



The NET

Sharing fruits of faith in Derry Diocese

ISSUE 115, FEBRUARY 2026

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Celebrating Catholic Schools - St Brigid's Cranagh



Celebrating Search - Derry.



Grandparents Day - St Mary's Greenlough.



Honouring St Brigid - Castlederg.



“Pope John Paul II would be calling us to be modern greats in our time and place.” – Bishop Donal (see p4-5)

Papal Cross Award recipients with Bishop Donal, Patron of the Pope John Paul II Award, at this year's ceremony in St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry.



Valentine Lourdes Fundraiser - Desertmartin.




Pancake Tuesday - Steelstown




Youth Valentine Mass - Muff.

People in focus



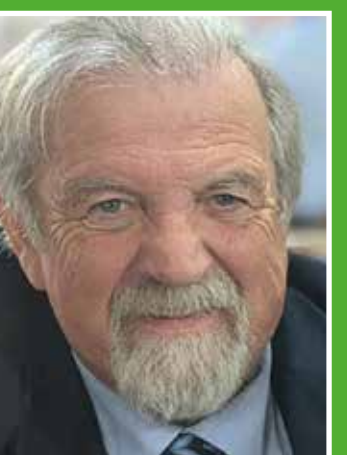
Dr Marie Ferris - Lumen Christi College principal.




Faye Heaney - Search Derry.



Fr Eugene Hasson RIP.



Liam Begley - Dungiven.



Tristan Doran, St Joseph's Boys School, Derry.

Also featuring: Young Writers Section; Search Youth Ministry; Pope John Paul II Awards; Catholic Schools Week feature; St Anne's welcome for Nazareth House PS; Cathedral Club anniversary & Women Without Fear project; Liam Begley faith story; Parish St Brigid feature; Remembering the late Fr Eugene Hasson; Matt Talbot Film; Vocations News; Quiz, Diary Dates and much more...

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The NET

Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

Contacting us:

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Fr Sean O'Donnell reflects on the Pope's February prayer intention for children with incurable diseases:

“Let us pray that children suffering from incurable diseases and their families receive the necessary medical care and support, never losing strength and hope.”

When little lights shine brightest

POPE Leo calls us this month to turn our hearts toward the smallest and most vulnerable among us: children battling incurable diseases, and the families who love them through unimaginable trials. This intention invites us not merely to offer sympathy from a distance, but to enter into solidarity with these families, to accompany them with concrete support, fervent prayer, and unwavering hope.

There are moments in life when faith is not simply believed but lived, when hope becomes not a feeling but a choice made in the darkness. For families walking alongside children with incurable diseases, these moments arrive not once but daily, sometimes hourly, in the quiet of hospital rooms and the long watches of

sleepless nights. Yet even here, especially here, grace makes itself known.

The smile of a child enduring what no child should have to endure is among the most profound witnesses to the resilience of the human spirit and the presence of God in suffering. These children, in their innocence and courage, often become teachers to us all. They find joy in small things: a favourite story; a gentle touch; the simple comfort of a parent's presence. Their capacity to love, to laugh, to hope against hope, reveals something essential about the Kingdom of Heaven that Christ promised belongs to such as these.

For parents, watching a beloved child suffer is a trial of faith unlike any other. It is to stand at the foot of the cross in

a deeply personal way; to know something of Mary's piercing sorrow as she watched her own son. The questions that arise in the heart are ancient and achingly human: Why this child? Why our family? Where is God in this pain?

Yet, faith does not promise us freedom from suffering; it promises us we will never suffer alone. The God who chose to enter human existence as a vulnerable infant, who knew physical pain and the anguish of watching loved ones grieve, walks with these families in their darkest valleys. His presence may not always be felt, but it is steadfast. In the kindness of a compassionate nurse, in the prayers of a community that holds them up when they cannot stand, in the unexpected moments of

peace that descend like grace, God is there.

Hope, in the Catholic understanding, is not naive optimism that everything will turn out as we wish. It is the deeper assurance that nothing, not even death, can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:38-39). It is the trust that every life, no matter how brief or how marked by suffering, has infinite dignity and purpose. These precious children are not defined by their illness, but by their immeasurable worth as beloved sons and daughters of the Father.

The families who journey with these little ones need more than platitudes; they need tangible support. Quality medical care that addresses not just the disease but the



whole person: body, mind, and spirit. Palliative care teams who understand that comfort is sacred work. Communities that show up with meals, with listening ears, with the gift of presence when words fail. And they need our prayers, that most powerful form of accompaniment, joining our intercession with theirs before the throne of mercy.

To these families, we say: You are not alone. Your courage does not go unnoticed. Your tears are precious, and your child's life, however long or short, matters immeasurably. Keep the light burning. When

Eucharistic Adoration in the Diocese


- Aghyaran:** Thursdays, 10.30am–12 noon.
- Ardstraw West & Castlederg:** Fridays, 10.30am–12 noon, St Patrick's Church.
- Badoney Lower:** Tuesdays, after 12 noon Mass until 5 pm, St Patrick's Gortin; and Wednesdays, Mass 7.30 pm, Adoration and Confession until 9 pm, St Mary's, Rouskey.
- Badoney Upper:** Wednesdays, after 7.30 pm evening Mass until 9 pm, St Patrick's Cranagh.
- Ballinascreen:** First Mondays, from 12 noon-7.30 pm, in Holy Rosary Church, Draperstown.
- Banagher:** Thursdays, 10.30-11.30 am, St Mary's Church, Altinure, and Fridays, 10–11am, St Joseph's Church, Fincairn.
- Bellaghy:** Every Friday, from 10 am until recitation of Rosary at 7.30 pm, in St Mary's Church.
- Buncrana:** Mondays, Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 6am-10pm, Fridays, 6 am-10 pm and
- Sundays, 2-10 pm, St Mary's Oratory.
- Cappagh:** Wednesdays, 8-9pm, concluding with Night Prayer, and Sundays, 3.30-6.30 pm, in Christ the King, Strathroy.
- Claudy:** Tuesdays, after 10am Mass until 8 pm, St Patrick's Church, Claudy, and Wednesdays, after 10 Mass until 8 pm, St Joseph's Church, Craigbane.
- Clonmany:** Tuesdays, 7.30-8.30 pm, the Oratory of the Assumption, Ballyliffin; Wednesdays, 3-4 pm, St Columbcille Village, Cleagh;
- Fridays,** 3-6 pm (Rosary at 5.40 pm), St Michael's Church, Urris.
- Coleraine:** Wednesdays, in St John's Church, 2-4 pm, with Rosary at 3:45 pm.
- Creggan:** Sundays 1.30 pm-6 pm; Mondays 10.30 am - 7 pm; Tue - Sat 10.30 am - 12 pm, Divine Mercy Chapel.
- Donagheady:** First Fridays after Mass until 12 noon, St

- Mary's Church, Aughabrack.
- Donaghmore:** Tuesdays, 10.30 am-7.30 pm, St Mary's Church, Sessiaghoneill; Thursdays, after 9.15 am Mass, St Patrick's Church, Crossroads.
- Drumquin:** Wednesdays, 6 pm until Mass at 7.30 pm.
- Drumragh:** Wednesdays, following morning Mass, Sacred Heart Church until 5.30 pm.
- Dungiven:** Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, 9am-6 pm, and Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9 am-8 pm, in Adoration Chapel.
- Errigal:** Mondays, after the 10 am Mass until 2.30 pm, St Mary's Church, Ballerin.
- Fahan:** Fridays after 10am Mass, St Mura's Parish Church.
- Greencastle (Tyrone):** Thursdays, 6-10 pm, St Patrick's Church.
- Greenlough:** Thursdays, 9am–5 pm, St Oliver Plunkett's Church.
- Iskaheen:** Tuesdays, from after 10 am Mass until 2 pm, St Patrick's Church.
- Kilrea:** Mondays, 12 noon -

- 7pm, St Mary's Drumagarnier. Concludes with Benediction.
- Lavey:** Fridays, after 9.30 am Mass until 5 pm.
- Leckpatrick:** Wednesdays from 8.15 am–5 pm.
- Lifford (Murlog):** 9.30 am - 12.30 pm
- Limavady:** First Sunday of each month from 3-5 pm in Christ the King Church (with Confessions), and on Thursdays in St Mary's Church, from 1-6 pm.
- Magilligan:** Wednesdays, 3-7 pm; First Sundays, 3-6 pm, St Aidan's Church.
- Melmount:** Mondays, after 10 am Mass until 6 pm.
- Moville:** Mondays, 2-9 pm, and Wednesdays, 6-9 pm, St Pius X Church.
- Newtownstewart:** Thursdays, 6.30-7.30 pm, Oratory of Mary, Mother of God.
- Sion Mills:** Adoration takes place in the side chapel (Oratory) and will be available every day during the Church's opening hours, moving to the main body of the chapel on Fridays, from 11am-6.50 pm, ending with Benediction

- before 7 pm Mass.
- Steelstown:** Mondays, from after 10 am Mass until 6.50pm.
- Strabane (Camus):** Every day from 10.30 am-1 pm in the Adoration Chapel (Oasis of Peace), at the back of the Church.
- St Columba's Long Tower:** Wednesdays, after 10 am Mass until 7.30 pm Mass.
- St Eugene's Cathedral:** Sundays, 3-6 pm, and Tuesdays, 10.30 am-7.20 pm.
- Three Patrons:** Tuesdays from 11 am-7 pm in Our Lady's Chapel, St Joseph's Church, Galliagh; Wednesdays from 10.30 am-7 pm, in St Patrick's Church, Pennyburn, and seven days a week in the Adoration Room in St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, from 8 am until 8pm.
- Urney & Castlefin:** Tuesdays, 12 noon-8 pm, St Anthony's Chapel.
- Waterside:** Mondays, 11.30 am-12.30 pm, St Oliver Plunkett, Strathfoyle; Thursdays, 1-6 pm, Immaculate Conception Church; Fridays, 1-6 pm, St Columb's Church.

Send any additions/amendments via: editorthenet15@gmail.com or 07809292852.



The NET

Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

Supporting us:

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

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

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

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The ministry of

The NET

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

Ministering to youth for over 40 years, Search extends invitation to... Come and see what it's all about



AFTER 40 years of youth ministry, we are delighted to be continuing in this blessed work. We are going from strength-to-strength with our range of youth programmes. Alongside our 'Empower 2 Transform' programme, we have our weekly youth groups in our own centre at Iona Park, Creggan, on Thursday nights, for 10-14-year-olds and Friday nights for 15-18-year-olds.

Our faith-based summer scheme, 'Mol an Oige' runs each July for 5-11-year-olds, and has done so for almost the last 20 years. We also run enrichment sessions within local secondary schools,

and many of the young people continue in our programme to get involved as volunteer youth leaders.

We are so excited to announce that we are having our next residential Search weekend on March 20-22 in Termonbacca Retreat Centre. One of our amazing volunteers, Faye Heaney has given us a short testimony about why you should get involved in a Search weekend and she will be leading you on the weekend with her joyful energy.

Empower 2 Transform

We have been blessed to have

our dedicated and talented youth worker, Clare Wilkinson in post with us over the last number of years. Clare is leading the 'Empower 2 Transform' Project (PEACEPLUS programme), with the support of our partner organisation Youth Initiatives.

The E2T programme is now recruiting for new participants aged between 16-24, who will get the opportunity to develop their confidence, skills, form positive relationships with others of different backgrounds, and positively contribute to building a cohesive society.

This programme is a great

opportunity to meet new people, make real friendships and get new opportunities to make memories.

Papal recognition

Derry Search Youth Group was established with the aim of fulfilling the vision of St Don Bosco, who proclaimed: "It is not enough to love our young people, we must show them that they are loved."

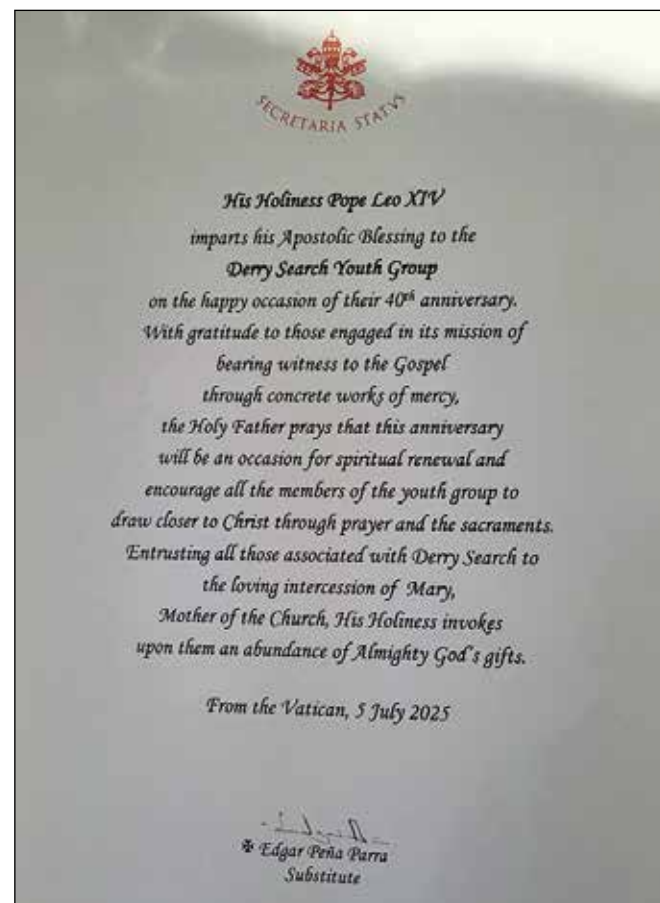
The young people and leaders of Our Lady of Knock Youth Group, originally established in October 1983, in Creggan, attended the first ever Derry Search weekend over 40 years ago.

The Derry Search Youth Group was established on July 4, 1985, when a group of over 40 young people, 12 adults and three priests from Chicago came here and blessed us with the beautiful and grace-filled programme of Search.

'Search' simply means 'Searching for Christ' and, for over 40 years now, has been a spiritual channel for over 8,000 young people throughout the entire Diocese of Derry, and further afield to Dublin, Sligo, Donegal, and even Clydebank in Scotland, enhancing the spiritual, educational and social development of young people from all walks of life.

Search has been fully supported by the Church, realising that the ethos of our great Patron, St Don Bosco has been manifested through the witness of Search volunteers for over four decades.

Derry Search Youth Group, with the support of Bishop McKeown testifying to the incredible work carried out throughout the Diocese, to the Papal Nuncio in Ireland, has been overwhelmed in receiving an Acknowledgement Documentation from Pope Leo



himself in recognition for 40 years of Voluntary Service in youth ministry.

We are honoured and appreciative for such recognition

from The Papal Office. With God's Grace, we will endeavour to continue this wonderful mission of Youth Evangelisation in our city.

Reflection continued from p2

your own strength falters, let others carry you for a while. That is what the Body of Christ does; we bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of love (Galatians 6:2).

And, to the children themselves, those small warriors with big hearts: You are loved beyond measure. Your smile in the midst of pain is a testament to hope that the world desperately needs to see. You teach us that life's value is not measured in years but in love, not in what we accomplish but in who we are.

In the Catholic tradition, we believe that suffering, when united with Christ's suffering, can become redemptive, not because God wills pain, but because God can bring light from any darkness, resurrection from any tomb (Romans 8:28; CCC, 164, 618, 1505). These families live this mystery in the most intimate way. Their faithfulness, their continued choice to hope and love even when the road is unbearably hard, becomes a witness that strengthens the faith of us all.

Let us surround these families with our compassion, our practical support, and our fervent prayer. Let us advocate for medical care that honours human dignity and provides genuine comfort. Let us remember that in God's economy, every act of love matters, every small kindness ripples into eternity.

The light that these children carry may flicker in the wind of suffering, but it will not be extinguished. For it is lit by a Love stronger than death, a Hope that endures beyond every horizon, and a God who holds every tear, remembers every sorrow, and promises that one day He will wipe every tear from every eye.

Until that day comes, we walk together, we hope together, and we keep the lights burning for ourselves, for these precious children, and for a world that so desperately needs to see that even in the darkest night, love remains.

"Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these." (Matthew 19:14)

A Search experience shared... by Faye Heaney



MY name is Faye Heaney. I am 22 years old and have been attending Search since I was seven years old. At this age, my mummy had the great idea of signing my brother and I up for the Search summer scheme, 'Mol An Oige', which I then attended each summer.

I would say that it was this summer scheme that initially sparked my interest about Search from a young age. From this, I began my faith journey through

games, arts, crafts, cooking and, most importantly, through song and dance, which has always been my favourite part.

In October 2017, I attended my first session at the Search Friday Night Club, as I had just turned 14 that previous summer. Friday nights at Search involve starting with some ice-breaker games, an activity in the middle, and ending with prayer time. Attending Search every Friday night has provided me with opportunities to meet new people and learn new skills.

We have also started a 10-13 group on Thursday evenings, which I also volunteer at. On Thursday evenings, a group of young people gather to play games and participate in activities, all whilst having fun. This helps to plant a seed of faith in young people from the age of 10, in the hope of them progressing to the stage of participating in their Search weekend at the age of 15.

In March 2019, I attended my first ever Search weekend. A Search weekend is one of, if not,

the best weekends of your life. At these weekends, memories are made and friendships are built, with God at the centre. Even though tears may be shed, these tears are followed by an abundance of laughter in a variety of different ways, which I can't even begin to explain.

With a Search weekend

upcoming in March, the most important advice that I could give anyone going would be to go into it with an open heart, an open mind, and be willing to receive any message that is awaiting you, and I can promise that it will be a weekend you will never forget.

We hope to see you at Search soon!



John Paul II Award

Diocese pays tribute to over 400 Pope John Paul II Award recipients



THE 19th Pope John Paul II Award ceremony for the Derry Diocese got off to a joyful start with the singing of the Award Anthem, 'Open the doors to Christ', as Bishop Donal and those who would be receiving their Papal Cross Awards processed up the aisle of St Eugene's Cathedral.

Welcoming all gathered, Fr Paul Farren, director of the Diocesan Catechetical Centre which oversees the running of the Award here, announced that 419 young people from all over the Diocese of Derry and beyond, would be receiving their Awards.

He went on to note that this involved participants from 21 second level schools, 46 parishes from within the Diocese and 14 outside of it, with 16 young people to receive the Papal Cross Award.

Delighted that young people were continuing to enrol for the Award, Fr Paul added that more parishes were involving the laity as Award leaders.



Highlighting that the whole purpose of the programme was to encourage people to use their talents within their parish, he said: "We need young people to be engaged in parish life. Sometimes parish life can be challenging and so people need as much support as possible."

He told the young people: "There are many places in the world that are not at peace today, so young people in places like Ukraine, the Holy Land and Sudan, do not have the opportunities that you have."

"In a time when we often hear bad news, the Award continues to be a good news story in the Church in Ireland and beyond," remarked Fr Paul, adding: "It is a quiet story but it is evidence that the Church is fully alive and young."

Donal Walsh

The guest speaker was to be Elma Walsh, of the Donal Walsh #LiveLife Foundation, but she was unable to travel from Kerry due to the weather conditions there. Elma's son, Donal, who died from cancer aged 16 years, had come to prominence through his writings and appearance on RTE's 'The Saturday Night Show' to promote his anti-suicide #Lifeline message. His family went on to set up the Foundation to continue to promote his message, with his parents, Elma and Fionnbar visiting schools and other venues when invited to speak.

Speaking to the young people about the inspirational Donal, who encouraged people to focus on what mattered most in life, Fr Paul said: "He was a young man of deep faith. When he heard that his cancer was terminal, he said that he had three requests: he wanted to receive Holy Communion every day; he wanted to die with a clean spirit; and he wanted to go somewhere different every day. I would encourage you to look into

his story. He knew the value of living his faith."

Bishop Donal, Patron of the Pope John Paul II Award, then addressed the young people, speaking of Pope St John Paul II as "one of the great world figures of the end of the last century."

"He was great," he explained,

“

You have shown that you dare to believe in beauty. You have dared to look at our faith and at Jesus, and to believe that we can expect better than the stunted growth that secularism offers. Socially, you want to move from dependence to independence to interdependence.

”

"because he grew up in Poland and used his influence to peacefully undermine the Soviet system and put an end to the Iron Curtain. He called people, and especially young people, to be great and to do great things. His pointing to Jesus was not a distraction from life but a call to be holy in normal ways."

Saying that Pope John Paul II had been part of his journey, Bishop Donal added: "The year I came back from college as a young priest, in 1978, and began my 36 years in Belfast before coming to Derry, he was elected pope; the first non-Italian pope for many centuries.

New era

"But, nearly 50 years after he was elected pope, I think we are on the threshold of a new era of history, just as he was with the end of the Iron Curtain.

"The secular agenda of self-indulgence and individualism is collapsing, and we are facing the reality that many advances in science have created, what one book by Jonathan Haidt called, 'The Anxious Generation.'"

He went on to note from this book the observation of how video games 'make it easier to retreat to your bedroom rather than doing the hard work of maturing in the real world', and excessive social media lead to social deprivation, sleep deprivation, attention fragmentation, and addiction.

And, he highlighted Haidt's solution as being that of the 'Wisdom of ancient traditions', including spiritual practices, such as meditation, prayer, confession, drawing us away from ourselves and reducing loneliness; sharing sacred times, places and objects; shared rituals, especially eating; stillness, silence and focus; transcending the self – against the cultural pressure to be judgemental, boastful, dishonest and petty; be slow to anger, quick to forgive; and find awe in nature.

Telling the young people that Pope John Paul II "would be calling us to be modern greats in our time and place and 'to be rebels and revolutionaries against a culture that is stifling joy and hope', Bishop Donal remarked: "In the face of much mental distress and addiction, where parents are afraid of what is happening outside the home but often powerless to protect their children in their homes, you have shown that you want to stand for something, like truth, community and forgiveness, and not fall for anything that some influencer spouts about me, myself and my shadow.

"You have shown that you dare to believe in beauty. You have dared to look at our faith and at Jesus, and to believe that we can expect better than the stunted growth that secularism offers. Socially, you want to move from dependence to independence to interdependence."

Thanking the young people for their "generous hearts", the bishop concluded: "Be encouraged by the other young people who are here. On your own, you can do amazing things, and when you work with others, God can do miracles.

"Our faith is not just about believing what happened in the past, it is about believing in the future."



(Photographs by Stephen Latimer)



Former St Mary's College principal, Marie Lindsay joined Bishop Donal for the presentation ceremony, with the bishop handing out the Awards and Marie interviewing students from the various schools in attendance, about what activities they had been involved in and their experience of completing the Award programme.

Amongst recipients were those who were receiving the Papal Cross Awards, having completed their Gold Awards the previous year.

The choir for the ceremony was from Holy Cross College, Strabane.



Reflecting on her commitment to the Catholic Vision of Education, Lumen Christi College principal, Dr Marie Ferris highlighted importance of staff leading pupils in... Living the faith as lights of Christ



Pope John Paul II Award recipients for 2026

THE singing and music for the Mass in St Eugene's Cathedral to launch Catholic Schools Week, for the Diocese, was provided by the excellent Lumen Christi College Choir and Orchestra. The Bishop Street based College also excelled in the number of students receiving Awards at this year's Pope John Paul II Award Ceremony in the Cathedral. And present at both to support the students was the College's long-standing staff member and now principal, Dr Marie Ferris.

Reflecting on her own experience in the field of Catholic education, Dr Ferris told 'The Net' that, throughout her career, she had been "committed to the Catholic Vision of Education by promoting a can-do culture of excellence, setting high expectations and supporting all to achieve their best."

First formed in the faith as the eldest of three daughters born to Bernard and Rosaleen Ferris, and attending Mass regularly with her family at the Cathedral, during her childhood growing up in Limewood Street and later Westland Avenue, Dr Ferris' first experience of education in a Catholic school was at the 'Wee Nun's School', in the grounds of Long Tower, and then at St Eugene's PS, before moving on to Thornhill College.

With a long-held desire to become a teacher herself one day, she went on to study Chemistry at Queens and then did her Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), before going on to study for her PhD.

"My first teaching job was at St MacNissi College (Garron Tower) in 1989, to teach chemistry," recalled Dr Ferris, adding: "I was there four years and then moved to teach in Thornhill. After four years there, I had the opportunity to come to Lumen Christi. It was a brand-new school and so I was delighted to get a job here."

Starting her journey with Lumen Christi College in 1997 as Head of Science, she became a Senior Teacher in 2003 and then vice-principal in 2012, before being appointed as principal in 2023.

"It is my great privilege to be the principal of Lumen Christi College, having been here since the beginning of the school in 1997," she remarked, "and I am

very grateful to have had that unique opportunity. I couldn't ask for better colleagues over the years, who were and are committed to the maximum development of each student that has come across our doors."

Describing Lumen Christi as "a small, vibrant school community, that is very much rooted in family values", Dr Ferris stated: "We have a real commitment to building and sustaining excellent relationships underpinned by high quality pastoral care, and our size makes this possible. Staff know our pupils, and pupils build lasting friendships not just in their own year group, but across the whole school."

"One of the things that I admire most about our students is the kindness and encouragement that they show to each other. Our first principal, Mr O'Kelly would tell us to get the relationships right and everything else would fall into place, and he was so right."

Inclusive

She continued: "We are a listening College, so good communication and partnership with home is important to us. Our approach to education instils a strong sense of responsibility towards others, both in our local and global communities. Kindness, compassion, and service to others, in an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and at home, is at the heart of our college."

"My favourite time of the day is to go out and greet the pupils coming into school in the morning, so I box that time off to go out and walk around the school. I like to get to know the pupils, and it is an opportunity for them to talk to me."

