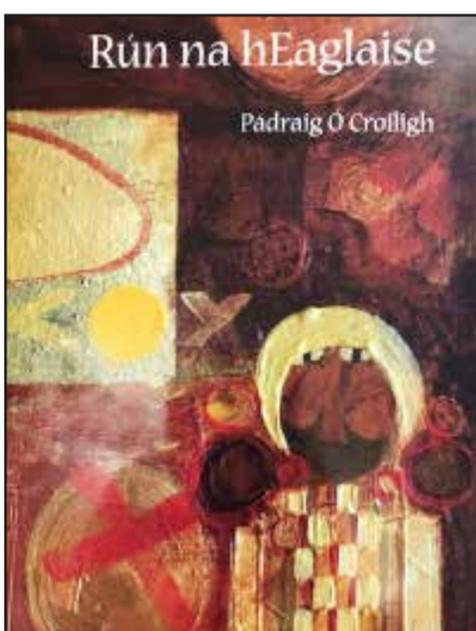
Ar an 19ú Márta i mbliana, Féile Naoimh Iósaeaf, d'fhógair an Pápa Proinsias ardú céime do scrín Chnoc Mhuire. Roimhe seo, ar an leibhéal oifigiúil, scrín náisiúnta a bhí i scrín Chnoc Mhuire. Agus ar ndóigh, tá bród ar leith ag muintir na hÉireann as an scrín náisiúnta. Agus, ar leibhéal neamh-oifigiúil, thaispeáin na pápaí ómós do Chnoc Mhuire: thug an Pápa Eoin Pól II cuairt ar Chnoc Mhuire (sa cheo!) in 1979, agus thug an Pápa Proinsias cuairt ar Chnoc Mhuire le linn Chomhdháil Domhanda na dTeaghlach in 2018.

Ach anois aithnítear Cnoc Mhuire mar scrín idirnáisiúnta Mhuire agus na hEocairiste. D'fhógair an Pápa Proinsias an gradam úr ar Fhéile Naoimh Iósaeaf, agus d'fhógair sé 2021 mar bhliain Naoimh Iósaeaf. Rud neamh-choitianta eile — d'fhógair an Pápa na rudaí seo ar



líne, in aimsir seo na Cóivide agus na teicneolaíochta: labhair sé le muintir na hÉireann, agus le duine ar bith eile a bhí ag éisteacht, le linn Triduum (trí lá) speisialta Urnaí i gCnoc Mhuire. Ócáid thráthúil a

bhí ann: tharla taispeánadh Mhuire le linn aimsir an bhochtanaís agus na haicíde, agus tharla fógairt an Phápa le linn aimsir na Cóivide agus an éadóchais — ardú céime, agus ardú meanman.



Bí ag Éisteacht

Tá téamaí áirithe le tabhairt faoi deara sa chúram spioradálta a thugtar do dhaoine breoite agus a dhéantar soiléir i ngnéithe de Shacraimint na nEaslán. Éisteacht an chéad cheann acu. Is cuma más dochtúir nó banaltra, duine clainne nó sagart, nó comharsa istigh ag cuidiú, níl rud ar bith is tábhachtaí ná éisteacht leis an duine tinn, agus ligean dóibh a bheith ag caint. In amanna ní mian linn a bheith ag éisteacht, ar eagla nach mbeimis ábalta na rudaí a deir siad a láimhseáil, ach tá sé tuillte acu go n-éistimis leo.

Agus caithfidh tú éisteacht le níos mó ná na cluasa. Thig leat éisteacht leis an tsúil, agus le do neach istigh. Mar an gcéanna thig leat labhairt le níos mó ná do chuid focal. Thig leo é a aithint nuair atá tú mí-shocair agus déanfaidh siad a gciall féin a bhaint as sin. Thig leat éisteacht le do lámh fosta, más féidir leat greim láimhe a bheith agat ar an duine tinn, nó lámh a chur ar an éadán. Thig leis an teagmháil seo muinín a chothú. Ar ndóigh, má bhíonn sé ag cur isteach ar an othar ná bain dó.

Tá sé seo fíor fosta ó thaobh cainte de. Thig leis a bheith úsáideach seans cainte a thabhairt don othar. Ní bheadh a fhios agat cad é ba mhaith leo a rá, nó a phlé. Uaireanta ba mhaith leo labhairt ar an bhás, nó ar a saol féin. Is iontach an gléas leighis í an éisteacht, a fhad agus ba mhaith leis an othar a bheith ag caint. Is cuimhin liom saineolaí amháin ag labhairt linn faoi chúram na ndaoine tinne. Mhol sé dúinn ceist amháin a chur orainn féin agus muid ag dul isteach ar cuairt chuig duine tinn: “cé leis an riachtanas anseo?”

Más é riachtanas an othair atá i gceist, glac d'am agus bí ag éisteacht. Ach más é do riachtanas féin atá i gceist, imigh agus bí ag súgradh le duine éigin eile! Caithfidh tú a bheith ag éisteacht leis an othar le fáil amach cad é atá de dhíth air, agus cén uair is ceart Sacraimint na nEaslán a chur ar fáil dó.

(Buíochas le *Foilseacháin Ábhair Spioradálta*.)

Colmcille wood sculptures have new home in The Wells

by Ivor Doherty



1. Birth of Colmcille



2. Childhood Education



3. Ordination of Colmcille



4. Foundation of Derry Monastery



5. Copying the Cathach



6. Battle of Cul Dreimhne

THE Colmcille Wood Sculpture Project was the inspiration of Liam Kennedy, woodcarving tutor, and Julie Logue, Arts co-ordinator, at Eden Place Arts Centre, Derry. The intention was to depict the life of St Colmcille, Patron Saint of Derry, in a series of wooden plaques, carved in relief.

The project was originally created in 2013 during Derry's City of Culture Year, with funding provided by the City of Culture Committee. Using extensive research into Colmcille's life by Rosaleen O'Callaghan, nine significant events in the saint's life were identified and were depicted in drawings by local artist, Maire Mullan.

The Irish word for Derry is Doire - meaning Oak Grove, so oak would have been the ideal wood to use. Oak of the required size was unavailable, but a suitable substitute was sweet chestnut cut from trees grown locally at St Columb's Park. An enthusiastic group of carvers from Liam's woodcarving classes set to, spending many hours, both in their homes and in the Art Centre, carving their individual sculptures.

The carvers involved were Jimmy Smith, Aileen Mac Manus, Connell McGinley, Helen Shiels, Masoud Baghi, Johanna Kelly, John Stevenson, Desi McKinney, and tutor, Liam Kennedy.

The completed project was installed on the outside wall of Pilots Row Community Centre and was unveiled by then Mayor of Derry, Martin Riley, on Friday, June 7, 2013, as the inaugural project of the Colmcille weekend. The project was greatly appreciated and admired by the local community and the many visitors who came to explore the history of the local area.

By 2017, the carvings were showing signs of wear and tear due to exposure to the elements, so were relocated to the interior of the Pilot's Row Centre. There they remained until they were noticed by Colm Barton, of the Bogside & Brandywell Initiative, in early 2021. Colm saw potential for the sculptures to be relocated to the St Columb's Wells area and he approached Judy Logue with his ideas, which were enthusiastically received. Since June 9, 1897, 1300 years after the death of Colmcille, his memory has been celebrated

at The Wells each year and so it seemed an ideal location for the carvings.

A committee was formed comprised of Colm Barton (BBI), Judy Logue, Liam Kennedy and Aileen McManus, all of Eden Place Arts Centre, and Ivor Doherty, local historian and manager of Aras Colmchille. Local residents were approached for consent and a formal application for funding was made to the Housing Executive through Eddie Breslin, and was duly approved.

The project was for the carvings to be refurbished and varnished, then erected with accompanying storyboards and signage on three gable walls of houses in Saint Columb's Wells, in time for the 1500th year Jubilee celebrations of Colmcille in June 2021, and to become a welcome addition to Derry's local history trail.

The sculptures have now been launched for public display, in the presence of The Mayor of Derry, Brian Tierney, Bishop Donal McKeown, and Bishop Andrew Forster, Church of Ireland Bishop of Derry and Raphoe.



7. Exile to Iona



8. Legend of the Crane



9. Death of Colmcille



'The Dove' still wants to bring peace to the town that he loved - Bishop Donal

BISHOP Donal expressed his delight at the relocation of the wooden Colmcille sculptures to a more visible location in this special year of remembering the 1500th anniversary of St Colmcille's birth. "This is a wonderful project where devotion to the Patron Saint of the city and the artistic creativity of local people have borne fruit," he commented to 'The Net'.

He noted: "The carvings were completed during the Year of Culture - and that was an

achievement in itself.

"But some local people did not want the work to lie unseen. The sculptures will now be visible in a part of the city which has known much conflict. Columba, The Dove, still wants to bring peace to the town that he loved".

"It was great that Bishop Forster could be there, with representatives of the local community, the statutory and civic authorities and myself," added Bishop Donal.

"The city is at its best," he said,

"when it can celebrate its shared part and artistic talents. When we can see the wood of local trees turned into works of art, we are all blessed by the fruit of the earth and the work of human hands. That helps us to be people of hope who can face the future together".

"St Columba," concluded Bishop Donal, "challenges us to be bearers of Good News in our day, just as he was in his time. A Naomh Cholmcille, guí orainn".



After 57 years of priesthood and 40 years of the Columba Community, Fr Neal Carlin believes and prays that...

The underground river of faith still in Ireland will bring a new experience of God leading us into the new life of the Holy Spirit

I was ordained on May 31, 1964, which means that it is my 57th anniversary this year. Where did the time go? I remember promising Our Lady in the old chapel in Newtown that if I passed my exams I would offer myself as a priest. That's the way we prayed in those days. Well Our Lady did her part and I went off to the seminary in Wexford. They were challenging years, but I met some good men who wanted to serve God and people, as I did myself.

I ministered in Scotland and had 11 very fulfilling years there but I always felt that there was something more to happen. An old priest friend took me to a

charismatic meeting with only three other people present and I received such peace and healing that I knew it was a blessing from the Holy Spirit.

As a qualified teacher in RE in a secondary school, I was given a book to look at by a Presbyterian friend. It was called "Nine O Clock in the Morning" by Dennis Bennett, from the US. He describes his own awakening and how he saw the gifts of the Holy Spirit come alive in some of his parishioners; that inspired me in my time of need.

I felt a prompting to come back to Derry and I ministered in the Cathedral in the height of the Troubles.

I witnessed such suffering and deep faith that could only have come as a great grace of God.

While I enjoyed the challenge of working in a large parish and leading a charismatic prayer group, I felt a call from God to start a lay community and we opened Columba House in 1981. The concept was often misunderstood, but I thank God that He gave me a listening heart, what Richard Rohr calls "the deeper level of listening", and He surrounded me with prayerful, supportive people, who both challenged and affirmed me in my leadership of the Community. I have come to realise the difficulty

there would be in working full time in a parish and also leading a community.

The Holy Spirit has blessed us with gifts of hearing His word in scripture, prophecy, words of knowledge, and discernment, and I have seen miraculous healings and happenings as we prayed and depended on God.

Whenever there is nowhere else to go, the real power, that of the Holy Spirit, comes into sharper focus as He moulds us, refines the vision, and calls us always to go deeper.

Charismatic renewal and seeing the gifts of the Holy Spirit used to build up His people, witnessing the healing and peace people have received as we prayed

in Columba House and St Anthony's, in the prison ministry, in White Oaks and in the Celtic Garden, has been the great joy of my ministry.

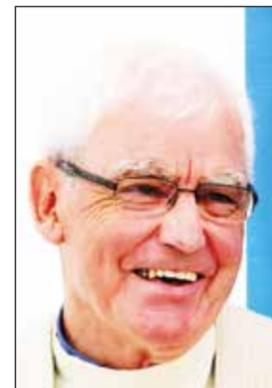
The other centres we have opened - St Anthony's Retreat Centre, White Oaks Rehabilitation Centre, perhaps the work for which we are best known, and the Celtic Prayer Garden, were all prompted by the Spirit and, while we prayed and worked hard, the Lord has never been outdone in generosity.

The Psalm Columba was reputed to have been writing sums this up: "Those who trust in the Lord shall want for no manner of good

things." (Psalm 34)

These days of illness allow me to reflect and go back to what has been a word of life for me and my community: "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not grow weary. They shall walk and not faint..." (Isaiah 40:31). Praise God.

We pray, in union with Pope Francis, for authentic participation and lay leadership in the Church. We pray for all who read this article that they may know the power of God at work in their lives and that they may respond to the call to serve the poor and marginalized.



I believe and I pray that the underground river of faith that is still in Ireland will bring our people to a new experience of the God who has lavished His love upon us, and who desires to lead us into the new life of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name. Amen

Celebrating 40 years of ministry on the Feast of St Columba...

Columba Community reflect on their outreaches and ongoing mission of yielding to the Spirit



Fr Neal Carlin with some members of the Columba Community at St Anthony's Retreat Centre on the Derry-Donagall border.

WHEN the Lord speaks to hearts many strange and beautiful things happen. The Columba Community is no exception. Celebrating 40 years of ministry this June, on the feast of their patron, St Columba, they reflect on the history of each of their outreaches and their ongoing mission of yielding to the Spirit, building Christian communities as a network of interpersonal relationships based on their common relationship with Jesus Christ as Rock and Cornerstone.

In 1978 - 1979, during a sabbatical year, Fr Neal Carlin travelled to visit the major emerging Christian Communities and houses

of prayer in the United States and was profoundly influenced to establish a community of prayer and reconciliation in the heart of Derry City. He cites a stay with the Pecos Community in New Mexico as a major spiritual experience, with its emphasis on inner healing and forgiveness.

On his return to Ireland in late 1979, small steps were taken to form a praying community in Derry. Fr Neal travelled to Wexford for a retreat in the winter of 1979, to pray for direction as to how they might best provide an outreach to the troubled city. It was on returning home that he sensed clearly

God speaking to him by confirming the following word from the Spirit: "In a few days a stranger will point out to you a house."

On returning to Derry the expectations were realised, as within days a large property in the city centre was indeed pointed out to Fr Neal. Before the 'Troubles', the property was used by the police for lodging and recreation but was burnt out in 1970 and by 1979 was derelict and a mere shell. Undeterred by the enormity of the task ahead and with the princely sum of just £200, Fr Neal and a group of committed individuals decided to buy the house after much prayer,

fasting, participation in all night prayer vigils and discussion.

With a small army of dedicated volunteers and the financial help of generous benefactors, renovations began and Columba House of Prayer and Reconciliation was opened.

The ministry of Fr Neal and the Columba Community at that time concentrated on prisoners, their needs and the many issues that arose in that area. Supported by lay members of the Columba Community, this apostolate also provided pastoral and practical support for prisoners' families and ex-prisoners. Many needs were met and dealt with through prayer, mutual support and by making use of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

This, in turn, led to the opening of St Anthony's Retreat Centre, Dundrean, on the Derry/Donagall border; a haven of tranquillity offering exceptionally attractive retreat packages for those wishing to take time apart with God, with an emphasis on Ignatian and contemplative prayer, and offering weekly healing Masses on a Monday evening over many years.

The advent of the peace process in the 1990s brought an end to the daily death and destruction visited on the streets of Northern Ireland, but the violence had left a legacy of addiction and

substance misuse on many victims and survivors of the conflict.

It was clear from the ever increasing number of individuals and families coming to Columba House in search of advice and help for addiction, that a residential facility with trained professionals was needed. The Columba Community responded by establishing the White Oaks Rehabilitation Centre. This purpose built facility opened in 2001, providing residential treatment for individuals seeking help from addiction. Over 2,000 people have now been treated for addiction at White Oaks.

In addition to rehabilitation for those experiencing addiction, the Columba Community also offers counselling and support from a specialised addiction counsellor to family members affected by another's addiction.

From the 5th to the 12th century, Irish saints and scholars brought a new renaissance and civilisation to Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire. Through their monastic lives, Columba and Columbanus and many others spread the Christian faith throughout Ireland and into Europe.

In honour and recognition of these great men and women of Ireland, the Columba Community developed the Celtic Prayer Garden and

Columba
Your grace filled presence lingers still
In this great walled city

Dove of the church,
Reconciler

A voice for peace in turbulent times

Symbol of all that is good
Child of Royal Blood
Noble boy

Like your Saviour

You learned the psalms in childhood

Musician

Poet

You carried God's word in your heart
throughout your life

At home with silence

Finding space withing your heart
To let God's spirit dwell

Listening to what the spirit taught
A man of wisdom and good counsel

by Ann McCay, Columba Community

IOSAS Centre with The Sanctuary accommodation. The garden and centre serve as a place of quiet escape from the hustle of modern life, a centre for education on Celtic Spirituality, and is also a leading local producer of organic vegetables through the Acorn Project based on site.

The Columba Community pray that, as they continue their ministry, they will see the fruits of their vision statement, "that all people find freedom and dignity through Jesus Christ, for the greater glory of God. For I have come that you may have life and have it to the full"

Fr Neal's prophetic vision is a testament to waiting on the Lord with expectant faith

and trusting in His goodness and mercy. "For they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not grow weary - walk and not grow faint." For we know one thing for certain - the Lord will never be outdone in generosity.

May Fr Neal's prophecy and vision of the Holy Spirit flowing underground through the land of Ireland, welling up within each of us, come to fruition through the living water of Christ pouring forth upon us all in missioning together to build small basic Christian communities - His kingdom come here on earth.



St Canice's Oratory, in the Celtic Garden.



DURING the month of June, we celebrate the Feast of the Body & Blood of Christ (June 6), Sacred Heart of Jesus (June 11), and the Immaculate Heart of Mary (June 12), as well as the Feast of the Irish Martyrs (June 20), Nativity of John the Baptist (June 23), Feast of Sts Peter & Paul (June 29), and the First Martyrs of Rome (June 30) - flesh and blood people like ourselves, who walked this earth and, open to the Holy Spirit, gave their 'yes' to God...to the point of giving their lives.

Reflecting on your relationship with God and whether you would be prepared to die for your faith, share your thoughts on this and what you would say to/ask Jesus, imagining Him walking alongside you, like the experience of two on the road to Emmaus...

To risk the road by Edel O'Connor

AT this time of year, we celebrate the feast days of many great disciples and pioneers of Christianity. Those who had the courage to risk the road of faith, to accompany Jesus, and those ultimately who were prepared to die for their faith.

In the words of Joyce Rupp, "Risk the road, risk the work. Go, I will be with you, what else do you need?"

People like St Paul, St Peter, Mary and John the Baptist walked that faith journey, opened their hearts to the Holy Spirit and gave their "Yes" to God.

Fr Michael Paul Gallagher reminds us that "faith is a yes to a yes". We are all asked to respond to that calling from Jesus and trust our lives with Him who has entrusted His life with us.

Reflecting on my own relationship with God; how am I saying yes and how am I surrendering myself to the call to be a disciple of Jesus? Rather than answer the question...am I prepared to die for my faith, for me, the question is...what am I willing to let go of and let die to enable my faith to grow?

Fear, pride and control are just some of many challenges that I can surrender. Pioneers need to travel light and all the great disciples left their comfort zones. However, I can only let go if I have the belief that I want something greater. St Augustine reminds us that our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee.

On the road to Emmaus, the two disciples realised their hearts were burning as Jesus travelled the road with them, revealing the scriptures. There is a great parable in the children's party game, 'Pass the Parcel', we journey together, unravelling and letting go of the layers to reveal the gift.

The great and wonderful gift of faith is waiting for us in those



Edel O'Connor, Coleraine.

words of calling from Jesus, "Come Follow Me". In my role as RE teacher in Scoil Mhuire Buncrana, it is a gift to enable the students to respond to that calling from Jesus.

I accompany those participating in the Pope John Paul II Awards to draw out their giftedness and encourage them to integrate their faith into their daily lives. St Irenaeus stated that the glory of God is people fully alive and through these awards the students' faith comes alive.

We hear much these days about our carbon footprints, but what about our spiritual footprints? We follow in the footsteps of the great disciples of our faith. We are all on a faith journey but we are not on this journey alone. I witness young people every day letting go of embarrassment and fear, and allowing themselves to grow in their faith.

In the words of the French Poet, Guillaume Apollinaire, "Come to the edge, he said. They said: We are afraid. Come to the edge, he said, they came. He pushed them and they flew".

My prayer is that we will all listen and respond to that burning call from Jesus within our hearts. May we be proud of our spiritual footprints and have the courage to risk the road safe in the knowledge that God is accompanying us.

Hardest martyrdom may be allowing my strongly felt ideas to be killed off...so that God's will be done *by Bishop Donal*



THE word 'martyrdom' is interesting. In the early Christian centuries, it came to mean someone who died for their faith in Jesus. But its Greek root means 'bearing witness'.

Suffering and death might be the result of bearing witness to Jesus. And we know from history that death for Christ has been part of the Church in every century. After all, Jesus had given His life in the sacrifice of the Cross - and we celebrate the sacrament of that

death each day.

John the Baptist and the early Christians knew what 'red martyrdom' meant. But, as many saints discovered, living for Christ was often as tough as dying for Christ. Death was martyrdom only if it was the price of living for Christ. St Paul knew that when he wrote "if I let them take my body to burn it but am without love, it will do me no good whatever." (1 Cor 13:3) Death is no guarantee of grace, unless it is in conformity with God's will.

The challenge for most of us in the 21st century is to bear living witness to Jesus in an alien culture, whatever the cost. The price of such 'white martyrdom' can be rejection or a sense that God has abandoned His people, or that we are wasting our time. Shedding our sweat for God can be tougher than shedding our blood.

Today, we have a lot of books and arguments that the Church is in crisis. The certainty of the past is lost and should be restored. The implication and answer seem to be that there must be a simple, clear

solution to that uncertainty - as soon as possible.

But the Old Testament contains many stories about how the Chosen People felt lost and abandoned, living with trust in God and not in their own plans. That was especially true in the 40-year journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. For many, a return to slavery in Egypt seemed a much better idea than moving forward to the Holy Land.

But when they looked back on those years of wandering and not arriving, they came to believe that it was not a waste of time. God was working at forming them from slaves into becoming a people.

The witness/martyrdom of Moses consisted in his being faithful to God's promise, even when it seemed that most of the Israelites were against him. At times he felt that the burden of leading a hard-necked, headstrong people was too much for him. But he was prepared to pay the price so that God could help the people grow together in knowledge of the God who was faithful to them.

That was his martyrdom.

For many of us today, our form of martyrdom may well be having to be patient with the Lord who is trying to remake His people in our day. Two thousand years ago, St Paul wrote that he hoped and trusted that he would have "the courage for Christ to be glorified in my body, whether by my life or by my death." (Philippians 1:20)

In my role as Bishop of this diocese in our time and place, I have to be ready to serve the Lord's designs, whatever the cost. I have my ideas - and many others will share their ideas with me. Discernment means trusting that, if we listen together to the Lord and to God's grace in others, we can discern the Lord's ideas and plans the next stage on our Exodus. My prayer is only that I can be used for God's glory, whatever cost that may entail.

Maybe the hardest form of martyrdom is allowing my own strongly felt ideas to be killed off, so that God's will might be done on earth as it is in heaven.

My imaginary walk in 2021 on my Road to Emmaus *by Brenda Deery*



Brenda Deery, Faughanvale.

follow the road of love, peace, joy and true fulfilment.

I enjoy my daily walks and find nature a great blessing in helping to understand the stages of my own life. At present, I see the vibrancy of nature, the different shades of greenery, the awakening blossoms and the nesting birds, and all this 'aliveness' is a great resource for contemplating life's meaning. Springtime immediately awakens me to reflect on the beauty of every individual life from the womb to the tomb. I watch the birds busy building their nest, protecting their nests, hatching their eggs, and feeding their offspring.

I often think of Our Lord as He spent His first nine months on earth in the womb of Our Lady, and the physical and spiritual bond that was formed. May, the month of Our Lady, together with spring, and all its beauty, does speak to my senses, my heart and spirit. I ponder the reality that Our Lord completely surrendered Himself to Mary to protect, nourish and participate in the distribution of graces as she became the first living tabernacle. I feel Our Lord is asking me to make a special place in my life for His Mother; to allow her to carry me, guide me and protect me.

Throughout my day, I have ongoing 'natters' with Our Lord about this world we are living in; the purpose of my life and am I doing His will? I ask Him how best to navigate myself in this ever-encroaching secular, anti-Christian culture in order to

He loved standing by, said to His mother: Woman, behold thy son; Then, He said to the disciple 'Behold thy mother' and from that hour the disciple took her to his own (home)". (Jn 19:25-27)

To walk with Our Lord and know that He had a perfectly attuned mind and will to God and nature, compared to my mostly 'out of tune' mind and will, means I need to continually pray and reflect on His life to seek guidance. I pray on this journey, "Am I on the right road or have I gone adrift?" I thank Jesus that He is so patient with me and always trust that, with His grace, I will get back on the correct road whenever required.

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it". (Matthew 7:13)

I think of Our Lord along today's 'road to Emmaus' and wonder what He would think of us 'passer byes' shrouded in blue masks? Does scripture offer us any advice on this? Is a virus greater than 'His Body and Blood'? What is He saying to me in these times?

Vine

Then I hear the wind blowing the trees and see the leaves falling...is He showing me He is shaking the branches on the vine... "yet some gleaming remains as an olive tree

is beaten - two or three olives are left on the topmost bough, four or five on the fruitful branches says Yahweh the God of Israel... For you have forgotten the God of your salvation, you have failed to remember the Rock of your salvation". (Isaiah Ch17 v 6 & 10)

I feel Jesus is walking this trail (trial) with me. He is challenging me to 'trust in Him'. He is asking me to study and know His ways, stop being blinded by the 'world-view' and look through the lens of His Word.

I believe Jesus is with me throughout every incident on my journey. He has been signposting me via scripture and giving me the remedies for my life's woes in the form of sacraments, if only my "ears would hear and my eyes would see" (1 Cor 2). He wants me to know that everyone's journey is important to Him and we should walk with each other and help each other. We all have a place in His Plan and nature is gifted to us, together with His Word, the Sacraments and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, to enlighten us on our way and provide the beacon to draw us to our destination. "Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me, let them bring me to our holy mountain, to the place where you dwell". (Psalm 43:3)

I am drawn more to St Therese's Little Way than prospect of violent death in martyrdom

by Fr Michael McGoldrick OCD

I find the saints we celebrate in June daunting. We celebrate the exuberant abundance of God's generosity in the gift of his Body and Blood. The Feast of the Sacred Heart speaks of His endless mercy and is also an invitation to confidence in the good Jesus. The Immaculate Heart of Mary speaks to us of her virginal purity, of a heart that is totally focused on and dedicated to Jesus.

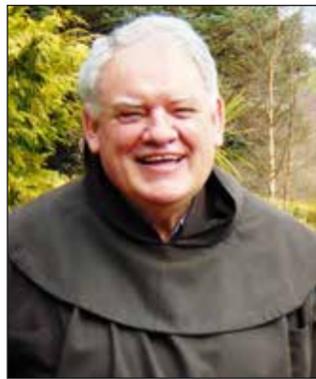
The great martyrs, Sts John the Baptist, Peter, Paul, and the First Martyrs of Rome hold up an example of martyrdom that I do not believe I would emulate. I am not convinced that I have the courage to say 'yes' to God to the point of giving my life. Of course, it might be asked of me in the form of illness, but I will cross that bridge if it comes!

In the presence of these great saints, I find myself drawn towards the 'smaller' saints like St Therese of Lisieux, with whom I identify more easily. While her little way is very demanding, it is not quite as intimidating as the prospect of a violent death in martyrdom.

When I look at our Carmelite saints, they were all utterly committed to God. Several speak of the martyrdom of feelings – their desire to love God with more fidelity that they feel capable of. They speak of the darkness of faith as being like martyrdom. They remind us that there is no easy path to God. Jesus did not have an easy path and He tells us that if we want to follow Him, we must take up the cross. That often comes in simple but particularly challenging ways; someone whose ways of behaving we find difficult...can we try to love them sincerely? Can we forgive hurt?

If I had the privilege of walking with Jesus on the road to Emmaus, I hope that I would first listen to him. I would thank him for Pope Francis, for his wonderful example and for the way he makes Jesus present in our world.

I would ask Jesus to help me to



Fr Michael McGoldrick OCD, Termonbacca.

know Him better, to be a better friend to Him and to give my life if that is what He wants. I would ask him to help me to see more clearly the beauty of the world and its people that He has gifted us with, and how to respect our world better. I would ask Him to show me how He wants me to reach out to those on the margins of our church and society.

I would tell Him that I do not always understand His decisions when it comes to answering prayers. I hope I would be honest enough to say that sometimes I get angry with Him when the outcome seems unjust, for example, a young mother dying from cancer. At the end of the day, I do try to trust that He knows what is best, but I do not always succeed!

I would also ask Him to inspire a sense of vocation among the young people of our world, so that whether they be single people, married, priests or religious, they will keep His message alive and inspire others to be good friends for Jesus.

Finally, I would ask Him for the physical and mental energy to do what ever mission He has for me and to give me the graces I will need to do it. While I am willing to stay on earth as long as He wants, I would ask that it not be for too long!

And what a joy it would be to share a meal with Jesus at the end of the journey!

(Rev 24:4)

With God's reassurance and the reality of the resurrection I know 'the road to Emmaus' will lead me to my eternal destiny. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, "This perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity, this communion of life and love with the Trinity, with the Virgin Mary, the angels and all the blessed is called 'heaven.' Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfilment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness". (n.1024)

Though I suffered much without Mass, would I be willing to die for the Eucharist? by Martin Callaghan



Martin Callaghan, Burt, Co Donegal.

I emerge from the Eastertide celebrations reflecting on my relationship with Jesus and connecting with the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. I can look to Our Lady for guidance as she is the epitome of the human race in virtues.

I purchased a pillow cover with an image of Our Lady punching the devil, taken from the 13th century breviary by William de Brailes, a non-monastic illuminator, because this image captures the essence of 'sometimes being silent you are stronger.' This strength is seen again in the final

battle... "A woman clothed with the sun", who gives birth to a saviour and battles with the devil. (Revelations 12)

To take up this battle, I do not expect to give up my physical body in death like the martyrs, since I live in a free society. I do expect a spiritual death, however, it is not that I lose something but rather I gain something, freedom. How is this you may ask? Easy...if you follow Our Lady, who is the defender of the Church.

According to Christian author, CS Lewis, Christianity is a 'fighting religion' - a spiritual struggle against the evil in and around us, using the weapons of love, justice and courage.

To help with my spiritual struggle, I try and get Holy Mass, 15 decades of the Rosary and Liturgy of the Hours completed before bedtime.

During the day, I try and catch up with the latest gadgets on the web and discuss them with my friends, who can use their wrist watches as 'phones and to order online. These gadgets appear harmless but they can speed up time and this 'Now not Later' attitude could be dangerous, because we do not

have free time to relax away from all the pressures of the modern world.

This is one question I would ask Jesus if we were out walking - "Did I give more of my time to technology and personal items rather than to you?" I hope to get an average answer but it would probably be something like my school report - could try harder.