As a co-educational school, with a broad, balanced curriculum, Dr Ferris highlighted that Lumen Christi's goal was to help prepare young people "to take their place in, and embrace the challenges of, tomorrow's world as resilient, capable, and caring individuals. So, natural friendships are built here that last far beyond the gates of Lumen Christi College, and our students are well prepared for third-level education, for the world of work, and for life beyond school."

Noting that the distinctive nature of the Catholic School "is

expressed in the way our faith affects what we do and how and why we do it", she added, "aside from all our success both in and outside the classroom, the key reason that I would recommend the College lies within our name, Lumen Christi – Light of Christ."

"Faith development is very important to us. Pupils begin their journey through the College with our Mass of Induction for the new Year 8s and their parents in August, and they finish their journey, ready to take their place in the world seven years later, with the Mass of Valediction for Year 14 and their parents in May. While we take every opportunity to develop the faith, we are also very inclusive of other children who are not of the Catholic faith."

"We are blessed with our beautiful chapel at the centre of our school. Each morning, we start the day with Morning Prayer, and our Liturgy Prefects direct this. Fr Gerard Mongan, our School Chaplain, is very committed to our students, and is a regular visitor to the college to celebrate Mass with students and staff. Our Folk Group, directed by Emer McCaffrey and Sylvia Lester, provide the music and singing for all our liturgical services."

She continued: "We encourage our pupils to use their gifts, talents and abilities to be a Light of Christ in the service of others, and they certainly do! Our Year 13 Outreach Programme allows our students to give back and also strengthens our connections with the Long Tower Parish, local primary schools and local care home."

"In addition, we support an array of local and international charities. Before Christmas, we sent a staggering 400 shoeboxes and a mountain of coats and shoes to Ukrainian children, hampers to Foyle Food Bank, and presents to Foyle Women's Aid, as well as a donation to the Long Tower Conference of St Vincent de Paul."

Lourdes

"In recent weeks, I have been particularly proud, with our choir and orchestra having the privilege of providing the music for the Diocesan Catholic Schools Mass, and 37 of our Year 14 students receiving Gold Pope St John Paul II Awards in St Eugene's Cathedral. Last summer, I also had the privilege of witnessing 13 of our students assisting with the sick during the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes, accompanied by Dr Michael Gormley."

Dr Ferris went on to recall: "Last June, 60 of our Year 9 students travelled to Knock on the College's Pilgrimage, accompanied by Fr Mongan, Bronagh Gormley, Head of RE, and Stephen Doherty, Faith Development Coordinator."

"Recently, our Year 13s and 14s had the opportunity to receive the

Sacrament of Reconciliation, and it was very pleasing to see that the vast majority took the opportunity. And, last year, Emer McCaffrey organised a 'Sing for Sr Clare' for our local schools to celebrate Sr Clare Crockett's life, which was enjoyed by all."

"In September, Dr Gormley and myself accompanied our Year 14 Liturgy Prefects to the Mass in St Eugene's Cathedral to celebrate the canonisation of St Carlo Acutis. We would like our students to adopt St Carlo Acutis and Servant of God, Sr Clare Crockett, as very positive role models."

"We have truly wonderful students," said Dr Ferris, "but without the energy, enthusiasm, and encouragement of our staff, who work hard to give our students opportunities, their experiences would not be as successful as they are. I would like to thank, in particular, Mr Stephen Doherty, our Faith Development Coordinator, for his unstinting work in the College."

"We want our young men and women, when they leave here, to look towards others first before themselves, and develop that sense of service in a family, in a community, in their places of study and places of work, wherever it maybe. We want them to always see themselves as great ambassadors for Lumen Christi College. Whatever they do in their lives, we ask them to make sure that they are good and kind to the people around them, and be optimistic in all that they do! Individually, we are good, together we are great."

Saying that her experience of Catholic Education has been the dedication and commitment of staff to the development of students in all areas, Dr Ferris continued: "For me, Catholic Education is about taking care of those who need taking care of. It is also about the development of faith which requires staff to model the faith. Our staff are very much moving with us in terms of faith journey. Every Friday morning, we have a staff briefing, during which we pray the 'Hail Mary' together, and ask for the intercession of St Carlo Acutis and Sr Clare Crockett, who are both honoured within the Templemore Parish. I think that is important for staff as well as students."

"Faith gives children hope and that is the best gift you can give them. Academic success is maximizing people and giving them hope for the future."

Dr Ferris concluded by sharing a special tradition that has been passed down from principal to principal at Lumen Christi College: "Every morning, as principal, I go into our little chapel to light a candle for all the students – past and present – and all their families."





Sing for Sr Clare

A wonderful day of prayer and song was hosted by Lumen Christi College last May, and was thoroughly enjoyed by all those who took part, including pupils and staff from St Brigid's College, St Columba's College, St Cecilia's College, St Joseph's Boys' School, St Mary's College, St Patrick's & St Brigid's College, Claudy, and Thornhill College.

Entitled 'Sing for Sr Clare', one of the highlights of the retreat was the singing of a new hymn in honour of Derry's Servant of God. Written by Lumen Christi teacher, Mrs Emer McCaffrey, the 'Sr Clare' hymn was sung as the opening hymn for Mass celebrated in the College Chapel by Fr Shaun Doherty.

Special guests for the day were nuns from Sr Clare's Order, the Home of the Mother Servant Sisters, who are based at Crossroads, Killygordon, Co Donegal, and Sr Clare's sisters, Shauna and Megan.

After the showing of the Sr Clare film, 'All or Nothing', one of the Servant Sisters gave a talk about vocation and the Derry-born nun, who grew up in the Long Tower Parish which Lumen Christi College is part of. This was followed by the praying of the Rosary in the Chapel, with a student from each school leading a decade.

The day came to a close with prayer for the canonisation of Sr Clare.



Serving in his parish...helping those in need...representing his school and community abroad...

JPII Award experience leaves lasting impact on St Joseph's student

ONE of the Papal Award recipients at this year's Diocesan Pope John Paul II Awards in St Eugene's was Tristan Doran, of St Joseph's Boys School, located within the Cathedral Parish. During the ceremony, the Year 14 student spoke impressively about his involvement in the Award and the opportunities it provided him.

Happy to share his experience in a report for 'The Net', Tristan wrote...

In September 2024, I took my first step on a journey of service when I signed up for the Pope John Paul II Gold Award through my school, St Joseph's Boys' School, Derry, and my local parish, St Mary's, Creggan. At the time, I didn't know how deeply this decision would shape me.

Each month, I assisted at the 'Do This in Memory' Masses in my parish, and then started to read at Mass. What began as a commitment, soon became something I genuinely looked forward to. I found great meaning in being able to help within my parish community and, just as importantly, to set an example for the younger children taking part. Serving at the altar wasn't just about fulfilling a role - it was about belonging, responsibility, and faith in action.

When I completed the Gold Award, I knew something for certain: I wasn't finished. The experience had strengthened my connection to my parish and my community, and I didn't want that to end. That was when I decided to continue my journey by taking part in the Papal Cross Award, allowing me to keep building on the values of service, leadership, and faith.

In school, I am also a member of the Good Deeds Council, which was established through the Loukoumi Foundation.

Through this, I became involved in promoting kindness and service within our school community. Last year, St Joseph's organised a trip to New York to attend the Loukoumi Good Deeds Summit, and a group of sixth-year students were selected to go. Being chosen was an incredible opportunity, and one that allowed me to extend my commitment to service beyond home.

While in New York, we carried out various good deeds as a group. One of the most meaningful experiences was preparing sandwiches for the homeless and visiting Mary's House, where the food was distributed. Meeting people face-to-face and helping in a small, but practical, way was humbling and eye-opening, reminding me of the importance of compassion and human dignity.

During the trip, we also attended St Patrick's Cathedral for an intercultural event. I had the privilege of reading at this gathering; an experience that felt both surreal and deeply special. Standing in such a historic and sacred place, far from home, yet united through faith and service, is something I will never forget.

These experiences - serving in my parish, helping those in need, and representing my school and community abroad - have left a lasting impact on me. They are days and moments that will stay with me forever, guiding how I live out my faith and continue to serve others.



Celebrating Catholic Schools...

Retreats, Grandparent poems & St Brigid Cross-making



Crossroads PS Kilrea

Loreto Coleraine



St Brigid's PS Carnhill



Gleneely NS Crossroads



St Brigid's College Carnhill



Holy Cross Melmount



St Cecilia's Derry



Celebrating Catholic Schools...



St Colm's Draperstown



St Joseph's Boys' Derry



St Mary's, Altinure



St Mary's PS Gortnaghey



St Mary's PS Greenlough



St Patrick & St Brigid Claudy



St Safan's NS Castlefin



Celebrating Catholic Schools...



Our Lady of Lourdes PS Greencastle



St Brigid's Cranagh



St Anne's welcome for Nazareth House family highlights Catholic educational values *by Eilis McGuinness*

ST Anne's Primary School has formally extended accommodation to the pupils and staff of Nazareth House Primary School, after their roof was ruled unsafe by the Education Authority, reflecting a clear and deliberate commitment to the core principles of Catholic education.

The arrangement, established to support Nazareth House during a period of need, demonstrates the strength of partnership, service, and fraternity that underpin the Catholic school network.

Comprehensive preparations were undertaken by both institutions to ensure the continuity of learning and pastoral care. Considerable attention was given to the organisation of classrooms, shared facilities, and daily routines, ensuring that all pupils were welcomed into a stable, respectful, and nurturing environment. The cooperative efforts of staff across both schools have contributed to an atmosphere characterised by dignity, reassurance and mutual respect.

The integration is regarded as a practical embodiment of the Catholic ethos, emphasising community support, compassion, and the collective responsibility to care for those in need.

The two schools worked collaboratively, the partnership standing as a testament to the mission of Catholic education: to foster environments where every child is valued and where communities respond with

generosity and solidarity.

Eamonn Broderick, chief executive of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), said he was "delighted that an interim solution could be arrived at so quickly for the children of Nazareth House".

He added: "The willingness of the team at St Anne's to provide accommodation demonstrates the values and ethos of Catholic maintained education in practice. Our primary objective remains delivering an exceptional standard of education in an appropriate and welcoming school setting."

St Anne's has also announced the opening of a new Special Provision for Integrated Mainstream Support (SPIMS) class, marking a significant step for inclusive education in the city. The dedicated class, which opened last term, is designed to support pupils with additional learning needs while ensuring they remain connected to the mainstream school community.

The SPIMS model allows children to access tailored teaching, specialist interventions, and smaller group settings, while still participating in wider school activities. Staff at St Anne's say the new provision reflects the school's commitment to ensuring every child feels valued, supported, and included.

(Mrs Eilis McGuinness is Principal of St Anne's PS, Derry.)



St Eugene's Cathedral News...

Women Without Fear Project 2025 by Anne Marie Hickey



WOMEN Without Fear, I feel, was a deeply moving and meaningful project that spoke directly to the strength, courage, and resilience of women in our city. It shone a light on the realities many women face, while powerfully reminding us that fear should never define any woman's life.

The project's message was both emotional and empowering, inspiring hope, confidence and a sense of solidarity. What made this project truly special was its compassion. It showed genuine care for women's voices, experiences and struggles, while uplifting them with a message of bravery, self-worth, and empowerment.

The vision behind the project is to encourage women to stand tall, believe in themselves, and reclaim their sense of safety and freedom within the city and surrounding areas.

The project leaves a lasting impact on the participants. It not only raised awareness throughout the parish and City, but also touched the heart, motivating

reflection, understanding, and positive change.

Overall, Women Without Fear was an inspiring and courageous initiative that reminded us of the power of unity, empathy, and hope. It is an outstanding and emotionally powerful project that truly honours the strength of women, and the importance of living without fear in our city and world today.

Our grateful thanks to Constable Crawford and her colleagues for creating this wonderful project. Thanks to those who provided training, Peter Day and Charlie from Lifestyle Combat, and to all those who supported the project in any way.

This project was not only worthwhile but essential in the times we live in now. Thanks to the funders for prioritising and highlighting the need for safety, training, and awareness of this particularly important subject.

(Anne Marie Hickey is the Pastoral Coordinator, St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry.)



Project participants share thoughts...

"I loved it. It made me get out of the house and meet new people. It is great to learn how to help protect yourself when out walking alone." (Claire)

"This was a lifeline to me. I got to meet lovely people and now I can defend myself better as a woman." (Sharon)

"The fact that we all walked together was great for me. I felt I met new friends and will organise walks with these girls again." (Isobel)

"The walking group was a great way for me to get out of the house and meet new people. Also learning some self-defence was something I would have never thought I would do. I loved it." (Helena)



Cathedral Club celebrates second anniversary with special guest

THE Cathedral Club has celebrated two years of meeting weekly for social interaction in the Cathedral Hall, across the road from St Eugene's.

To mark its second anniversary, the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland, Siobhan Casey was invited along to talk to the members, leading to a very informative and open discussion which was helpful to our members.

We were also advised of agencies and advocates which will benefit the members and their families.

As a parishioner of St Eugene's Cathedral, in the Derry Diocese, we are very proud of the work Siobhan is doing and helping so many older people. Her good work is very much appreciated.





LENT

year • fasting • almsgiving

at
St. Eugene's Cathedral, Derry
beginning
Ash Wednesday - 18 February

MONDAY TO FRIDAY

7.45am Morning Prayer of the Church
1.00pm Lunch-time Mass beginning on Ash Wednesday

Each MONDAY
5.00pm - 7.00pm Confessions & Exposition

Each TUESDAY
7.00pm Guided Meditation in Mother Teresa Chapel

Each WEDNESDAY
7.00pm "Reasons to have Faith"
Talk by Fr Paul Farren in the Cathedral

Each THURSDAY
1.30pm Stations of the Cross led by our Parish Schools
8.00pm Holy Hour of prayer, adoration, reflection and music with Fr Shaun Doherty in the Cathedral

Each FRIDAY
7.00pm Stations of the Cross
'Fish Friday' as this is the day when Jesus was crucified you are invited to give up meat each Friday in Lent in remembrance of His sacrifice for us

www.steugenescathedral.com

Young Writers share thoughts...

THIS month, we welcome Three Patrons parishioner, Clodagh McDermott, a Pope John Paul II Award student at St Brigid's College, Derry, and Upper Cumber & Learmount parishioner, Alannah Gormley, who attends Thornhill College and is also participating in the Pope John Paul II Award.

While Alannah writes about struggles with faith and how finding God distant during challenging times is an opportunity to strengthen endurance, Clodagh has an interesting take on what it means to truly follow Christ, and how the image of God is equally present in those whom we disregard and those we admire.

Sean writes about betrayal and how not only to overcome it without holding resentment, but build back better, while Nieve reflects on how prayer can help deal with grief and loss of a loved one.

With Valentine's Day a big time of celebration in February for many, Erin highlights the importance of being open to God's love 365 days a year, and Conor shares his research into Bible cross references proving the authenticity of the books within it.

Shea reflects on how politics and religion can clash and the call to stay rooted in Christ, and Ryan writes about St Kateri Tekakwitha and her great witness to never abandoning belief in God, no matter the cost.



Cara-leigh Doherty - Derry City Deanery
Alannah Gormley, Derry City Deanery
Nieve Browne, Derry City Deanery
John Augustine Joseph, Derry City Deanery
James Tourish, Derry City Deanery
Erin Whoriskey, Derry City Deanery
Ryan Duffy, Derry City Deanery



Bláthnaid McMenamin - Co Tyrone Deanery
Ellie Donnelly, Derry City Deanery
Clodagh McDermott, Derry City Deanery
Seán McLaughlin, Co Tyrone Deanery
Niamh Sharkey, Derry City Deanery
Harry Mason, Derry City Deanery
Conor Sharkey, Derry City Deanery

Doves...pigeons... and things we choose to value *by Clodagh*

LATELY, something that I have been thinking about is how common-place doves are throughout the Gospels. It is a dove which brings the olive branch to Noah in Genesis to signify the receding of floodwaters and the return of hope. Again, we see a dove at the baptism of Jesus. We see doves mentioned so frequently, in fact, that if we were to count each individual mention, the number would exceed 40. Even outside of a theological lens, humans have found meaning in these birds in a way almost unlike in any other animal. The dove is a symbol of peace, unity, hope and, within Christianity, the Holy Spirit itself.

Why I find this so interesting as of late is, scientifically speaking, a dove is essentially

the same as a pigeon. They belong to the 'Columbidae' family of birds, share the same vocal habits and have the same dietary requirements. The only separation is in the colloquial language; a dove being smaller and lighter in colour, while a pigeon is larger, more stout and less admired. This raises an odd question: if there is indistinguishability between the two, is the reality we assign them entirely arbitrary?

The fact the Holy Spirit could be represented in an animal many disregard as vermin suggests that 'holiness' is more than aesthetic appeal. More than this, it sheds light on a deeper issue within our society. I see time and time again, both in the media and in my daily life, that we are turning away from

what it means to truly follow Christ. Our modern obsession with commodities and surface-level beauty directly parallels the reverence afforded to doves and the disregard, if not contempt, shown toward the pigeon.

In saying this, I am not placing a critique on society as a whole, but rather imploring the reader to look beyond what we are taught are the things of value. A pigeon can be found in the most undesirable places, amongst those society has deemed the inconvenient and unworthy. "Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor" (Zechariah 7:10) calls us to help those in need. God is not found through mansions or the excesses of the world elite, but out there amongst those who need Him. God is in the lady

How does prayer help people through grief? *by Nieve*

FOR people who have experienced grief, they understand it is not a gentle arrival. Instead, it is something that bulldozes into your life. It can come as a shock or it can be predicted, but it will always crash down. Whether it is a simple text, 'phone call, or being told directly, the world around you will feel like it is crashing. Suddenly, the house is more empty, the world is more empty, and you, yourself, are more empty.

Grief is unique. There are steps to help you through grief, but this will not work for everybody. It cannot be pinpointed how you will get through grief, and the truth is you will never get over grief. For some, family and friends are what they need, while others can't handle it being around everybody.

People look for last resorts for grief, but a very overlooked one for people who do not have a strong religious mind is prayer. When in prayer for grief, I do not always have to be looking for help, but I can be for asking questions like, why? Even if you know the answer, you won't have an answer you like. Some people are silent, and some people cry out until they are shaking; emotions are raw and they hurt.

The Psalms in the Bible deal with so much sorrow and confusion: "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" (Psalm 22). These prayers are not rejected by God; they are embraced, and He receives them with His full heart.

There may not be ghosts, there may not be figures that you see, but prayer becomes a way of still

staying connected to the person you have lost. Prayer in the Bible is seen as an act of love for those who have died, and having trust in God that they have received mercy and are seated with Him, waiting for their loved ones in the Kingdom of God.

As I said, grief cannot be taken away, the pain cannot be extracted from your body, but you can control your grief. You can have a space for your grief, not a bottled-up space but a place where your grief can sit. So, prayer allows grief to be poured out and handled. People who pray through grief give a description of almost being held. They do not feel somebody, a physical person is not there but, in a spiritual sense, they are being held, and strength is given to them, comfort is given to them. It may not be strength to last a lifetime, maybe just what they need at that moment.

Eternal life

Belief in God reveals to us that death is not the end of the road for us, but that eternal life is waiting in resurrection. The feeling of a broken heart and loss will not be erased through prayer, but it will change how it is. It is not that you will never see that person again, but you will just have to wait until God's plan for you is carried out, and He is ready to take you back to Him and those you have lost.

Prayer for loss is filled with a sense of longing and trust in God; trusting that you will be reunited in the Kingdom of Heaven. However, grieving with God is not just trusting Him and holding on to Him and just feeling closer to Him. Some feel



a sense of resentment, anger and wanting to distance themselves from God; feeling that if there is a God, why are they going through this? Why would He let this happen? Prayer allows for any way for grief to be expressed. A person will not be shamed for how they feel, they will be guided and shown the way and why this happened. Prayer helps you to come to know that your loved one is with God, and is no longer hurting, but simply waiting.

There is no answer for grief, no remedy to make it go away. The

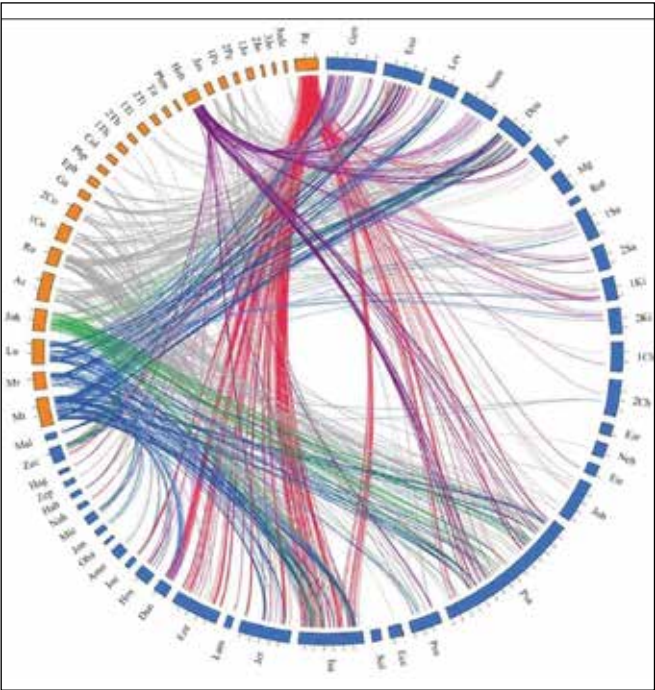
love you have felt will not simply be taken out of your life. If it is, then you have not fully grieved, or you are not grieving in the first place. Prayer, when grieving, is about having a listening ear, a hand held in a spiritual sense, so that you feel you are not alone, and that there is something waiting for you after that. Prayer keeps us tied to what we don't know, what we don't see, but we will.

And sometimes that is all we need.



Young Writers share thoughts...

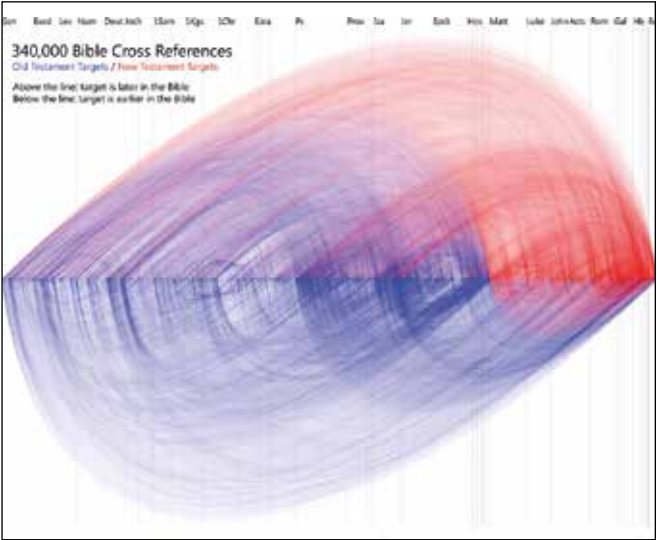
Bible cross references by Conor



BIBLE cross references are links between verses that display similar concepts, themes, events, phrases or people. They prove the authenticity of the Bible and the writers that have written 66 books over 1,500 years. There have been 63,000+ references identified by Chris Harison and Christoph Romhild. There

are many parallel events which unfold within the Bible as told by its many writers, allowing us to see many perspectives on major events, and allowing us to formulate our own interpretation of the bible, and it gives us a better understanding. Typically, in bibles, cross references can be located in the margins or centre

columns of physical bibles, and in digitals ones they are linked directly. The New Testament contains thousands of cross references alone. The books of Matthew Mark, Luke and John are said to contain 76% of the same content, despite it not being confirmed that all the authors of these books met; they tell similar stories of accounts of eye witnesses about Jesus' life. An exception is the triple tradition, where the three synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke have shared narratives, parables and sayings believed to originate from within the early Christian community, forming the core Gospel. There are often variations in scripture due to disagreements between Matthew and Luke. The stories of the baptism of Jesus, calling of the disciples and the healing of the leper are present in all three narratives, along with them having similar structure and order of events. Many times, Jesus refers to the Old Testament. He directly quoted it 78 times in the gospels, citing the Pentateuch, Psalms and prophets to validate his authority, fulfil prophecies and to teach; commonly referring to the Ten Commandments regarding murder, adultery and honouring parents. Quotes such as Hosea 6:6 - "I desire mercy, not sacrifice", and Leviticus 19:18 - "Love your neighbour as yourself", further prove this. Jesus' recognition of the Old Testament linked His teachings to the values of the people He preached to, as they would have followed the Old Testament at the time. The writers also make references to the Old Testament, with John describing Jesus as 'the Lamb', referencing the sacrificial system in the Old Testament. There are many prophecies in the Old Testament that are fulfilled in the New Testament, such as the Virgin birth of Jesus mentioned in Isaiah 7:14 - "Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel", which is recorded by Matthew in 1:22-23 - "All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a



Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel'. Being interpreted as 'God with us' this is undeniable evidence of the connections between the scriptures. Another instance of this is in Isaiah 53:3-7, which many Christians believe to be a reference to the crucifixion of Jesus: "He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Surely, He took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered Him punished by God, stricken by Him, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth." There are clearly many links to this and the theology and attitudes of Jesus.