I was inspired reading a true

story of "without Sunday we cannot live" from the year 304, when 49 Christians attended Mass in fear of death from the Emperor Diocletian. One of the condemned said, "Without the Sunday Eucharist we can't live".

How much I suffer without the Mass due to the Covid 19 restrictions, but would I be willing to die for the Eucharist like the people of Abilene, Tunisia?



13th Century manuscript image of Our Lady punching the devil on the nose.

Corpus Christi and the Martyrs

by Noel Bradley



Noel Bradley, Buncrana.

THE sixth of June is the Feast of Corpus Christi and during this month of June we will also remember the early Christian Martyrs of the Roman Church and the Uganda Martyrs. Last month, we had the Algerian Martyrs, the English Martyrs, the Mexican martyrs and St John 1, Pope and Martyr. Is there any relationship between the feast of Corpus Christi and martyrdom?

'They have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb'

It is not a question that occurred to me before, probably because martyrdom is not something that we ever hear about in the media.

The question could, nonetheless, be asked of a Christian: Would they find enough evidence to convict you for being a Christian? Or would you be willing to lay down your life for Christ or for your faith?

Of course, it is all very theoretical sitting here in the safety and comfort of the Derry diocese in 2021. But, in many parts of the world, Christians are in danger if they practice their faith in any public or radical way. In Nigeria, there have been a number of kidnappings of priests, sisters and lay people recently and many have been killed.

I remember the murder of Archbishop Romero (now St Romero) of El Salvador. He was a conservative priest and bishop until he went to the scene of the murder of one of his priests, Fr Rutilio Grande and his two companions, by the military. He cancelled all the Masses in the diocese so that all the priests would be able to attend his funeral in the cathedral. From then on, he spoke out continuously against the military and the government until he, himself, was assassinated while saying Mass. At his funeral in the cathedral, there were shots fired into the crowd as his body was

being brought into the Church.

After this, there was the murder of Jean Donovan, who studied in Cork University the year before (1979) and her three missionary companions (1980), and, later, Ignatio Ellacuria and his five Jesuit companions from the University of Central America (1989), and Elba Julia and her daughter, Celina, who had taken refuge with them.

In Brazil, there was Bro Vicente Canas (1987), who lived with a remote Indian tribe in the Amazon forests. There were others like Fr John Bosco Burnier SJ, who was shot by Brazilian police in 1977, and American, Sr Dorothy Stang, who was murdered in 2005.

They were all working for justice among the poor and they were a threat to those with most of the wealth and power. These are only a few. They make us aware that it is dangerous to be an authentic Christian in this world.

It is remarkable that all these martyrdoms took place since Vatican II, which opened the Church out to its mission of transforming this world into a more just and equitable one. There was also the Synod of Bishops in 1971 and the theme was 'Justice in the World'. In 1975, the Jesuits

committed themselves to 'The Service of Faith and Promotion of Justice'. Its key insight was that there can be no preaching of the Gospel without work for justice.

This new emphasis on justice for the poor was bound to lead to tensions and conflicts and, for many, inevitably to martyrdom. It is no small matter that some 90 Jesuits from 20 countries have died violently on mission since the Jesuit society committed itself explicitly to promote faith and justice as the twin dimensions of the Gospel. This has been due to a great extent to the leadership of Fr Pedro Arrupe, who himself suffered, perhaps a slow martyrdom, for trying to implement this vision with opposition from many, including in the Vatican.

A Multitude of Minor Martyrs

It seems to me that the Church in Ireland, in general, has missed out on almost all of this development over 50 years. So, we don't have any martyrs. But then again there are many who, in many hidden and quiet ways, have worked for a more just and equitable world. So maybe we have a multitude of

continued overleaf

continued from page 18

Then Our Lord asks me, would I be willing to die for Him? The question I ponder is...am I willing to live for Jesus? Do I want to live eternally with Jesus and the saints?

I know that nature always presents yearly cycles to alert us of our passing nature and this together with God's Word signposts me to the ultimate death of my body - "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away".



THE Feast of the Sacred Heart, June 11, is a special day in the lives of members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association, who are devoted to the Sacred Heart, as is reflected in their daily 'Heroic Offering for Life to the

Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Association emblem, with its image of the heart and the cross.

Founded over 120 years ago by Fr James Cullen SJ, in Dublin, on December 28, 1898, the main aim of the Association is the promotion of sobriety and temperance. Fr Cullen had seen the terrible damage caused by excess alcohol, especially to families.

He stated: "Women...are the greatest sufferers from the wreckage caused by drink; they are the silent, hidden, uncomplaining victims of its cruelty and savagery...in fighting for temperance they would be fighting, as no other could fight, for themselves and for their children, for earth and for Heaven."

Some influential members of the Association down the years have included Venerable Matt Talbot, Dublin (1856-1925), who struggled with alcoholism and became a pioneer at the age of 28. He lived the last 41 years of his life sober and his life story of sacrifice and prayer has been an inspiration for alcoholics and addicts throughout the world.

Venerable Edel Quinn, Cork (1907-1943), who played a key role in the spreading of the Legion of Mary in Africa, became a pioneer as a young woman and remained true to her pledge for life.

Servants of God, Fr John Sullivan SJ (1861-1933) and Frank Duff (1889-1980), who founded the Legion of Mary in Dublin in 1921, were also Pioneers. Indeed, many Pioneers went on to become members of the Legion as well.

Celebrating the work of the PTAA, a number of Pioneers in the Diocese have reflected here on why they pledged to "abstain for life from all intoxicating drinks" and why they see a need for this "heroic offering" as much today as Fr Cullen did 122 years ago.

continued from page 19

'minor-martyrs' among all those who, in one way or another spoke the truth and stood on the side of the poor in many different guises and when it was difficult and painful for them, and suffered some form of rejection in doing so.

Corpus Christi, Body given and Blood shed

'Corpus Christi' that we remember and celebrate at Mass is always the Body of Christ 'given for you' and the 'blood of Christ shed for you' out of love. His love was a friendship love. "I have called you friends" but, at the end of the day it was a sacrificial love. "There is no greater love than that a man should lay down his life for his friends".

As members of the Body of Christ, we, too, share in that love and the Martyrs have 'given' their bodies and 'shed' their blood to the point of death.

If I were to speak to Jesus, now risen, about all this I would say:

"It all seems so sad that there is so much suffering inflicted on these Martyrs and on the masses of poor suffering people all over the world. I don't let much of it into my consciousness most of the time. It is all too much.

"I do try to keep my heart a little open to it all but I know it is only a little bit. I know it is only you who can stretch my heart and make it more open and that that will be my salvation. Yet, I am afraid to ask for that from you because of what it might mean in practice in my life.

"I thank you for all the Martyrs. In a real way they are your Body given again for me and for all of us. I am inspired and moved when I read about St Romero, Pedro Arrupe and others. Keep inspiring and touching my heart and help me in following you more faithfully, and not to be afraid of a greater love that you want to give me. We will talk about this again later. Amen.

(Noelbradley1512@gmail.com)

Finding more time for prayer while shielding due to Covid concerns....

Fr John Downey hails power of prayer for vocations and witness of Pioneers

DERRY-born Fr John Downey has been a pioneer for 65 years and, for 12 of these, he served as spiritual director to the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association at Diocesan and County level. Speaking to 'The Net' from his adopted home of Moneyneena, in the parish of Ballinascreen, he shares his experience as a priest and Pioneer.

A son of the late Maud and Paddy Downey, Fr John was born in Windsor Terrace, within the Cathedral Parish. He recalls appreciatively how the strong faith of his parents was passed onto their family and how this helped him, and his brother and two sisters, as an 11-year-old when his mother died.

A late vocation to the priesthood, Fr John said that he had first thought about a priestly vocation after an aunt mentioned it to him when he was about 10 years old, but it wasn't until he was in his late 30s that he felt the calling strong enough to seriously consider responding to.

"I went on to St Columba's College after primary school, but I didn't stay too long," he recalled, adding: "My father took me out and put me into an apprenticeship as an electrician. I got my qualifications at Derry Tech and worked as an electrician until I was 38, and then I went off to the seminary. I had been thinking about the priesthood for about two years before this and finally decided to give it a go.

"I went to St Kieran's College, in Kilkenny and, after working for so long as electrician, it took me about two years to get back into the way of studying, but I was alright after that. I was ordained in St Eugene's Cathedral by Bishop Edward Daly in 1984, but I don't remember too much about it as my father had died suddenly and was buried the day before, and it is that day that I remember.

"He had a heart complaint but we weren't expecting him to die, so it was a shock. I was a deacon on the day he was buried, a Saturday, and on the Sunday I was an ordained priest".

Fr John wasn't the first within his family to be called to the priesthood. An uncle had entered the seminary but died as a student, and he has a cousin ministering as a priest in Dublin.

As a newly ordained priest, his first appointment was to the Pennyburn Parish, where Fr George McLaughlin was the parish priest. He spent six years there before moving to minister for another six or seven years in the Parish of Faughanvale. He then moved further down the road to serve as curate in Ballykelly, in the Limavady Parish, and from



Fr John Downey receiving a gift of appreciation in 2019 from the Derry Pioneer Association committee members, for his years of ministry as their spiritual director.

there he arrived in the Parish of Ballinascreen. That was 16 years ago, and he grew to love the community so much that he was happy to remain there in their midst when he retired year-and-a-half ago.

Saying that he never had any regrets about responding to the call to priesthood, the now 81-year-old felt that entering at the more mature age of 38 had benefitted his ministry: "When you have been out working amongst people for a while you know what problems they have, so then you know better what to expect when ministering as a priest".

He added: "Some of the saddest cases I have had have been the break-up of families because of alcohol. The women are as bad as the men. We Irish have got the name of drinkers. Once, when I was visiting friends in England, I went on a social occasion with other priests and they couldn't believe that I don't drink, and me from Ireland. They said that I was the first Irish person they had met that didn't take a drink.

Drugs

"Over the last 10 years, I have seen the situation getting worse, with drugs becoming as much of a problem as drink. And the age is getting younger. The problem with the drink in Ireland goes back to the famine. The people didn't have enough to eat, so the parents gave their food to the children and they drank to kill their own hunger.

"The Pioneer Association was started in Dublin by Fr James Cullen, a Jesuit, in the aftermath of that, in 1898. The Famine did a lot of damage to the people of Ireland. A lot of prayer is needed. It is the power of the prayer of the Pioneers that helps and it is good for people to continue to support that.

"Pioneers are all sincere people, many of whom took the pledge when they were youngsters, and most have had experience of

drink affecting someone in their families. I was about 16 when I got my full pledge. I joined with Fr Mulvey at the Cathedral."

Saying that his parents had not been Pioneers, Fr John recalled his encouragement to take the pledge coming both from his association with athletics in his youth and the support of a group of friends who didn't drink alcohol.

"I was a cross country and road runner," he said, "so I didn't drink because I was associated with athletics and I was always in the team. I was never tempted because the crowd of boys I hung around with didn't drink either, and I seldom went near pubs."

When Fr John retired from ministry a year-and-a-half ago, though he still helps out with the celebration of Mass, he also retired as the PTAA spiritual director for the Diocese, with Fr Thomas Canning now appointed to the role.

As well as athletics, Fr John also has an interest in drama, which he shares with his half-sister, Roma Downey, well known for her portrayal of Jackie Onassis in the American television mini-series, 'A Woman Named Jackie', and her angelic role in the long-running television series, 'Touched by an Angel'.

While Roma, who is one of two children born into the family when Fr John's father married again, followed up acting after initially going to study Fine Art in Coleraine, Fr John's talent was behind the scenes working on the stage lighting.

He recalled: "When Bishop Daly did the pantomimes and talent competitions in St Columba's Hall, I did the electrical work for them, such as the stage lighting. That was before I was ordained, when I was working as an electrician".

Saying that stardom hasn't changed Roma, Fr John remarked that he misses her visits home from Malibu, in California, since the arrival of Covid-19, during

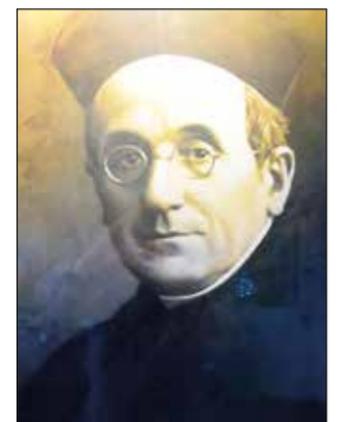
which he shielded completely.

"I had a lot of time for prayer while I was shielding," he added, "and I found that very comforting, especially when people were not allowed to come to your door and so I had very little contact with people. I am diabetic so was susceptible.

"It has been a terrible time with Covid. Thank God, while we had some cases here in the parish, we didn't experience an epidemic. But we did have some people who died. It was very sad particularly for funerals, weddings, and baptisms, with so few people allowed into the chapel. The numbers are up now to whatever the chapel can safely accommodate, but that is still about half the number that could be accommodated if there were no social distancing requirements".

Happy in his retirement, Fr John remarked: "I am beginning to slow down a lot and just praying for a happy death at this stage in my life. I'm happy here with the people of Moneyneena and the chapel is right beside the Parochial House, so that is very handy."

As restrictions ease, Fr John is looking forward to getting out more again and helping wherever he can, most especially through his prayers for more vocations to the priesthood and more Pioneers to pray for the conversion of excessive drinkers.



Fr James Cullen, founder of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association.



Sacred Heart of Jesus I Trust in You

by Mary McMEnamin

THIS year, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus on June 11. In many Irish Catholic homes in times gone by, the Sacred Heart picture could be seen proudly displayed on the wall. In more recent times, however, the devotion to the Sacred Heart has somewhat dwindled to the point where we could ask the question - Does modern Ireland know what the Sacred Heart picture represents?

Jesus appeared to St Margaret Mary, a nun of The Visitation Convent in France, where He revealed His Most Sacred Heart to her and His deep love for mankind. In the messages she received, Our Lord made a promise that all those who receive the sacraments of Holy Communion and Confession on the nine first Fridays of the month consecutively, will have the grace of final repentance.

Jesus gave 12 promises to those who would respond to the pleading of His heart. They are as follows:

1. I will give them all the graces necessary in their state of life.
2. I will establish peace in their homes.
3. I will comfort them in all their afflictions.
4. I will be their secure refuge during life, and above all, in death.
5. I will bestow abundant blessings upon all their undertakings.
6. Sinners will find in my Heart the source and infinite ocean of mercy.
7. Lukewarm souls shall become fervent.
8. Fervent souls shall quickly mount to high perfection.
9. I will bless every place in which an image of my Heart is exposed and honoured.
10. I will give to priests the gift of touching the most hardened Hearts.
11. Those who shall promote this

devotion shall have their names written in my Heart.

12. I promise you in the excessive mercy of My Heart that My all-powerful love will grant to all those who receive Holy Communion on the First Friday of 9 consecutive months, the grace of final perseverance; they shall not die in mortal sin nor without receiving the sacraments, for my Divine Heart will become their secure refuge at that last moment.

The Pioneer Association, fully titled, The Pioneer Total Abstinence of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, was founded by Fr James Cullen in 1898 and dedicated to the Sacred Heart.

The Heart of Jesus symbolises the total unconditional love of God for humanity and Fr Cullen believed that the Pioneer Association would succeed in its mission to reduce problems in society with the loving Heart of Jesus as their strength.

I have always had great admiration for people who were lifelong pioneers. When I decided to become a pioneer in 2004, I was hesitant at first, as I had enjoyed an occasional glass of wine from time to time and I knew this would require commitment.

On the other hand, I knew it would be a good way to make reparation for the abuse of alcohol both in my own family and in society. Once I had made up my mind to become a pioneer, I knew it was the right decision.

Jesus wants us to come to Him, into His Sacred Heart, so He can feed our souls, which have been left dry and barren without Him. The Heart of Jesus is present in all the tabernacles of the world, waiting and longing for us to come to Him.

In Matthew 11, Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest".

The Grace of being a Pioneer by Fr Patrick Lagan



Fr Patrick Lagan, St Eugene's.

THE story is told about the humble parish priest of Ars, more commonly known as St John Vianney. One afternoon,

he received a visit from an atheist who had one particular task; he wanted to expose the pious shepherd as a fraud. After a few hours, the atheist returned to his friend somewhat more confused and perplexed. Asked how the visit went, he explained that he had come to reject his atheism not because of anything St John Vianney said, but quite simply what he witnessed. The character of the parish priest left such a deep impression on him that he was transformed forever.

There is a power in witnessing! There is a grace in encountering the heroic and the virtuous not in what someone says, but in what they do. I think of the well known verse of St Francis of Assisi: "Preach the Gospel at times using words if necessary". This is particularly true

when we consider the wonderful example afforded by many in this Diocese and beyond who belong to the Pioneer movement, of which I am a very proud member.

It was the witness of fellow seminarians during my time studying at the Irish College in Rome that illustrated the power of this devotion; a pledge, a promise that was not only rooted in sacrifice for a greater good but also an act of reparation and example. They, in turn, were teaching me that the power of making a promise, making a commitment, shapes the will to serve the Lord we love all the more.

Through the sacrifices that we make, the promises that we keep, we are allowing ourselves to be formed ever more perfectly in our discipleship.

In May 2009, after simply chatting and discussing the Pioneer Devotion with many good friends, I decided to make my own offering to the Lord. As someone who deeply cherishes this devotion, I cannot encourage it enough. It is rich source of grace and through the inspirational witness of so many, many lay faithful exemplify the joy and steadfast love of being committed as a Pioneer.

It is precisely the tonic we need in our society and our time, to point to a greater hope that the Christ we love and serve is a God who desires love, perfect love!

I thank God for the grace and witness of those who led me to become a Pioneer and, through continued witness, will inspire many more.

Pioneers and The Sacred Heart by Fr Noel McDermott



Fr Noel McDermott, PP Faughanvale.

Being a Pioneer is not a condemnation of alcohol. It is a recognition that alcohol is one of God's many gifts to us, a gift that needs to be treated with care and respect and moderation.

Being a Pioneer is not a judgement on those who suffer from an addiction to alcohol. Indeed, one part of the Pioneer's daily offering is to pray for "the conversion of excessive drinkers."

There is an acknowledgement in the Pioneer's 'Daily Offering' that it is only by God's grace that a Pioneer can be faithful to a life of temperance, and that it is only by God's grace that those who suffer from an addiction to alcohol can come to live a life of temperance.

Venerable Matt Talbot (1856-1925), whose memory is venerated in the Church on June 19, once said that "the spiritual life consists in two things: mortification and the love of God".

In his own life, Matt Talbot had overcome his own serious

addiction to alcohol simply and solely through prayer and self-denial. He became a Pioneer when he was 28 and spent the remainder of his life in prayer and making amends for the harm that he had done during his years of alcohol abuse. Such was the strength of his craving for alcohol that he once stole a blind man's violin and sold it to get money for drink!

If the Pioneer Association was important when it was established in Dublin in 1898, it is even more important in our own time, when the abuse of alcohol and addictions of all kind have reached almost epidemic proportions.

The Pioneer symbol of the Sacred Heart of Jesus makes it clear that this discipline is rooted in Jesus Christ and its primary purpose is to give glory to Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus once said, "seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). In a very real

sense, becoming a Pioneer is a positive first step on the road to seeking first the kingdom of God. It is primarily a daily walk with Christ.

It is a source of great good for the individual Pioneer, for his or her family, for his or her community and for the good of the wider society as well.

I thank God each day for my own membership of the Pioneer Association. My decision to become a Pioneer in 1975 has been one of the great blessings in my life. I live in the hope that many more will become Pioneers and that the message of temperance and sobriety will, once again, take hold at a time when the danger of addictions of many kinds is not unlike an epidemic in our own country.

It is precisely at a time such as this that the Pioneer Association is even more important. Will you take up the Pioneer challenge?

Nine people have taken short-term pledge this year – we can help them with our prayer by Mickey Livingstone



Mickey Livingstone, Omagh.

I joined the Pioneer Association in 1976, before leaving school. I always wore my pin and said the Heroic Offering prayer to The Sacred Heart of Jesus, but didn't do much for the Association until I was asked to a Pioneer meeting in 1986 by my boss, Patrick Tracey. I loved it and then started going to the Regional meetings. I became Regional chairman and attended Diocesan Pioneer meetings, and now I go to the Dublin meetings as the representative for the Derry Diocese.

I love bringing back news from these meetings to my fellow Pioneers, though we have not been able to meet over the past year, and I love helping people with alcohol problems.

My priest is very good at giving my contact number to anyone looking for help with their drinking and, every week, I receive 'phone calls from people asking for the short-term Pioneer pledge.

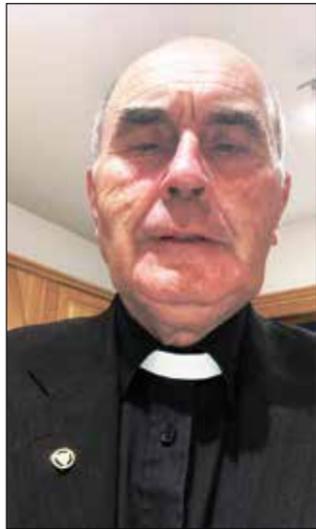
The last year has been very hard for everyone and, so far, this year I have had nine people take the

short term pledge. We can help them with our prayer.



Being a Pioneer is making a sacrifice of a gift God has given to be used wisely

by Mgr Andy Dolan



Mgr Andy Dolan, PP Bellaghy.

It was easy to be a Pioneer when I joined in 1963. For all intents and purposes, it was the done thing for young people to join the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association; just like it is the norm today to consume alcohol from a young age.

When I look back now, I realise that it was a very young age to be making any kind of a lifetime commitment. The Confirmation Pledge was already there until one was 21 years old. That pledge was sacrosanct and any breaking was severely frowned upon.

As I say, it was easy to keep the Pioneer pledge when friends and older family members had joined. Again, it was an exception if

someone in the football team took a drink, and even then it would have been in moderation.

Other circumstances prevailed that supported the keeping of the pledge: alcohol was not readily available; no off-licences; and money was not too plentiful either. Going into a pub was just not on unless accompanied by an adult. My experience of a pub would have been with my father when he would be meeting up with somebody on Fair Day to finish off a deal. If things went right a bottle of lemonade might materialise.

Mentioning of football, our post match treat would have been a stop off at the chippy, and maybe a few records on the jukebox, only seen today in the movies.

I can honestly say that during my student days I was never really tempted to take drink, even though some of my contemporaries did partake. By then, I was more conscious of how the abuse of alcohol was a source of difficulty for individuals and families.

I often wondered if I did ever start to take a drink how I would handle it, and would I become dependent on it if things weren't going well. There were very few family circles who didn't have someone who couldn't handle the demon drink. All these things did help to motivate me to remain faithful to my pledge. As the years have gone by, I can say that I have

never regretted my decision, even at such a young age.

I would like to state that I am not anti-drink. I enjoy the company of people who can take their drink in moderation. None of my friends, priests or lay, have ever forced me to take a drink, in fact, I still sense respect for the fact that I don't drink and an acceptance of my being a pioneer. Very often, I fulfill a very important role of being round as a driver. I am glad to see that there is a greater sense of responsibility regarding driving under the influence.

I have a great sympathy for younger people today in comparison to my youth. Alcohol is readily available, there's more money around, and beer is cheaper than a bottle of water in most outlets. I would love to see young people holding off the drink for a while rather than starting so young.

There is a trap into which people sometimes fall and it needs to be guarded against. Sometimes we can hear parents say, "he/she might have wee drink, but sure as long as they are not on the drugs it is not so bad." Both are addictive. Drink to be used cautiously and drugs are a No No!!

It is always a source of joy when young people, or indeed older people, want to take the pledge. One young person said to me recently that she felt there would

be less pressure on her if she said she was a pioneer rather than saying she simply didn't drink, hence she has taken the pledge initially for six months and then hopefully for good.

I am grateful for the good example which I got in my younger days from family and friends.

Saying the Heroic Offering prayer to the Sacred Heart has been an important source of strength for me and a help towards a proper motivation. Being a Pioneer is not a case of avoiding something dangerous but making a sacrifice of a gift which God has given us to be used wisely.

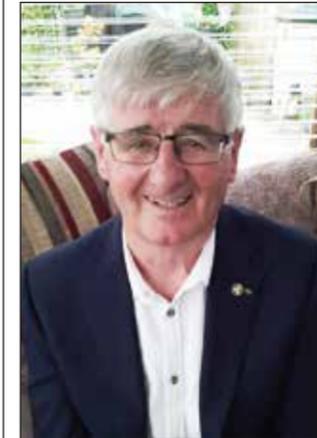
I also would like to think that that little sacrifice, along with the prayer, might be the source of grace for someone struggling with alcohol or the affects of someone else's drinking.

"For Thy greater glory and consolation, O Sacred Heart of Jesus, for Thy sake to give good example, to practise self-denial, to make reparation to Thee for the sins of intemperance, and for the conversion of excessive drinkers, I will abstain from all intoxicating drinks. Amen."

Wearing the Pioneer Pin, with the Sacred Heart as its emblem, helps to remind us of Jesus' love for us and that we can unite our humble efforts with all that He has suffered for us.

I pray every day for anyone needing help with alcohol

by Robert Glackin



Robert Glackin, Waterside, Derry.

I joined the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association as a junior, when I was 14 years old, and enrolled as a life member when I was 16 years old, in 1962, and I have been a Pioneer ever since.

I have never taken a drink of alcohol. When I was younger that was the done thing. There may have been a couple amongst our peer group who did drink, but most did not.

When I moved to live in the Waterside in 1978, I was asked to join the Glendermott Parish Pioneer Council by Paddy Hampsey, who was the president. We attended a meeting every month and, at that time, somebody was always there at the last Mass celebrated on a Sunday to take enrolments for anyone who wanted to join the Pioneers.

There is supposed to be a Pioneer Council in every parish, which meets every month, and each parish PTAA committee organise a Mass at a certain time of the year, usually on or near the Feast of the Sacred Heart in June, at which Pioneer pins are given to new members. Life pins, as well as Gold for those 50 years a Pioneer, and Silver for those with 25 years membership, are also presented at

this Mass.

An annual Diocesan Mass is celebrated by the Bishop, hosted by a different parish each year, and this is usually in October. There is also an annual collection organised in each parish, which goes to Dublin to help promote Temperance.

Regional and Diocesan Pioneer meetings are held every three months, though not during Covid. I am the Regional President for the Derry City parishes, and was the Diocesan President for four or five years.

Our new Diocesan President is Eugene McLaughlin, of Malin, in Inishowen, and Michael Livingstone, from Tyrone, is a delegate to the Central Council in Dublin.

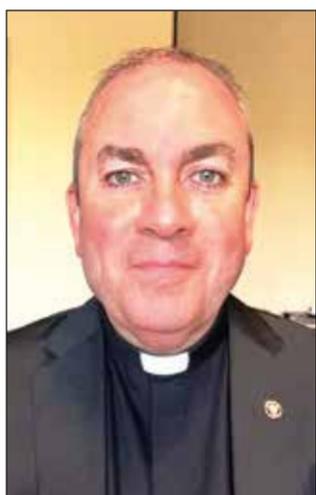
The situation with drink and drugs is much worse now. We do get people joining on a temporary basis and we try to encourage them to keep it up. Taking the short-term pledge for the six weeks of Lent is something some people do. Some come back and take the Probation Pin for a year, and others come back to take the pledge for life.

We have quite a few Pioneers in the Glendermott Parish, with 12 taking the Pioneer Magazine and helping out with fundraising. We would have some young people who want to continue on after their Confirmation pledge and become a life member of the Pioneers when they turn 18.

I am sure that the majority of families know of someone addicted to alcohol. I say the Pioneer Prayer every day, and the Matt Talbot Prayer, for anyone I know who needs help with regards to alcohol, and I wear my Pioneer Pin when I am out to help promote the cause.

Pioneer pledge is a life-giving challenge... why not check it out!

by Fr Francis Bradley



Fr Francis Bradley, PP Buncrana, Burt Inch & Fahan.

BY tradition, the month of June is dedicated to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. This is largely because the Feast of the Sacred Heart falls on the third Friday after Pentecost. Although it could be as early as 29 May (in 2285) and as late as 2 July (in 2038), ordinarily it falls in June.

As early as 1353, Pope Innocent

VI instituted a special Mass in honour of the Sacred Heart. But popular devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus largely springs from the revelations received by St Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690). A 19th century painting of the image of the Sacred Heart, which was revealed to her, is the image which we find to this day in many Catholic homes. A prayer of consecration of homes to the Sacred Heart stems from this image too.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is central to the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association. Together with four ladies who had become concerned about the abuse of alcohol and the consequent difficulties in many families at the time, a Jesuit priest, Fr James Cullen, founded the Pioneer Association in Dublin on December 28, 1898. From very small and humble beginnings, it has grown to become an International Association peaking at membership of about 350,000 around 1950. While numbers of

Pioneers might be less today, the value of the witness and sacrifice of members of the Association is more important now than ever.

In normal circumstances, June might usually be the month when recently-confirmed young people would be invited to take their post-confirmation pledge, where they promise to refrain from taking alcohol until they are at least 18 years old. Like the life-long Pioneer Pledge, this promise makes good sense from a physical or physiological point of view as their bodies and minds grow and develop.

In the world of today, many people make a lifestyle choice not to drink alcohol because of the harm it can do to them. The Pioneer Pledge simply takes this lifestyle choice a step further in asking God's help with it, in offering it to him as an act of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and in making its sacrifice not only for one's own good but for the good of others, especially those who struggle because of alcohol

abuse.

Most of our parishes have a local Pioneer Centre associated with them. These centres are the life-spring of the Association for they are where local people can join it, become more involved if they wish, and receive and offer support and encouragement to others. People can join the Association also through the Central Office in Dublin. Check out the Association on www.pioneerassociation.ie. A monthly Pioneer Magazine also keeps members and others aware of the great things that are happening.

Thankfully, I have been a member of the Pioneer Association since my teens. I chose this because of the example of my parents and others around me and because it was, and is, a sensible thing to do. I was very privileged to serve as Central Spiritual Director of the Association for the last few years as it transitions now from having been led by the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) to being a Private Association of the Faithful, an

apostolate of the Irish Bishops. While the role of Central Spiritual Director has now been taken up by Fr Robert McCabe, from the Diocese of Meath, I remain in close contact with the Association to advise it in relation to Canon Law.

As many as there are members of the Association, there are even more people who have benefitted from the good example, the encouragement and the quiet sacrifices and prayers offered by its members. Today, more than ever before, we have so many good things immediately available to us. This is a blessing but it demands great self-discipline and self-control on our part if we are not to over-indulge by abusing our use of the gifts we are given. The

Pioneer Association is one way of developing great self-discipline and self-control in our lives – always helped by God.

So, while June might be a special month of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, why not consider enrolling as a Pioneer because it is a great way to offer on-going and life-long devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and supporting other people through prayer and good example. If you have the opportunity to take a post-confirmation pledge, or to join the Pioneers as an adult, why not take it up! We all rise to challenges – this is a life-giving challenge. You never know how you and others will benefit from the good decisions you make.