Experience of betrayal can be moulded into a good with God's guidance by Seán

BETRAYAL is one of the harshest emotions we can feel. Especially, when it hits us while we are in a sense of security, and when our betrayer is someone whom we trusted to remain loyal and true. In Psalm 41:19 it is written, "Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me." Betrayal is something the individual must learn to overcome and, eventually, even see the benefits of. Christ was betrayed by Judas, and by the Jewish people, when He was handed over to Pharisees to be condemned, and to the Roman authorities for crucifixion. Betrayal can come when we least expect it, when we believe that our life is going well, and betrayal can drastically throw off a situation which we believed to be stable. Like any of life's setbacks, betrayal is something from which we can climb back from and climb higher than before. When Jesus was betrayed and died on the cross, for three days He suffered and then He was resurrected, later ascending to Heaven to be at the right hand of His Father. When we are betrayed, it is vital for own benefit that we remember there was a time in which we

lived without that particular person, and what they offered. In some circumstances, they may have even been holding us back, something we may not come to realise until after a betrayal. The initial feeling one might feel after a betrayal will be unlike those formed after days of clarity. You may feel relief, gladness, even a sense of having escaped from something you believed you needed, but now realise that you do not. Genesis 50:20 reads, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good." The harshest of betrayals can be moulded into something better than what you had prior, with the guidance of God. It is easy to hold a grudge, especially when someone you trusted has done something to harm you. It is written in Matthew 5:44, "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." It is never the correct course of action to detest someone for their transgressions against you. The initial feelings of resentment must eventually be replaced with ones of forgiveness, or else the heart will become heavy with hatred. As unfair as it may seem, unwillingness to eventually forgive will damage you also. Matthew 6:14-15 reads,



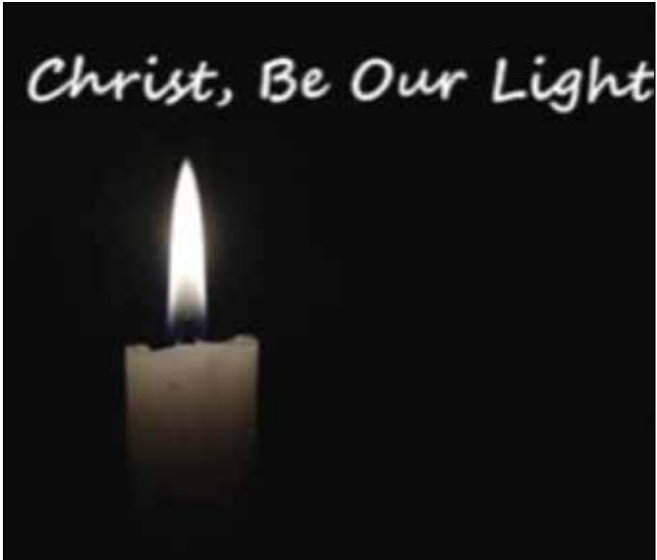
"For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Hatred breeds hatred, but the righteous learn to break that chain and be civil, composed and unreactive in the face of torment, embarrassment and humiliation. Overcoming betrayal is no easy feat, but the weight tossed off your shoulders when you do, feels better than even the times before the betrayal. When Jesus was betrayed by Judas, there was a fall, and then a rise, greater than before. When people betray their fellow man, they do so for petty reasons, for matter of slight self-benefit, all while tossing away

a little piece of their soul, what makes them human. It is written in Matthew 26:14-15, "Then one of the twelve, Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What are you willing to give me if I deliver him to you?' And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver." People find it difficult to even respect and care for one another, we who are made in the image of God - and Judas betrayed the Lord in human flesh, all for a very small amount of money. It is difficult to have faith in people, knowing how easily they could toss aside a level of trust and respect you believed was built on a solid foundation. However, it is better to believe in the human spirit.

Rekindling faith by Alannah

I was raised in a very religious household but, as I grew older, I often struggled with my faith in God. Things happen in our personal lives that sway us from faith, for example a family member passing suddenly or unjustly making you wonder, why would God do this to me? I suppressed this feeling for months, wondering why God had not sent me any signs that He was there. Why didn't He comfort me when I was down. However, one day everything changed for me. I was in school listening to a talk from a speaker the school had brought in from the SEARCH programme. The lady spoke about God and why

sometimes people felt distance, like He wasn't there. Then she said this: "If you pray for courage from God, you will not receive it overnight... God will test you in order for you to earn it by overcoming a challenge in your life that He has presented to you." These words have sat with me ever since. The Lord did not leave me. He was testing my faith in hard times to give me the gift of endurance and strength, to allow me to surpass hard times in life. The late Pope Francis once said: "Having faith does not mean having no difficulties, but having the strength to face them, knowing we are not alone."



Young Writers share thoughts...

St Kateri Tekakwitha a great witness to never abandoning belief in God *by Ryan*



IN 1656, St Kateri Tekakwitha was born in the Mohawk village of Ossernenon, which would later become modern-day Auriesville, in New York. St Kateri's father was a Mohawk Chief named Kenneronkwa, and her mother was an Algonquin woman called Kahenta, who had been captured and adopted into the tribe. Kahenta was a Christian convert, having been baptised by French Missionaries prior to her capture.

Kateri's given name from the Mohawks was 'Tekakwitha', meaning 'She who bumps into things,' and this name came at age four. A devastating smallpox epidemic struck the Mohawks, which led to the deaths of both of her parents and her younger brother, and left her with scars and injuries to her face causing her to be partially blind, which led to her being called 'Tekakwitha'.

Following her family's deaths, Tekakwitha was adopted by her aunt and uncle. Her uncle was a Mohawk chief who strongly opposed the 'Black Robes', the Jesuit missionaries, believing that they were trying to persuade the Mohawk people to abandon their traditions and relocate to Catholic settlements. He strictly

forbade Kateri from speaking with them. Meanwhile, under her aunt's guidance, Kateri learned the essential skills expected of young Mohawk women: preparing and sewing animal pelts, weaving mats, baskets, and boxes, and planting, caring for and harvesting crops.

In the mid-17th century, Jesuit missionaries had begun to work among the Mohawk people. Although Christianity had been present for years within Mohawk society, it had always been treated with suspicion, due to its association with French colonists and the epidemics that had coincided with missionary arrival.

At age 11, Tekakwitha was visited by a trio of Jesuit missionaries, by whom she was greatly impressed. They were more than likely the first white Christians she had encountered in her life, and she started to live her life in accordance with the teachings of these three Jesuits. She did this despite living with her uncle, who strongly opposed Christianity and forbade her from associating with these missionaries. However, she continued to do so in secret. The Jesuits described Tekakwitha as a modest girl who avoided social gatherings. Over the years with her aunt, she had become skilled in domestic life and, as was custom in her culture, she was pressured to think about marriage around the age of 13. The young Tekakwitha refused, saying to her confessor, "I can have no spouse but Jesus", and following this up with, "I have the strongest aversion to marriage".

In 1669, the Mohawk tribe was attacked by a rival tribe that wished to control the fur trade in the region. During this time, Tekakwitha assisted the Jesuits in helping care for the sick and wounded, and the compassion

shown by these Jesuits strengthened Tekakwitha's resolve. Following the attack, Tekakwitha declared to her aunt that she wouldn't marry in her life. At 17, her aunt tried to arrange a marriage and Tekakwitha fled the cabin, hid in a field and resisted the marriage. Eventually, her aunt gave up efforts to arrange her marriage.

In the spring of 1674, Tekakwitha met the Jesuit priest called Jacques de Lamberville, who had visited the village. Tekakwitha told Lamberville her life story and asked to become a Christian, and she began to study the Catechism with him. Lamberville said that Tekakwitha practised her Catholic faith while living in a non-Catholic society, and how that would often cause minor conflicts.

On Easter Sunday, April 18, of 1676, Lamberville baptised the now 19-year-old Tekakwitha, who was renamed 'Catherine' after St Catherine of Siena. The Mohawk form of the name Catherine was Kateri. Tekakwitha stayed at home for six months. During this time, the Mohawks opposed her conversion and accused her of witchcraft, while others in the village stoned, threatened and harassed her. However, she soon fled her home and travelled over 320 kilometres to the mission of St Francis Xavier at Sault Saint-Louis, also called Kahnawake. When she arrived, she found it was a community of natives who had also converted to Christianity and, in 1677, Tekakwitha made this her home.

Suffering

It was said that Tekakwitha put thorns on her sleeping mat and lay on them as she prayed for her family's salvation and forgiveness. Piercing the body to draw blood was a traditional practice of the Mohawk; it was heavily opposed

in the community, as they were concerned for Tekakwitha's poor health. However, she pushed back on the concerns, saying, "I will willingly abandon this miserable body to hunger and suffering, provided that my soul may have its ordinary nourishment."

It was also around this time that Tekakwitha began a friendship with a woman named Marie Thérèse Tegaingueta, and the new friends attempted to start a Native Religious Order, but the idea was rejected by the Jesuits. She also met Fr Claude Chauchetière, who was a Jesuit and who became her spiritual advisor and chief biographer.

The Jesuits founded Kahnawake as a mission village to convert the indigenous people with a primacy on the Mohawk from the eastern parts of New York, and while it functioned as a Catholic settlement, it retained many traditional Haudenosaunee features. With residents living in longhouses, moving when a certain area was out of resources, and maintaining clan structures, with longhouses serving as chapels. This village was autonomous under New France, and included members of several tribes who had migrated north. While the town had a fur trade with the French, the cultural divide between the missionaries and Natives stayed.

When Tekakwitha arrived in Kahnawake in 1677, she lived inside a longhouse and was guided in Christian practice primarily by Mohawk women, which included clan mother, Anastasia Tegnonsiongo. This all showed how important Native women had become in sustaining the faith within the community. Along with Tegnonsiongo, Jesuit priests, such as Claude Chauchetière and Pierre Cholenec, had become key figures in her spiritual life and later wrote

the early biographies of St Kateri Tekakwitha.

By Holy Week of 1680, Tekakwitha's health had rapidly declined. Word started to spread that she was near death and the village had gathered at her bedside, with both Jesuit priests administering her last rites. At around 3 pm on Holy Wednesday, on April 17 of 1680, when Tekakwitha was aged 23 to 24, she passed in the arms of her friend, Marie Therese, who reported her last words to be "Jesus, Mary, I love you." Following her death, witnesses claimed that her scarred face suddenly became clear and radiant, with her smallpox marks having disappeared.

In the weeks following, Anastasia Tegnonsiongo, Marie-Thérèse, and Fr Chauchetière all reported visions of Tekakwitha. Anastasia said that while she was crying over the death of her spiritual daughter, she looked up and saw Tekakwitha "kneeling at the foot" of her bed, and "holding a wooden cross that shone like the sun". Marie-Thérèse reported that she was awakened at night by a knocking on her wall and a voice asking her if she was awake, before saying, "I've come to say goodbye; I'm on my way to Heaven." Marie went outside but saw no one, though she heard a voice murmur, "Adieu, Adieu, go tell the Father that I'm going to Heaven." Chauchetière, meanwhile, said that he saw Tekakwitha at her grave, where she appeared in "baroque splendour; for two hours he gazed upon her" and "her face lifted toward Heaven as if in ecstasy."

A chapel was built near the grave of Tekakwitha and, by 1684, it had become a pilgrimage site. The Jesuits turned her bones to dust and set her ashes within the newly built mission chapel. This served as a symbol of her presence on Earth.

The first account of Tekakwitha was not published until 1715. Due to her unique path to chastity, she is often referred to as a lily, a typical symbol of purity. Images of Tekakwitha are often decorated with a lily and a cross. This all led to Tekakwitha being referred to as 'The Lily of the Mohawks'. Tekakwitha was a cultural bridge between Indigenous and European Christian communities. Devotion spread gradually and, come the 19th century, the process for Tekakwitha's canonisation had begun, having been initiated by United States Catholics at the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1885, followed by Canadian Catholics. Some 906 Native Americans signed 27 letters in the US and Canada, urging for her canonisation. Her cause was formally opened on May 19, 1939, which granted her the title of Servant of God. On January 3, 1943, Pope Pius XII declared her venerable, and she was beatified on June 22, 1980, by Pope John Paul II.

The canonisation of Tekakwitha followed the Vatican's recognition of miracles attributed to her intercession, including the healing of a young boy called Jake Finkbonner, who was from Washington State and had survived a severe flesh-eating bacterial infection in 2006 by his parents praying to Tekakwitha. Following a second miracle in 2011, Pope Benedict XVI canonised her on October 21, 2012. This made her the first Native American woman of North America to be declared a Saint.

St Kateri Tekakwitha serves as a great example of how, even when we are shunned or rejected for our faith, we should never abandon our belief and love of God.

Jesus is God's Valentine to you *by Erin*

AS I am writing this article in the approach to Valentine's Day, I have been reflecting on Jesus' love for us. Valentine's Day is a celebration filled with flowers, chocolates, and gifts, however, under the surface is a deeper desire – to know that we are truly loved.

The love of Christ reaches deeper than any of these materialistic things. Jesus went to the Cross and gave His life for our sins. He did not hesitate or shy away from suffering, but faced it all so that we could be brought to the Kingdom of God.

Jesus shows His love for us, not

only on the Cross, but every single day in different ways. He gives us strength, as Philippians 4:13 states - "I can do all through Christ who strengthens me." His love is not generic, but it is personal.

Each of us is made in God's image and likeness, and He loves every one of us. He nurtures us on our spiritual journeys and "He is sitting in the place of honour at God's right hand, pleading for us." He has even prepared a place for us in Heaven, an expression of love greater than any on Earth.

Some people may avoid Valentine's Day completely, feeling that it reminds them of

loneliness or something that they are missing. Jesus' love, however, does not depend on relationship status or how popular we are. He loves us always, no matter what, and any love which is in our lives reflects Him - "We love because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

Jesus was sent by God to this broken world as an expression of His love. This love is never-ending, far beyond our understanding. He fills our hearts with love so that we can love others, even those who are hard to love.

Ephesians 4:2 says: "Be completely humble and gentle. Be patient, bearing with each other

in love." But first, we need to allow His love to enter our hearts. Love is something that does not come from this world, and without the Lord, all cards and gifts would mean nothing.

Valentine's Day may be a beautiful sentiment, but His love is present 365 days a year. It remains constant and unchanging. This February, we should pause and remember the One who first loved us. We should open our hearts to receive that love fully and, as we do, pray that we spread love to others, every day of the year.



Young Writers share thoughts...

Politics and Religion
by Shea

RECENTLY, I have been wondering about politics and religion and how they clash. I have seen, in the past number of years, world politics becoming a controversial topic when it comes to our faith.

It seems to me that most Christian beliefs often get pushed into the far-right wing of the political spectrum, and I am unsure as to why this is. Is it because of our beliefs on sexuality? I am not writing this as an attack on anyone; I am writing this purely from a point of curiosity because when I took a political spectrum online, the people around me expected far-right to come up at the end of the quiz, when actually I came out as centre-left. I answered every question on that quiz with my faith at the centre of it.

What I am really getting at is, yes, of course our religion and politics go hand-in-hand. In some cases, I would be a fool to say that they don't because some of the biggest topics of faith that we, as Catholics, wrestle with are also some of the biggest political ideologies out there, such as abortion. The left-wing or liberal take a strong stance on 'my body, my choice', stating that abortion is a woman's choice. However, the right would take the approach that the child in the womb should be protected.

Now, here is the catch. When I took the political test, I came

up left-wing, but I don't agree with abortion at all. So, this has confused me because I have always thought that to be pro-life meant I was far-right. However, when I took this to prayer, I came to a realization that politics and religion may have similar discussions but different roots.

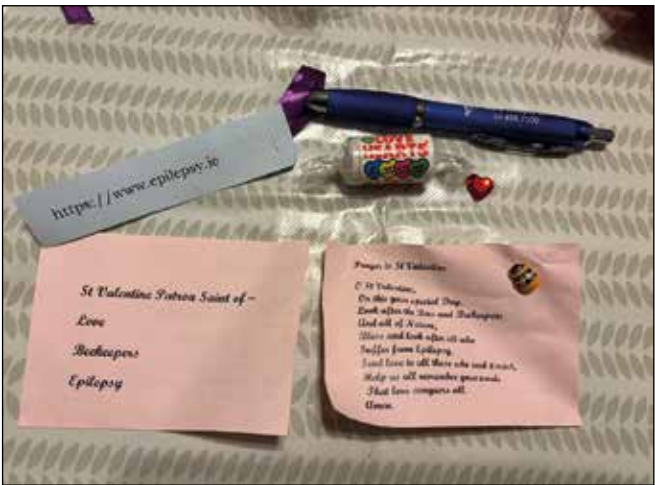
As a Catholic, I believe in everything that I believe in because of Christ. When Jesus came into my life and touched my heart in a way that no-one else ever could, I knew that He was to be followed. People often label Christians as homophobes, etc, but that is not the case. I can't be hateful or unrighteously judge someone, that would be unchristian of me. To hate someone because you disagree with their politics is where I draw the line.

We, as Christians, should never be dragged down to hatred; it is not of God. However, I believe that we should never compromise our faith, or water it down. We should believe in God's Word, acting upon it with love, being a witness of Christ and His love and word no matter the political environment we are in. That is what we are called to do as Christians; to focus more on the values, beliefs and teachings of the Church, living these out, and not to get too caught up in the whole political side of things. The most important thing is to stay rooted in Christ.

Muff JPII Valentine Mass



Desertmartin Valentines loved Lourdes fundraiser tea



Scrumptious Steelstown Pancake Tuesday



Parish communities honour St Brigid...

Urney & Castlefinn St Brigid's Night celebration by Emby O'Donnell

A great celebration was held in Doneyloop Hall, within the Parish of Urney & Castlefinn, on the Eve of St Brigid. Everyone had a very enjoyable night and we look forward to many more.

A large crowd attended, with their families, making the night a great success and keeping our traditions very much alive. We were delighted to see so many young people taking part, as well as the not so young!

We are deeply indebted to the late Mack McLaughlin, a former founder of the Doneyloop St Brigid's Night, who gave so unstintingly of his time and expertise organising the event annually. A presentation was made to his family acknowledging his great work. Mary Louise McCroary gave a well-informed insight to his work.

A fantastic selection of refreshments was served while the judging took place. A lady commented on the fact that it had been a very long time since she had felt such marvellous community spirit - a joy to see.

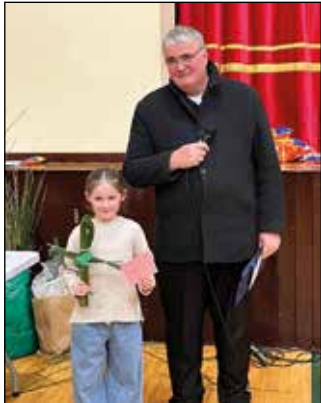
Thanks also to Fr Hegarty, who

led us in prayer and blessing. A sincere thank you to the Organising Committee, the hard-working hall and kitchen teams, those who donated food, those who attended on the night and, not forgetting, St Brigid.

Collette Carlin was our very eloquent MC on the night. St Brigid was Catriona DeWard, and the judge for the night was Sinead Gallagher, who had a difficult challenge in judging the different categories with so many different styles of crosses. She was highly impressed with the efforts of the young people making crosses.

The night concluded with the prize-giving ceremony and the blessing of Crosses, St Brigid's Well Water and St Brigid's Cloak by Fr Hegarty.

Prize-winners for Crosses made on the night were: Novice - Calvin Cairns; Primary School - Elle May Catterson, Grainne Greene, and Daisy Curran; Post Primary - Bailey McGee/Logue; Adult - Cormac Morris; Most Creative - Kathy Lynch, Leo McCready, and Liam Cannon.



Parish communities honour St Brigid...



Desertmartin



Three Patrons



Banagher



St Eugenes

Parish communities honour St Brigid...

Castlederg



Claudy



Donagheady



Greencastle



Derry Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes 2026...

A message from Lourdes...the dawn of an adventure by Fr Michael McCaul



EVERY journey has a destination. Every step on our pilgrimage journey here on earth should lead us closer to our real destination, God. And on our pilgrimage journey towards God, we are not alone. We are strengthened and supported with the faith, hope and love of those who journey with us.

Nestling in the foothills of the Pyrenees, in southern France, is the small town of Lourdes. It was in this little-known garrison town that Our Mother, Mary, the Immaculate Conception, appeared and spoke with the little shepherdess, Marie-Bernarde Soubirous, better known to us as St

Bernadette, on Thursday, February 11, 1858.

St Bernadette, who preferred to remain poor, was 'the broom used' by Our Mother to deliver a message in 18 apparitions, from Thursday, February 11, until Friday, July 16, 1858. St Bernadette's constant reply to those who tried to discredit her was: "It is not my job to make you believe it; I am charged only with the task of telling it to you."

And so, this is also our task to this day. To tell you the message of Lourdes. And the message of Lourdes is a simple one. It is the same message that we can find in the pages of the Gospel if we take time to look. It brings no new teaching, no startling revelations or magical promises.

The message of Lourdes simply calls us, once more, back to the basics of the Good News of Jesus Christ. It can be summoned up in four simple ideas: Prayer; Poverty; Penance; and Participation.

Over the next three years, the Sanctuary of Lourdes is inviting us on a spiritual pilgrimage, a journey

to the heart of the Virgin Mary's story. We will go step-by-step, guided by the Gospel of Luke. Our journey, our hope.

Theme for 2026 - the Annunciation

"Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you" (Lk 1:28)

This is the year of the welcome, of listening and of the 'yes' that changed everything.

The Annunciation is not just a distant event. It is the embodiment of every beginning in faith. At that precise moment, Mary did not know the future. Mary had no detailed map. Mary had no idea about the flight into Egypt or the darkness of the Cross.

So, what did Mary have?

- A deep inner willingness.
- A calmness marked by a Presence ("the Lord is with you" Lk 1:28).
- An unmerited divine gift, a grace.

What about us in Lourdes?

Our pilgrimage echoes this moment. We arrive here, often without knowing what awaits us,

carrying our questions, our hopes, our sorrows.

It is right here, in this place where Heaven reaches down towards the Earth, that an inner dawn can happen:

- The silent beginning of a conversion;
- The first step towards an unexpected healing;
- The awakening of a dormant faith;
- The sense of a call whispered in our hearts.

By going on our pilgrimage to Lourdes, we build on the threshold of our "yes", just like Our Mother Mary. Just like St Bernadette. Just like so many pilgrims who have travelled this road before us.

Knowing that the Good Lord is also with all of us, we should rejoice and be full of Gospel Hope. Full of Gospel Joy. Full of Gospel Love.

From priests to members of the hospitality, a pilgrimage is peppered with "Behold, here I am" moments. It is not just words, but the heartfelt promise to be present and to serve, trusting in God's

grace.

Pope Francis (RIP) reminded us of an essential truth - the heart is the place of true adventure: "In a world that prioritises the intellect, true adventure is to be found in the heart. It's the place where our lives find unity and meaning, where we learn to love and where we decide what really matters."

St Bernadette offers us the key to this adventure: 'Love is enough.' This is not a superficial statement, but the ultimate truth of a heart suffused with grace. It is love that gives prayer, conversion and service to others their true value.

I pray that we all say "yes" and accept the invitation to an inner pilgrimage. The real Lourdes pilgrimage, therefore, means journeying back to our hearts. It invites us, like Mary, to humbly make ourselves available so that God's love becomes visible through us. For grace acts in the faithfulness of our simple gestures and so, transforms ourselves, our families and our world.

Let us go prayerfully on



Fr Michael McCaul, Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage spiritual director, lighting a candle for the Diocese

pilgrimage together as one family, led by Bishop Donal McKeown, from Monday, June 29, until Friday, July 3.

Let us invoke Mary, the Mother of Hope, to teach us all how to believe, how to hope and how to love.

Invitation to go on pilgrimage to Lourdes from Pope St Pius XII

"Go to her, you who are crushed by material misery, defenceless against the hardships of life and the indifference of humanity.

Go to her, you who are assailed by sorrows and moral trials.

Go to her, beloved invalids and infirm,

you who are sincerely welcomed and honoured at Lourdes as the suffering members of our Lord.

Go to her and receive peace of heart, strength for your daily duties, joy for the sacrifice you offer."

Pius XII

(Given at Rome, from St Peter's, on the Feast of the Visitation of the Most Holy Virgin, July 2, 1957, the 19th year of Our Pontificate.)



The Pastoral Letter by Dr Seán Beattie

I recently listened to a reading of the Advent Pastoral Letter from Bishop Donal McKeown in my local church, in December 2025 - 'Moving Forward Together in Changing Times'. Apart from its focus on the need for prayer, one topic that struck me was the issue of parish amalgamation, reflecting the changing face of the Catholic church in the Diocese of Derry. On further reflection, I recalled other pastoral letters over my lifetime that highlighted dominant issues of the time facing the Church.

The Epistle

Despite the proliferation of social media today, the concept of the letter as a means of communication is as old as Christianity itself. (Latin, littera, epistle or written document). We are frequently reminded of this on Sundays as we listen, for example, to the First Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians. ("Take yourselves, brothers, at the time when you were called: how many of you were wise in the ordinary sense of the word, how many were influential people, or came from noble families?"). The letters reflected the challenges facing early Christians in their own time. Despite the stretch of centuries, some values remain unchanged: justice, forgiveness, humility, etc, to name but a few.

Bishop Farren's Episcopate

I decided, however, to look back at issues that faced the church in more recent times, during the episcopate, for example, of Bishop Neil Farren. He was consecrated Bishop of Derry on October 1, 1939, a challenging time in world history.

He guided the Diocese through World War II and then into the new era of the Education Act in 1948, which offered unique opportunities to his flock.

Bishop Farren's Lenten pastoral letter, dated February 26, 1941, took account of the devastation caused by the War but expressed gratitude that it was "kept from our shores". At the time of writing, the wars in Gaza and Ukraine dominate the headlines but on a lesser scale when compared to events in 1941.

He continued by deploring the "undue craze for pleasure", "the lust for earthly goods", "active atheism" in society, and the proliferation of these evil forces through the medium of newspapers, cinema and novels.

The Law of Fast and Abstinence

The main theme of the Letter was the need to do penance. He reminded his flock of the Law of Fast and Abstinence as applied to persons aged between 21 and 60, with the exception of those with a dispensation. The faithful were entitled to one full meal a day, with a small quantity of food in the morning and at night. He accepted that this was "a really difficult penance", but it was administered "under pain of mortal sin". However, it was not all doom and gloom. Due to the war situation, he decided to relax the rules. They would apply only to Ash Wednesday and Holy Week.

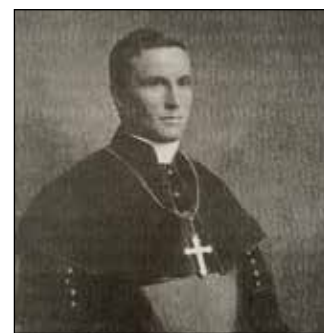
The Dance Hall Craze

Older readers will recall the closure of dance halls during Lent, and the migration of dance bands to England and Scotland for the

duration of Lent. He was quite clear in his advice that "the round of pleasure" must stop. He had in mind "picture-going and entertainment". His strongest condemnation, however, was for what he called "the dance hall craze"; the hall being, in his view, one of the main sources of sin in society, and which caused him a lot of anxiety. No particular form of dancing was mentioned but, some years earlier, Bishops had outlawed foreign dances and jazz in particular, sometimes called "the devil's dance". In Mohill, Co Leitrim, the parish priest, Fr Perter Conefrey, organised a campaign to have jazz music removed from the newly-established 2RN, the forerunner of Radio Éireann. He patrolled parish dance halls in an attempt to ensure that his orders were being obeyed. In this case, it was not so much that jazz was immoral but that it was taking over from traditional Irish music and dancing.

Cardinal O'Donnell

Over a decade earlier, Cardinal Patrick O'Donnell, Bishop of Raphoe, Archbishop of Armagh and Cardinal, had similar objections to the cinema. In his final Lenten Pastoral Letter as Cardinal in February 1927, he made his position clear, as recorded by his biographer, Rev Dr Pádraig O'Baoighill, (see Cardinal Patrick O'Donnell 1856-1927): "Pictures and postures of recent years have done far more harm than good. Certainly, if children are allowed at all to pictures, they should be kept at home, unless everything exhibited is good for their impressionable minds. There is nothing worse for



Cardinal O'Donnell expressed concern about the impact of the cinema on young minds in the 1920s the young than to gratify all their desires. Nothing is better for them than to train them in Christian self-denial...Amusement has its place and recreation is necessary, but too much pleasure-seeking spoils the young."

O'Donnell came from a farming background in Kilraine, Co Donegal, where, no doubt, as he grew up, he took part in all the physical work involved on the family farm in rural Donegal. In some respects, however, his comments are not out of place today, when the problems of access to social media are being highlighted, and the proposed restrictions on social media under discussion for under 16s.

Legacy

It may be said that Pastoral Letters reflect the social mores of their time. In St Paul's day, the epistle was an effective means of communicating the Christian message. To communicate the Christian message, the Church today moves with the times. It is worth noting that the recent Autumn Pastoral Letter in the Derry Diocese is also available on the Diocesan website.

Remembering Fr Eugene Hasson...

True to ideals of his youthful priesthood...

Fr Eugene Hasson remembered as dedicated pastor and loyal friend



THE passing of Fr Eugene Hasson a couple of weeks into the New Year has left a deep void within the hearts of his family and friends, and in the lives of the Drumragh parishioners he had faithfully ministered to as curate and then parish priest until his sudden sickness and terminal diagnosis took him away from them towards the end of last summer.

And, so it was with heavy hearts that his remains were received first at St Patrick's Church, in his home parish of Dungiven, following his death on January 12, and then at Sacred Heart Church, in Omagh, where his Requiem Mass was celebrated before returning to his home-town for burial.

But hints of the 70-year-old's humour lightened the mood somewhat, when his wish was granted for one last circuit of the outside of the 125-year-old Sacred Heart Church building that he had recently put so much energy into celebrating its quasiquintennial. Then followed the leading of the funeral cortege away from the Church afterwards by two ponies, and later into the grounds of St Patrick's, Dungiven, by his sister's two beloved Bernese Mountain dogs, Clara and Guinness, in a nod to his love of horses, dogs, and animals in general.

The homily at Fr Eugene's Requiem Mass, was delivered by his friend of over 56 years, Fr John Phair, PP Kinlough, Co Leitrim, whom he first met on his first day at Maynooth College in September 1974, when John was in his final year. Explaining their connection, Fr John said that his uncle, Fr George Doherty had been curate in Dungiven in Eugene's youth.

"We became lifelong friends," he added, recalling: "Eugene actually preached the homily at my uncle's funeral nine years ago. I was honoured to be asked to celebrate his parents' Silver Jubilee Mass, as he was still a seminarian at the time and could not celebrate the Mass."

Fr John went on to note that Fr Eugene was born on August 3, 1955, and baptised in St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry, and was the eldest child of Charlie and Kathleen Hasson. He attended St Patrick's Primary School, in Dungiven, and then St Columb's College, in Derry, before going to Maynooth to study for the priesthood. He was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Derry, in Dungiven, on June 14, 1980.

"His first appointment after ordination," added Fr John, "was to this parish as curate in 1980 and most of his 45 years priestly ministry was spent here in the Tyrone Deanery. He loved the people of Tyrone and touched many hearts, as all the prayer intentions and good wishes he received recently testify. As a child, he spent much time with his grandmother in Glenroan. He served here at a tumultuous time for this community and always tried to promote peace, justice and reconciliation."

Following his time as curate in Drumragh from 1980-91, Fr Eugene was appointed to Killyclogher as curate and chaplain to Tyrone County Hospital from 1991-9, before he went on sabbatical for Post-Graduate Studies to America from 1999-2001. He then served as curate in Glendermott, Derry, 2001-2006, before becoming Administrator in Claudy, 2006-7. He was appointed PP Greencastle in 2007, and in 2015 he was appointed as PP Lavey & Greenlough, before returning to Drumragh first as curate from 2016-2017, and going on to become the parish priest from 2017-2026.

Describing him as "a dedicated pastor, caring for all his parishioners, and a loyal friend to his fellow priests," Fr John recalled: "Eugene was Chaplain in Omagh Hospital at the time of the Omagh bomb. He buried his mother on the Thursday and the Omagh tragedy occurred on the Saturday. As soon as he heard the news, he headed straight back to Omagh and became so totally immersed in caring for the victims that he didn't get to bed until the following Wednesday night."

Ecumenist

"He was a committed ecumenist and, subsequently, he helped set up the Omagh Churches' Forum in response to the trauma which resulted. I imagine many of you will remember his memorable words of welcome on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Omagh Bombings, when he called for a future of peace and understanding, dialogue and compassion. Understanding is what bridges the gaps between us, he said. Love is the only thing that can overcome hate. How relevant those words of his are in the world in which we are currently living."

Noting that Fr Eugene had studied Art for his A'levels and had "an eye for excellence", Fr John went on to say: "He was a good organiser. His attitude was that if you are doing something, do it well. And do it big. Just last year, he organised a celebration of the 125th Centenary of this church, the Sacred Heart, Omagh, and he obviously alluded to St Mary's Drumragh in applying for the papal blessing, as it is also included in Pope Francis' blessing. He left no one out. And the line-up of special speakers for the week! Eugene succeeded in enlisting all the heavy hitters: Cardinal Brady; Archbishop Eamon Martin; Archbishop Dermot Farrell; and the Papal Nuncio...to mention a few. How he succeeded in persuading these busy prelates to come is beyond me."

Recalling Fr Eugene's love for the USA, where he spent two years on sabbatical, obtaining a Masters in Psychology and Counselling from Loyola University, Maryland USA, Fr John remarked: "Many of the friends he made then remained close to him and were very supportive during his illness. Eugene had spent many summers during his days in the seminary with the Benedictine Sisters in Ridgely, Maryland, where he worked at their School for Exceptional Children. During those two years, I often thought that he might stay there in an American diocese. His sister, Fiona was living in US at that time and they were very close. But his loyalty to his own diocese was stronger and he returned to Derry, and soon was appointed to be PP of Greencastle where he spent eight happy years."

He went on to mention Fr Eugene's beloved mare, Sorcha, and his great fondness for horses, recalling: "When one visited him, part of the ritual was going out to admire Sorcha, especially when she produced her foal. He enjoyed looking after her and riding out and made great friends in the equine world. His greatest joy was when Sorcha retired and he made her available to help the children at the Riding for the Disabled. He was very grateful to the people who encouraged him to realise his childhood dream of owning a horse."

Fr John also mentioned Fr Eugene's love of travelling and keeping fit, saying: "He ran the marathon in New York and Rome, and walked regularly. He looked in superb condition. Hence, the news of his illness came as a great shock to us. It must have been so traumatic for him. After his initial shock and trauma, he accepted his prognosis with courage, dignity and faith."

He added: "Friendship and loyalty to his friends was a true mark of Eugene. He had friends

from USA and Scotland come all the way specially to visit him when he became ill. He would have done the same for them."

Pointing out that the readings Fr Eugene had chosen for his funeral Mass were the same as those he had chosen for his ordination, Fr John remarked: "It is a brave man who would resurrect those readings and present his life for scrutiny in the light of how faithful he was to the aspirations of ordination day."

Ideals

"But Eugene was true to the ideals of his youthful priesthood. Yes, there were times when the stresses of parochial life got him down. But he faithfully continued to care for his flock. In his gentle, quiet, diligent, dutiful pastoring and leadership, in his care for the sick, the dying and the bereaved, in preparing children for their sacraments, in his chaplaincy work in Omagh and Altnagelvin hospitals, and with the pupils in the various secondary schools he was appointed to, he showed the face of our loving God to many people."

Recalling the recessionary hymn for Fr Eugene's Ordination Mass, 'Go tell everyone', Fr John read a few lines from it before pointing out: "It's a fitting description of his ministry. He preached the gospel daily and he lived it every day. May he rest in peace."

Speaking at the end of the Requiem Mass, Bishop Donal, who was the chief celebrant, said that he had been struck by two things in the days following Fr Eugene's death: "Firstly, despite problems and big question marks over church leadership, there is still a remarkable degree of loyalty to, and gratitude for clergy and their ministry. That is especially true for the work that is done when illness or disaster strike. And secondly, I was very struck by the pride that our parishes have in rising to the occasion when one of their present or former clergy dies. We saw that over the last few days in the amazing parish communities connected with the life and ministry of Fr Eugene. Despite disappointments, that ongoing desire for belonging and hope will not go away."

"I know we face a rapidly changing reality," he continued, "There is much distress in our world, and concern for the safety of our young people in the streets, online and even in their homes. But there is also a substantial mistrust in church structures. Furthermore, the dropping number of clergy means that it is simply not possible to provide the traditional religious services - the regular weekly ones and the occasional events - in each of our many churches."

But these last days have shown me that, whatever the configuration of our parishes, there will be a key role



Fr Eugene celebrating Good Relations Week as a member of Omagh Churches Forum.

Remembering Fr Eugene Hasson...

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for those who proclaim the mercy of God and the work to build supportive communities.

"Fr Eugene knew that it will involve much greater prayerful discernment by parishioners of what has to be done, and how the Gospel is lived and preached. The Gospel will not be handed on merely from the pulpit at weekend Masses. It will be proclaimed by families and communities who love Jesus and desire to be salt to the earth and light to the world.

"We thank God for the many public and private ministries of

Fr Eugene Hasson, for the deep friendships through which he interacted with people and for his thoughtful nature. We commend him to God and pray that others will follow his vocation."

When Fr Eugene was carried out of Sacred Heart Church, the St Eugene's Brass & Reed Band that had played on so many special occasions there, filled the air with their music, while people lined the route around the church building in tribute as their parish priest was taken on one last circuit of it before his remains were taken to his home town for burial.

Led off by two ponies and

riders, the cortege made its way out of Omagh and onwards to Plumbridge, then into Cranagh, over Sperrin and down Kilcreen Road into Feeny, before travelling on to Dungiven and to St Patrick's Church, via Station Road, where he had formerly lived.

Fr Eugene is survived by his brothers, Fearghal and Cathal, and sister, Fiona (Grant), and his nephews and nieces: Peadár; Nulagh; Emmett; and Cara.

Month's Mind Masses will be celebrated in St Patrick's Dungiven on February 12, at 7 pm, and in Sacred Heart Church, Omagh, on Saturday, February 28, at 5.30 pm.



With his ministry to people enhanced by wide travel experience...

Fr Eugene lived life committed to the role of a priest



GRATEFUL to have had a brother a priest, Fr Eugene Hasson's youngest sibling, Fiona remarked during her welcome to those gathered for his Requiem Mass in Sacred Heart Church, Omagh, that her rock, friend and guiding light was "someone who personified decency and fairness, and could not have been more suited to his calling to the priesthood."

She noted that he was "a man who, with little effort, attracted followers, instilled loyalty and commanded respect, not because of his position, but rather his quiet, compassionate words, his faith in God, his deeds and his unwavering moral compass."

"I had the joy of being a big part of his life," she said, "and seeing how he fully committed himself to the role of a priest, and how he looked after his parishioners and absorbed himself into the community of each parish he had the privilege of serving."

"For those who knew him best," said Fiona, "we knew that his

parishes who had organised her brother's wake and funeral, and the Funeral Directors, Charlie Lynch and Seamus McLaughlin, for the dignified and professional manner in which they carried out Fr Eugene's wishes.

Thanking Bishop Donal, and all the priests who had supported Fr Eugene during his 45 years of priesthood, Fiona went on to express deep appreciation to those who had supported him during his sickness, including her neighbour, Fr Seamus Kelly, and to his beloved friends from Omagh Churches Forum, and the wonderful people from the different Drumragh parish committees, whose knowledge Fr Eugene had much appreciated.

Preparing to bring Fr Eugene home to rest with his parents "in the land of O'Cahan", Fiona concluded: "We believe your spirit will live on in this beautiful Church that you loved so much, and among the great people of Tyrone, where you have spent most of your ministry."

Fr Eugene's first appointment as a curate was in Drumragh, back in 1980, where he served for 11 years before being appointed to the neighbouring Killyclogher Parish, and as chaplain to Tyrone County Hospital, in 1991. It was while ministering here that his great love of horses led to him being encouraged by local equine friends to get a horse.

Speaking later of the joy that this brought to her brother, Fiona recalled his beloved mare, Sorchá, that he had had for 31 years before she died five years ago, after having served in the local Riding for the Disabled centre for almost two decades. He also enjoyed going to the Aga Khan Dublin Horse Show, and his last visit there was in the days after his 70th birthday, celebrated on August 3, just a couple of weeks before his cancer diagnosis.

Life-time friends

Travel and people were another two great interests, the latter fuelled by the former, and many of those he met on his trips to various parts of

the world became life-time friends, with some going out of their way to travel many miles to be with him when they heard of his terminal illness.

"Two people came from America to see him after he got out of hospital in September, one stayed for 24 hours, the other for five days," recalled Fiona, adding: "One was the daughter of John Wilson and the other was Jan Hiley. Eugene had met John and Jan in 1975, when the three of them were counsellors with Camp America. Eugene was going into his second year in Maynooth and applied for the Camp through the university. They had been friends for the last 50 years.

"John doesn't like flying, so his daughter came to see Eugene; he had celebrated her wedding in 1981. She could only stay 24 hours as she had to go back to America from Italy. Then, two days before Eugene died, Jan travelled over from San Francisco and stayed for the funeral. Eugene had gone into the hospice on the Thursday and she really wanted to come and visit him. They hugged for a long time, and Eugene was able to speak to her.

"He was also delighted that an American friend called Jean spent five days with him in October. She did natural therapies such as reflexology, which brought him great comfort from the stresses of his illness and precious time with good friends. Another friend, Brendan Geary, whom he met in England while studying for his Masters after the Omagh bomb, came to visit him in November, on his way back from the Philippines. He came back a week and a day before Eugene died and spent the day with him.

"And a Polish friend that he met at a boot camp in Croatia about six years ago, came to visit Eugene from Poland for three days. The contribution of all the family, friends, carers, nurses and medics who visited and kept in contact with Eugene during his illness was so appreciated by him and our family. We are forever indebted to

all for the compassion and care that they gave."

Fiona noted that her brother had many interests that people wouldn't have been aware of, such as martial arts, wrestling and going to the gym: "Eugene always took care of his fitness and would have went to the gym every week for a workout. That would have come from his marathon days, though the gym was a bit less strenuous than the marathon running. He was also a vegetarian most of his life."

Apart from America, which he first visited in 1973 and later had the pleasure of flying there on Concorde in 2003, Fr Eugene's interest in other cultures brought him to Moscow and Beijing, via the Trans-Siberian Railway, and to Germany, Mongolia, India and Africa – and he had NASA keeping his request in mind to be the first priest on the moon!

"Eugene would say that travel changed his life," remarked Fiona, adding: "I went to India and Africa with him, and we got tickets to the Oberammergau Passion Play in Germany. He had also visited Delhi and Calcutta, and while in Calcutta he met Mother Teresa's nuns, the Missionaries of Charity. She was

away when he was there, but he wrote to her afterwards and she responded.

"Eugene had a great knowledge and understanding of, and interest in, people. His travels led him to have that interest in people. His life was very interesting and I will greatly miss him."

She went on to recall: "At the wake in Omagh, when people spoke to me, I asked them their names as I appreciated them coming. Many were parishioners, people he had journeyed with in their lives, and they had very interesting stories. I recognised some of the names, such as Babs Barrett who did the Cribbs exhibition, which Eugene loved. I got a lot of comfort and peace from those conversations.

"Many didn't know that Eugene had buried his mother three days before the Omagh bomb. The day of the bomb, we were trying to keep him away from the news as he needed a few days off. But, when he eventually heard about it, he was straight up the road and spent the next few days at the leisure centre with the people.

"Eugene was a kind and good man and he was like that since he was a boy. May he rest in peace now."



My journey in faith *by Liam Begley*



Liam Begley, dedicated long-term member of Dungiven Parish Pastoral Council.

Early Days: The Master Potter

BEING born into today's world is a vastly different experience than it was when I made my earthly entrance in 1950. I must confess that I can claim little credit if my faith and the behaviour emanating from it has helped anyone along the way; I am simply a product of the 'Master Potter' who brought me to creation, and exceptional parents, Tommy and Maggie Begley (nee McCann), along with my great aunt Jeannie, who lived with us for a number of years, and many other aunts, uncles, cousins, friends and neighbours who contributed positively to my development.

In addition, I have many reasons to be grateful to so many teachers, priests, acquaintances and ministers of other Christian denominations who have met or accompanied me on some part of my journey. So many different communities have played a part in creating the person I am today.

I was the first child of five born to Tommy and Maggie, who had married at a 'mature' age, and was reared on a small farm in an idyllic setting on a railway's edge, in the townland of Drumaduff, in the Drumsurn part of St Patrick's Parish, Dungiven. I realise now that my early years' experience was a major factor in my all-round development, and gave me a knowledge base and an understanding of life and faith which I might not have benefitted from had my parents been younger, or had I lived in a town or village. At that time, all of our neighbours, acquaintances and visitors would have professed to be Christians, although there was a variety of denominations which we would have had little knowledge of.

Memories of Halcyon Days

The innocence of the age made the experience even more special, bringing back heartwarming memories of my younger brother, Sean, soaking 'Wee Willie' Irwin with Holy Water as he left our house on his wee grey Ferguson tractor, issuing a simple instruction: "Bless yourself Willie, bless yourself."

Willie duly complied, with his left hand, but he did comply! Sean was only doing what my mother did every time my father set off on a journey on the tractor, as a blessing for a safe journey. Sean had no idea that Willie was not a Catholic, although it would never have been an issue for Willie.

I have no recall of a time when God and faith were not a vital and integral part of my very existence. I discovered at a very young age that Aunt Jeannie was very afraid of worms, and that I didn't actually have to be holding a worm to induce this terror. I could just cup my hands and say "worms Auntie" and she was terrified. She would always admonish me: "Aw Liam, God's watching you. God can see you!" I must have always thought that God had a good sense of humour.

Soon after this, I went on 'holiday' with Aunt Jeannie to my Aunt Annie's home in Ballinrees, in the Parish of St John's, Coleraine, coinciding with the birth of my late sister, Anne. On my first morning, Aunt Annie took me into 'the good room', sat me down on a cushion by the sideboard, and said: "There you go. Throw them all out over your shoulder and I'll gather them up later." The drawer was filled with silk scarves, mantillas and handkerchiefs of every shade. I was working up a good rhythm and getting good distance on the mantillas when Aunt Jeannie appeared. Her look said more than her tongue ever could. "Aw Liam, God's watching you. God can see you." I was totally confused and swiftly countered, "Why, is He on His holidays too?" Thus began my understanding that God was everywhere and not just in Drumaduff!

My Relationship with God

God has been a constant friend to me. To me, He is the reason I am here. Though I may be at odds with Church teaching, I have to say that fear has played little or no part in our relationship. While we should show absolute respect to God and be aware of how indebted we are

to Him for our salvation through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ, I think that God would want us to love Him much more than fear Him.

The God I think of is kind and caring, filled with mercy and compassion, understanding of our weaknesses, and loves nothing more than to listen to our calls. I talk to Him like I would to my best friend. If you ask why I trust Him so, I would say that I have been served really well by this method to date; even when things did not work out the way I wanted, I found that the actual outcome was the better option for all concerned in the long run.

The Foundation of Prayer

Morning and night prayer were essential aspects of the daily routine for all the children in the family. I remember a remarkable feeling of importance when permitted to join the adult prayer gathering with the Rosary of the Day being its central focus. The 'trimmings' - special prayers for illness, deaths, or exams - could have taken longer than the actual Rosary.

I remember, at about four years old, asking if I could say a prayer for a poor lady who had died. I realised from the body language of the adults that they were pleased I had considered her death important. This experience was a major factor in my desire to help others in sad or difficult times, if I possibly could. To some, the Rosary may have seemed repetitive, but to me it always seemed very grounded, solid and dependable.

Educational Travels

My educational journey and my faith journey were often very closely interlinked. I must name the teachers at Drumsurn Elementary, who complemented the work of my parents: Miss Bridie Kelly (Paul), my first teacher, with whom I remained friends even after she married Mr Dick Doherty and moved to Tartnakelly; Miss Noble, who replaced Miss Kelly and married Mr Brady (who had replaced Mr Doherty); Miss Josephine McLaughlin (Mrs Lynch), who prepared us for First Communion before she moved to Claudy; Miss Teresa McBride (Mrs O'Kane), who taught all of my siblings and then my children; Mrs Anna McElhinney, who was responsible for preparing me for Confirmation; and Mr Lawrence Hegarty, the Principal, who took our Bible History class very seriously.

I remember Fr Pat Kelly, the first priest to reside in Drumsurn, visiting our class. I was making the Sign of the Cross, but used my left hand because I was mirroring Miss Kelly, who used her left hand so we would use our right. When Fr Kelly asked why, I replied, "I'm using the same one as the teacher." I was terrified that I had got her into bother, but he just smiled.

A Legacy of Pastors

We were truly blessed with the spiritual care we received in Drumsurn over the years, including: Fr James McKee (1958), the humblest, gentlest person you ever could meet, and I have endeavoured to base my treatment of others on his template, and still visit his grave in Glenullin when praying for a resolution to current problems; Fr Bernard Feeney (1964-1971), a wonderful pastor and great friend of my father's, who was very supportive during my father's death in 1970; Fr Art O'Reilly, who is larger than life, raised everyone's spirits and his laughter was infectious; Fr PJ McGuigan (1974), long remembered for his dedication to a vow of poverty and redistributing any gifts he received; Fr Michael McEldowney, who served for 11 years, oversaw the chapel renovation, and was heavily involved with the Gaelic Club; Fr Jim McGonigle, an astute fundraiser and wonderful spiritual guide, who I feel honoured to call a special friend; Fr James McCrory, a retired priest with a gift for the young, who once asked a grand-niece if she loved God after she complained about going to Mass, and she replied: "Uck aye, I do Fr James, but I wouldn't be nuts about Him!"; Fr Michael Mullan, a pious and devout man who was the last cleric in the Drumsurn Parochial House, which has recently been sold.

St Columb's and De La Salle

My time as a boarder in St Columb's College could be challenging and, while the corporal punishment was sometimes extreme, I recall the fun times more vividly. Some priests there were teaching under duress while waiting for parish vacancies - how times have changed! I turned any perceived injustice into a promise: "If I ever work with children, I'll never treat them like this."

It was also at St Columb's that I experienced what I believe was an answer to prayer. Terrified of needles and suffering from 21 verrucae on my feet, I began using Holy Water and the Sign of the Cross on the infected areas after night prayers. They disappeared, proving to me that serious prayer is never ignored.

Later, at De La Salle College in Manchester (1969), I was friendly with Monsignor O'Connor and Fr Peter Knowles. They played a vital role in college life, even helping deal with a silly outbreak of students dabbling in the occult. I remember Fr Knowles introducing himself: "Hello, I'm Peter Knowles. Unlike my famous namesake [the Wolves footballer], I'm thinking of giving up religion and taking up football!"

A Career in Teaching

On returning home, I began teaching. I remember with so much affection my P4 class in Long Tower Boys, names like Anthony Canavan, Thomas McCann, and Thomas Phelan are ingrained in my mind. I then spent 35 years at St Patrick's College, Dungiven.

I loved every day, I loved the children, and I knew their families.