It hasn't always been easy to be a Pioneer...but I've learned to face my problems head on *by Susan Coleman*

Susan Coleman,
Urney & Castlefin.



I decided to become a Young Pioneer after my Confirmation, so I was about 13 years old. When I turned 16 or 17, I decided to take the lifetime pledge – quite a big decision to make at that age!

I was lucky in that my family were extremely supportive of my decision to become a Lifelong Pioneer. Both my parents are Lifelong Pioneers themselves and, not too long ago, celebrated their Silver Jubilees. Both my granddads celebrated their Golden Jubilees also. They are all proud wearers of their Pioneer pins!

For me, being a Pioneer hasn't

always been easy. Alcohol was never something I saw or encountered growing up, so being a Pioneer when at home was relatively easy. When I moved to Limerick for university at age 18, that's when I began to fully realise the impact of my decision.

I believe that university years can be the best years of your life, undoubtedly. But that doesn't mean that it's not sometimes tough and isolating. You're trying to meet assignment deadlines, keep your grades up, but at the same time meet new people, and form new friendships, become your own

person – it can be far from easy!

No wonder we associate university years with high levels of drinking, and we're not wrong! Alcohol is a huge aspect of university life. However, through being a Pioneer, I have learned to face my problems head-on, and not run to alcohol as a means of escapism like so many people do.

I really enjoy socialising myself, but I don't use alcohol as my crutch when in awkward, unfamiliar situations, which sums up much of the socialising university culture. I have been forced to develop my social skills, and be confident in

situations where others will grab a drink to steady the nerves. Not to mention, the financial benefits... alcohol is an expense I don't have to budget for. And I can always drive home whenever I choose to leave an event. I also have never had to deal with a hangover – they sound horrific!

I really think the biggest advantage in being a Pioneer is that you are less susceptible to peer-pressure, in general. It takes courage to be different and to make your own decisions.

Getting the Message *out there...* *by Fr John McLaughlin ssc*

THERE is a story of Anthony de Mello, where a certain preacher ventures into the common highway and his message seemed to be gaining an audience. For a while. But then the hearers started to drift off 'til, after a while, there were no listeners at all. So, one day somebody came along and approached the preacher, "Why do you still carry on preaching? Surely you must see that your mission is impossible!" The preacher responded: "At the start I had the hope of changing them. But now, the main reason that I continue to preach is to ensure that they don't change me!"

I liked the stories of de Mello (The Song of the Bird) and used them on the occasion of sermons, seminars, days of reflection, etc, and found a way of challenging people in a gentle fashion. Some years back, I attended a weekend seminar on de Mello in Milltown Park, in Dublin. There was a different kind of an audience there, not at all your average Sunday Mass-goer. And, I believe, I was the only priest present apart from the presenter, an American-based Jesuit, Fr Dolan, who explored the depth of the great man.

He even caught me by surprise when he burst into song with one of my own favorites, 'Come by the Hills to the land where fancy is free...', which brought me back to my Abbey Tavern tape, where Anne Byrne and Jesse Owens, I think, sang that same tune in a fabulous tone. In one of those years, in a stage-by-bus stage journey across the north of Spain, I spent the nights in Spanish retreat houses along the route to Santiago de Compostela. I recall very clearly having a long chat on de Mello with Padre Mario in the house in Bilbao. He used to share some of those stories with his penitents as a form of spiritual growth. So we shared the stories, our own favourites for a long while after supper.

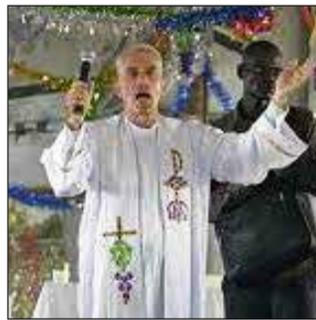
From that same Spain there were other pastoral resources from people like the Sacred Heart

nun, Dolores Aleixandre. They are modern parables and stories for all ages, some of which must be in English as Sr Dolores would have a high profile amongst European religious men and women. At one European conference in Rome, she shared the platform with Fr Timothy Radcliffe OP – another person whose stories could enliven any gathering.

The present generation of 'Baptised Disciples and Missionaries', as Pope Francis stresses, must look around for their own resources. It struck me, as I watched the Zoom video where 'The Net' young writers entered into dialogue with the French nun, Nathalie Becquart, now Under-Secretary for the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops for the Church, that maybe some of those would be now gathering in their own stock. Maybe some have the 'Pray –as-you-go' app on their daily diet. For many years, I have used the Spanish version 'Rezando Voy' and find it a real stimulus on a morning where News and more News begins to leave me overpowered.

In a society where many allow the ME to dominate thinking and choices, and no politician will quote Bible or Papal Pastoral Letters, people like Bishop Robert Barron, and his ministry of the Gospel, invite us not to leave the arena through fear or laziness, but to be prepared to argue in a healthy sense. ('Word on Fire' – 'Overcoming Disagreement Fatigue' and 'Natasha Crane reflection'). So, in one of his recent talks on this, he addresses a booklet from another Christian source on just this apathy, or withdrawal from the market place.

Being a regular on Facebook for some years now, I have noticed, perhaps more from the Irish public than my Latin American one, that the number of likes or hits on any Mission topics or interview have been just NIL! There is a Spanish word that springs to mind, 'replegar', which means folding-in on oneself almost in cocoon



Fr Mike Bassano.

It seems to fit the climate here when the world outside, and that of Mission, is presented... 'Hay que sacar la cara...poner la camiseta', the Chilean catechist would say ("You have to show your face...put on the jersey!")

For many years of pastoral activity in my earlier years in Dublin as a priest, the challenge that I took up was pastoral house-to-house visitation. In such varied places in Dublin as Rialto, Arklow, Marino, Glasnevin, a part of every weekday was given over to visiting my own district. There was always the push against going out, the need of the 'agere contra' to get going.

Two small examples come to memory out of many encounters. On a Rialto round, in Dolphin House flats, on a third floor, I became aware of raised voices inside but decided to knock anyway. John (and I do remember the surname!) and his wife were having a 'discussion'. My arrival came to them as almost a divine intervention, as they told me. John later increased his involvement in the local Ferrini Boys' Club run by the Vincent de Paul Society. And quite near that, on another day, I came across a very simple and generous woman. Her recent mission, at the request of a congregation of nuns, was to take in young women with pregnancies whose parents had disowned them. She had, by that stage, run up quite a list. That was around the middle sixties. It was a moment of enlightenment for me, even then!

Visitation

Fr Pat Crowley, then a senior

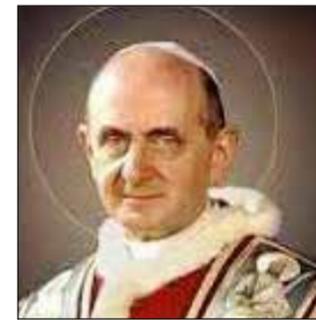


Bishop Robert Barron.

priest in the Diocese, was a model of visitation in those years in Marino. He renewed his mission every year, just two days after Christmas, and knew his district inside outside. As a golfer, though, he was implacable in not conceding three or four feet putts!

Many years later, on a hill in Valparaiso in Chile, I had a similar challenge to get out there and meet the people on their own ground. Following a simple scheme drawn up by fellow Columban, Mike Hoban, in our parish in Santiago, I organized a communal blessing for the departamentos of these new arrivals. So that, rather than "come around and bless our house, padre" on a single basis, we invited the residents in each block of three stories, to a couple of meetings.

There, on a first occasion, it was a getting-to-know one another and what their new area and new first-time Departamento meant to them. Topics like the bins and hygiene, the water supply, police protection from a nearby precinct and final ownership came up. And their own Tenants Associations were more than involved. On a second meeting, the subject was their expectation in regard to the Chapel and the Community, catechetics for Baptisms and First Communion, and celebrations of the Eucharist. Some had previous experiences with their parents in other parishes and there was plenty of discussion. The third meeting centered on the preparation of the ceremony of the communal blessing. This later was to be held, for their convenience, on a Sunday afternoon, with a gathering outside and a communal prayer.



Pope Saint Paul VI.

Then there was a house-to-house blessing accompanied by a little team, Holy Water, a prayer -card left there and a slow wandering up and down the stairs, leading to a final outdoor liturgy and some hymns. It was a moment of growth for all, the new tenants and the Christian Community...and the pastor!

In all of the Columban parishes at that time, there were initiatives to develop the sense of solidarity and mission. Sometimes the Holy Week ceremonies would be adjusted to have a common procession and Blessing of the Palms, or there would be outdoor Stations of the Cross, either at chapel level or parish level and involving around two hours on the streets.

Recalling some of those moments brings back to me the witness of a Maryknoll priest, Fr Mike Bassano. He was more or less of our time and he started attending the school of acting in the university, as well as brushing up his Chilean Spanish. The finished article was when Fr Mike came on the streets armed only with a portable Cross and a Bible and gave some street witness hitherto only shown by some of the evangelicals and the Jehovahs. When Fr Mike took up position in the central Plaza de Armas, opposite the Cathedral in the city centre, and spoke by memory large tracts of the New Testament, he caused a sensation amongst the other denominational preachers. I believe he continues with Maryknoll nowadays somewhere in Asia.

Finally, on this challenge to get



Anthony de Mello.

the message out there. In each of our parishes, the street markets occurred on different days of the week and spread around the area. Some of us would make a point of being seen there, maybe distributing Mass times or other religious materials, and answering questions about how to get their children baptised, and requisites for marriage and Confirmation preparation or, indeed, a house blessing. One group of Presentation Sisters set up their own stall in the 'feria' and sold small religious pictures, as well as responding to the queries. Columban, Fr Mike Hoban, and Fr Pat Egan, adept at all this, despite his major task as an Episcopal vicar, always spent his Saturday mornings on that round, and made contacts with very many of the vendors. On queries about how to get to the Mass on the visit of the Pope, he undertook to get some tickets, on the one condition that they attend the great Mass in the Parque O Higgins.

So that is the challenge evoked by the de Mello parable; being 'Disciples and Missionary', otherwise, as the very widely-read Spanish Jesuit priest, Jose Antonio Pagola maintains, there will be no discipleship and the future of the Catholic religion will be dim.

St Paul has a strong passion in his text "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (I Cor 9:16), and this was repeated by his namesake, Pope Paul VI in a famous address in Manila on a visit to the Philippines (Nov 29, 1970). Where I worked on Mission in Chile, this was a seminal text and explored in many types of celebrations.

Listen to the truth of Christ wherever you may find it and make it the measure of the living of your life...

Pope Benedict XVI *by Fr Stephen Quinn OCD*

IN a John Ford western movie from 1962, 'The Man who shot Liberty Valance,' Ford has a reporter in the film utter a memorable line. In the movie a politician makes a clean breast of things revealing that the story that had thrust him to public attention and fuelled a stellar career was, in fact, not the truth. After regaling the journalist with the whole story and leaving him to print the truth, the journalist very dramatically rips up his notes of the conversation and utters the famous line, "This is the West, Sir, when the legend becomes fact, print the legend", and he walks away. In so many ways, this movie dialogue expresses some real truth that at some deep level we are not really interested in the truth, but rather ever possessed by creating our own fictions, our own legends.

There were many legends created in order for people to understand the identity of Pope Benedict XVI. From the moment Pope Benedict XVI stepped out onto that central Loggia of St Peter's, the media busied themselves in creating a legend. A legend of how he was in the 'Hitler Youth', that he had been called a 'Rottweiler' at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and how a once famous 'Panzer-Cardinal' had been thrust into the role of a 'Panzer-Pope'. The media were playing on the perceived difference between a liberal and a conservative, a traditionalist and a progressive, between positive and negative, and between light and shade. For these media types, Benedict XVI was very much a man of the shade; a lurking threat to all they held dear in their liberal agenda.

Even in the highly acclaimed film 'The Two Popes', this manipulated interaction of light and shade continues; you have this effervescent character of the 'liberal' Francis and the dark and brooding 'conservative' Benedict. The game of throwing shade on Benedict continues throughout the movie; an ambitious and proud man who reached for the highest position, a fundamentalist right down to the letter of the law, a person who was aloof and cut off from the realities that others live through, and who stuck his head in the sand while real evil was incubating in the Church.

The movie's game only throws light on Benedict when he decides that the best thing that he can do is resign and vacate his role so that the 'liberal' Francis can get on with the job of putting all matter of things to rights. The movie is so carefully woven together and so popular that you have got to wonder how much of it is going to stick in the popular imagination. Will this be the lasting legend of Benedict XVI?

I am sure that you must be aware that these caricatures of

an Arch-Conservative do not amount to much. It is a careless, poverty-stricken, simplistic epithet that is convenient to throw around on headlines. It permits the media to never enter into the reality of who the person truly is. I have been reading Benedict's books and sermons for decades now and, while no expert, I believe that I have discovered a little way to the heart of the man. When I consider this significant Pope, in my imagination I place him in the category of one of the prophets of the Old Testament; almost like an Isaiah, a Jeremiah or a Micah.

There was no artifice, flamboyance, or drama in him. He would not go out of his way in order to fascinate and tantalise and draw us in, as the cult of celebrity does. All there was, was the quiet way that he learnt as university professor; the quiet way of a true teacher who wants to give his students what is truly good. But for all the lack of histrionics, you got the impression that there burnt the fire of conviction in his heart. He stood his ground on the belief that the truth had changed him; not he changed the truth. Such a message is not going to be received with open arms by those who are in the business of creating legends. He was going to be reviled and hated for it, just as the prophets of old were hated for sharing with the people God's word.

Prophet

Nowhere did you see Joseph Ratzinger step onto the World stage as a prophet more than that morning of the conclave that gathered after the death of Pope St John Paul II. The cardinals gathered to pray the Mass for the election of a new Roman Pontiff. With the whole Church gathered and the World looking on, the prophet who was within 24 hours of being elected Pope issued his prophetic message. His detractors did not hear his message for what it was, but heard instead a

manifesto for government and a grab for power, but their analysis said more about them than him.

In an understated tone that sometimes grew hoarse and coughed, the prophet weaved his message. The then Cardinal proceeded to paint a picture of the Church as a small boat being thrown around in the swells and gales of the dangers of the World. These swells and gales were to him the substitution of lies for truth. He identified a singular human talent at manipulating reality to suit ourselves and for the sake of short term gain. Joseph Ratzinger went through a long list of the various ideologies and 'isms' that he had known in his life, there had been Marxism and liberalism, there had been atheism and agnosticism, which ran alongside with all sorts of vague religious mysticism, and then there had been everything from collectivism to radical individualism.

These 'isms' were nothing less than trickery and a complex tissue of lies; fallible and limited human beings putting forward equally fallible theories that masqueraded for the truth. In reality, they turned out to be an effort to control life and other people, an attempt to shaping that life and other people to a personal purpose, a slanted reading of everything from one particular lens, and that sought to explain away everything that did not fit. Human beings had created a network of self-serving tricks and fabrications to serve nothing more than 'ego and desire'. Then Joseph Ratzinger, like a prophet of old, called out the truth with the memorable line "we are building a dictatorship of relativism" that recognises nothing as authentic or definite other than our own lies. Joseph Ratzinger had called out the chief ailment of this 21st Century, the chief enemy of God's Word spoken to the World, and the poison that was ailing the soul of humanity.

Benedict's far-reaching prophecy has been dramatically authenticated in recent years. Stop for a moment and look, and you will see signs of the "dictatorship of relativism" being alive and well. Nowhere does it breathe more life than in the whole sphere of politics, which now really seems to have degenerated into a dirty game, a bear-pit of a profession. Politicians come out of our communities, they know our communities intimately, they are elected by those communities and are returned to power by those communities. When a person goes in and puts a mark at a politician's name, it is not an act of indifference; the politician is an expression of their opinion and even of themselves. Isn't that an uncomfortable thought?