St Brigid – Patron Saint of Ireland

ST Brigid is placed alongside St Patrick as joint Patron Saints of Ireland. An article in 'The Messenger' last month caused me to review a short article I had written about her some time ago, and I remembered how impressed I had been at the time by her care for the poor and her great charity and compassion.

Having grown up on a small farm, I was also greatly taken by her love of animals and being patroness of dairy workers.

She is also purported to be patroness of mothers, blacksmiths, healers and poets, which was my inspiration for writing a tribute in verse, although I confess, I am not a poet.

I am certain that the vast



majority of residents in Ireland are well informed of St Brigid and her exploits. St Brigid's crosses remain very popular and are often placed on the doors of dwellings in the belief that they will protect those inside from evil spirits, fire, hunger, illness and disease.

Prayer to St Brigid on her Feast Day

*Brigid of Faughart, springtime in the air,
a prayer we whisper, a burden we share.
Born into shadows, a spirit so bright,
you shone a beacon, a pure guiding light.*

*For the poor and the weak, your heart overflowed,
a champion of justice, on life's dusty road.
You saw the suffering, the wounds deep inside,
and fought against darkness, with dignity and pride.*

*Not just the symptoms, but roots you would find,
the inequality rampant, so hurting mankind.
Told, 'Love thy neighbour', lesson often ignored,
the vulnerable neglected, their voices unheard.*

*From your Kildare Abbey, your teachings did spread,
your blessings of cloths a faith and hope led,
or sick and the hurting, a faith did ignite,
believing in healing, with all of your might.*

*We weave Brigid's crosses, a symbol so clear,
of Christ's sacrifice, banishing all fear.
Remembering your journey, your commitment untold,
to care for the lost, more precious than gold.*

*You'd want us to act, not just dream and aspire,
to fight for the helpless, to set souls afire.
For addicts abandoned, a helping hand lend,
support and compassion, a most faithful friend.*

*To churches you'd call, for mercy and grace,
to welcome the wounded, in every place.
And each of us urged, in our own humble way,
to brighten the darkness, and lighten the day.*

*Inspire us, dear Brigid, to love as you told,
to cherish the broken, as Christ did of old.
A legacy whispered, on February's soft breeze,
a prayer for your blessing, and merciful ease.*

(Liam Begley)

continued from page 22

We had an amazing staff and pupils who would have excelled in any era. In the midst of the heavy lifting, we had some 'fierce craic'.

Service and Future of the Parish

Over the years, I have been involved in voluntary work, including running the 'Children's Friendship Programme for Northern Ireland' (CFPNI), bringing Protestant and Catholic children together for placements in the USA. I have also worked with the Gelvin Community Association on historical publications.

My Church involvement has been constant. From being an altar boy at age eight, with Sean Mullan, Vincent Devlin, Joey Chivers and Francis Forsythe, to serving Mass in boarding school, where the attraction was sometimes the cooked breakfast at Nazareth House! Since Vatican II, I have been a Reader, and was 'conscripted' as a Minister of the Eucharist by Fr McEldowney. Administering the Blessed Sacrament to the sick is a privilege that leaves me humbled and filled with hope.

My work with the Parish Council began in 1980. Back then, we were needed as ushers for a chapel that was full to overflowing. Today, the need is different. There is

an increase in brokenness and displacement. The task of a Pastoral Council now must be to create an open door - a safe, non-judgmental haven for the vulnerable. If we could only remove the stigma attached to mental health and perceived failure, and trust in the Holy Spirit, we would find the answers to our greatest problems.

My Family

If you read what I have actually attributed to myself, you might well be forgiven for thinking that it is unlikely that I had time to bother with mundane items like a wife or children. I was probably exaggerating all those other exploits because I have been married for just over 50 years to the long-suffering Jean, who holds everything together. Fr John Irwin, who thankfully is still living in Dungiven, officiated at our wedding. We went on to have four amazing children: Stephan, Lisa, Erin and Janine. We have two sons-in-law, fortuitously both named Michael so that I can never get the wrong name, and one daughter-in-law, Emma, who I could never forget anyway.

Jean was a Castlederg lady, and nursed in Altnagelvin, Gransha, and finished up in what was North West Independent Clinic at the time. We have eight grandchildren:

DUNGIVEN PARISH
ST. PATRICK R.E.A.C.H. RETREAT
1st - 7th MARCH 2026



Sunday - Retreat Open at 6pm
Weekdays - Mass at 7am & 10am
Weekdays - Evening service at 7pm
Saturday - Vigil Mass at 6pm
when Bishop Donal will close the retreat

Eilish; Owen; Arthur; Joel; Conal; Dara; Nina; and Gracie.

We have been truly blessed to have such an amazing family, and thank God for them every day. Our siblings, nephews, nieces and cousins are hugely important to us also.

My Covenant

Jesus gave us a clear directive: Love God with every fibre of our being and love our neighbour as ourselves. This is the way to inner

peace. We will make mistakes, but the secret is to never give up.

- With God: I thank Him morning and night for my family's gifts and pray for those in need or countries suffering unnecessarily.

- With others: I try to help anyone in need, hold no grudges, forgive those who act against me, and celebrate the success of others.

I thank God for giving me the health and ability to serve Him and help others in the process.

‘Matt Talbot: Urban Mystic’...a powerful story of hope to premiere in Derry

A powerful new film exploring the life of one of Ireland's most compelling spiritual figures will premiere in Derry on February 23, marking a significant moment following the centenary year of his death.

'Matt Talbot: Urban Mystic' is a feature-length documentary-drama that tells the extraordinary true story of Matt Talbot, the Dublin labourer whose journey from chronic alcoholism to heroic holiness has inspired generations. Declared Venerable by Pope Paul VI, Talbot is on the path to sainthood and is widely regarded as a patron for those struggling with addiction and recovery.

Produced by Joyful Films, the award-winning Catholic production company based in the Philadelphia area, the film combines dramatic re-enactments with expert interviews and deeply moving personal testimonies. Portions of the film were shot on location in Dublin and Philadelphia, bringing Talbot's world vividly to life.

The premiere comes nearly 100 years after Talbot's death in 1925, offering audiences a timely reflection on addiction, redemption, and the transforming power of faith.

"Matt Talbot's story is the story of one simple 'yes' to God," said film-maker, Bill Rose, who served as director, producer, and editor. "On a hot Saturday in Dublin in 1884, at the lowest point of his

life, Matt chose sobriety - and that single decision, lived one day at a time, changed everything."

Talbot took a life-long pledge of sobriety after confession and spiritual direction at Clonliffe Seminary, remaining sober for more than 40 years. He went on to live a hidden life of intense prayer, daily Mass, hours before the Blessed Sacrament, and radical service to the poor - a spirituality Rose describes as "deeply mystical and profoundly practical."

"He just couldn't get enough of Jesus," Rose said. "What we now understand in 12-step recovery as reliance on a higher power, Matt was living through his Catholic faith decades before the 12 steps existed."

The film also features modern-day stories of recovery, including testimony from Ken Johnston, co-executive producer and long-time recovery advocate, who credits Talbot's intercession as central to his own sobriety.

"Matt Talbot has become a cornerstone of our prayer life and ministry," Johnston said, adding: "Every time we gather, we pray for his canonization and for freedom from addiction. His witness continues to save lives."

'Matt Talbot: Urban Mystic' had its initial premiere in the United States in September 2025, and follows Joyful Films' 2024 Mid-Atlantic Emmy Award-winning production on St Katharine Drexel. The Derry premiere

marks a special homecoming for a story deeply rooted in Irish soil and spiritual heritage.

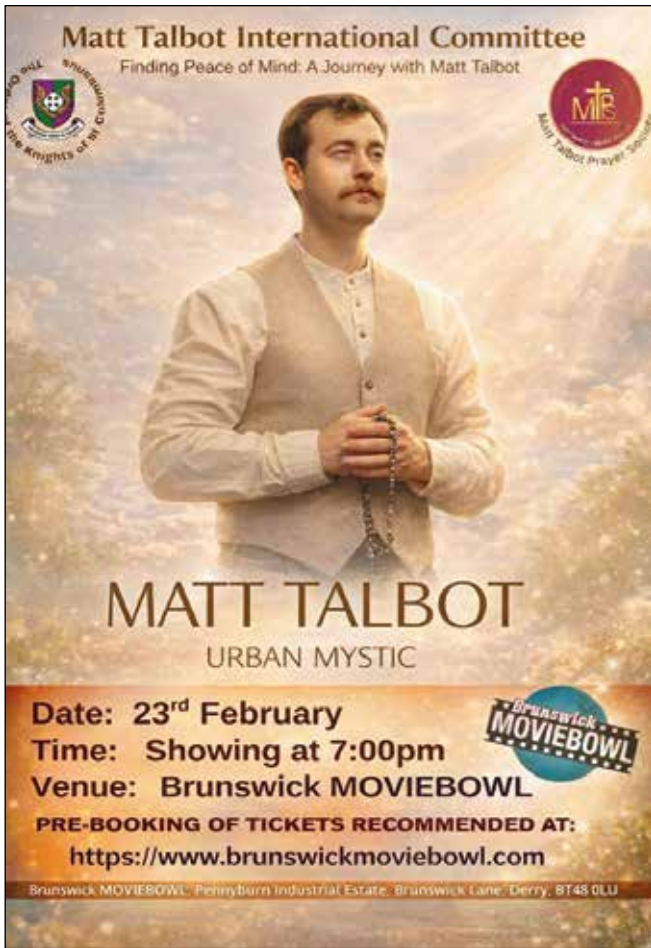
While the film addresses addiction, Rose emphasises that its focus is ultimately one of hope.

"This is not just a film about addiction," he said, "it's about the solution - how anyone, no matter

their chains, can find freedom, healing, and holiness."

The premiere will take place in Brunswick Movie Bowl, Pennyburn Industrial Estate, Brunswick Lane, Derry, BT48 0LU, on Mon, Feb 23, at 7 pm. Pre-booking of tickets is recommended, at <https://www.brunswickmoviebowl.com>

Matt Talbot International Committee
Finding Peace of Mind: A Journey with Matt Talbot



MATT TALBOT
URBAN MYSTIC

Date: 23rd February
Time: Showing at 7:00pm
Venue: Brunswick MOVIEBOWL
PRE-BOOKING OF TICKETS RECOMMENDED AT:
<https://www.brunswickmoviebowl.com>

Brunswick MOVIEBOWL: Pennyburn Industrial Estate, Brunswick Lane, Derry, BT48 0LU

An Lasair Chríost Conference...by James Tourish

Finding purpose and meaning for young adults in the modern age

ON Sunday, March 22, An Lasair Chríost (The Flame of Christ) Conference will take place in St Columb's College, for a day which will see young people from right across the island come together to discuss Christ's call for Ireland's youth today, and what we can take from the life of St Patrick and apply to our own lives.

Many people nowadays are realising that the ways of the modern world, the constant pursuit for career advancement, the everlasting pursuit of pleasure over purpose, and the real lack of anything really meaningful, are not ultimate goals to be achieved, but are distractions from the more profound questions knocking at our doors.

In a world full of noise, one of which the news cycles and advertisers try every bit to grab your attention, there is a real power in silence, and taking the

time to contemplate the truly important things of life, like St Patrick did on Croagh Patrick.

The conference will begin with a Sung Mass celebrated by Bishop Donal McKeown at 11.30 am, in St Patrick's Church, Pennyburn, followed by a 1pm start at St Columb's College, which will begin with a light lunch.

Attendees will hear from guest speakers, panellists, and can take part in workshops and speak to people from religious groups and organisations at stalls set up. There will be time also to talk to each other and make friends with like-minded people.

The event will end with Solemn Benediction at 4 pm. We hope to see you all there!

For enquiries, and expressions of interest in attending for catering purposes, please email - FlameofChristConference@gmail.com



An Lasair Chríost Conference

Sunday, March 22nd, Derry

Christ's call to Ireland's Youth in the Modern Age and reflecting on the life of St. Patrick

11:30am - Sung Mass celebrated by Bishop Donal McKeown, St Patrick's Pennyburn

1pm - Lunch, St Columb's College

1:30pm - Conference with Guest Speakers, Stalls, Workshops and Discussion

4pm - Solemn Benediction to close conference

The Flame of Christ Young Adults' conference

Venue - St Columb's College, Derry, BT48 8NH
Enquiries to FlameOfChristConference@gmail.com

Ruach...Breath of the Spirit

Thirty-eight years yet innocent *by Fr Eamonn Kelly*

THE other day on the news, I saw an innocent man being released from prison after serving 38 years for a crime he did not do. It was a lovely moment in the middle of a terrible sad reality that should not have arisen. When the released man spoke on camera, he stressed that he always knew that this day would come but he regretted that his jury, his judge and his family has not believed him. Tears flowed as he told the media that the false evidence presented in the trial had given lies instead of truth, and fiction instead of reality. His main regret was that, because of his conviction, he had lost his wife and family. He had had no communication with any of them since the judge's hammer came down, close to four decades ago.

This news item gave my interior life a new angle on things as I pondered on ways that I have been wrongly converted, and the times in life when I was convinced by a false reality. Conversion is a life changer. If I accept something as true, then that thinking influences my everyday life, and colours the way I see the world and the people that are around me.

As the interior train of thought continued, I saw clearly how important conversion to truth is. If I think that a particular leader is great, then what that leader does and says has a big influence in my ordinary everyday life. If I think that a leader is of little good, then the leader's actions I can easily criticise and condemn anyone who follows them. It is so important that we be careful in what or who we are converted to. If I look at any area of society, I can see the results of conversion everywhere. The person who is converted to the opinion that drugs are nothing but harmless fun, will challenge no

one to avoid drugs. The opposite holds true too – the person who holds that drugs are very harmful to the human will try and persuade all not to get involved in the use of drugs.

“Peter got to know Jesus in a very familiar way. He walked the roads of Galilee with him. He chatted, argued and ate with Jesus. Peter was called by Jesus to become a leader in the promotion of the Kingdom of God. Here, we see Peter's reluctance to be converted more. Peter had gone some distance – from fisherman to listener to the Word of God – but this idea of suffering proved to be a stumbling block.”

This interior flow of thought led me to Christ and my conversion to the ways of God or not. For conversion is an acceptance of a truth presented. It is not just the presentation given by someone, but it is our decision to accept that presentation. Let us look at St Peter's conversion to the faith and truth as our Saviour taught, and all the time trying to be aware of our own conversion or the lack of conversion. If we are convicted of truth we shall act according to that truth. If we are convicted only to some truth, our following of the

way will be light.

The story of the life of St Peter is about conversion. He, eventually, came to a deep lasting faith in Jesus Christ. Peter had a way of thinking, of living, of being. Then, through an encounter with Jesus, Peter changed the direction of his life and began the process of being converted more to the ways of God.

Peter, the married fisherman, was called by Jesus to leave the catching of fish behind and to follow a new path. We know very little of Peter's faith beforehand. That moment when Jesus called him to become a fisher of men had a deep impact on Peter; enough impact to leave the familiar, to leave the place where he was comfortable and to trust the one who was calling. Looking at my own conversion, I see much more hesitation, much more looking for reassurance, much more examining the situation, trying to figure out the outcome of my decision. There were many times that I heard the call, but because of lack of conversion, it took a long time to be converted and convinced to the truth of the call.

Peter got to know Jesus in a very familiar way. He walked the roads of Galilee with him. He chatted, argued and ate with Jesus. Peter was called by Jesus to become a leader in the promotion of the Kingdom of God. Here, we see Peter's reluctance to be converted more. Peter had gone some distance – from fisherman to listener to the Word of God – but this idea of suffering proved to be a stumbling block.

Conditions

Jesus proclaims that He, the Christ, was going to suffer, be rejected and be put to death. From where Peter is at on his faith

journey, at this moment, the idea of suffering rejection and death is a step too far and he tries to change the conditions of following Jesus. Jesus is heading for Jerusalem. Peter wants to go somewhere else, anywhere else. Oh, how many times I tell Jesus the conditions of my following – I will go this far and am not able or willing to go beyond this point. How many times have I said I will follow you as long as I do not have to leave home, or be embarrassed or challenge my friends?

In not being fit to accept the possibility of suffering, at this point on his journey with Christ, Peter is not converted to the stark reality of the mission of Christ: of winning souls for God whatever the cost. Becoming a fisher of men was one thing, but the personal cost of rejection was too much for Peter. As a result of this lack of conversion, the denials became easier. The denials were easier to say because the speaker was not completely converted to the ways of the Saviour. Peter's 'I do not know the man' is very tied to Peter's 'that must not happen to you Lord'.

Running from the ways of God is easier when we are not converted and have not accepted the fullness of the teaching of Jesus. The cock crew and the reality dawned on Peter that he had separated himself from Christ because he had not allowed himself to be totally convinced of the teaching of Jesus. It is no wonder that the tears fell. Peter had wanted to follow Jesus, but his unwillingness to be converted totally resulted in Peter hiding in fear rather than being available to help and support Jesus as He took the Cross of redemption to Calvary. They are very vivid in my memory – my denials: I will not pray because I am too busy;



I will not speak to that person as they are very awkward; I will give up the drink another day; I will go on retreat some other time.

After the resurrection, Jesus forgave Peter, fully and completely. Jesus did not change His leader and left Peter as first among the apostles. The process of conversion truly began in earnest in Peter, allowing Jesus to be the one in charge, allowing God to be in control. The conversion would happen completely through the power of the Holy Spirit.

When the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples, Peter was the first to get up and proclaim that Jesus was Lord. Peter professed that Jesus had risen from the dead and that Christ was the one appointed by God to be the Lamb of sacrifice that would take away the sins of the world. That was some change of heart! From denying to a wee woman on Good Friday that he even knew Jesus to proclaiming boldly that Jesus, who was crucified, was and is Lord of the whole world. It was on this rock that Jesus would build His Church.

In the strength of the Holy Spirit, Peter would lead the fledgling Church to the ends of the earth. The conversion was completed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Peter was 'almost there' for a long time, but it was only by the help of the Holy Spirit that finally Peter could say from his heart, 'Jesus is Lord'. I can see many times when I wanted to speak the truth but hid; times when I wanted to stand for Christ but went along with the popular view; times when I knew I should have knelt in prayer but stood on with the crowd. It is only in asking for the help of the Holy Spirit that the greatest step and steps in conversion takes place.

The news item of the innocent man being released from prison after 38 years allowed me to have some good insights into conversion and how far am I willing to give my all to Christ. I should not be surprised at this, for I follow Jesus who, even though He was innocent, died to give me life. Today, I, and all who claim to follow Jesus, are asked to be convinced of the truth of the gospels and live accordingly.

'Life in the Spirit' seminars *by Evelyn Heaney*

'LIFE in the Spirit' seminars are a series of teachings, music and song, which deepen our relationship with God and create a personal encounter with Jesus. Our lives change through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The themes are: God's Love; Salvation; New Life; Receiving God's Gifts; Baptism in the Spirit; Growth; and Transformation.

'Life in the Spirit' seminars help us to experience the love of God poured into our hearts, and recognise Jesus as a true Friend and Saviour. Romans 5:5 says: "The love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."

Baptism in the Holy Spirit gives us a love for the Word of God in the Bible. We listen more attentively to the Scripture readings at Mass and to the

priest's homily, and desire to apply it to our lives.

These Seminars change our prayer life as we make time to pray every day. This includes prayer of praise, thanksgiving, contrition, and petition. People are keen to spend time with Jesus in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, praying for their own needs and the needs of others. Baptism in the Holy Spirit helps people make a change in their attitudes and behaviour towards God, and those they live and work with.

Many people receive the charismatic gifts of prophesy, word of knowledge, speaking in Tongues, and the gift of healing, which they then use for the greater good of their community, often becoming more active in the church in their parish and joining,

or even starting, a prayer group.

St Paul tells us to "put on the mind of Christ" (cf. Phil 2:5; 1 Cor 2:16).

Most people develop a desire and motivation to learn what the Church teaches, become familiar with the teachings of the Catholic Catechism, read good spiritual books, such as Lives of the Saints, and follow good Catholic speakers and writers. This is one of the graces of participating in the 'Life in the Spirit' seminars.

In 2017, Pope Francis celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) in Rome, calling it a "current of grace" to be shared with the whole Church. He emphasized unity, spiritual ecumenism, and the baptism in the Holy Spirit, urging the movement toward greater ecclesial maturity.

Pope Francis addressed the crowd at the Circus Maximus on June 3, 2017, praising the movement and challenging it to share "Baptism in the Holy Spirit" with everyone in the Church. He said: "I encourage you to expand the 'Life in the Spirit Seminars' in all places and for everyone."

'Life in the Spirit' seminars are currently running on Tuesday evenings in the Three Patrons Parish, Derry, in St Pio House, Galliagh.

Seminars begin in Omagh on February 19, the first Thursday in Lent, in the Sacred Heart Church, in conjunction with 7.30 pm Holy Mass. They conclude on Thursday, March 26. This will provide a grace-filled Lenten journey in this year of St Francis, who said: "Preach the Gospel at all times, if necessary, use words".

Omagh Charismatic Prayer Group invites you to

Life in the Spirit

Seminars 2026

Sacred Heart Church

Omagh, Co. Tyrone
Accessible online at www.drumraghparish.com

Thursday 7.30pm Holy Mass
Grace filled Lenten Journey

19th February	God's Love	Fr John Keane
26th February	Salvation	Fr Eamonn Kelly
5th March	New Life	Fr Barney McAleer
12th March	Receiving God's Gifts	Fr Peter McAnenly
19th March	Baptism in the Spirit	Fr Joseph Mary Deane CFR Derry
26th March	Growth & Transformation	Fr Owen Gorman

"Preach the Gospel at all times, if necessary use words." St. Francis

Vocations News

The Joy of Priesthood

THE Vocations Directors of the Northern dioceses (Armagh, Clogher, Derry, Down & Connor, Dromore, Kilmore and Raphoe) are hosting their annual Vocations Retreat at the Drumalis Retreat Centre, Larne, from March 6-8.

The Retreat is open to men from all over the country who are discerning a possible vocation to the diocesan priesthood.

The theme this year is ‘The Joy of Priesthood’, and the speakers who are lined up for the weekend are: Bishop Phonsie Cullinan, Bishop of Waterford & Lismore, and Chair of the Bishops’ Commission for Vocations; Sr Mary Sheila OP, Vocations Director, Limerick Diocese; Fr Michael McCullagh, a Vincentian priest who is involved in a ‘Ministry to Priests’ programme at Knock; Bishop Donal Roche, Auxiliary Bishop, Dublin Diocese; and Bishop Donal McKeown.

The local Vocations Directors will be on hand over the weekend and will celebrate a number of liturgies (Mass, Emmaus Walk, Adoration, Penitential Service) for the attendees, as well as taking part in an Open Forum; an opportunity for the participants to ask questions in relation to their ongoing discernment and

seminary formation. Please keep the intentions of the Retreat in your prayers, and the intentions of all those taking part.

Vocations Conference
The Vocations Council of the Diocese of Derry will be hosting a Vocations Conference in Pio House, Galliagh, on Saturday, March 21, from 9.30 am–2 pm.

Please note: Attendance is by invitation only!

The focus of the Conference will be the promotion of vocations to the diocesan priesthood; how best to engage the minds and hearts of men who are asking themselves how they will spend the rest of their lives, and to encourage them to consider seriously the possibility that God may be asking them to serve the Church as priests of the Diocese of Derry.

The format of the day will be a series of ‘Conversations in the Spirit’; a method of discussion promoted by the late Pope Francis, who asked us to be “A Listening Church” – brothers and sisters who listen attentively to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us right here, right now, and who can voice their thoughts without fear of interruption, contradiction, or criticism.

This Synodal approach has already proven very beneficial in a number of settings, and we hope that those who take part – members of Faith Groups active in the Diocese (such as Cursillo, Pioneers, Search, Youth 2000, Knights of Columbanus), school principals, teachers, heads of RE, chaplains, religious, priests, seminarians, and a number of men who are currently discerning

their vocation – will engage with one another in a way that will help the Vocations Council to continue its work of promoting vocations here in our own little corner of the Church, and of the world...the Diocese of Derry.

Please pray for the intentions of the Conference and of all those participating in it, and please note: space is limited, so participation is by invitation only.

A Prayer for Vocations to the Diocesan Priesthood

Lord Jesus, give us happy priests,
happy because they know they are called by You
and are Your friends.
May those who have been given the grace
of a priestly vocation,
welcome it with gratitude and responsibility.
May they nourish it with Your Word,
Your Sacraments and daily prayer.
We ask You, Lord,
for pastors according to Your Will:
to seek out the lost; serve the poor;
and humbly guide those entrusted to them.
Mary, Mother of Priests, pray for us.
St Joseph, Father of Priests, pray for us.

(Based on the words of Pope Leo XIV – National Vocations Office, Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference.)

Vocations Monstrance blessed by Pope Leo XIV to travel around island



A new Vocations Monstrance was launched by the Bishops of Ireland at a special prayer gathering during their annual spring retreat at the International Eucharistic and Marian Shrine in Knock, Co Mayo.

This Monstrance will be used to gather the faithful for prayerful Eucharistic Adoration for vocations to the priesthood and

to religious life.

Chair of the Bishops’ Council for Vocations, Bishop Phonsie Cullinan, Lismore, Waterford, highlighted the central role of prayer in nurturing vocations: “The Holy Father Pope Leo XIV blessed our new monstrance in the Vatican last November, which has been designated as a Vocations Monstrance.

“The bishops’ launch today marks an important moment in the Church’s ongoing commitment to promote and foster vocations to the priesthood and to religious life. Our monstrance will be travel around the island of Ireland to focus minds and hearts, and to ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into the fields of people’s lives today.

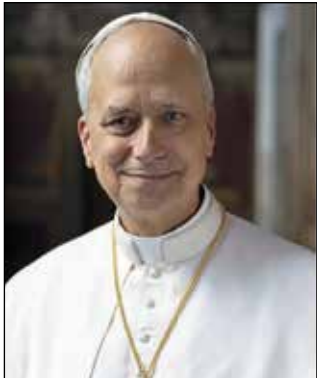
“As Catholics, we all share the important responsibility to build the Kingdom of God as we practice our faith.”

He added: “Our initiative aims to encourage prayer for vocations and to deepen young people’s awareness of God’s call in their

lives. The monstrance will visit dioceses, parishes, schools, and seminaries throughout the country, providing opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration and focused prayer for vocations.

“Through prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, we ask the Lord to raise up generous and joyful servants for His Church. Vocations are born in prayer, sustained by prayer, and strengthened through prayer.”

Bishop Phonsie went on to say: “We should consider in our prayer three virtues in particular in pleading with God for more vocations to the priesthood and religious life: faith, courage



- Fr Dermot Harkin (21st)
- Fr John Gilmore (22nd)
- Fr Joseph Gormley (23rd)
- Fr Eamon Graham (24th)
- Fr Gerald Hasson (25th)
- Fr Karl Haan (26th)
- All Priests (27th)
- All Priests (28th)

Pope’s monthly intention

The Holy Father has asked for prayer during February for:

Children with incurable diseases:
Let us pray that children suffering from incurable diseases and their families receive the necessary medical care and support, never losing strength and hope.

Prayer for Priests
Heavenly Father, I ask you to bless our bishops and priests and to

confirm them in their vocation of service.

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

Give them the grace they need to respond generously to you, and the courage to proclaim your Word of justice, love and truth. Bless, in a special way, Your servant Father, Send your Spirit upon him So that he may always walk in the path of faith, hope and love, in the footsteps of Christ, the eternal priest, who offered Himself on the cross for the life of the world. Amen.

Remember in prayer:

- All priests (Feb 1st)
- All priests (2nd)
- Fr Michael Doherty (3rd)
- Fr Patrick Doherty (4th)
- Mgr Andrew Dolan (5th)
- Fr Brian Donnelly (6th)
- Mgr Joseph Donnelly (7th)
- All priests (8th)
- All priests (9th)
- All priests (10th)
- All priests (11th)
- Fr Malachy Gallagher (12th)
- Fr Jack Farrell (13th)
- Fr Paul Fraser (14th)
- Fr John Farren (15th)
- Fr Neil Farren (16th)
- Fr Paul Farren (17th)
- All priests (18th)
- Fr John Forbes (19th)
- All Priests (20th)

DISCERNMENT RETREAT
FOR THE DIOCESAN PRIESTHOOD

SAVE THE DATE: MARCH 6-8, 2026
DRUMALIS, LARNE

CALLED
TO BE A
PRIEST?

DERRYVOCATIONS.ORG

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

and generosity – that we ask for greater faith in God’s plan and to trust God more. We need more courage to step out and be the person God is asking us to be and to follow the vocation God has planned for each person, and then be generous enough to give ourselves willingly in the service of others – be that in marriage, the single life, priesthood or religious life.

“I believe that there are people who are called to priesthood and religious life who just cannot make that final step. With sincere prayer around the country, perhaps they will obtain the faith, courage and generosity to do that and hopefully this initiative will help them on their vocational journey.”

Fr Willie Purcell, Ossory, the National Diocesan Vocations Coordinator, remarked that the

placed prayer and accompaniment at the heart of vocational discernment, saying: “At a time when many young people are searching for meaning, direction, and belonging, our National Vocations Monstrance offers a quiet but powerful invitation to encounter Christ in the Eucharist. It reminds us that every vocation begins in a relationship with the Lord, nurtured through prayer, listening, and trust.”

He went on to emphasise the vital role of families and parish communities in supporting those who are discerning their vocation, saying: “Every vocation is nurtured within a community of faith. We hope this monstrance will inspire parishes, families, and young people to pray together and to listen attentively to the voice of God in their lives.”

Vocations Holy Hour

THERE will be a Holy Hour for Vocations to the diocesan priesthood in St Columb’s Church, Waterside, on Tuesday, February 17, with Mass at 7.30 pm, followed by a Holy Hour from 8-9 pm; and

in St Oliver Plunkett’s Church, Clady (Greenlough) on Thursday 26 February at 7 pm.

Anyone who can’t attend in person can join in the prayers via the respective parish webcams.

Parish Post-its

Aghyaran

Weekend Mass Times: 7.30 pm Vigil, and 11 am.

Ardstraw East

(Newtownstewart)

Zoom Catechism: All are welcome to join Catechism by Zoom on Mondays, from 7.30-8.15 pm. Email: ardstraweast@derrydiocese.org to get the link. Learn how to answer hard questions.

Pope John Paul II Award – Sessions for Pope John Paul II Award participants take place on Thursdays at 6.30 pm, in the Oratory of Mary, Mother of God.

Holy Hour: 6.30 pm, Thursdays, Oratory of Mary, Mother of God.

Weekend Mass Times: 11:30 am, St Eugene's Glenock.

Badoney Lower

(Gortin-Rouskey)

Men's Lenten Talks: The St John Paul II Men's Prayer Group invites men of all ages to its Sunday talks during Lent, from 6-7 pm. Each night a guest speaker will give a talk and discuss faith and family life, with tea/coffee. This will be held in Cormac House, Gortin, which is beside St Patrick's Church.

Adoration: Adoration takes places in St Patrick's Gortin, after the 12 noon Mass until 5 pm on Tuesdays, and in St Mary's, Rouskey, after 7.30 pm Mass on Wednesdays, with an opportunity for Confession, until 9 pm.

Weekend Mass Times: 7.30 pm Vigil, St Patrick's, Gortin; 10 am, St Mary's, Rouskey.

Badoney Upper

(Plumbridge-Cranagh)

Adoration & Confession: Adoration and Confessions take place in St Patrick's Cranagh after the 7.30 pm Wednesday evening Mass, until 9 pm, and after the 12 noon Mass on Saturdays in Plumbridge.

Confessions: Confessions are available after 11 am Mass on Saturdays in Sacred Heart Church, Plumbridge, and after the 7.30 pm Saturday Vigil Mass in St Patrick's Church, Cranagh.

Weekend Mass Times: 7.30 pm Vigil, St Patrick's Cranagh; 10 am, Sacred Heart Plumbridge.

Ballinascreen

Lenten Mission: The Lenten Mission for Ballinascreen & Desertmartin will run from February 19-22, with the themes being: Eucharist & Thanksgiving; The Cross; and Waiting. The Mission will open on Thursday, February 19, with 7.30 pm Mass in Holy

Rosary Church. On Friday, there will be 7 am Mass in both Holy Rosary Church and St Mary's Church, Coolcalm, and 10 am Mass again in St Mary's Coolcalm, followed by tea/coffee in Knocknagin Parish Hall, with a Liturgy of the Word Service in Holy Rosary Church at 7.30 pm. On Saturday, there will be a Liturgy of the Hours Service at 10 am in Holy Rosary Church, Mass & Anointing of the Sick in St Patrick's Keenaught at 4 pm, and 6 pm Vigil Mass in Holy Rosary Church. On Sunday, Mass will be celebrated at 9 am in St Columba's, Straw, 10 am in St Mary's Coolcalm, 11 am in St Patrick's Sixtowns, and 12 noon in St Eugene's Moneyneena.

St Colm's Lenten Mass: During Lent, Mass will be celebrated at 8.40 am in St Colm's High School on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays (but not in Holy Week).

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

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place in Holy Rosary Church on the First Mondays from 12 noon until 7.30 pm.

Confessions: Holy Rosary Church every Saturday at 5.30 pm, before the Vigil Mass. Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, Holy Rosary; 9 am in St Columba's Straw; 11 am in St Patrick's, Sixtowns; 12 noon in St Eugene's, Moneyneena.

Ballymagroarty

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

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

Confessions: Saturdays from 10.30-11.30 am & 5.15-5.50 pm; Tues & Thurs 6.45-7.10 pm.

Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil; and 9.30 am, 11 am, and 12.30 pm on Sunday.

Banagher

Adoration & Chaplet: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Divine Mercy Chaplet take place in

St Mary's Church, Altinure, Thursdays, 10.30-11.30 am; St Joseph's Church, Fincairn, on Fridays, 10-11 am.

Confessions: St Mary's Church, Altinure, Thursday 10.30 am; St Joseph's Church, Fincairn, Friday 10 am & Saturday 6.30 pm.

Weekend Mass Times: 7 pm Vigil in St Joseph's Church, Fincairn, 10.30 am in St Mary's Church, Altinure, and 12 noon in St Peter's & St Paul's Church, Foreglen.

Bellaghy

Stations of Cross: Lenten Stations of the Cross will take place on Sundays at 6 pm on February 22 in Bellaghy, March 8 in Greenlough, and March 22 in Ballyscullion.

Lenten Retreat: The Parishes of Bellaghy & Greenlough are having a combined Lenten Programme in memory of Sr Clare Crockett's 10th Anniversary. It will commence on Thursday, February 12, with an information night, followed by weekly prayer nights from February 19 to March 26. The prayer nights will include informal small group discussion, reflecting on spiritual lessons from Sr Clare and application to our own daily lives. The themes for these nights are: A Call to Holiness; From Hollywood to Humble Heart; Surrender & Trust; and Alone with Christ Alone. There will be a 'Movie Night' on Thursday, February 19, in Greenlough, 7.30-9 pm, when there will be a viewing of the documentary on the Life & Spiritual Progression of Sr Clare. The programme comes to a close on Thursday, March 26, in Bellaghy, from 7.30-8.30 pm, when there will be Guided Adoration by the Sisters from the Home of the Mother, with Confessions running concurrently.

Adoration: Fridays from 10 am-8 pm (Rosary at 7.30 pm). Weekend Mass Times: 5.30 pm Vigil livestreamed to Bellaghy from St Oliver Plunkett's Church, Greenlough; 10.15 am in Ballyscullion, and 11.30 am in Bellaghy.

Adoration: Fridays from 10 am-8 pm (Rosary at 7.30 pm). Weekend Mass Times: 5.30 pm Vigil livestreamed to Bellaghy from St Oliver Plunkett's Church, Greenlough; 10.15 am in Ballyscullion, and 11.30 am in Bellaghy.

Adoration: Fridays from 10 am-8 pm (Rosary at 7.30 pm). Weekend Mass Times: 5.30 pm Vigil livestreamed to Bellaghy from St Oliver Plunkett's Church, Greenlough; 10.15 am in Ballyscullion, and 11.30 am in Bellaghy.

Cappagh (Killyclogher)

Lenten Programme: Stations of the Cross reflections will take place across the churches in Drumragh and Killyclogher Parishes, during Lent. Mondays – Sacred Heart, Omagh, at 7.30 pm, Tuesdays – St Mary's Knockmoyle at 7.30 pm and St Mary's Drumragh at 7.30 pm, Wednesdays – Christ the King, Strathroy, at 7.30 pm, Thursdays – Corpus Christi, Mountfield at 7.30 pm, and Fridays – St Mary's, Killyclogher, at 7.30 pm. There will also be a Holy Hour and Benediction on Sundays at 6 pm, alternating between St Mary's Killyclogher, on the first, third and fifth Sundays of Lent, and in Sacred Heart, Omagh, on the second and fourth and Palm Sunday.

Eucharistic Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesday from 8-9 pm in Christ the King, Strathroy, concluding with

Fridays, 6am-10 pm, and on Sundays 2-10 pm.

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

Guided Holy Hour: A Guided Holy Hour of Adoration in Honour of the Holy Face of Jesus takes place on Sundays, 6-7 pm in St Mary's Oratory. All welcome. Rosary for Priests: Three Rosaries are prayed each Tuesday, between 1-2 pm, in the Oratory for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

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

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

Weekend Mass Times: St Mary's Oratory – Vigil 4.30 pm, 8.30 am and 12.30 pm; St Mary's Cockhill – 11am; Star of the Sea, Desertegney – 9.45 am.

Burt, Inch & Fahan

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

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil, 10.15 am, St Aengus' Burt; 9 am, Our Lady of Lourdes, Inch; 11.30 am, St Mura's, Fahan.

Cappagh (Killyclogher)

Lenten Programme: Stations of the Cross reflections will take place across the churches in Drumragh and Killyclogher Parishes, during Lent. Mondays – Sacred Heart, Omagh, at 7.30 pm, Tuesdays – St Mary's Knockmoyle at 7.30 pm and St Mary's Drumragh at 7.30 pm, Wednesdays – Christ the King, Strathroy, at 7.30 pm, Thursdays – Corpus Christi, Mountfield at 7.30 pm, and Fridays – St Mary's, Killyclogher, at 7.30 pm. There will also be a Holy Hour and Benediction on Sundays at 6 pm, alternating between St Mary's Killyclogher, on the first, third and fifth Sundays of Lent, and in Sacred Heart, Omagh, on the second and fourth and Palm Sunday.

Eucharistic Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesday from 8-9 pm in Christ the King, Strathroy, concluding with

Night Prayer, and on Sunday from 6-7 pm, in Christ the King, with Devotions and Benediction.

Rosary: The Rosary is prayed in St Mary's Church, Killyclogher, Monday-Saturday at 9.15 am, and in Corpus Christi, Mountfield every Thursday evening at 8 pm.

Legion of Mary: Legion of Mary meets every Monday after 10 am Mass in St Mary's Church, Killyclogher. New members always welcome. Anyone wishing to welcome the Pilgrim Statute of Our Lady into your home and pray the Rosary is asked to contact Rosaleen on 07917421119 to make arrangements with the Legion of Mary, Cappagh Group.

St Pio Novena Devotions: Novena devotions through the intercession of St Padre Pio take place on the first Wednesday of the month in Christ the King Church, Strathroy. Rosary at 7 pm, followed by Mass as 7.30 pm. Veneration and blessing with relic will be available after Mass.

Stations of the Cross: The Stations are prayed on Fridays at 3 pm in St Mary's Killyclogher.

Confessions: Confessions are heard on Saturdays after 10 am Mass in St Mary's Killyclogher, and from 5.45-6.25 pm in Christ The King, Strathroy.

Polish Mass: Mass is celebrated in Polish in the Church of Christ The King, Strathroy, Omagh, on the first and third Sundays of each month at 10 am.

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil, 12 noon, Christ The King, Strathroy; 9 & 11 am, St Mary's, Killyclogher.

Carndonagh

Lenten Schedule: During Lent, from Mondays-Thursdays, the Rosary will be prayed at 9.30 am and 6.30 pm, with Mass at 10 am and 7 pm; on Fridays, the Rosary and Confessions will be at 6.30 pm, with Mass at 7 pm; on Saturdays, the Rosary will be prayed at 6.30 pm, followed by Mass at 7 pm; and on Sundays, Mass will be celebrated at 9 am and 11 am, with Rosary at 6.30 pm.

Weekend Mass Times: Vigil 7 pm; Sunday 9 am & 11 am.

Castlederg & Ardstraw West

Lenten Stations: Stations of the Cross will be prayed in St Mary's, Dregish, on the Fridays of Lent, at 7.30 pm. Lenten Walk with Christ: All are welcome to a time of faith, reflection and conversation

on the Wednesdays of Lent, starting February 25, at 7.30 pm. The evening will include a short reflection, Sycamore video, prayer and conversation, and tea/coffee. Adoration: Adoration takes place following 10 am Mass in St Patrick's Church on Fridays, until 12 noon.

Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil and 11 am, Castlederg; 9.30 am Dregish; and 12.30 pm Drumnabey.

Claudy

Lenten Stations: The Stations of the Cross will be prayed every Friday during Lent, on Parish webcam, beginning on Friday, February 20, after the Divine Mercy Chaplet at 3 pm.

Living Word: There is a 'Living Word' gathering in the Upper Room in St Patrick's Church on Thursdays, 7-8.30 pm, for a time of reading and reflection on the Mass readings for the following Sunday. All welcome.

Rosary: The Rosary is prayed on the Parish webcam from St Patrick's Church, Monday-Thursday, at 6 pm.

Divine Office & Chaplet: The Divine Office (Mid-day Prayer of the Church) and the Divine Mercy Chaplet are prayed on the Parish webcam, from St Patrick's Church, Monday-Friday, at 3 pm.

Holy Face Devotions: Holy Face Devotions will be prayed on the Parish webcam in St Patrick's Church, Claudy, every Friday, beginning with Divine Office (Evening Prayer) at 6 pm. All welcome to join.

Society of St Joseph: The Vocation Society of St Joseph prayer meeting, in support of religious vocations, takes place on the first Thursday of each month, at 6.30 pm, in the Upper Room, St Patrick's Church.

Children's

Rosary:

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

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil, St Patrick's; 10 am, St Joseph's; 11.30 am St Patrick's.

Clonleigh (Lifford)

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil, 11 am.

Clonmany

Lenten Gathering: The Sycamore 'Baptised and Sent in Lent' programme will run in St Mary's Hall on Mondays – February 23 and March 2, 9 16 and 23 – at 7.30 pm. All are welcome to this time of prayer and reflection during Lent. It includes a short reflection, video, prayer and conversation and, of course, a wee cup of tea/coffee.

Exposition: Exposition of The Blessed Sacrament in the Oratory of the Assumption, Ballyliffin, on Tuesdays, 7.30-8.30 pm; and in St Mary's (in room behind altar), on Wednesdays, 2.30-3.30 pm, and in St Michael's Church, Urris, on Fridays, 3-6 pm (Rosary at 5.40 pm).

Confessions: Confession is available in St Mary's Church from 7 pm on Fridays, in lead up to 7.30 pm Mass 6 pm on Saturdays, in lead up to 6.30 pm Vigil Mass.

Weekend Mass Times: St Mary's Church, Clonmany, Vigil 6.30 pm (Rosary at 6.10 pm); Sunday 11:30 am; St Michael's Church, Urris, Sunday, 10 am.

Coleraine

Society of St Joseph: The Society of St Joseph for the support of religious vocations meets on the last Monday of each month at St John's Church Sacristy, after the

CALL TO MORE

ST. JOHN PAUL II
MEN'S
PRAYER GROUP

invites men of all ages to our
talks every Sunday evening
during Lent

Each night a guest speaker will
give a talk and discuss faith and
family life.

Cormac House
Gortin
(Beside St Patrick's Church),

6:00 -7:00pm
followed by tea/coffee

LENT

Parish Post-its

10 am morning Mass, and is open to everyone. New members are welcome at any of the meetings, which support praying for and assisting to support the vocation to priesthood and the religious life.

Exposition: St John's Church Monday Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Wednesdays in St John's Church, from 2-4 pm. with Rosary at 3:45 pm.
Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, 11 am, St John's; 7.30 pm Vigil, St Mary's Dunboe; 9.45 am, Our Lady of the Assumption, Aghadowey.

Creggan

Sycamore: The Sycamore sessions continue in St Mary's Parochial House Conference Room on the second and fourth Fridays of the month, running from 6-7 pm. The sessions are an opportunity to explore faith, ask questions and meet people, and include a short film and friendly chat over a cuppa. The next dates are February 27; and March 13 and 27.

Adoration: Exposition of Blessed Sacrament takes place in the Divine Mercy Chapel on Sundays from 1.30 pm - 6 pm, Mondays from 10.30 am - 7 pm, and Tuesday - Saturday from 10.30 am - 12 pm.

Bereavement Support: Parish Pastoral Bereavement Support. The Parish Pastoral Bereavement Support Group meets on the second Sunday of each month at 3 pm in the Parochial House community room. All are welcome to share a cup of tea, have a chat, remember and talk about their loved one and find support with others experiencing similar feelings. In addition to the group, there is an ongoing opportunity to speak on a one-to-one basis with an experienced grief counsellor. The contact number for more information on the group or to arrange one to one support is 07907085178.

Polish Mass: Mass for the Polish community will be celebrated at 4 pm every second and fourth Sunday of the month in the Divine Mercy Chapel, at St Mary's Church.

Confession: Monday - Friday 5-5.30 pm, Saturday 10.30 am & 5.30-6.20 pm.

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil; 10.30 am; 12.15 pm.

Culdaff

Good as New Shop: St Mary's Church Bocan Re-decorating Committee has the 'Good as New Shop' now open in Carndonagh. All proceeds are for the Re-decorating

Fund.

Weekend Mass Times: 8 pm Vigil; 10 am Sunday.

Desertmartin

Lenten Mission: The Lenten Mission for Ballinascreen & Desertmartin will run from February 19-22, with the themes being: Eucharist & Thanksgiving; The Cross; and Waiting. The Mission will open on Thursday, February 19, with 7.30 pm Mass in Holy Rosary Church. On Friday, there will be 7 am Mass in both Holy Rosary Church and St Mary's Church, Coolcalm, and 10 am Mass again in St Mary's Coolcalm, followed by tea/coffee in Knocknagin Parish Hall, with a Liturgy of the Word Service in Holy Rosary Church at 7.30 pm. On Saturday, there will be a Liturgy of the Hours Service at 10 am in Holy Rosary Church, Mass & Anointing of the Sick in St Patrick's Keenaught at 4 pm, and 6 pm Vigil Mass in Holy Rosary Church. On Sunday, Mass will be celebrated at 9 am in St Columba's, Straw, 10 am in St Mary's Coolcalm, 11 am in St Patrick's Sixtowns, and 12 noon in St Eugene's Moneyneena.

Knit & Natter: Knit & Natter classes take place in Knocknagin Hall on Tuesdays at 7.30 pm. Bring your own project or you can help with knitting for local charities.

Weekend Mass Times: 7.30 pm Vigil in St Patrick's, Keenaught; and 10 am in St Mary's, Coolcalm.

Confessions: Saturday evenings in St Patrick's, Keenaught, from 6.30-7.10 pm.

Donagheady

(Aughabrack & Dunamanagh)

Lenten Devotion: Lenten Devotion to 'Walking with Jesus along the Via Dolorosa, will run on the Mondays of Lent, beginning on February 22, with Adoration from 6.45-7.45 pm. At 7.45 pm, there will be a short period of devotion, led by members of the Parish Council, which will include an opening prayer, Gospel reading, reflection, decade of a Scriptural Rosary, and a Lenten Mission closing prayer.

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place in St Mary's, Aughabrack, on First Fridays, after 10 am Mass until 12 noon.

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil, St Patrick's, and 10.30 am, St Mary's.

Donaghmore

(Killygordon)

Holy Hour: Prayerful reading of the Scriptures & Rosary with the Home of the Mother, Servant Sisters every Tuesday from 6.30-7.30 pm at St Mary's Church, Sessiaghoneill, Ballybofey, and every Thursday from 7-8 pm at St. Patrick's.

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Tuesdays, 10.30 am-7.30 pm, St Mary's Church, Sessiaghoneill; Thursdays, after 9.15 am Mass, St Patrick's Church, Crossroads.

Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, 10 am, St Patrick's; 8 pm Vigil, 9 am & 11 am, St Mary's Sessiaghoneill.

Drumquin

Rosary: The Rosary is prayed each Tuesday morning at 10 am in St Patrick's Church, Drumquin.

Eucharistic Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesdays from 6 pm - Mass at 7.30 pm.

Weekend Mass Times: Vigil 6.30 pm, and 11 am.

Drumragh (Omagh)

Lenten Programme: Stations of the Cross reflections will take place across the churches in Drumragh and Killyclogher Parishes, during Lent. Mondays - Sacred Heart, Omagh, at 7.30 pm, Tuesdays - St Mary's Knockmoyle at 7.30 pm and St Mary's Drumragh at 7.30 pm, Wednesdays - Christ the King, Strathroy, at 7.30 pm, Thursdays - Corpus Christi, Mountfield at 7.30 pm, and Fridays - St Mary's, Killyclogher, at 7.30 pm. There will also be a Holy Hour and Benediction on Sundays at 6 pm, alternating between St Mary's Killyclogher, on the first, third and fifth Sundays of Lent, and in Sacred Heart, Omagh, on the second and fourth and Palm Sunday.

Life in the Spirit: Omagh Charismatic Group's annual Life in the Spirit seminars will get underway on Thursday, February 19, with the celebration of Mass in Sacred Heart Church at 7.30 pm.

Prayer Group: The Charismatic Prayer Group meetings take place in The Pastoral Centre on Thursday evenings, with Rosary at 7.30 pm and prayer meeting at 8 pm. All welcome to come and pray.

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

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes

place in Sacred Heart Church on Wednesdays following 10 am Mass until 5.30 pm.

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

Stations of Cross: The Stations are prayed after 10 am Mass in Sacred Heart Church.

Confessions: Confession take place on Saturdays after 10 am Mass and after 6 pm Mass in Sacred Heart Church.

Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, 9 am and 12 noon, Sacred Heart Church; 10.30 am, St Mary's Drumragh.

Dungiven

Lenten Saturday Mass: Mass will be celebrated in St Patrick's Church every Saturday morning during Lent, at 10 am.

Legion of Mary: Dungiven Legion of Mary meets every Tuesday at 7 pm in the Parish Committee Room. New members welcome. If anyone would like to have the Legion of Mary Statue, (Our Lady of Peace), please telephone 078 9552 9563. Many blessings have been bestowed upon those who have taken the statue to their home for a week. And we host the Rosary on the first Monday of each month, at 7 pm, in Emmaus Hall, beside St Patrick's Church. Special intentions are prayed for and light refreshments provided. Prayer Group: The St Canice's Charismatic Prayer Group meets each Thursday at 7 pm, in the Conference Room, and invites anyone who wishes to deepen their faith through shared Scripture, Prayer and Praise.