The outstanding Russian

novelist and philosopher, Alexander Solzhenitsyn warned of the first shoots of this dictatorship, and he noticed it in the particular manner that Americans and Western Europeans use words. The Russian observed that we use words like curtains or veils, we throw out a word like 'compassion' and it acts like a magic trick, you toss it out over a practice like abortion and the murder of the most vulnerable is, hey presto, gone from public sight. Something similar occurs with the modern take on marriage, you throw out a word like 'equality' and suddenly gender means nothing, the fact that all the evidence points to male and female being hands down the most effective and stable unit for a family counts for nothing, and that even the human body is ignored. Again, it happens in the end-of-life care debate, a word like 'dignity' gets thrown around and suddenly we are freed up to terminate the old and the sick as if their life did not matter. If this is the amount of respect that we are showing towards the truth on the 'big' matters of life, imagine what is going on in the 'smaller' ones.

Dictatorship

As we have seen, the "dictatorship of relativism" is not something alien to the real lives of ordinary people. Its insidious influence reaches down to touch our daily choices and our day-to-day living. There are symptoms of it everywhere. It appears when integrity and dignity are held as of lesser value than lifestyle and the accumulation of material goods. There seems to be a growing consensus that lying is just another sad fact of life and that we just have to put up with it. It would be an interesting activity to go through the court records to discover when it was that someone was last prosecuted for perjury.

There seems to be a virtual epidemic of thinking that truth is merely something subjective and only valid to the individual. How many times do we hear the phrase 'your truth' bandied around in common parlance but that amounts to little more than whim and passion? Another interesting phenomenon that seems to particularly influence younger generations is the belief that they can go through an infinite series of metamorphoses, that they can create and then, at a drop of a hat, recreate themselves. There seems to be no regard paid to who they really are and what lies inside of them. All these changes seem to stretch identity very thin to the point of nothingness. No wonder then that this generation seems so extremely afflicted by mental health problems, alcohol and drug addiction, identity crisis,



Pope Benedict XVI.

break-down, and suicide. How profoundly deep runs the sad effects of the dictatorship.

Pope Benedict XVI has identified something that is so significant that it reaches all the way from the world of the rich and powerful down into the heart of each and every individual; almost an allergy to the truth that plays to our own detriment. Benedict would have us know that this is not something novel, in fact, quite the opposite, it is the new coming of an age-old phenomenon; age old because it goes all the way back to the beginning, to Eden. In Eden, the Old Serpent in his temptation of the man and woman had managed to place in their heart, seemingly permanently, a shadow of a suspicion. The suspicion was that God's Majesty and Truth poses a threat to us. In our littleness, God's glory seems just too much for us to handle. It threatens to overflow and crush us beneath its weight and, if we would ever surrender to it, we would risk becoming less human.

The Old Serpent has placed in each heart, the belief that we can only be ourselves in an overt rejection of God and the truth that follows in his wake. The subsequent actions of Adam and Eve are evocative of what has been happening ever since. The reaching out and taking of the apple of knowledge stands for a power grab in which we reach out and grasp the truth that God has written into His Creation, and pervert it to our own convenience and purpose. Our lies are a perverse effort to raise ourselves to God's level, to become master in our own domain, no matter how small and mean that might be.

Warning

Surely, there is a warning in what immediately follows Adam and Eve's power play! As soon as they reach out to take the apple for themselves, Eden turns to dust. So, it has ever been with human efforts at control; once we think that we can dispose of the truth, immediately everything good within us turns to dust.

When the prophetic Cardinal came on the World stage and spoke

of the dictatorship of relativism it was interpreted as a negative message, but that interpretation is not half the story. In raising his voice, Benedict was speaking an utterly positive message, the same message that the Lord spoke so many centuries before him; the "truth will set you free!" A counter cultural message and a half truth leads to more humanity, truth leads to human flourishing. For Benedict, the truth is something synonymous with God. Benedict reinterprets the Gospel of John in terms of truth, in the beginning was the truth, and the truth was with God and the truth was God. All things came into being through the truth and apart from truth, nothing came into being. God spoke truth to the universe, and it burst into life.

The whole sense of this text is that creation, itself, is caught up in the creative hands of the truth and if any single part of that creation does not participate intimately in truth, then somehow it is cut adrift and futile. The planets spin around the Sun on an axis of truth. The truth that was spoken at the beginning can be seen in the vastness of that universe that manages to work better than a new Swiss watch.

God did not reserve His truth to mathematical equations and physics formulas. The truth that He spoke to the universe, He spoke in another way to every single human being, with infinite tenderness and generosity. He spoke the truth of their name, He spoke about who they were, He spoke the truth of their dignity and integrity. The truth was to be a powerful force within individual lives, and truth was the impetus to living life for all eternity. In other words, truth is everything to humanity.

When our first parents started rummaging around in the truth that was within them and through short-sightedness perverted and usurped it, untold damage was done, not just Eden but they themselves turned to dust. God was not satisfied to leave matters in the dire straits that humanity created. He prepared for an even greater truth to be spoken to each human being. This truth would

Waterside Church anniversary celebrated with 40 Hours of Adoration

THE 40th anniversary of The Immaculate Conception Church, in the Glendermott Parish, Waterside, Derry, was celebrated with 40 hours of prayer led by Fr Sean O'Donnell CC.

The Solemn 40 hours of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament began with Dawn Mass, at 4.30 am, on Sunday, May 30, and finished with Benediction at 8.30 pm on Monday, May 31.

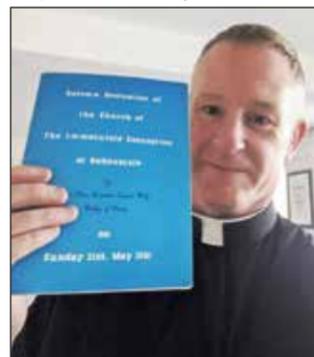
Fr Sean explained that there was a threefold intention for the 40 hours: Thanksgiving; making reparation for sins; and asking for an outpouring of God's Grace to renew the practice of the faith.

Watched by many online, from within the parish and further afield, the 40 hours of Adoration was punctuated with periods of prayer led by either Fr Sean or parishioners, including the Mass, Angelus, Chaplet for Priests, Morning Prayer, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Rosary, Holy Hours, Night Prayer, and Benediction.

Noting that the Trench Road Church was dedicated by Bishop Edward Daly on May 31, 1981, Fr Sean said: "It is 40 years since the dedication of this Church of the Immaculate Conception and we entrust the next 40 years to Our Father".



Prayer for the closing of the 40 Hours in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Trench Road, Waterside.



Fr Sean O'Donnell, CC, with the Mass booklet for the opening of Immaculate Conception Church, Trench Road, Waterside, 40 years ago



Fr Michael Canny appointed Vicar General

THE Waterside Parish, in Derry, has a double reason to celebrate, with their parish priest, Fr Michael Canny reaching a milestone in his priesthood.

As well as celebrating the 40th anniversary of his ordination, having been ordained on June 14, 1981, the Donegal-born pastor has also just recently been appointed as Vicar General of the Diocese by Bishop Donal.

Fr Michael will step into the role vacated by Mgr Andy Dolan, PP Bellaghy, who celebrates 50 years in the priesthood, and joins the other Vicar General for the Diocese, Fr Paul McCafferty.

Commenting on the new appointment, Bishop Donal said: "The Vicar Generals have the task of both advising the Bishop in decision making and in representing the Bishop.

"Mons Andy Dolan was a wise and passionate parish-based voice who gave me great support and counsel.



Fr Michael Canny, PP Glendermott & Strathfoyle, who has been appointed to serve as Vicar General to Bishop Donal.

"Fr Michael Canny is prepared to be a critical friend to me at this important time for the development of the Church in Derry. I thank Fr Michael for his readiness to take on this role".

continued from page 26

be spoken in a most singular fashion. To a humanity deformed out of all shape by our own lies, truth itself took a human nature, a human soul, a human body and, in fact, everything that a human being is. Because truth came that close to us and invested itself in the human, humanity became capable of living again and not being a beggarly futile thing.

Truth's very existence as a human being showed us who we truly are and what is possible for a human being. Showing for all

time that God's Truth does not leave us less human or diminished but rather like Christ Himself, at peace with ourselves, capable of extraordinary goodness, marked out as beautiful in God's image and, at last, able to love in a real and generous manner.

Benedict XVI asks us two things to combat the dictatorship of relativism: listen to the truth of Christ wherever you may find it and make it the measure of the living of your life.

As the Ignatian Year gets underway to mark the 500th anniversary of St Ignatius' conversion, Bishop Alan McGuckian, Raphoe, Ireland's first Jesuit bishop, reflects on the conviction of the founder of the Jesuits, that...

Our human desires in their depths are a desire for God

IT all began with a broken leg! Ignatius Loyola was felled by a cannonball defending the town of Pamplona against a French invasion on May 20, 1521, and all his dreams were shattered. He was a man of deep desires; he wanted to achieve great things in the world, to be heroic in the service of the King of Spain, to win the heart of a princess on account of his exploits, to be a great man.

Lying on his sick bed, he feared that he would always walk with a limp and his vision of himself as a Knight in shining armour lost all of its sheen. What was he to do? He couldn't move out of his bed for months and he grew bored. Asking for some of the courtly love novels of that era, he was disappointed to find that they had nothing to read in the house except lives of Christ and the Saints.

As he read them, he was surprised at how moved he became. Christ emerged as a new King of his heart whom he was drawn to follow. The old desires to do great things came back, but in a new way. He saw that his former ideals of self-aggrandizement could be transformed into heroic self-denial in the service of loving and following Christ.

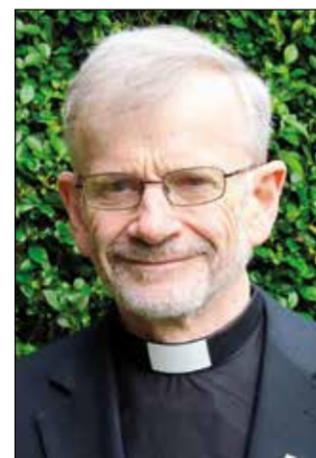
In the weeks and months after his disaster with the cannonball, he paid attention to what was happening in his soul. He was shocked to realise that God's Spirit was present and active behind all of the movements of his inner world; he could recognise God's promptings in the ebb and flow of his own emotions.

Active also, however, behind those self-same personal experiences was the 'bad spirit' whom he referred to as the 'enemy

of our human nature'. He realised, with startling clarity, that the human heart - every human heart - is in fact the scene of a battle between God, who seeks to draw His children towards the light of holiness, and the evil one who is always seeking to undermine, discourage and disillusion them.

Central to the spirituality that Loyola came to expound is the conviction that our human desires in their depths are a desire for God. They are easily twisted out of shape and subverted by the 'bad spirit'.

The work of discernment, of which Loyola became the great champion, is to listen carefully to the desires of everyday in our own hearts, to sift out and set aside the trickeries of the 'bad spirit' and find delight in following the promptings of God, which are for our flourishing and our salvation.



Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ

Another thing: God is always a God of surprises. A 'broken leg' can seem like the end of the world and turn out to be beginning of an extraordinary adventure.

+Alan McGuckian SJ



St Ignatius of Loyola.

'See all things new in Christ' during Ignatian Year

THE Society of Jesus has launched a year-long celebration of the 500th anniversary of St Ignatius of Loyola's conversion, after being struck by a cannonball as a soldier.

During the Ignatian Year, which runs until July 2022, the Jesuits hope that those who take part will grow in their relationship with God and their love for others by meditating on this life-changing

moment experienced by their founder, and the theme, 'To see all things new in Christ'.

In an online prayer initiative to mark the beginning of the Ignatian Year, Pope Francis, the first Jesuit Pope, expressed his hope that all inspired by Ignatian spirituality may "truly live this year as an experience of conversion".

During the year, which will conclude on the Feast of St

Ignatius, July 31, 2022, the Jesuits will also celebrate the 400th anniversary of the canonization of St Ignatius and St Francis Xavier on March 12, 2022.

Resources will be made available across the world to enable participants in the Ignatian Year of prayer to become more familiar with St Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises and spiritual discernment.

Celebrating St Columba *by Vera McFadden*

SOMETIMES there are great coincidences in life. A parish priest once called them 'God incidences' and, of course, that is right for God sees the full picture as it is His Creation.

When Niall of the Nine Hostages went to Wales on one of his raids and captured some people, he would never have imagined that the captive boy, Patrick, would one day convert members of his family to Christianity. That happened Easter Sunday when Patrick was brought to Tara after lighting the fire at Slane.

While Laoghaire did not convert to Christianity that day, his brother, Conall, who was visiting at the time, did. Conall owned land in Meath and he gave some to Patrick, on which the saint built Domhnach Padraig. He also invited Patrick to his main territory at Donegal.

I do not know if Patrick was aware that the brothers were relations of the man who had captured and sold him. He appreciated and remembered Conall's kindness to him and a few years later he began a journey to Donegal, founding Domhnach Mor. En route, Conall and his two sons were coming to meet him. As they approached each other at Ballintra, the Holy Spirit gave Patrick a sudden insight, and he greeted Fergus, the younger son first. Then he blessed the shield of Conall, the older son, and explained that it had been revealed to him that a great saint would come from the line of Fergus. One of the stained-glass windows in St Columba's Church, Long Tower, shows St. Patrick blessing the shield of Conall.

There was another prophecy about St Columba. This was a symbolic vision. Ethna, was the daughter of a Leinster chieftain and the wife of Fergal, a descendant of the Niall of the

Nine Hostages. The couple lived at Kilmacrenan. One day, Ethna was sitting on the bank of the river Swilly, when she suddenly saw a beautiful veil coming down from heaven. It had flowers of many heavenly colours over it. It came near her and she knew that it was hers, so she reached up to touch it but she could not grasp it. She watched as it was taken up higher, drawn by an angel, and then it spread far and wide over land and sea. She knew it belonged to her, and still she could not understand. Now filled with sorrow and frustration at the complexity of it all, she began to cry. Then the angel told her not to be sad and explained that the veil was symbolic of her future son, who would work for God in many places and the flowers were symbolic of the graces he would receive, and those that others would receive through his ministry.

Of course, Ethna would have shared the story of this symbolic vision with her husband. They both knew about the prophecy that St Patrick had made because that was important and would have been passed on through the generations.

When St Columba was born, Ethna was not at home in Kilmacrenan. She was at Gartan, not far from one of the lakes on that date, it will be the 1500th anniversary of the birth of Derry's patron saint. We are told that that the spot where he was born is still remembered.

After reading about Gartan I wanted to see it. My children and I went via Kilmacrennan and stopped there to enquire if anyone knew where Columba's parents' home had been. We were directed to a little street that ran parallel to the main street, and there we saw some remains of an Abbey which had been built on that site. After

that, I drove on, turning left near Termon and stopping for a while at Doon Well, which is near the inauguration shrine.

When we arrived near Gartan, we asked for directions. There was an upper road, which overlooked the lake, and a lower road, which after a while skirted the lake. We chose the second route. When we came to the short link road, it led us to the end of the upper road and to a gate lodge that was near our destination. We went into the estate and before long came to another house, at which we had been told to ask for further directions. St Columba had been born only a short distance away! We parked the car and walked along the little lane until we saw a narrow opening into a small, enclosed area.

There it was - the flagstone that had been either the floor of Ethna's tent or just outside the entrance. This was a very personal moment, and it was with great reverence that we recalled the vast importance of this twice prophesied event. This was a place that reached across the centuries and people of many periods have come and prayed and wondered. Some who were about to emigrate lay on the flagstone and it was given the name 'Leac na Cumha' (the flagstone of loneliness).

A photograph in 'Derry Columbkille' shows a pilgrimage group that went from Derry to Gartan. I wondered if my grandfather or any of his family were in it. In those days, people would have walked the journey.

The local people must have come occasionally. Some of these were once evicted from their little homesteads because the landlord wanted to create a deer park. His wife later had a monument erected to their nobility of character. It was near the site where Columba had been born.

And surely Ethna, herself, may have returned here from time to time - when her son was fostered, away at a distant school or journeying from place to place, fulfilling his vocation to spread the Good News of our salvation, as Jesus had told His disciples to do. Ethna would always remember the first time she had held her son in her arms at this place.

Gartan is a place that calls you back. We returned frequently, enjoying the exploration and peace of the area. We visited the ancient church, the old graveyard, the Holywell every time and we walked on the peaceful path by the shore of the lake.

One year, I heard that a new heritage centre was to be opened at Gartan and bookings for visits could be made. My pupils had already visited St Columba's Church and I decided that going to Gartan would be ideal for their summer excursion. We were there the first day that the

centre opened. The museum was very interesting with all sorts of displays - archaeological finds, illustrations, models, photographs, and other data relating to St Columba and his period. After they got a good look at a display, I asked the children some questions about it.

Before we left, the children sang 'Hark! Angelic songs resounding' and 'On the island of Doire Calgach' for Margaret, the lady in charge, explaining to her that the first was Derry's hymn to St Columba and the origin of the second. It was one of several developed from little sequences of chords I was trying out when practising the guitar. I had added simple lyrics about events in the life St Columba. I was surprised when she asked me if I would prepare workbooks for younger visitors to the centre. I agreed.

I had another surprise a long time later when she contacted me to ask for copies of the little songs. Margaret and I had become friends and she had given me some of the famous Gartan clay, the traditional format of the turas, and she had introduced me to the Columbine which was growing in her garden and showed me the way that its petals were in the shape of a dove.

She told me that there were preparations for an important centenary - the 1400th anniversary of St Columba's death and rebirth into Heaven. The teachers had said that there were no children's songs about the saint and she had told them about mine. When I sent them to her, she pointed out that there was no mention of Gartan in any of them. So, I set out to compose another couple of songs, but this time the melodies were already there. One had come to me when I was working in the kitchen, and I was preparing lyrics about the sorrows of Our Lady, and the other was a melody which had come to me when I was climbing the smaller mountain at Medjugorje. Of course, I had worked out lyrics for that before I continued my climb.

The first was the melody which I chose for 'Ethna's Dream'...

Ethna's Dream

*Once I had a strange dream of a silken veil,
Coming down from heaven decked with flowers pale.
It was for me - I wanted to see but to my sorrow,
It drifted away, drawn by an angel - away from me.*

*Now I could not reach it, though I knew 'twas mine,
It floated high above me but it was a sign.*

*The angel then said, "No need to dread -
This veil's like your son, lively and free,
A fine missionary, working for*



God.

*You will have a baby; he will be very blest,
He will journey for God and will leave the rest.
Graces like flowers will come in their showers,
Through your Columba, who'll help so many
To the true God, the Trinity.*

*And now here in Gartan is my baby son.
Patrick 'told his coming - he's a special one,
A saint from our race, a chief who will love grace,
Columba from Gartan, my little son,
Columba from Gartan - the special one.*

I had noticed that the two songs about Gartan had been given melodies from songs about Our Lady and I wondered if this had any significance. When I realised that the Feast of the Immaculate Conception was the day after Columba's birthday, I wanted to write a song about that. I could get no inspiration, but one first Saturday morning, the words and melody just came together all at once. When I asked my art teacher, the late Brother Joseph Connolly about ideas for illustrating 'Ethna's Dream', he painted his interpretation in a very skilful and apparently rapid manner. This reminded me of St Columba's handwriting, which was also skilful but had a rapid

appearance.

The Feast of St Columba, June 9, celebrates the day on which he died and was reborn in Heaven. My favourite song for schoolchildren was about that day. I did not compose the melody. One day, when I was driving from the West to Maynooth, a lovely familiar strain came into my head, but I could not remember where I had heard it. I was passing a signpost to Durrow at the time. Durrow is also associated with St Columba. When I sang the melody to my daughter, she told me that it was 'Buachaill Ón Éirne'. Many lyrics have been set to this air, one of them being "Come to the hills".

I read Adamnan's 'Life of Columba' to find out about his last day on earth. This song is about that...

Columba's last day

*One sunny morning Columba and Dermot went round the Farm on Iona to pray and to bless all they found.
The fields and the paths, the cattle, the barn, and the grain.
Then Columba told Dermot he never would do this again.*

*And on the way home they sat down by the roadside to rest.
A white horse came up and it nestled its head on his breast,
and then with great grief like human it starts to cry.
for God let it know that Columba was going to die.*

He blessed the island and then he



returned to his cell, and worked at the writing of Scripture, a work he loved well. "Those seeking the Lord will lack nothing that is for their good." But 'Baithin must finish - Columba had done all he could.

After praying the Vespers Columba lay down for a while.

"My words I commend to you, Dermot", he said with a smile. "Have true love, among you, and if you will act in this way, God provides all Heaven, and I living with Him will pray.

And now it was midnight. Columba hurried to pray again, the church at the start of that Pentecost day. A light came to meet him - the monks saw great joy on his face, as he blessed them and left them to go to his God of all grace.

(Repeat) My last words I commend to you. Have true love among you - and peace.

It will not be the 1500th anniversary of Columba's death

until 2097. 1897 was the 1300th anniversary and, in that year and part of the following, some people were gathering information, photographs, etc, compiling 'Derry Columba'.

My grandfather was one of the contributors and his poem was about Columba in the oak grove...

St Columba's Day
The eyes of faith behold once more white winged spirits who of yore, Beneath the sheltering oaken tree kept Colum Cille sweet company, And they once more to earth have come from out their far off happy home to mingle with his sons today to cheer them up the narrow way, to stretch to them a helping hand, the gifts of virtue - offerings sweet - to lay down at the master's feet.

Let not the messengers of light leave earth without a burden bright, not empty-handed on high send the soul's angelic guide and friend. Nay, send not empty hands to Him but fill each vessel to the brim Ay, fill them with choice fruits

and flowers from faith's and from affection's bowers. With flowers of virtue, fruits or brace, fill up each shining golden vase that angel hands may bear away gifts worthy St Columba's day. (A.J.)

The editor of the anniversary book, Fr William Doherty, was the priest who officiated at my parent's wedding. My brother Anthony and my sister Bridie were teachers in the Long Tower parish. Several people in each generation inherited my grandfather's love of writing and there were creative writers, poets and songwriters. Three of them wrote songs about Columba and the angels. I think that my grandfather would have been particularly proud of his granddaughter, Teresa because her hymns about Columba and the angels were used on a special occasion. When Fr Roland Colhoun was having the statues of the angels placed at certain points of the church roof, a children's choir from the Nazareth House School sang her compositions as part of the ceremony.



Our Lady saw the angel Gabriel and agreed to God's request. St Patrick saw his guardian angel, Victorious, and he was told that a ship was available to bring him from Ireland. Ethna saw an angel which foretold her son's vocation. And Columba himself saw angels in the oak Grove, around the tabernacle, on the hill on Iona. He sent them to help friends in need and sometimes saw them carrying the soul of a friend to heaven. I remember hearing that, in our own time, some astronauts

saw angels outside the spaceship, going along beside it and smiling. Columba was born into a family of chiefs and could have had a position of power, but he rejected it to serve God in the priesthood. Sr Clare Crockett, who grew up so near the Oak Grove, had wanted a life of fame, but rejected it to serve God in the religious life. When Our Lady met Elizabeth she told her, "God fills me with joy, and my spirit rejoices in God my saviour." No matter which way of life

God intends us to follow, we have great inner contentment when we do His will for us. No matter what age we are, we can serve God in the manner which He wishes for us, and we know that we are doing so when we experience the inner peace and joy. At the Marriage Feast of Cana, Our Lady told the servants, "Do whatever He tells you." Let us take her advice and then "in spite of our emptiness, He fills us and renews - if we listen in His Presence and obey".

Mystery walk for Newtownstewart parishioners - by Fr Roland Colhoun CC



THE parishioners of Ardstraw East embarked on a socially distanced mystery walk on Sunday, May 2. The outing was a fund-raiser for manufacturing and installing new windows in St Eugene's Church, Glenock.

The fourth oldest church in the Derry Diocese has undergone many restorations since it opened in 1785. Historic buildings need continuous maintenance, and this was the fourth sponsored walk in 20 months. It was a 'mystery' walk insofar as the people did not know their destination in advance. The idea arose at a planning meeting of the Pastoral Forum, as a means of gaining participants through curiosity. The word 'mystery' draws attention because everyone is attracted by the unknown. This walk revealed some things about the past. In that sense, the mystery

walk was also a history walk. The ancient parish of Ardstraw has a remarkable religious story to tell. Part of its history is the monastic houses that thrived for centuries but could not survive penal law. One of the suppressed foundations lies at Scarvagherin, a townland in Ardstraw West, near modern-day Drumnabey/Spamount.

This was the mystery destination for the pilgrims of Ardstraw East on the first Sunday of May. Situated nine miles from Newtownstewart, the outing required an initial drive to Spamount, two miles short of Castledearg. The convoy of 15 cars turned a few heads as it crossed the narrow 16th century stone bridge in Ardstraw Village.

Fr Paul Fraser kindly gave permission for use of the car park at St Francis' Church, Drumnabey.

The 1982 church is significant because it gained its name from the abandoned Franciscan Friary of Scarvagherin. Beginning at the statue of St Francis himself, I gave an outline history of the Third Order lay Franciscans who had settled there in the mid-fifteenth century.

St Francis of Assisi (1182-1224) instituted the Third Order for lay people living in the world. In the beginning, members of the Third Order wore long grey habits, in imitation of the First Order (the Friars Minor), but without cowls. In time, these Tertiaries formed small communities, calling themselves Third Order Regulars.

The Friars Minor arrived in Ireland in 1231 and founded many houses but seem not to have come to the Diocese of Derry. However, their lay brothers, the Third Order Regulars, established no less than four foundations in west Tyrone in the mid-fifteenth century. Reliable and detailed information about these houses is hard to come by. But one was at Scarvagherin in the parish of Ardstraw, which lasted almost 150 years.

The Scarvagherin site is elevated and dry and it was attractive to the Friars because of its proximity to a ford in the river Derg. Of course, the river met many of the community's needs, namely fishing, drinking and washing. In addition, a river in late medieval

times was equivalent to a highway today, providing transport by boat or by foot along its banks.

The late Fr Philip Donnelly, in writing his 'History of the Parish of Ardstraw West and Castledearg', researched this congregation at some length. He discerned that the dimensions of the ruined chapel, 81 feet by 22, indicated a sizeable community. Fr Ciarán Devlin, the noted historian of our diocese, said that these mendicant Friars devoted much time to pastoral work in the community and education in schools attached to their friaries. But out of necessity, the friars would also have worked their own orchard, vegetable garden and herbal garden.

The Franciscans also offered hospitality and because of its strategic location on the River Derg, many pilgrims would have lodged for the night in Scarvagherin on their way to St Patrick's Purgatory, Lough Derg. Sadly, the friary at Scarvagherin was suppressed by English military might in 1603. Tradition says it was fired upon from Fern Hill, slightly to the north and the terrified friars were forced to leave.

Over the subsequent centuries, the local people used the holy ground as a graveyard. It now looks to be at capacity, and there have been no burials for many years. At some point, the graveyard came under the care of Strabane District Council, now amalgamated with Derry City Council.

For the group of enthusiastic parishioners from Newtownstewart, it proved a splendid location for a history walk on a sunny day. Furthermore, the sponsorship of the walk yielded almost £4,000; valuable income for our windows at St Eugene's Church, Glenock.



Pope's monthly intention

The Holy Father has asked for prayer during June for:

The beauty of marriage... Let us pray for young people who are preparing for marriage with the support of a Christian community: May they grow in love, with generosity, faithfulness and patience.

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:

- Fr James Devine (June 1st)
- All priests
- Msgr Brendan Devlin (3rd)
- All priests (4th)
- Fr Peter Devlin (5th)
- Fr Fintan Diggin (6th)
- Fr Brendan Doherty (7th)
- All priests (8th)
- All priests (9th)
- Fr John Doherty (10th)
- All priests (11th)
- Fr Michael Doherty (12th)
- Fr Patrick Doherty (13th)
- Mgr Andrew Dolan (14th)
- Fr Brian Donnelly (15th)
- Msgr Joseph Donnelly (16th)
- Fr Liam Donnelly (17th)
- All priests (18th)
- Fr John Downey (19th)
- All priests (20th)
- All priests (21st)
- Fr Jack Farrell (22nd)
- All priests (23rd)
- Fr John Farren (24th)
- Fr Neil Farren (25th)
- Fr Paul Farren (26th)
- Fr Christopher Ferguson (27th)
- Fr John Forbes (28th)
- Fr Eddie Gallagher (29th)
- Fr Paul Fraser (30th)



Lord, I am not worthy *by Fr Johnny Doherty, CSsR*

MANY parents dread the day when their teenage son or daughter rebels and asks: "Why should I go to Mass?" This is one of the best questions that could be asked, one that all of us should look at constantly. We can be so conditioned by our attitudes that we can fail to ever touch into the extraordinary gift that we have.

For some people, Mass is just an obligation on a Sunday. They will go faithfully but without any great enthusiasm. It is an imposition. They want it over as quickly as possible. Other people see Mass as a penance. They will go to Mass during the week in Lent in order to do something difficult or go to an early Mass as a penance for some particular intention.

One of the most frequent statements that is heard about the Mass is that it is boring. How insulting this is to Jesus who has given Himself completely to us and whose heart longs only to give Himself to us day after day, week after week. Familiarity certainly breeds contempt!

The single greatest treasure of our Catholic faith is the Eucharist, in which we are constantly invited to be completely one with Christ. He gives Himself totally to us as we eat His Body and drink His Blood.

Our opportunity

These few weeks of June are a great opportunity to renew for

ourselves a real hunger for the Eucharist. As we listen to God's Word during this time, we can catch some of the intimacy of His love.

Christ recognises the loneliness and isolation of human life. He tenderly cares for each of us as if we were the only person who exists. He knows that our human hearts can only be satisfied by being touched deeply by the quiet passion of God's love for us. He proclaims Himself as the bread of life. And He goes further by telling us that "the bread that I shall give is my flesh for the life of the world".

Week after week, Christ stands among us with that wonderful invitation that has the name of each one of us engraved on it: "Take and eat, this is My Body which will be given up for you." In that moment, everything we could want in our wildest dreams is offered to us.

Our hearts

The only problem that is presented to us at this time is that of our hearts. Our hearts can be so filled with our own selfishness that there is no space for God's love. Our hearts can be so broken with life that we think there is no hope. Our hearts can be so empty because of self-doubt that we cannot hear the intense love that God has for us.

Lift up your hearts

That is one of the important invitations in every Mass just before the Eucharistic Prayer. It is an invitation that we should listen for each week of the month of June, particularly so that we can be more receptive of the Body and Blood of Christ. Week 1: June 6-12

Corpus Christi

Jesus said: "Take this and eat, this is My Body. This is My Blood of the covenant which is to be poured out for all."

What an extraordinary love Christ has for us that led Him to give us this wonderful sacrament. And yet we grow so used to it that we can even see it at times as a burden. But we do the same with our love for one another. In marriage and family life many people feel burdened by the demands of love.