St Pio Healing Mass: A St Pio Healing Mass is celebrated monthly, on the first Thursday, in St Patrick's Church at 7 pm.

Society of St Joseph: The Society of St Joseph's for the support of religious vocations meets on the second Tuesdays of the month in the Committee Room, after 10 am Mass in St Patrick's Church.

Children's Liturgy: Children's liturgy recommences on Sunday, October 20 and will continue every third Sunday of the month at 11.30 am Mass. Children from P2-P4 are invited to participate.

Stations of the Cross: The Stations of the Cross will be prayed after the 10 am Mass on Fridays, in St Patrick's Church.

Rosary: The Rosary is prayed on Mondays, Tuesday, Wednesdays and Fridays,

at 9.35 am, in St Patrick's Church.

Adoration: Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, 9 am-6 pm, and Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9 am-8 pm, in Adoration Chapel.

Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, 9 am and 11.30 am, St Patrick's; 10.15 am, St Matthew's; and 4.30 pm, Immaculate Conception.

Confession: Confession is available in St Patrick's Church at 11 am on Saturdays.

Errigal

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Mondays after 10 am Mass in St Mary's Church, Ballerin, until 2.30 pm.

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

Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, St Joseph's Church, Glenullin, and St Mary's Church, 10 am, St Mary's, Ballerin, and 11.30 am in St Joseph's, Glenullin.

Faughanvale

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

Vocations Society of St Joseph: The Faughanvale Branch meets in St Mary's Church on the second Monday of the month (not Jan July, August) following morning Mass. They pray for and sponsor vocations to the priesthood. New members are needed. The meeting only takes less than an hour.

Rosary for Priests and for Vocations: A Rosary for priests and vocations is recited each Monday before morning Mass.

Weekend Mass Times: 5 pm Vigil, 12 noon, Star of the Sea; 6.30 pm Vigil, 10 am, St Mary's.

Granaghan (Swatragh)

Weekend Mass Times: 12 noon & 7 pm Vigils; 10.30 am.

Greencastle

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

Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in St Patrick's Church on Thursdays, 6-10 pm.

Stations of the Cross: The Stations of the Cross are prayed after 7.30 pm Mass on Fridays in St Patrick's, Greencastle.

Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm

Vigil, St Patrick's, and 11.30 am, Our Lady of Wayside, Broughderg.

Greenlough

Stations of Cross: Lenten Stations of the Cross will take place on Sundays at 6 pm on February 22 in Bellaghy, March 8 in Greenlough, and March 22 in Ballyscullion.

Lenten Retreat: The Parishes of Greenlough & Bellaghy are having a combined Lenten Programme in memory of Sr Clare Crockett's 10th Anniversary. It will commence on Thursday, February 12, with an information night, followed by weekly prayer nights from February 19 to March 26. The prayer nights will include informal small group discussion, reflecting on spiritual lessons from Sr Clare and application to our own daily lives. The themes for these nights are: A Call to Holiness; From Hollywood to Humble Heart; Surrender & Trust; and Alone with Christ Alone. There will be a 'Movie Night' on Thursday, February 19, in Greenlough, 7.30-9 pm, when there will be a viewing of the documentary on the Life & Spiritual Progression of Sr Clare. The programme comes to a close on Thursday, March 26, in Bellaghy, from 7.30-8.30 pm, when there will be Guided Adoration by the Sisters from the Home of the Mother, with Confessions running concurrently.

Rosary: Tuesday Night Rosary is prayed at 7.30 pm in the Church.

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place in St Oliver Plunkett's Church from 9 am-5 pm on Thursdays.

Weekend Mass Times: 5.30 pm Vigil, and 9 am (alternates with 11 am Sunday Mass in St Mary's Bellaghy).

Iskaheen, Drung & Muff

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Tuesdays after 10 am Eucharistic Service, until 2 pm, in St Patrick's Church, Iskaheen.

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

Rosary: The Rosary is prayed before all weekday Masses.

St Peregrine Novena & Blessing: The St Peregrine Novena Mass and relic blessing takes place on the First Fridays at 7 pm, alternating between the three parish churches.

Confessions: Confessions are available in Iskaheen on

Saturdays, 9.45-10 am, and in Muff on Saturdays, 6 pm, and after 6.30 pm Vigil Mass

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil, 11.30 am, Sacred Heart Church, Muff; 8 pm Vigil, 10.15 am, St Columba's, Drung; 9 am, St Patrick's, Iskaheen.

Kilrea

Early Lenten Mass: Early Masses will be celebrated in St Mary's Drumagarnier on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, at 7 am. All welcome. Eucharistic Adoration: Mondays, from 12 noon - 7pm, at St Mary's Drumagarnier. Concludes with Public Prayers.

Stations of the Cross: The Stations of the Cross are prayed on Sundays in St Anne's Oratory at 7 pm, with Confessions beforehand from 6.30-6.50 pm.

SVP: The St Vincent de Paul Thrift Shop is open on Saturdays from 10 am -1pm.

Confession: Confession is available immediately after the 7 pm Vigil Mass in St Anne's Oratory each Saturday. Alternatively, feel free to request the sacrament before or after any weekday Mass.

Weekend Mass Times: 7 pm, Vigil, St Anne's Oratory; 10am St Mary's, Drumagarnier; 12 noon, St Mary's, Craigavole.

Lavey

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Fridays from 9.30 am until 5 pm.

Confession: Confessions are heard from 5.15-5.45 pm on Saturdays.

Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, 9 am and 11 am.

Leckpatrick

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesdays from 8.30 am Mass until 5.30 pm.

Weekend Mass Times: 5 pm Vigil, St Mary's Church, Cloughcor; 9.45 am St Joseph's Church, Glenmornan; 11.15 am, Sacred Heart Church, Derry Road.

Lifford (Murlog)

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesdays from 8.30 am Mass until 5.30 pm.

Stations of the Cross: The Stations of the Cross are recited publicly each Friday after 9.30 am Mass in St Patrick's Church, Murlog.

Adoration: 9.30 am-12.30 pm.

Confessions: Saturday, 6-6.15 pm

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil; 11 am.

Parish Post-its

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Limavady

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on the first Sunday of each month in Christ the King (with Confessions) from 3-5 pm, and on Thursdays in St Mary's Church, from 1-6 pm. **Children's Prayer:** A Children's Prayer Group is held in the Drummond Hotel, Ballykelly, on the First Saturday of every month, from 2.30-3.30 pm. All welcome. Contact: Kathy on 07538749627.

Weekend Mass Times: 4.30 pm Vigil, 9 am, 12 noon, Christ the King Church; 6 pm Vigil, St Finlough's Church; 10.30 am, St Mary's Church.

Maghera

Holy Face of Jesus: The Holy Face of Jesus prayers take place every Tuesday after the 9.30 am Mass and Divine Mercy.

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

Confession: Daily after morning Mass (except Sunday and Holydays), and St Mary's at 7 pm on Wednesdays (before evening Mass) and Saturdays at 11am/12noon and 5.30pm/6.15pm

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil and 11.30 am, St Mary's; 9.30 am, St Patrick's.

Magilligan

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place in St Aidan's Church on Wednesdays, from 3-7 pm, and on the First Sundays from 3-6 pm.

Malin

Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, and 10.30 am, St Patrick's Church; Vigil 8 pm, Star of the Sea Church; 9 am, St. Mary's Church.

Melmount

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in the church on Mondays after 10.30 am – 6.30 pm (Benediction at 6.30 pm if priest available).

Confessions: Second and fourth Saturdays at 11.30 am in St Mary's; for First Fridays – after Mass Thursday & Friday mornings (if no funeral) and after First Friday evening Mass.

Weekend Mass Times: 7 pm Vigil, 11.30 am.

Moville

Stations of the Cross: The Stations of the Cross are prayed after 10 am Mass on Fridays.

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

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

Confessions: Confessions will be heard in St Pius X Church on Saturdays from 5.45-6.15 pm.

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil, 10 am, St Pius X Church. 11.30 am on alternate Sundays in St Mary's Ballybrack, and St Columba's Ballinacrae.

Sion Mills

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Fridays, from 10.30 am – 6.30 pm (ending with Benediction if priest available). The Blessed Sacrament can also be adored in the Adoration Room in St Theresa's anytime while the Church is open.

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

Confessions: First, third and fifth Saturdays at 10.30 am in St Theresa's.

Weekend Mass Times: 5.30 pm Vigil; 9.30 am.

Steelstown & Culmore

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

Adoration: Mondays after 10 am Mass until 6.50 pm.

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

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil; 9 am, 11 am, and 12:15 pm.

Strabane (Camus)

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesdays from 8.30 am Mass until 5.30 pm.

Stations of Cross: Stations of the Cross are recited publicly each Friday after 10 am Mass in Immaculate Conception Church.

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place every day, from 10.30 am-1 pm, in the Adoration

Chapel (Oasis of Peace), which is situated at the back of the Church.

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

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

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

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

Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, 9.45 am & 12.15 pm.

Templemore – St Eugene's

Lenten Programme: The Lenten Programme for St Eugene's Cathedral will run from Ash Wednesday, February 18, and includes: Monday-Friday – Morning Prayer of the Church at 7.45 am and Lunch-time Mass at 1 pm; Mondays – Confessions and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from 5-7 pm; Tuesdays – Guided meditation in Mother Teresa Chapel at 7 pm; Wednesdays – Talk on 'Reasons to have faith' by Fr Paul Farren, at 7 pm in Cathedral; Thursdays – Stations of the Cross led by Parish schools at 1.30 pm, and Holy Hour of prayer, Adoration, reflection and music with Fr Shaun Doherty at 8 pm; and Fridays – Stations of the Cross at 7 pm.

Afternoon Tea: 'Songs of Ireland' Afternoon Tea will take place on Saturday, March 14, at 1 pm in the Cathedral Hall, Infirmary Road, Derry, with Anne Marie Hickey, Roisin Rice, Lauren Doherty and The Villagers. Pre booking is required. Call into the Parish Office or 'phone 71 262894 or email cathedral@derrydiocese.org.

Eucharistic Adoration: Every Sunday, there is Eucharistic Adoration from 3-6 pm and every Tuesday

from 10.30 am until 7.20 pm. **Matt Talbott Mass:** The Matt Talbot, Freedom from addiction Mass takes place on the first Monday of each month at 7.30 pm in St Eugene's Cathedral.

St Dymphna Mass: The St Dymphna Mass with Anointing of the Sick takes place on the third Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm. This Mass is to give thanks to God for positive mental health and to pray for those who are struggling with mental health issues and those who care for them.

Cathedral Club: The Cathedral Club meets after the 10 am Mass each Thursday in the Cathedral Hall. Everyone is welcome to this parish social group. Refreshments will be served. Weekend Mass Times: 6.15 pm & 7.30 pm Vigils; 9.30 am, 11 am, 12.30 pm & 7 pm.

Templemore – Long Tower

Lenten Stations: During Lent, the Stations of the Cross will be prayed every Thursday at 7 pm, with Confessions starting at 6.30 pm, and Mass at 7.30 pm, followed by Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from 8-9 pm.

'From St Columba to Sister Clare': Evening of Prayer in St Columba's Church, Long Tower on the first Thursday of each month, at 7 pm for Rosary (Confessions available), then 7.30pm Mass, followed by mini vigil to midnight for healing and intercession. At this Mass, we will pray for the cause of Sr Clare in the Monastic site where St Columba knelt and prayed. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Mental Health Mass: A monthly Mass for Mental Health, and a mini-Vigil to midnight, takes place on the first Thursdays at 7.30 pm. This Mass is to give thanks to God for positive mental health, and to pray for those struggling with mental health issues and those who care for them. After Mass, Adoration will follow until midnight.

Purple Hearts: The Purple Hearts group gathers every Tuesday in Aras Cholmcille after 10 am Mass in Long Tower, for a cuppa, conversation, and some activities such as dancing, knitting, bingo and organising day trips. All welcome.

Long Tower & Brandywell Memories: A collection of old cine film transferred to DVD, taken from 1950's onward. The pack contains a double DVD with many clips of Derry in the 50s up

to 80s. Much of the footage was filmed in the Brandywell area and the Long Tower School. Cost £10, available from Parish Office and Aras Cholmcille.

Children's Rosary: Children's Rosary takes place in the Long Tower on the First Friday of every month, at 3.30 pm.

Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, 10 am & 12 noon.

Siopa Cholmcille: St Columba's Gift Shop in Aras Cholmcille has a variety of Confirmation/First Holy Communion gifts & cards, candles, Rosary beads, books, occasion cards and other gifts & mementos available. The shop is open after 10am morning Mass during the week. For enquiries, please contact Sheila Doyle/Jim Doherty via (parish office 028-7126230 or Sacristy 028-71261946) who will be happy to help.

Cloisters Café: Cloisters Café in Aras Cholmcille (Wee Nuns building), in the grounds of Long Tower Church, is a cosy place to relax and have a bite to eat or a cuppa and a cake! The café is open Tuesday – Saturday, from 10 am to 3 pm.

Three Patrons

Lenten Journey: The Parish Lenten Journey, 'Walking Together in Hope', will run from Wednesday, February 25, for five Wednesdays, starting at 7.30 pm in the Emmaus Room, within the grounds of St Patrick's Church, Pennyburn. It will be hosted by Thornhill Ministries.

New Course: The Parish is running a course entitled, "Genesis (1-11) and Church Teaching" on Thursdays in the Kildare Room, St Brigid's, Carnhill, from 7-8 pm. All are welcome; bring along a Bible and come discover how these ancient stories speak powerfully to our faith today. Children's Rosary: Children's Rosary takes place in St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, on the second Saturday of the month, at 2 pm.

Legion of Mary: The Legion of Mary meets on Mondays, from 1-3 pm in the Meeting Room at St Joseph's Church, Galliagh.

Folk Group: The Carnhill Folk Group meets on Mondays from 7-8.30 pm in St Brigid's Church.

St Brigid's Choir: The 10.30 am St Brigid's Choir meets on Thursdays from 5-5.30 pm in St Brigid's Church.

Bible Study: Bible Study takes place on Tuesdays after 11 am Mass in the Meeting Room, St Joseph's Church, Galliagh.

Men's Bible Study: Men's Bible Study takes place in the Upper Room in St Brigid's Chapel, Carnhill, on Tuesdays from 7.30-8.30 pm.

Women's Bible Study: Women's Bible Study takes place on Wednesdays from 7-8 pm, in the Upper Room, St Brigid's Church, Carnhill. God Club: God Club is an opportunity for teenagers to learn together about their faith. It takes place in the Kildare Room, Carnhill, on Saturdays from 11.30 am until 12.30 pm.

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

Be Still: Be Still is a Men's Prayer and Friendship Group that meets every Thursday night from 8.15-10 pm in Our Lady's Chapel, within St Joseph's Church building, Galliagh. Its mission as a group is to provide a safe place where men can pray and share in a confidential and supportive setting. All men are welcome.

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

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place in Our Lady's Chapel, St Joseph's Church, Galliagh, on Tuesdays from 11 am until 7 pm. It also takes place seven days a week in the Adoration Room in St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, from 8 am until 8 pm, and in St Patrick's Church, Pennyburn, on Wednesdays from 10.30 am – 7 pm.

Youth Prayer Group: A Youth Prayer Group takes place on Thursdays, from 7.30-8.30 pm, in St Pio Centre, Galliagh.

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

Living Disciples: Living Disciples meet on Tuesdays at 7.30-8.30 pm in St Pio House, St Joseph's Church grounds, for Praise & Worship, friendship and a cup of tea. All welcome.

Holy Face Devotions: Devotions to the Holy Face of Jesus takes place every Tuesday after 11 am Mass in Our Lady's Chapel, St Joseph's Church, Galliagh. All welcome

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

Healing Night: A Healing Night with the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal takes place monthly on the first Friday, from 7-10 pm, in St Joseph's Church, Galliagh. Everyone welcome.

Holy Souls Prayer: Under The Gaze of Our Lady of Montligeon, the Holy Souls of Purgatory Prayer Meeting takes place on Mondays after 11 am Mass in Our Lady's Chapel, within St Joseph's Church, Galliagh, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. The Group also meet in Termonbacca on the last Wednesday of every month, from 12.30-1.30 pm.

Vocations Society: The Vocations Society of St Joseph hold monthly meetings on First Fridays after 10 am Mass, in the Emmaus Room, Pennyburn. New members welcome.

Women's Laugh & Craft: The Women's Laugh & Craft Group meets every Monday from 7-9 pm in the Kildare Room, St Brigid's, Carnhill. £3 per class. Spaces limited.

St Pio Café: St Pio's Café, in the St Pio Centre, Galliagh, is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 11.30 am-2.30 pm.

Confessions: Confessions takes place in St Joseph's Church, Galliagh, on Tuesdays from 6.15-6.45 pm and Sundays from 5.30-6 pm; in St Patrick's Church, Pennyburn, on Wednesdays from 6.15-6.45 pm, and Saturdays from 5.15-5.45 pm; and in St Brigid's Church,

THE LITTLE WAY NOVENA
TO ST. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX



9-17 MAY 2026
SAINT EUGENE'S CATHEDRAL - DERRY

Parish *Post-its*

cont. from page 28

Carnhill, on Thursdays from 6.15-6.45 pm, and Saturdays after 11 am Mass and from 4-4.30 pm.
Weekend Mass Times: 6.15pm Vigil & 9.45 am, St Patrick's, Pennyburn; 5pm Vigil, 10.30am &12.30pm St Brigid's, Carnhill; 11am, 12.30pm (An tAifreann Naofa), and 6.30pm Youth Mass, St Joseph's Galliagh.

Urney & Castlefinn

First Saturdays: The First Saturday Devotion and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament will take place in St Columba's Church, Doneyloop, from 12 noon until 1 pm on the First Saturday of each month.
Adoration: Weekly Eucharistic Adoration takes place in St Anthony's Chapel every Tuesday, from 12 noon until 8 pm.
Cenacle: The Cenacle for Priests takes place every Tuesday in St Anthony's Chapel immediately after the 7 pm Mass.
Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, St Columba's, Doneyloop; 10.30 am, St Mary's Castlefinn.

Waterside & Strathfoyle

Lectio Divina: Reflect on the Scriptures with Lectio Divina in the side chapel in St Columb's Church, Chapel Road, on Thursday nights, starting at 8.15 pm – after evening Mass.
Eucharistic Adoration: There is Eucharistic Adoration in St Oliver Plunkett Church, Strathfoyle, on Mondays, 11.30am-12.30pm and Wednesdays from 7-9pm; in Immaculate Conception Church on Thursdays, 1-6pm; and in St Columb's Church on Fridays, 1-6pm.
Confessions: St Columb's – Saturday after 10am Mass, Monday–Friday at 7pm, before evening Mass; Immaculate Conception, after 11am Mass every Saturday and at 5.30pm before evening Mass on a Saturday; St Oliver Plunkett, Every Saturday 5.30pm, before the Vigil Mass.
Weekend Mass Times: 7 pm Vigil, St Columb's; 6pm Vigil, 10.15 am & 12.15pm, Immaculate Conception; 6pm Vigil and 11.15am, St Oliver Plunkett.

BAPTISED AND SENT
IN LENT WITH
SYCAMORE

WHAT WILL YOU DO
FOR LENT THIS YEAR?

A Time for Prayer and Reflection
All Are Welcome

Join us for a simple weekly gathering during Lent
to pause, pray, reflect and share faith together.

Each evening includes:

- short reflection
- Sycamore video
- prayer and conversation
- tea/coffee

Dates: Monday 23 February, Monday 2, 9, 16 and 23 March
Time: 7.30pm
Venue: St Mary's Hall, Clonmany

No booking required – just come along.

DDS Daily Masses 2025-2026

St Eugene's 17 Jan, 9 Mar, 29 Apr, 19 Jun, 9 Aug, 29 Sep, 19 Nov	Donaghmore 12 Dec 2025, 1 Feb, 24 Mar, 14 May, 4 Jul, 24 Aug, 14 Oct	Claudy 27 Dec 2025, 16 Feb, 8 Apr, 29 May 19 Jul, 8 Sep, 29 Oct	Fahan 11 Jan, 3 Mar, 23 Apr, 13 Jun, 3 Aug, 23 Sep, 13 Nov
St Columba's 18 Jan, 10 Mar, 30 Apr 20 Jun, 10 Aug, 30 Sep, 20 Nov	Termonamongan 13 Dec 2025, 2 Feb, 25 Mar, 15 May, 5 Jul, 25 Aug, 15 Oct,	Banagher 28 Dec 2025, 17 Feb, 9 Apr, 30 May 20 Jul, 9 Sep, 30 Oct	Clonmany 12 Jan, 4 Mar, 24 Apr, 14 Jun, 4 Aug, 24 Sep, 14 Nov
The Three Patrons 19 Jan, 11 Mar, 1 May, 21 Jun, 11 Aug, 1 Oct, 21 Nov	Langfield 14 Dec 2025, 3 Feb, 26 Mar, 16 May, 6 Jul, 26 Aug, 16 Oct,	Ballinascreen 29 Dec 2025, 18 Feb 10 Apr, 31 May 21 Jul, 10 Sep, 31 Oct	Carndonagh 13 Jan, 5 Mar, 25 Apr, 15 Jun, 5 Aug, 25 Sep, 15 Nov
St Mary's, Creggan 30 Nov 2025, 20 Jan, 12 Mar, 2 May, 22 Jun, 12 Aug, 2 Oct, 22 Nov	Sion Mills 15 Dec 2025, 4 Feb, 27 Mar, 17 May, 7 Jul, 27 Aug, 17 Oct,	Dungiven 30 Dec 2025, 19 Feb, 11 Apr, 1 Jun, 22 Jul, 11 Sep, 1 Nov	Malin 14 Jan, 6 Mar, 26 Apr, 16 Jun, 6 Aug, 26 Sep, 16 Nov
Our Lady of Lourdes 1 Dec 2025, 21 Jan, 13 Mar, 3 May, 23 Jun, 13 Aug, 3 Oct, 23 Nov	Ardstraw East 16 Dec 2025, 5 Feb, 28 Mar, 18 May, 8 Jul, 28 Aug, 18 Oct,	Limavady 31 Dec 2025, 20 Feb, 12 Apr, 2 Jun, 23 Jul, 12 Sep, 2 Nov	Iskaheen 15 Jan, 7 Mar, 27 Apr, 17 Jun, 7 Aug, 27 Sep, 17 Nov
Holy Family 2 Dec, 2025, 22 Jan, 14 Mar, 4 May, 24 Jun, 14 Aug, 4 Oct, 24 Nov	Ardstraw W & C'derg 17 Dec 2025, 6 Feb, 29 Mar, 19 May, 9 Jul, 29 Aug, 19 Oct	Magilligan 1 Jan, 21 Feb, 13 Apr, 3 Jun, 24 Jul, 13 Sep, 3 Nov	Culdaff 16 Jan, 8 Mar, 28 Apr 18 Jun, 8 Aug, 28 Sep, 18 Nov
Culmore 3 Dec 2025, 23 Jan, 15 Mar, 5 May, 25 Jun, 15 Aug, 5 Oct, 25 Nov	Clonleigh 18 Dec 2025, 7 Feb, 30 Mar, 20 May, 10 Jul, 30 Aug, 20 Oct	Coleraine 2 Jan, 22 Feb, 14 Apr, 4 Jun, 25 Jul, 14 Sep, 4 Nov	1ST FRIDAY MASS FOR LIVING MEMBERS 2025 / 2025
Glendermott 4 Dec 2025, 24 Jan, 16 Mar, 6 May, 26 Jun, 16 Aug, 6 Oct, 26 Nov	Drumragh 19 Dec 2025, 8 Feb, 31 Mar, 21 May, 11 Jul, 31 Aug, 21 Oct	Garvagh 3 Jan, 23 Feb, 15 Apr, 5 Jun, 26 Jul, 15 Sep, 5 Nov	Magilligan 12/5/25
Donagheady 5 Dec 2025, 25 Jan, 17 Mar, 7 May, 27 Jun, 17 Aug, 7 Oct, 27 Nov	Cappagh 20 Dec 2025, 9 Feb, 1 Apr, 22 May, 12 Jul, 1 Sep, 22 Oct	Kilrea 4 Jan, 24 Feb, 16 Apr, 6 Jun, 27 Jul, 16 Sep, 6 Nov	Granaghan 1/2/26
Leckpatrick 6 Dec 2025, 26 Jan, 18 Mar, 8 May, 28 Jun, 18 Aug, 8 Oct, 28 Nov	Greencastle 21 Dec 2025, 10 Feb, 23 May, 13 Jul, 2 Sep, 23 Oct	Greenlough 5 Jan, 25 Feb, 17 Apr, 7 Jun, 28 Jul, 17 Sep, 7 Nov	Termonamongan 2/6/26
Ardmore 7 Dec 2025, 27 Jan, 19 Mar, 9 May, 29 Jun, 19 Aug, 9 Oct	Badoney Lower 22 Dec 2025, 11 Feb, 24 May, 14 Jul, 3 Sep, 24 Oct	Bellaghy 6 Jan, 26 Feb, 18 Apr, 8 Jun, 29 Jul, 18 Sep, 8 Nov	Ardstraw W /Castlederg 3/6/26
Strathfoyle 8 Dec 2025, 28 Jan, 20 Mar, 10 May, 30 Jun, 20 Aug, 10 Oct	Badoney Upper 23 Dec 2025, 12 Feb, 25 May, 15 Jul, 4 Sep, 25 Oct	Lavey 7 Jan, 27 Feb, 19 Apr, 9 Jun, 30 Jul, 19 Sep, 9 Nov	Cappagh 4/10/26
Camus 9 Dec 2025, 29 Jan, 21 Mar, 11 May, 1 Jul, 21 Aug, 11 Oct	Maghera 24 Dec 2025, 13 Feb, 5 Apr, 26 May, 16 Jul, 5 Sep, 26 Oct	Moville 8 Jan, 28 Feb, 20 Apr, 10 Jun, 31 Jul, 20 Sep, 10 Nov	Donagheady 5/1/26
Urney & Castlefin 10 Dec 2025, 30 Jan, 22 Mar, 12 May, 2 Jul, 22 Aug, 12 Oct	Desertmartin 25 Dec 2025, 14 Feb, 6 Apr, 27 May, 17 Jul ,6 Sep, 27 Oct	Granaghan 9 Jan, 1 Mar, 21 Apr, 11 Jun, 1 Aug, 21 Sep, 11 Nov	Donaghmore 6/5/26
Mourne 11 Dec 2025, 31 Jan, 23 Mar, 13 May, 3 Jul, 23 Aug, 13 Oct	Faughanvale 26 Dec 2025, 15 Feb, 7 Apr, 28 May, 18 Jul, 7 Sep, 28 Oct	Buncrana 10 Jan, 2 Mar, 22 Apr, 12 Jun, 2 Aug, 22 Sep, 12 Nov	Langfield 7/3/26
			Badoney Lower 8/7/26
			Greencastle 9/4/26
			Leckpatrick 10/2/26
			Clonleigh 11/6/26

...other Diary Dates

Rosary as Gaeilge lessons:

Every Wednesday during Lent, after 10 am Mass, there will be an opportunity to learn the Rosary in Irish in Aras Cholmcille. Mary Kane will teach this powerful prayer in the language our ancestors would have recited it. Irish speakers are welcome but this class is aimed at absolute beginners. The classes are free and handouts will be provided. After class you are invited to join us in Cloisters and help support our community café. This year, on June 9, St Columba's Feast Day, we hope upwards of 300 people will gather at the Calvary to offer the Rosary in Irish for peace. So why not join us for the first of six classes starting this Ash Wednesday, on the top floor of Áras Cholmcille (aka Wee Nuns).

Hands That Talk Tea:

Hands That Talk will be hosting an Afternoon Tea on Saturday, February 28, from 2-5 pm, in the Conference Hall at St Patrick's Church, Dungiven.

Aras Cholmcille:

On the eve of International Women's Day, Saturday, March 7, Áras Cholmcille will be hosting talks on an ancient text widely regarded as Europe's first human rights treaty, and penned in the seventh century by St Eunan (also known as St Adomnan) of Raphoe and Iona. This code was framed to legally protect women, children and non-combatants in war. The talk will examine the 'Law of the Innocents' in the context of today's world. Another talk will focus on Women in Medieval Ireland, and the significant but tantalisingly scant evidence of two very different

roles - female scribes and the 'banfil' or woman poet. Speakers, times and details to follow.

Harmonic Dialogues:

Donagh Choir is hosting 'Harmonic Dialogues' in Sacred Heart Church, Carndonagh, on Sunday, March 8, at 3 pm, with music by Florence Price, Von Paradis, Gluck, Vivaldi, Bach and Mozart. The concert will feature: Amy Gillen (flautist); Orsolya Szabo-Yelamo (violin); Helen Haughey (organ, piano); the Donagh Choir, directed by Helen Haughey; the Conwal Singers (directed by Karen Patton); and Donegal Chamber Orchestra (conducted by Victor Yelamo). Admission will be 10 Euros.

St Patrick's Day Prayer 100:

A call is going out to rise before dawn on St Patrick's Day to pray the Our Father/Lord's Prayer 100 times for peace and unity in Christ. This has evolved from the powerful legacy of St Patrick, who recorded in his Confessions that he rose 100 times before dawn to pray. Christians of all traditions are encouraged to gather at St Patrick's grave in Downpatrick, at 5.45 am on the morning of his Feast Day, March 17. Alternatively, people can gather in their own localities to do this prayer together.

Marriage Enrichment Weekend:

Catholic Marriage Encounter in Ireland will be hosting a Marriage Enrichment Weekend in St Mary's Knock, Co Mayo, on March 20-22. For further information see www.marriageencounter.ie

Forty Hours - February & March

Sun 22 Feb	St Eugene's Cathedral	Templemore, Derry
Sun 22 Feb	St Oliver Plunkett's	Strathfoyle
Sun 1 Mar	St Teresa's	Sion Mills
Sun 1 Mar	St Patrick's, Pennyburn	Three Patrons, Derry
Sun 8 Mar	Sacred Heart, Derry Road	Leckpatrick
Sun 8 Mar	St Patrick's	Dungiven
Sun 8 Mar	St Columba's, Doneyloop	Urney & Castlefin
Sun 15 Mar	St Mary's, Drumagartner	Kilrea
Sun 15 Mar	St Finlough's, Ballykelly	Limavady
Sun 15 Mar	St Joseph's	Banagher
Sun 22 Mar	St Mary's, Rouskey	Badoney Lower (Gortin)
Sun 22 Mar	St Joseph's, Glenmorman	Leckpatrick
Sun 22 Mar	St Patrick's, Glen	Maghera

Diocesan Diary

Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage:

The Derry Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes in 2026 will take place from Monday, June 29, to Friday, July 3 (4 nights), ex City of Derry Airport. Cost of £895 is inclusive of local taxes, but exclusive of single supplements and insurance. The Pilgrimage office will open for bookings on Saturday, January 17 at 11 am. However, Gift Vouchers

to any value are now available (Monday to Thursday) from the Diocesan Pastoral Centre, 164 Bishop Street, Derry BT48 6UJ.

Accord Derry:

Marriage preparation workshops for 2026 are - March 27/28'; April 24/25; May 15/16; and June 19/20. Booking at www.accordni.com

“What can bring us happiness?” many ask (Psalm 4) *Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR*

ONE of the features of our life as a Redemptorist Community is that a Superior for the Community is appointed for a term of four years. This may be extended to eight years. Then someone else is appointed. There is no third term.

On one occasion, a new Superior addressed the Community outlining what he wanted for the Community for the next four years. After mentioning a number of aims, he concluded by saying that the most important thing that he wanted was that “everyone would be happy for the four years ahead”. Just then, the voice of one of the characters in the Community was heard in a loud whisper: “I don’t want to be happy!”

The Beatitudes

On Sunday, February 1, the Liturgy of the Mass introduced this month by giving us, through the Gospel passage, what is called ‘The Beatitudes’ from the Gospel of St Matthew (5:1–12). These are eight statements of Jesus’ teaching that each begin with the words: “Happy are...”

Jesus certainly wants us to be happy. In these eight statements, He shows us the ways to happiness. Very often we do things in order to be happy. We find this in our own personal life, we find it in our family life, in our social life, and so on.

Many of these bring us a happiness that soon passes and we have to do something else to be happy again. By following the ways that Christ indicates, we are guaranteed happiness that will last forever. This month of February is a good time to think about this and to make special efforts to live the Beatitudes as our way of Christian living.

How happy are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.

Much of human life is lived with the thought that if we could only

be rich enough, then we will be happy. And so many people’s lives are spent on ‘making a living’. Of course, it is vitally important that everyone would have enough to live by and that everyone would get on well. But when wealth becomes the objective of life, we have lost our way.

How happy are the poor in spirit. That is how Jesus sees life. It does not mean that He is in favour of people living in poverty. Just the opposite is the case. Through His eyes, we can see that countless people live in abject poverty and that this is one of the great scandals of our society. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer. That is intolerable.

Being poor in spirit is about appreciating the wonder of life, the privilege of love, the challenge of generosity, and the responsibility of taking care of the poor. When we are living like that, we are building the Kingdom of God and changing the world. That is true happiness that will last forever.

Happy the gentle, they shall have the earth for their heritage.

We live in a world that is characterised by violence of word and of action. We can see this on a global level with all the wars and threats of wars that are in our world today. And we can see it in the actions of people much closer to us and to each other, in family life and in social life. There is a very noticeable decline in the ordinary courtesies that people should show one another.

Jesus tells us that gentle people are the happy ones. And, thank God, there are so many of them among us. Gentleness is not the same as weakness. Far from it! To be gentle means to think of other people in everything we do and say. The gentle person speaks words of encouragement and words of praise and affirmation, rather than words of criticism and

character assassination. The gentle person is one who is affectionate in her or his actions. And Jesus says that they will find happiness because they bring happiness.

Happy those who mourn, they shall be comforted

For many of us, this will seem a very strange thing to hear and to think about. But, when you do think about it, it makes sense. We cry for all kinds of reasons. Many of them are self-centred. You can only mourn when you have loved deeply. This is seen at the death of a wife or husband who has been greatly loved. Or it is obvious at the death of a child or maybe also a parent.

Because of the depth of love, mourning eventually turns into joy and peacefulness as the relationship only deepens as the years go by. The rich memories bring great happiness. And the thought of being reunited with the loved one for eternity brings joy.

We can also mourn for the state of the world that is racked by war and violence and injustice. When we hear of so many children dying every day of famine and malnutrition, we can mourn. Christ assures us that these will be avenged by the justice of God. That can be our consolation - that all will be well.

Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right; they shall be satisfied.

In our world today, there is a great loss of a sense of what is right and what is wrong. Because of social media, everybody’s opinion is seen as being as valid as everyone else’s. So many people do not accept that there is any objective way of evaluating right or wrong, only what each of us thinks for ourselves.

We often have an outcry against violence wherever it takes place. But we have enshrined in the laws

of many counties, including our own, the right to the worst violence of all - the right to abortion - and no one dare speak out against it.

We are conscious of the terrible things that are done to women and girls in our society today. But we dare not point out that one of the things that is powering this behaviour is pornography, which is built on treating others, especially women, as objects of pleasure.

These are just two of the very many areas of human behaviour that needs us, as followers of Christ, to keep confronting the world with. Upholding the right to life and the right to respect will bring us happiness as well as criticism.

How happy are the merciful; they shall have mercy shown them.

When people get a taste of religion for the first time, it often happens that they think they have to save the world. They get very conscious of all the evil that is in the world. And they now know that this is so much against the will of God. This can end up in them standing in judgement on others - at a cosmic level as well as at the level of their own families and loved ones.

Living the previous Beatitude of ‘Happy are those who hunger and thirst for what is right’, needs to be tempered by this one of ‘Happy are the merciful’. We have no right to stand in judgement on others. Only God is the judge. And God’s judgements are always merciful. They are judgements of love and compassion. Our judgements of others need to be like that also. Only then will they bring us happiness.

Happy are the pure in heart: they shall see God.

When we hear the word ‘pure’, we so often immediately think of sexual purity. Of course, it means that. But it means a lot more also.

Our society is riddled with sexual impurity, so much so that it is almost impossible to talk about it anymore. But our society is even more crippled by manipulation, double-dealing, fake news, and conspiracy theories. It is almost impossible to know what is true anymore, especially when we are listening to social media.

Being pure in heart is about being honest, upright, true to your word, and so on. It means that what you see is what you get, especially when what you see is a disciple of Christ. Being pure in heart is about having no hidden agendas in our relationships with one another. That does not mean that we are going to be perfect in love. But it does mean that when we fail, we ask for forgiveness and begin again.

Happy are the peacemakers: they shall be called children of God.

Sometimes, I force myself to listen to chat shows on the radio just to get a flavour of what is happening in society. And it is always depressing! There seems to be so much division in human life and people are almost revelling in it!

As Christians, we are all called to be peacemakers, with the guarantee that this is the way to happiness in our own lives and in the lives of others. We cannot all be peacemakers on a global or national level. But we can be peacemakers at the level of our own daily lives of marriage and family life, as well as in the community in which we live. And we can be peacemakers in the life of the Church by promoting unity among us, as Christians, in our efforts at building a world of peace.

Happy are those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.

Over the past 20 years and more, there have been huge changes,



Fr. Johnny Doherty CSsR

especially on social issues, to the laws that govern our countries. And these do not leave room for conscientious objections. People have found themselves unable to continue in their professions, especially in the medical area, because of pressure to do things that they know are wrong. That is persecution!

Many parents and grandparents today feel pressure from their family when it comes to practicing their faith and doing what is right. It is so important that they keep going and know that this is for the happiness of their life as a family.

And, so many young people can feel a real peer pressure when it comes to doing what is right. Thank God for those who continue with us. We need to support our young people with good Youth Ministry to help them through this time and into full happiness of life.

Conclusion

What can bring us happiness? In the Beatitudes, Jesus opens up the secrets of happiness. But He warns us that this is not going to be easy. It will lead to persecutions and abuse.

He says: “Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in Heaven.”

Embracing God's invitations *by Sinéad Strong*

MANY of us, as people striving to follow Christ in a busy and demanding world, find ourselves trapped by invisible barriers of our own making. “I’ll serve at church once my schedule clears up.” “I’m not ready to volunteer until I learn more.” “I’ll reach out and mend that relationship when I’m a better person.” These are the quiet, self-imposed restrictions that often keep us from experiencing the fullness of God’s plan for our lives. In our pursuit of perfection and order, we may not realise that we are putting God’s invitations on hold - and missing out on His blessings in the process.

This tendency to wait for the ‘perfect time’ or the ‘right conditions’ is something most of us have experienced. It can creep into every corner of our lives, convincing us that we must be more prepared, more knowledgeable, or more spiritually mature before we can truly serve God or others.

We might promise ourselves that one day, when things settle down or when we feel more capable, we will finally step into the roles and opportunities that God has placed before us. Yet, more often than not, that elusive day never quite arrives.

Perfectionism is a subtle foe. At first glance, it can seem like virtue; a sign of diligence, care, or even humility. We might believe that it is best to wait until all the pieces are in place before we take action, whether it is starting a new ministry, deepening our prayer life, or simply reaching out to a neighbor in need. But this desire for perfect circumstances often becomes an excuse for inaction. The longer we wait for everything to align, the more opportunities we allow to pass by, and the more disconnected we feel from the work that God is calling us to do.

Sometimes, this perfectionism appears in the smallest routines. We may feel that the house needs

to be spotless before we can rest, pray, help someone, or take the next small step that God is inviting us to make. What begins as a desire for order, becomes a quiet rule we follow without noticing. Yet God does not ask us to have every room in our lives perfectly arranged before responding to Him. In fact, the Bible repeatedly shows us that God invites people into His work not when they are most prepared, but precisely in their moments of weakness and imperfection.

We convince ourselves that we are not good enough, not knowledgeable enough, not holy enough to say ‘yes’ to what God may be prompting us to do. We set ever-higher bars, expecting ourselves to be flawless spouses, model parents, exemplary employees, or ideal parishioners, before we will risk stepping out. Yet, as we wait and polish and plan, opportunities pass us by. The perfect moment rarely arrives.

This desire for everything to be ‘just so’ can quietly become a cage. Instead of moving in faith, we end up in a holding pattern, circling around what God asks us to do, but never quite landing. We may look back at months or years gone by and realise that our quest for perfection became a barrier to God’s grace at work in our lives. The sense of regret that sometimes follows is a gentle nudge from God, reminding us that His ways are not our ways, and that His timing is not dependent on our readiness or confidence.

Scripture is filled with stories of people who were called by God in the midst of their imperfection. Moses doubted his ability to speak and lead, yet God made him the shepherd of His people. David was a simple shepherd and a sinner, but God called him “a man after My own heart.” Peter denied Jesus three times, yet Christ entrusted him to “feed my sheep.” It is clear: God does not wait for us to be perfect. He meets us where we

are and equips us as we go. Their stories are not just tales of long-ago heroes, but lessons for us. They show that God’s power is revealed most clearly when we are honest about our limitations and allow Him to work through us anyway.

It is important to remember that God’s plans do not depend on our perfection, but on our willingness and openness. When we delay out of fear or a desire for complete readiness, we may miss the blessings, growth, and profound encounters God has prepared for us. Sometimes, the greatest lessons and the deepest joys are found not in the moments when we feel most prepared, but in the ones when we step out trembling, trusting that God will guide and provide. In these moments, we discover that our weaknesses are not obstacles but openings for God’s strength to shine through.

The life of faith is a journey into trust. Jesus calls us away from our comfort zones, asking us to rely on His sufficiency. When He said to

the fishermen, “Come, follow me,” there was no preparatory course or period of self-improvement required. The Apostles left their nets - unfinished, incomplete - and followed. Their willingness to say “yes” in the midst of uncertainty changed the course of history, and it continues to inspire us today. We, too, are invited to respond with courage, even when we feel inadequate or unprepared.

God’s grace meets us in our imperfection, filling the gaps and transforming our humble offerings into something beautiful. When we surrender our desire for control and perfection, we make room for God to do what only He can do - turn our ordinary, messy lives into extraordinary testimonies of His love and faithfulness.

Lord, thank You for loving me in my imperfection. Give me courage to trust You and step out in faith, knowing Your strength fills my weakness. Help me offer You my willing heart today, believing that You can do great things with my small acts of faith. Amen.

Children's Catechism Club - C3

by Veronica Harley

HELLO children. Welcome to the month of February. This month is dedicated to the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. The Holy Family is where Jesus spent the time from His birth until He started His public journey telling us about God. The Holy Family is our best example of love, hope, faithfulness, and joy (CCC 533).



During the month of February, we celebrate The Presentation of the Lord – Candlemas Day (CCC 529). The Presentation of the Lord is the story of Jesus being brought to the Temple in Jerusalem by Mary and St Joseph. It was customary for Jewish parents to present their child in the temple 40 days after birth. When St Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to the Temple, they met Simeon, a devout Jew who had prayed that he would live to see the coming of the Messiah. Simeon, filled with the Holy Spirit, took the baby Jesus in his arms, blessed Him and proclaimed that He was truly the Son of God.

The Feast of the Presentation is also known as Candlemas, or Candle Mass, Day. It is given this name because Christ is the Light Who has come into the world to chase away the dark and drive out sin. Since the seventh century, candles have been blessed before Mass and used in the year ahead for celebrations like baptisms and prayers in the home.

True or False The Presentation

How well do you know the story of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple?

Can you figure out which of these phrases are true and which are false?

1. Fifty-five days after Jesus was born, His mother Mary and St Joseph took Him to the Temple. True or False?

2. Mary and Joseph offered two doves as a sign of their offering of the Baby Jesus since that is what the law required. True or False?

3. A holy man named Solomon came to meet them in the Temple. True or False?

4. When he has seen Baby Jesus Simeon said to God that now, he was ready to die in peace, since he had seen God's salvation. True or False?

5. Simeon said, "This Child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and will be a sign to be

contradicted" True or False?

6. A holy widow who was named Anna was in the temple came and looked at Baby Jesus but did not say anything. True or False?

7. When Mary and Joseph had done what the law required, they went home to Nazareth. True or False?

Answers: 1. False (40 days), 2. True, 3. False (Simeon), 4. True, 5. True, 6. False (she thanked God and spoke about Jesus), 7. True.

Saints of the Month
February 1: St Brigid of Ireland
February 3: St Blaise
February 5: St Agatha
February 10: St Scholastica



Our Lady of Lourdes

We celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes on February 11. This feast celebrates one of the most famous apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It took place in Lourdes, in southern France. On February 11, 1858, a young girl named Bernadette Soubirous was out collecting firewood with her sister and a friend near a grotto. Suddenly, Bernadette saw a vision of a beautiful lady. This was the first of 18 appearances.

During these visits the Lady (who did not immediately identify herself as the Blessed Virgin Mary) asked for a chapel to be built on the grounds, so that Bernadette could pray for the conversion of sinners. She also asked Bernadette to drink the spring water that was revealed to her at the grotto.

The news of the apparitions spread rapidly and caused quite a commotion in the town. As a result, Bernadette was detained, interrogated and harassed by the civil authorities, and treated as if she were a common criminal.



The villagers, however, came to Bernadette's rescue and demanded that she be released. Through all these difficulties Bernadette was given an interior strength.

Many of the townspeople believed that it was the Blessed Virgin Mary who was appearing to Bernadette, and they came down in large numbers to the grotto to pray. The spring, which the Lady asked Bernadette to drink from at the grotto, quickly revealed itself to give forth blessed water with miraculous healing properties.

On March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation, the Lady appeared at the grotto again, this time identifying herself as the Immaculate Conception.

"With her two arms hanging down, she raised her eyes and looked up at the sky, and it was then that she told me, joining her hands together now at the height of her breast, that she was the Immaculate Conception. Those were the last words she ever said to me."

The Marian dogma of the Immaculate Conception (CCC 490-493) had been announced by Pope Pius IX a few years previous, on December 8, 1854. This infallibly defined dogma stated that the Blessed Virgin Mary "from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God, and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the human race, was preserved free from every stain of original sin is a doctrine revealed by God and, for this reason, must be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful."

Lourdes has become a place of pilgrimage and healing, but even more of deep faith. A beautiful church has been erected near the grotto. The shrine of Lourdes is visited by millions of pilgrims each year. It has become one of the most prominent places of pilgrimage in the world. The water of Lourdes is readily available to all pilgrims and numerous miraculous healings of Lourdes have been medically documented. Many people who visit Lourdes, return home with renewed faith and a readiness to serve God in their lives.

Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us



February 14 - St Valentine's Day

"...and the greatest of these is love."
(1 Cor 13:13)

February 14 is always a very special day as we celebrate the love which we have for each other, and we remember especially the love that God has for us. According to Catholic history, there were two saints named Valentine who were both martyred. Little is known about the lives of these men, but tradition does speak of their great love for God and for others.



Feast of St Brigid of Ireland

St Brigid, one of the most loved saints in Ireland, was born during the fifth century. There are many stories about Brigid, especially her generosity to others. One story tells how St Brigid, after giving her mother's whole butter supply away to the poor, prayed to God that the butter would be replaced. And it miraculously re-appeared!

Brigid founded a monastery under an oak tree in Kildare. The monastery quickly grew in numbers. Many men and women came there to study the faith and learned the skills of ornate writing and religious art.

In Ireland we have special devotion to St Brigid's Cross. Tradition speaks of how Brigid went to visit a dying pagan who needed to hear the Gospel. The man was very unsettled, so she sat and prayed with him and, as she prayed, Brigid lifted some straw from the floor and weaved it into a cross. When the man had become quiet, he asked her what she was doing. Brigid explained the Gospel to him with the use of her cross made of straw. He immediately came to believe in Jesus. Brigid baptised him before he died. Today people still make St Brigid's crosses out of rushes and place them in their home to ward off evil and welcome Christ.

Quiz Time with Lawrence

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|---|---|
| 1. What popular dessert dish is named after a 20th century Russian ballerina? | 15. In what Irish county would you find the town of Tullamore? |
| 2. What 2011 film won the Oscar for 'Best Movie' having been recorded entirely in black and white? | 16. What author created the fictional detective character, Hercule Poirot? |
| 3. Of what country is Rabat the capital city? | 17. What Welsh songstress had a 1977 hit with 'Lost in France'? |
| 4. Who are the current holders of the Europa League trophy? | 18. What conflict was ended by the signing of the Treaty of Versailles? |
| 5. Which Hollywood actress is the great-granddaughter of former UK Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith? | 19. Which English football club plays its home games at Ashton Gate? |
| 6. Which of the Children's TV characters 'The Teletubbies' is green? | 20. What country is the world's largest producer of olive oil? |
| 7. What European river flows through 10 countries? | 21. What chemical element carries the symbol 'Fe'? |
| 8. Which city hosted golf's 2025 Ryder Cup? | 22. What Italian word translates into English as 'scratched drawing'? |
| 9. What actor/presenter played Fr Noel Furlong in the Father Ted TV series? | 23. In which county was the new President of Ireland, Catherine Connolly, a TD? |
| 10. In what year did Derry's Peace Bridge officially open to pedestrians? | 24. At which US golf course is 'The Masters' tournament hosted every year? |
| 11. What was Elvis Presley's middle name? | 25. In what month of the year is 'Burns' Night' celebrated? |
| 12. Name the manager of the England Lionesses Women's football team? | |
| 13. Hartfield was the world's busiest airport in terms of footfall in 2025. In what city is it found? | |
| 14. What species of fish produces eggs for caviar? | |

Quiz Answers:
1, Pavlova; 2, The Artist; 3, Morocco; 4, Tottenham Hotspur; 5, Helena Bonham Carter; 6, Dipsy; 7, The Danube; 8, New York; 9, Graham Norton; 10, 2011; 11, Aaron; 12, Sarina Wiegman; 13, Atlanta, Georgia; 14, Sturgeon; 15, Offaly; 16, Agatha Christie; 17, Bonnie Tyler; 18, World War 1; 19, Bristol City; 20, Spain; 21, Iron; 22, Graffiti; 23, Galway; 24, Augusta; 25, January.

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

Let Your Light Shine!

An Lasair Chríost Conference

Sunday, March 22nd, Derry

Christ's call to Ireland's Youth in
the Modern Age and reflecting on
the life of St. Patrick

11:30am - Sung Mass celebrated by
Bishop Donal McKeown, St Patrick's
Pennyburn

1pm - Lunch, St Columb's
College

1:30pm - Conference with
Guest Speakers, Stalls,
Workshops and Discussion

4pm - Solemn Benediction to
close conference

The Flame of Christ Young Adults' conference

Venue - St Columb's College, Derry, BT48 8NH

Enquiries to FlameOfChristConference@gmail.com

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

Clonmany, Coleraine, Creggan, Culdaff, Culmore, Desertmartin, Donnyloop, Drumquin, Dunamannagh, Dungiven, Fahan, Faughanvale, Garvagh, Gortin, Greencastle,

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