This week is a time to renew the sense of awe that should be ours when we think of the extent of God's love for us and the privilege of our love for one another. It is a week to cry out "My Lord and my God" and to say again to each other "I love you".

Week 2: June 13-19

The Kingdom of God

Jesus said: "What can we say the Kingdom of God is like?"

We all have our own ideas of what the Kingdom of God is like. But we need to listen to what Jesus says it is because He is the

only one who knows. He tells us today that first of all it is God's kingdom. God is at work in us and all around us all the time, even when we are not attentive to Him.

He also tells us that the small things are the key to the growth of God's kingdom. God is present in the love relationships of marriage and family life, and also of our faith community.

Our contribution is to be found in the small things of love - giving time to one another; showing affection to one another; affirming one another; forgiving one another. We are always standing on holy ground.

Week 3: June 20-26

Jesus the Lord of the storm

Jesus said to His disciples: "Why is it that you are so frightened? How is it that you have no faith?"

Over the past number of years the Church has been going through a fierce storm. It has been a time of anxiety and worry for many. It has been a time of deep hurt and anger for others. There seems to be no end to it.

Even though the storm is real, and we have to face the reality of it with all its implications, we also have to remember that Christ is with us and He will bring calm again. But we also have a responsibility to work for that calm by the ways we love one another in our homes and in our communities.

Week 4: June 27-July 3

The Lord we serve

Jesus said: "Once the hand is laid on the plough, no one who looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God".

We live in a world in which people are finding it increasingly difficult to commit themselves to anyone or anything. This is probably one of the single most important reasons for many of the social ills of our society. Jesus tells us that commitment is essential to human fulfilment.

When a couple get married, they are looking ahead, but tend quickly to look back to what each had and so set limits to their relationship. When a couple conceive a child, they look forward to the birth. Then they often look back to the freedom they had and try to reclaim as much of that as possible.

And in parish life, many people want a full part in determining the future of the Church but are often unwilling to commit themselves to the work involved in ensuring its success.

A vitally important commitment

In our Catholic practice, there has always been an emphasis on the importance of Sunday Mass, so much so that it is an obligation for us. Now is the time for us to make it a personal commitment

that will bring us forward into being an alive and vibrant community of faith.

By making this commitment, we are setting out to make a fresh start to our married life and or/family life week-by-week; make a new beginning each week in our life of being a faith community gathered around the Eucharist; and a way of making a new beginning in our own commitment to Christ as we let ourselves be fed with the bread of life.

I urge you to make that commitment today and see how it will bring you into a much greater joy in your life and faith.



Fr Johnny Doherty

'Leave The Water Running' – a story about the unconditional love of Christ



Martin McLaughlin with his book "Leave the Water Running"

WHEN Martin McLaughlin celebrated his 70th birthday last year, Fr Joe Gormley, who has journeyed with the Creggan man and the youth of Search as their spiritual director, told him to be sure and note down the many stories accrued over his lifetime, and so, with all the reflection time during the Covid-19 lockdowns, he let it all flow and the fruits of his efforts are now raising funds for the Search youth project close to his heart.

'Leave The Water Running' is a 400-page book of recollections from Martin's life growing up in Creggan, his football days,

faith journey and miraculous happenings, as well as personal poems relating to people in his life who have passed on.

Summing it up further in talking to 'The Net' about the book, Martin said, "It is really a story about the unconditional love of God".

He has dedicated it to his wife, family, parents, Derry Search Youth Group, Don Bosco Football Club, and "to all who search, through the lay person vessels of Cursillo, Search, Cor and other organisations who, as one Body of Christ, seek to find the Way, and to show the way to The Waymaker".

The cover design includes images central to his life story: a water tap, with droplets of water designed using the ichtus (fish) symbol, tying in with Search; St Mary's Church, Creggan; Don Bosco's image; a football; Our Lady of Knock Shrine and children representing Our Lady of Knock Youth Group.

The title of the book is taken from the first chapter, which begins with Martin sharing a memory of watching the card game, Whist in his childhood home when he was about 10 years old, which has stayed with

him because of two particular experiences involving a couple of elderly ladies amongst the card players.

"Lizzie Long asked me for a drink of water, and asked if I could leave the water running. So, I let it run for a while," he recalled, adding: "It was running for two-and-a-half hours before someone realised that it was still running! It became the water of baptism as my life matured".

"On the same night", he continued, "another old lady, Beezy Donaghy, handed me a four-inch thick book, saying... 'You need to read this book. It is meant for you'. It was the life-story of St Don Bosco. I read the book but, at 10 years of age, it didn't mean anything to me then. However, because the water of baptism was running, the content of it came more into my lifestyle from that night".

The book also tells the story of the founding of the Don Bosco Football Club for teenagers by Martin and a group of others, which he felt was his response to the St Don Bosco book he had read years earlier.

"Football and winning became my God rather than prayer and

were more important to me than anything else in my life," he said, adding, "I was a decent footballer and was playing for Derry City when I got a cracked knee that was unrepairable. I'm not saying that God had a hand in that, but He had a plan in a sense to redirect my priorities.

"My Trinity before that was Matt Busby, George Best and Denis Law. However, when I was injured and came out of football, I was invited to help take over 30 young people on a trip to Knock Shrine. Most wouldn't have had a clue what it was all about but were just glad to get out of the city and away from the Troubles for a while".

"That was the beginning," said Martin, "Before that, in 1980, I had done a Cursillo weekend in Benburb Priory which had given me a different perception of who and what God is. I was 30 years old at that stage.

"A miracle happened that day in Knock. With my knee wrecked, I couldn't walk without a stick. One of the young people broke my stick and said that if I wanted them to believe in all of this 'crap', then I had better start believing it myself. I was able to play football

for another 10-12 years after that, though not at senior level.

"The real vocation started then. The real message of the life story of Don Bosco kicked in and what I should be doing in my life, and that is where Search began. Search simply means Search for Christ. All of that came from my encounter with the loving God on a Cursillo weekend".

The story continues from this up to these current days of Covid, and it was during the second lockdown that Martin finally sat down to record it...typing 10,000 words at a time into a Samsung phone.

"I prayed to the Holy Spirit to guide what I should write every time I sat down," said Martin, "and it took me 14 weeks to write it, from start to finish, have it bound and ready to go".

Costing £8.99, the book is sold at the IOSAS Centre, the Search Centre, in Iona Business Park, VG Stores in Creggan, Spar Store, Ballymagroarty, and the Clifford Store in Shantallow, and the proceeds are for Derry Search Youth Group, which has had around 10,000 young people complete its programme over the years.

Thornhill Ministries Triduum

AS we emerge from Covid, Thornhill Ministries have put together an online reflective triduum, entitled 'Belonging in Changing Times', to run from August 23-25.

Fr Paschal McDonnell, OFM, will lead a three-day personal reflection time for those aware of change, those seeking a faith-path of belonging.

The Zoom programme will include Communal Lectio Morning Prayer, 8.30-9 am, followed by Communal Engagement, including input, reflection and journaling, from 11 am until 12 noon.

Participants are invited to create their own dedicated timeline for the three days and will receive support prompts for reflection as the process unfolds.

A suggested donation of £30 towards Thornhill Ministries would be welcome.

To register and receive Zoom details send an email to secretary@thornhillministries.co.uk.

Children's Catechism Club - C3

by Veronica Harley

Hello children. Welcome to the month of June and the lovely summer days. June is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We celebrate the beautiful Feast of the Sacred Heart this year on June 11, and on the following day we rejoice with the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. God is Love and the Sacred Heart of the Son of God is the human sign of God's love for us. The Sacred Heart is overflowing with love for all humanity.



Sacred Heart of Jesus

Sacred Heart of Jesus,
I trust in You.
Sacred Heart of Jesus,
I believe in Your love for me.
Sacred Heart of Jesus,
Your Kingdom come.

The Immaculate Heart of Mary leads us closer to God and shows us how we should love Him. To say that Mary's heart is Immaculate means that it is pure and without sin (CCC 411) and that She is the only fully human person who can love God in the way that He should be loved. Devotion to Mary's Immaculate Heart allows us to honour Her holiness (CCC 971) and brings us closer to God (CCC 969).

Immaculate Heart of Mary

O Virgin Mary, my Mother.
I give to your Immaculate Heart my body and my soul, my thoughts and my actions.
I want to be what you want me to be, and do just what you want me to do. I am not afraid because you are always with me. Help me to love your Son Jesus with all my heart and above all things.
Take my hand in yours so I can always be with you.



Corpus Christi

The glorious feast of Corpus Christi is celebrated after Trinity Sunday. It usually falls in late May or June. The name 'Corpus Christi' is the Latin for 'Body of Christ', meaning that this is the Feast Day of the Holy Eucharist. The greatest Feast of the Eucharist is Holy Thursday, the day

of the Last Supper. But because of the sad events which are recalled in Holy Week, the Eucharist is given its own special day to celebrate – Corpus Christi. One practice of devotion which allows us to show great homage to Christ is Eucharistic Adoration.

Eucharistic Adoration

The Church has developed the beautiful practice of Eucharistic Adoration. This practice is centuries old, dating back to the Apostles, when the Eucharist was carried to the homes of those people who could not attend Mass. Eucharistic Adoration is a sign of devotion and worship of Jesus, who is truly present – Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity – in the Eucharist.

The Holy Eucharist is placed in a very special vessel called a monstrance. This is made of a precious metal and is shaped like the sun to symbolise the resurrection of Jesus. The centre of the monstrance has a round glass window through which the sacred Host can be seen. Behind the glass is a round container called a lunette. The lunette holds the Host securely in place. When the Host is not in the monstrance for adoration, it is kept safely in its lunette within a strong container known as a pyx and placed in the Tabernacle.

When the monstrance contains the sacred Host, the priest will not touch the vessel with his bare hands. Out of respect for the Eucharist, the priest holds the monstrance with a humeral veil, a wide band of cloth that covers his shoulders (humera) and has pleats on the inside, in which he places his hands. A humeral veil is

a liturgical vestment normally made of silk or gold cloth and is used by priests during Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

We are invited to come and spend time with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. When we spend time with Jesus in the Host, we praise and adore Him. We thank Him for all the wonderful things in our lives and the many gifts He has given us. When the mysterious angel appeared to the children at Fatima in 1916, he showed them how they should worship Jesus in the Eucharist. He bent low in worship until his forehead touched the ground. He taught the children a beautiful prayer to say to Jesus. Please try to visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and spend some precious time with him.

Saints of the month

St Justin Martyr – June 1
St Kevin of Glendalough – June 3
St Columba of Derry – June 9
St Irenaeus of Lyon – June 28

Saint Columba, the Dove of the Church

Columba was born on December 7, 521AD in Gartan, County Donegal. His father was Fedhlimidh, a great-grandson of Niall of the Nine Hostages, the fourth century High King of Ireland. His mother was Eithne of the Uí Néill clan. She was a member of the royal family of Leinster.

While Columba was still very young, he decided to become a monk. He was educated at the monastic school under St Finnian in Moville. This is not Moville in Inishowen, rather, St Finnian's famous monastery was at Moville, County Down, near modern day Newtownards. The young Columba

continued his education as a monk in Glasnevin (modern day Dublin) and at Clonard Abbey, near the River Boyne in County Meath.

When he was ordained a priest, Columba founded monasteries at Derry (Long Tower), Durrow (Co. Offaly), Kells (Co. Meath) and



Swords (Co. Dublin). He is also associated with many places such as Glencolumbkille (Co. Donegal), Drumceat (Co. Derry) and Drumcliff (Co. Sligo).

In 560AD, a dispute arose over a copy of a book of Psalms (a Psalter) which Columba had quietly made of St Finnian's book. This dispute led to a rebellion by the Clan Neill against King Diarmait of Ireland. It culminated in the Battle of Cooldreveny (modern day County Sligo) in 561AD, at which 3,000 men were killed.

Following this battle, Columba's confessor, St Molaise, set him the penance of leaving Ireland and preaching the Gospel abroad, in order to convert as many to Christianity as had been killed at Cooldreveny: and never again to look

upon his native land.

In 563 AD, Columba and 12 companions left Derry by boat and travelled up Lough Foyle. There is a marker at Portkill, near Shrove in Inishowen, where Columba is said to have briefly disembarked his curragh for a final farewell to his homeland. He and his monks landed at Dunaverty near Southend, Argyll, in Kintyre before settling on the island of Iona, off the west coast of Scotland. The island was granted to Columba for the establishment of a monastery.

In the years ahead, he and his monks spent a lot of time in solitude, study and prayer. They also worked as scribes, copying religious manuscripts. Columba and his community began the religious conversion of Scotland, which at that time was pagan territory. Their fame and influence spread to most of Europe. In time, Iona became a place of pilgrimage. It also became known as a holy island where 48 kings of Scotland, four kings of Ireland and eight kings of Norway are buried. On June 9, 597AD, Columba died in the monastery he had built on Iona.

With Saint Patrick and Saint Brigid, Columba is one of Ireland's patron saints. This year we celebrate the 1500th anniversary of his birth, 521-2021. The celebrations of his life and legacy commenced on December 7, 2020 and will continue for 12 months.

St Columba – the Dove of the Church – was a significant figure in the early Irish Church and is credited with the spread of Christianity in Scotland and beyond. Most importantly for our Diocese, he established a famous monastery at Long Tower, the site of the present-day St Columba's Church.

Quiz Time with Lawrence

- In which Irish county would you find Lugnaquilla mountain range?
- Who reached Number 1 in the UK charts in 1991 with a song called 'The one and only'?
- With what sport is Bryony Frost associated?
- For which US state is Hartford the capital city?
- In which 2006 movie did Will Smith and his son, Jaden star together?
- Who is the current Prime Minister of Australia?
- Which soap opera ended in 2003 after 21 years on UK television?
- What nationality is golfer Louis Oosthuizen?
- Martha J Canary was better known by what name?
- Who was the original lead singer of The Undertones?
- According to the children's nursery rhyme, which fictional character lived down Drury Lane?
- Who wrote the 2015 novel 'The Girl on the Train'?
- How many counties does Derry share a border with?
- What are the only two '10 point letters' in a game of Scrabble?
- How many grandchildren does the Queen have?
- What was the Disney Corporation's first feature film?
- In which ocean would you find the Bermuda Triangle?
- Which three teams were relegated from this season's English Premier League?
- In which English city is Crufts dog show held?
- Who played the title role in the 2012 movie, Anna Karenina?
- For which US President was Walter Mondale Vice-President?
- Despite his death in 1977, Elvis Presley topped the UK singles charts in 2002 with what song?
- What is the capital city of Uruguay?
- In what song would you find the lyrics '...just ring the bell on the big Bagatelle and you'll make all the coloured lights cascade...?'
- Which country is the world's largest producer of bananas?

Quiz Answers: 1, Wicklow. 2, Chesney Hawkes. 3, Horse Racing (jockey). 4, Connecticut. 5, The Pursuit of Happyness. 6, Scott Morrison. 7, Brookside. 8, South African. 9, Calamity Jane. 10, Feargal Sharkey. 11, The Muffin Man. 12, Paula Hawkins. 13, Three- Antrim, Tyrone, Donegal. 14, Q and Z. 15, Eight. 16, Snow White. 17, North Atlantic. 18, Sheffield Utd, West Brom and Fulham. 19, Birmingham. 20, Keira Knightly. 21, Jimmy Carter. 22, A Little Less Conversation. 23, Montevideo. 24, Penny Arcade. 25, India.



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

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

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



Let Your Light Shine!

Photography by Stephen Latimer



“More than ever I realise that the smallest happenings of our lives are guided by God”

St. Thérèse



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